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Experiencing Musical Connection:
Sonic Interventions in Mediterranean Social Memory

by

Ian Isaac Goldstein

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

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in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Benjamin Brinner, Chair

Professor Jocelyne Guilbault

Professor Charles Hirschkind

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by Ian Isaac Goldstein

ABSTRACT

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Andalucía, Spain's southernmost region is the epicenter of a contemporary scene comprised of North African and European musicians whose projects integrate aspects of Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) genres with elements of Spanish flamenco, related Iberian folkloric styles, and European early music. This ethnography of collaborative, mixed-musical practices explores how key musicians in this scene find ways to engage diverse backgrounds and trainings as they seek to combine musical systems, and how they consider their projects in the context of a contested past that links the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa. Following the ways in which these artists explore both real and imagined links between musical systems and historical trajectories, I argue that a *phenomenon of experiencing musical connection*—by which I refer to a complex mix of perceiving, desiring, and believing in a musical, cultural, or historical tie between musical practices and practitioners—animates music-making practices in several ways. This phenomenon impels the pursuit of the past *as remembered* and understood; nourishes the acquisition of new musical abilities; and illuminates a set of interactive possibilities within an ensemble, ultimately inspiring novel forms of musical creativity.

Further, I suggest that some of the musical recordings and performances that emerge from these collaborations make what I am calling *sonic interventions in Mediterranean social memory*, undercutting standard histories that obscure, deny, or efface the sizeable contribution of Arab-Islamic culture to Spain and Portugal, and revealing—in the sense of recovering and manifesting anew—points of continuity and cultural overlap between North Africa, the Middle East, and the Iberian Peninsula. Through the course of the thesis I develop the theoretical notion of sonic intervention in parallel with the concept of musicality as a multifaceted sensibility, an idea that treats musical thinking and memory as active, creative processes that register at multiple levels, from the personal, to the interpersonal, and finally to larger social groups.

In order to understand the phenomenon of musical connection and the different ways that musicians intervene in collective memory, this thesis traces two lines of inquiry. The first relates to how musicians make creative use of the past, particularly the contested cultural legacy of al-Andalus. I explore how several Moroccan-Spanish (more broadly, MENA-Euro) collaborative projects based in present-day Andalusia are animated by particular ways of relating to the past as remembered.

The second aspect of my inquiry concerns issues in music cognition having to do with competence, multimusicality, and musical thinking in ensemble interaction—how musicians of different backgrounds and sensibilities (languages, desires, etc.) relate to one another and work together. While the collaborations I discuss often draw on a pervasive, intuited sense of similarity between musical styles, in fact they require, sustain, and develop a diverse set of knowledges, skills, creative faculties, and sensibilities that are distributed throughout an ensemble.

As the project moves between close analysis of musical practices and broader discussion of the larger, contested narratives of a shared cultural past, I explore how musicians from both sides of the Gibraltar Strait experience, negotiate, and make sense of their presumably shared cultural inheritance. Ultimately this thesis argues for a dynamic, intimate, and mutually informing relationship between musical competence and collective memory. In so doing this dissertation contributes to a more nuanced understanding of early-21st-century, collaborative music making in the Western Mediterranean.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

phenomenon, n.

1. A thing which appears, or which is perceived or observed; a particular (kind of) fact, occurrence, or change as perceived through the senses or known intellectually;
esp. a fact or occurrence, the cause or explanation of which is in question.
2. A person's own opinion, theory, or idea. Obs. rare.
3. Philos. An immediate object of sensation or perception (often as distinguished from a real thing or substance); a phenomenal or empirical object (as opposed to a thing in itself). Cf. noumenon n.
4. A very notable or extraordinary thing; a highly exceptional or unaccountable fact or occurrence; (colloq.) a thing, person, or animal remarkable for some unusual quality; a prodigy.

(Oxford English Dictionary 2017)

This thesis explores contemporary musical mixtures in the Western Mediterranean. The study focuses on several current collaborations that combine aspects of Arab-Andalusi, North African *chaabi* and Levantine Arab music with Spanish flamenco, Andalusian folk, Portuguese Fado, and European Early Music. The dissertation asks two principal questions: the first, how does a diverse group of music makers with different trainings, native languages, and places of origin, perhaps distinct ways of understanding music, come together to create new music? The second question asks, how do notions of a shared cultural heritage animate these projects, guiding musical production within these ensembles? Another way of asking this is, how do these collaborations enact a relationship with the sonic past, in this case the larger, contested, historical legacy of al-Andalus in *Andalucía*? Thus, the thesis is at once a study in musical competence and ensemble interaction, as well as a study in social memory. Moreover, rather than treating these studies in isolation, I argue for an integrated approach that sees musical competence and social memory as intimately related.

To recast the questions of this thesis in this dialogic light is to ask: How do the thoughts, desires, abilities, and actions of collaborating musicians, and the contested historical legacies in popular circulation, mutually inform one another? How might we put the embodied-cognitive dimensions of performative musical experience in conversation with the social—in this case, the larger, contested, historical legacy of al-Andalus in *Andalucía*. Thus, the intent of this study is to further our understanding of how social memory conditions the practical possibilities for collaborative music making, and how embodied- and social-cognitive processes involved in ensemble music making, in turn,

reshape the landscape of social memory. This dissertation achieves this through an exploration of three contemporary, collaborative music projects. An exploration of these collaborative musical projects will demonstrate how two modalities of musical remembering—social memory and social & embodied music cognition—are, in fact, mutually informative.

Genesis of this Project

The spark of an idea for this project came to me in 1999, via a classic, used CD and record shop in San José, California. In a bin marked “Spain” I lit upon Radio Tarifa’s *Rumba Argelina* (World Circuit 1996). The CD cover depicted a simple, antique map of the Strait of Gibraltar, simultaneously dividing and connecting *Hispaniae* to the north and *Marocchi* to the south. The back cover description promised “Spanish meets Moorish meets contemporary African meets European medieval.” What piqued my curiosity, more than the novelty of the sonic mixture itself, was how they managed to achieve what, at least to my ear, seemed such cohesive sound world. What was the link, I wondered, between North African and Spanish music?



Figure 1.1 *Rumba Argelina* album cover (illustration by María José Bernardos)

As a graduate student at Tufts, I started to immerse myself in Middle Eastern music. I started learning to play the oud, and joined Tufts Takht, the University's Arab Music Ensemble, then under the direction of Syrian-American composer and oud player Kareem Roustom. Boston's Middle Eastern musical scene was, and still remains, a remarkably diverse mix of Mediterranean perspectives and relationships. The master oud luthier, Peter Kyvelos, led me to Mal Barsamian and his cadre of musical collaborators, and thus to my MA project, which centered on issues of music transmission, memory, and intra-community conflicts around the use of Turkish musical signifiers in the music of New England Armenians. On the one hand, I formed a picture of the various musics of the Middle East as intensely diverse, yet also intimately connected, often in surprising ways. Meanwhile, I began taking oud lessons with several teachers. What struck me most was how each engaged with the instrument differently. It wasn't only that they approached the instrument through different musical systems, Arab or Turkish, or that they each played with such distinct personalities. From one teacher to the next, they seemed to think differently through the instrument.

My interest in Middle Eastern musics, intercultural encounter, and music cognition led me to UC Berkeley. At the same time, I still had this nagging interest in the sound and the story of that Radio Tarifa record. I wondered to what extent Radio Tarifa was an isolated phenomenon, or whether there was a larger scene around these collaborations and musical mixtures. The outline of a project began to take shape around Moroccan-Spanish musical encounters. Already a Spanish speaker, I began taking Arabic lessons, first in Modern Standard, then in Moroccan *darija*.

In the summer of 2012 I conducted preliminary fieldwork in Spain and Morocco. Meetings with Amin Chaachoo in Tetouan, and several musicians in Granada, Sevilla, and Madrid, it became clear that there existed a very diverse, albeit diffuse, scene of mostly Moroccan ex-pat musicians involved with Spanish musicians in various collaborations. There was, indeed, a "there there." Musicians from both sides of the Gibraltar were criss-crossing the strait, some moving permanently others moving seasonally, spending part of their lives and careers in various cities in southern Spain. A picture began to emerge of people circulating within and among networks.

Scope

Among a host of interesting, small-scale projects, two individuals leapt out. Amina Alaoui, a Fez-born singer and composer, and Jalal Chekara, from Tetouan, had each moved to Granada and were actively collaborating with Spanish musicians. In different ways, theirs were each relatively high-profile projects. Alaoui was signed to ECM, an avant-garde jazz and world music major label based in Munich. Chekara had self-produced his first album, but he had a long history of interesting intercultural

collaborations and encounters, from Michael Nyman to Yehudi Menuhin to flamenco legend, Enrique Morente. Chekara was also connected, through his father and uncle, to some of the seminal collaborations that had taken place a generation earlier, putting Arab-Andalusi, Spanish Early Music, and flamenco in dialogue. If I could get in contact with Alaoui and Chekara, and if they were amenable, I would have two artists around whom to build a project, and a city as a base of operations.

With the support of grants from Fulbright and SSRC, I went back to Spain in January, 2014. Over the next year, I established a multi-sited fieldwork plan. While Granada was the focus, I would follow the tendrils of musical networks that stretched north to Madrid, east to Mojácar, west to Extremadura and into Portugal, and of course south, across the Mediterranean to northern Morocco. A meeting with Vincent Molino, one of Radio Tarifa's co-founders, led me to my third case study, a project he had recently become involved in with musicians based in Cádiz, in Jerez de la Frontera: La Banda Morisca.

Adding La Banda Morisca, I finalized the scope of the project.¹ I further limited the scope by focusing on one studio recording from each band. The idea was a micro-ethnography of three recording projects, snapshots in the life of these artists. Amina Alaoui's *Arco Iris* had recently been released and was getting international attention. Jalal Chekara was in the process of completing and releasing his second album, which was the first to feature original compositions. As I would soon learn, La Banda Morisca had just released their first record.

Performer-centric by design, my abiding interest in musical thinking and collaboration directed the focus on the musicians themselves and not on reception. As such, the matter of audience reception is, for the most part, absent from the dissertation, except insofar as it is discussed by the performers themselves. When I address issues of collective memory I do so through the musicians' own ways of understanding and expressing how they conceive of their projects in relationship to the past.

¹ Two notable projects that I do not write about in this dissertation merit mention. The first is *Confluences Musicales*, a collaborative project in Tangier between oud maestro Omar Metioui, and husband and wife team of psaltery player and vocalist Begoña Olavide, and luthier Carlos Paniagua. The second is *Algarabía*, a project sponsored by Casa Árabe in Cordoba, whose express purpose was to bring young Moroccan and Spanish musicians together to explore the musical links between the cultures. While I attended rehearsals and conducted interviews with many of the musicians, *Algarabía*'s program director, and institutional-level coordinators, I opted to limit the scope of the dissertation to three focused cases. All of this to say that the three subjects of this study part of a larger scene: musicians and institutions interested in exploring points of connection interrogating this narrative of a shared cultural heritage.

Research Methodology

Musical thought is often unconscious, intuitive. How, then, to try illuminate and make explicit aspects of musical thinking, to understand how musicians relate to their own knowledge? The idea of a micro-ethnography of a record gave me not only a more tightly focused project; it also offered a method for conducting my ethnographic research. My approach centered around listening sessions in which an artist and I would proceed, track by track, and analyze, essentially in real time, how each song was created, pausing or jumping back through a track whenever the conversation required. This co-present listening opened a dialogic space for discussion and provided a wonderful way to engage musical thinking. Those listening sessions took place in a variety of ways. Sometimes I met with the musicians in their homes, listening back on computer speakers, or at their place of business, as was often the case meeting at Mostafa Bakkali's tea shop, *Tetería La Fuga*. Other listening sessions took place in cafés or on long drives with musicians en route to their concerts.

Each type of session had its advantages and disadvantages. Listening in someone's home or business offered a disarming way to engage with musicians on their terms. Public spaces—the default environment of social engagement in Andalucía—offered a certain neutral ground that affected the dynamic in other ways. In southern Spain, people spend their lives outside the home in cafes. Playing music through a smartphone was not problematic inside or outside a café. Conversations on the road with musicians were yet another revealing way because I was a passenger and they were the driver. The pace of these conversations was often different, determined by the length of the journey in front of us. Listening and conversing while traveling always opened up a different headspace for the musicians, literally thinking in motion.

As I got to know people within this scene, I would on occasion ask musicians about one another. This is, of course, a delicate process requiring a certain diplomatic sensitivity. Though the collaborative musical scene is diffuse, everyone seems to be at least well aware of everyone else. Most people have an opinion, for example, on what constitutes a good or successful musical mixture. Everyone has a different idea about how one should go about combining styles. Inevitably, people would volunteer opinions not only about their own projects, but about other musicians, other collaborations. Some of the strongest insights about a musician's thinking and practices were revealed through how they positioned themselves and their music vis-à-vis others in the scene and their music.

As a way to establish and develop contacts within the community, as well as increase my own musical competence within the relevant musical styles involved in these mixtures, I took lessons in Arab-Andalusi oud, working with teachers on both sides of the Gibraltar Strait, including with Mostafa Bakkali in Granada, Amin and Mehdi Chaachoo, as well as on flamenco guitar, learning with Jorge "El Pisao" through Carmen de las Cuevas, a popular flamenco education hub for expats, tourists, and local players alike, located in Granada's *Albaicín*. Many of these conversations and lessons took place quite literally in

the shadow of the Alhambra, the 13th-century Moorish palace perched on a hill overlooking the rest of Granada.

Music and Collective Memory in the Western Mediterranean

As one of the globe's major cultural crossroads, both historically and into the present day, the Mediterranean has long held attraction for scholars as a site of encounter. At the same time, the notion popularized by Fernand Braudel (1973) of the Mediterranean as a culturally and socio-historically bounded space has held in the popular imagination. While it would be folly to suggest that every Mediterranean musical expression can be reduced to some common denominator, much of this scholarship accepts as a working premise the notion that a common musical sensibility does, indeed, pervade the various music cultures of the region. This larger debate as to the Mediterranean as a cultural field informs much of Mediterranean music scholarship. Several edited volumes have emerged in recent years, seeking to unpack the cross-cultural interactions and multiform characteristics of practices that claim the banner of "Mediterranean music" (e.g. Cooper and Dawe, 2005; Steingress, 2002). Much of this work focuses on popular musical styles, addressing issues of Mediterranean soundings in the context of globalization, from instrumentation, cross-cultural influence, local realities in the context of changing repertoires and styles, and the "Mediterranean" as a subcategory of world music.

In the introduction to his edited volume *Mediterranean Mosaic* (2003), Goffredo Plastino takes this metaphor of tiles to try to hold simultaneously the unique diversity of musical expression in the region, while trying to step back to perceive a unified image. Plastino cites Tullia Magrini, who offers an interesting definition that frames the music of the region in terms of movement, contact, memory, purity and contamination. For Tullia, the term "Mediterranean music" applies:

"for those musical phenomena which cross the sea, which have in the DNA a genetic patrimony that unites elements of different cultures, and which carry the historical memory of contacts within the Mediterranean," extending it further to the new repertoires resulting from the "postmodern tendency to contamination (Magrini 1999, 175-6 in Plastino 2003, 9).

Tullia's description captures some of the sentiments of my interlocuters, whose projects draw inspiration from a conviction that Arab-Andalusi, flamenco, fado, and other Mediterranean styles do indeed share common musical elements, borne through generations of contact across the Mediterranean. The "new repertoires" that I am investigating, however, do not comfortably fit within established categories of subgenres like *nuevo flamenco* or *flamenco árabe*, which have their own histories and musical associations or are too narrow a descriptor. Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca's broad

stylistic palettes, in particular, encompass far more than any one genre on either side of the Gibraltar Strait. In this sense, their approach is closer to that of Radio Tarifa.²

My interests differ, as well, from work like *Songs of the Minotaur* (Steingress 2002), who takes a slightly different angle to interrogate the idea of a Mediterranean musical ethos. This edited volume takes as its point of departure the idea that Mediterranean musics are inherently hybrid, and offers a comparative study of several styles: *flamenco*, *fado*, *rai*, *rebetika*, *sardana*, and (stretching the geographical limits of the analysis) tango and urban English folk. A sociological perspective frames the inquiries, which take up questions of authenticity, ethnic, regional or national belonging, and transgression.

I approach Mediterranean musical mixture from an ethnographic perspective, foremost. More specifically, insofar as I address a Mediterranean ethos, I frame the question around the matter of musical thinking or cognition. In other words, rather than conceive of musical sensibility as something in the salty Mediterranean air, so to speak, I want to look at in the embodied minds of collaborating musicians.

Sensibility in Collaborative Musical Mixture

Studies of collaborative musical mixture encompass a rather broad field of scholarly interest, subsuming issues of musical competence and interaction, multimusicality, and intercultural encounter. I use the label “collaborative musical mixtures” to describe the three musical projects explored in this thesis, in part because, collectively, these three case studies do not all fit easily or uniformly in many of the frameworks scholars have used to address musical collaboration.

While much valuable scholarship on music and intercultural encounter focuses on issues related to power and the political implications of collaboration in the context of globalization (e.g. Erlmann 1999, Feld 2000, Lipsitz 1994, Meintjes 1990), I am approaching these collaborations more from the perspective of music cognition, with the aim of advancing our understanding of musical thinking in interaction.

Thus, my concern with interaction is more aligned, for example, with the kind of “reflexive interculturalism” that frames Jason Stanyek’s interest in Pan-African jazz collaborations (2004), or Ingrid Monson’s account of “intermusicality” in jazz improvisation (1999), both of which explore musical thinking as it informs the interpersonal connection between collaborating musicians. Monson’s approach is helpful, as well, for expanding the concept of musicality as not only the sole purview of the individual musician, but as a co-produced, socially shared quality that emerges in improvisational interaction. In addition, she provides a useful way of thinking about how the past is made present in musical interaction, a central theme that runs throughout this thesis.

² I address this connection further in Chapter Three.

It is trying to reconcile this latter point—how collaborative musical thinking is bound up with an engagement with the past—that leads me to explore the idea of musical sensibility. In the latter chapters of this thesis, I consider some of the ways in which music making relies on multiple ways of relating, especially in the context of collaborative musical mixture. With this initial foray towards a theory of musical sensibility, I hope to bridge the twin realms of competence and interaction that Brinner first theorizes with respect to musical practices in general (Brinner 1995) and then further develops in the context of intercultural encounter and musical fusion (Brinner 2009).

The Structure of this Dissertation

Following this introduction, the next three chapters each present a single case study of a musician or group, and centers on a single album from that artist. While the dissertation's twin issues—collaborative musical mixture and the way music making engages the past as remembered—run through each of the case studies, Chapters Two and Three both lean more heavily on the matter of music and social memory, while in Chapter Four I weight the conversation towards musical thinking in the context of intercultural collaboration. Chapter Five brings together all of the case studies, taking as its point of departure the issue of multimusicality, a matter that, in my reading, links collective memory and cognition.

Chapter Two, entitled “From Felt Connection to Sonic Intervention—Amina Alaoui’s ‘Fado al-Mu’tamid’,” takes up the experience of a musical connection between Arab music and Portuguese fado, and how this experience both motivates the acquisition of new musical competences and inspires the composition of new music that seeks to integrate these styles. Inextricably bound up with the felt experience of sensing the familiar in another’s musical style is the notion of a shared musical heritage, a reading of the past that serves to corroborate and bolster the intuitive sense of sonic connection. It is some combination of belief in, or desire for, a connection, and the reality of its personally experience, that animates Alaoui’s musical projects.

There are clear parallels to Alaoui in the work of La Banda Morisca, a contemporary band from Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Chapter Three, “The Moorish Trace in La Banda Morisca,” introduces this group, comprised of a group of musicians from Spain, France, and Sudan and spanning a diverse range of musical backgrounds and points of reference. “The Moorish Band,” as it were – are motivated by the belief that a deep music-cultural legacy of al-Andalus persists in present-day Andalusia, and that this “trace” [*huella*] holds the key to understanding the mystery of Andalus identity. More than any particular sonic marker of shared heritage, I argue that it is this notion of the past as remembered that fuels their creative poesis. As they combine musical elements to which they attribute a shared musical provenance, they push back against dominant, received notions of Spanish history and identity that have largely effaced from collective

memory the cultural contributions of Arab-Berber, Muslim, Jewish, and *gitano* communities.

The title of Chapter Four, “*Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos: Jalal Chekara’s Flamenco Andalusi*,” seems an apt description for the betwixt-and-between musical world that violinist and singer, Jalal Chekara, inhabits. Where in the previous chapters I weighted the analysis towards considerations of how the past as remembered fuels a musical poesis, here I wish to examine more closely the musical and social details of intercultural collaboration. I am interested in exploring how, on a practical, music-making level, collective memory, musical competence, and real differences between musical styles might co-articulate the conditions of possibility for intercultural musical collaborators. This is also a powerful opportunity to examine how malleable those conditions of possibility might be over time. In the case of Chekara, whose recording process straddles southern Spain and northern Morocco, and whose work is strongly informed by the generation of *gitano* and Arab-Andalusi musicians that preceded him, I show how his brand of musical mixture, self-described *flamenco andalusi* emerges as a juxtaposition not only of distinct styles, but moreover, of what we might begin to conceive of as divergent musical sensibilities.

It is precisely this issue of musical sensibility that I pursue in Chapter Five, “Rethinking (Multi)musicality through Collaborative Musical Mixture.” In the culminating body chapter of the dissertation, I bring together the three case studies around the question of multimusicality, and the more pressing, issue of musicality, itself. In this chapter, I aim to rethink multimusicality on two levels. Turning to important work in psychology of intelligence, I first explore the idea of musicality itself as requiring and engaging multiple intelligences. Within the domain of music making, some of these ontological strong suits, as I call them, lead to different *ways of relating* to music making as a practice. Looking to bridge music psychology and ethnomusicological approaches to music cognition, I consider the idea of *collaborative musical sensibility* as a kind of ethos that undergirds and directs musical competence, a way musicians relate to what they know, to others, and to the world in which they find themselves. I see in this idea a way to speak not only to the music-technical aspects of musical competence and the structural issues of social interaction, but to account for the complex set of desires, beliefs, self-imaginings and ways of relating that motivate music makers. To rethink multimusicality, then, is to reframe the conversation around not only *how* musicians of diverse backgrounds collaborate and create new music, but *why* they set out to do so in the first place.

CHAPTER TWO: FROM FELT CONNECTION TO SONIC INTERVENTION: AMINA ALAOUÏ'S "FADO AL-MU'TAMID"

Over the next two chapters, I elaborate on a pair of related ideas in this thesis: that recordings and live performances of novel musical mixtures can act to sonically intervene in the collective memory of a given population, and that such music making efforts draw nourishment from a phenomenological experience of musical connection between ostensibly distinct musical systems. I show how, through their music, Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca put into conversation musical elements from different musical systems in order to articulate their own, particular conceptions of the common cultural roots and intimate connections linking Arab-Andalusi and Iberian folk musics.

In the course of these two chapters I introduce the idea that these artists' distinct knowledges, desires, and ways of relating to the near and distant past, deeply inform the kinds of collaborations they pursue and ultimately the music they make. Here in Chapter Two, I take up the case of the Moroccan-born Amina Alaoui, relating how the profound experience of familiarity when first encountering Portuguese fado motivates her exploration of that genre and its possible links to Arab-Andalusian music. Witnessing the deliberate erasure of al-Andalus from Portuguese public memory, she composes a provocative response that becomes the centerpiece of her recording for an acclaimed European label.

I open in *medias res* with the story of Amina's debut performance of that piece, entitled "Fado al-Mu'tamid," in which she defies some of the conventions that define that genre. How the piece came to be and how it operates, both in live performance and on record, to intervene in the collective memory of (not only Portuguese) listeners, form the center of my inquiry. Following the opening vignette, I backtrack in time, describing Amina Alaoui's musical background and the path that leads to her engagement with fado. I then discuss the role of fado in Portuguese collective memory, focusing on the notion of *saudade* as an emotional lever that activates and configures memory (Gray 2007) and the sentiments of loss and longing which that memory articulates (Elliott 2010). Amina Alaoui, I will argue, co-opts and reconfigures the affective tools of the fadista, introducing Arabic language and novel timbral combinations in order to present a counter narrative of Portuguese history, one that revives the memory of al-Andalus and argues that its cultural legacy can be discerned in Portugal's most representative national music genre. Amina's best evidence, in the end, is her own poesis. Taking the form of a *fadista's* bearing witness (Elliott 2010), "Fado al-Mu'tamid" simultaneously sounds her

own experience of a heartfelt connection perceived between two musical cultures, and musically recalls one of al-Andalus' most famous exiles.

A Daring Fado Vadio

It is evening in the early 2000s, in Beja, Portugal, at a *taberna do fado*— a bar and music venue dedicated to Portugal's most iconic, national music style. The conservative crowd of local fado devotees is familiar with the way things work in this traditional establishment. A sparse house band comprised of *guitarra portuguesa* and *viola baixo* (acoustic bass) accompanies any patron who cares to perform extemporaneously. This is *fado vadio*, which loosely translates to “vagabond's fado;” in contrast to a professional performance, here amateur singers step up, one by one, to extemporize a text, drawing from the large corpus of familiar melodies within the well-established fado canon. The songs, nearly all in minor keys, narrate various poignant stories of love and loss, the aesthetic goal being to imbue one's performance with the quality of *saudade* (loosely translated as “longing”) that marks fado.

Among the patrons that evening is a young woman visiting from her home in Granada, Spain, across the border and some five hours' drive away. After listening to several singers, she raises her hand to take a turn. She signals to the musicians, and as they begin to play, she takes a deep breath and starts to improvise a poem. The melody conforms to a traditional fado tune,¹ but the language is unfamiliar to many in the room. She has barely sung the first few lines when a great commotion erupts in the bar. Patrons are asking each other “what language is this?!” Half the people get up and walk out in obvious protest. Finally, one man comes to her defense and, in Portuguese, calls for quiet: “¡Silence! ¡Here we sing fado! ¡This is a historic moment people!” The visitor concludes her song, and the same man congratulates her. “¡Senhora! Thank you very much! This is momentous. I've never seen [anything like] this. What language were you singing?” She answers, “In Arabic, *senhor*.” At that, the rest of the crowd walks out.

The above story was related to me by the intrepid singer who caused the uproar that evening, Amina Alaoui. Her performance that night had been a bold experiment. The crowd's emotionally charged responses, divided between enthusiastic embrace and angry, offended rejection, only confirmed Alaoui's intuition that she had hit upon something that, at the very least, struck a nerve. This piece, “Fado al-Mu'tamid” would eventually become the centerpiece of her 2011 album for ECM, entitled *Arco Iris* (“rainbow” in Spanish). But to understand how Alaoui came to be in Beja that night, singing a fado in Arabic, we need to backtrack a little, as the inspiration for the record came years earlier.

¹ Fado practitioners generally draw upon an established corpus of melodies that follow stock harmonic progressions. When I asked Alaoui how the musicians knew what to play, she said she made mention of another song played earlier in the evening, and instructed the instrumentalists to play the same progression they had used to accompany that fado.

From Gharnati to Fado

The product of what she describes as an “aristocratic” upbringing in Morocco, Amina Alaoui proudly asserts the cultural duality of her musical and artistic education. On the one hand, she has a training in Arab-Andalusian and eastern Arab vocal music, an education that began at home. A native of Fez, Alaoui grew up hearing her grandmother singing pieces from the *gharnati* repertoire, a music closely associated with Tlemcen and Oran, in Algeria, later brought to Morocco. Literally translating “Granadan,” *gharnati* forms part of a larger corpus of music that claims descent from al-Andalus, music thought to have traveled with the exiled populations of Spanish Muslims who settled mostly in the coastal regions of North Africa, and understood to be preserved in oral transmission (see Poché 1995, Guettat 1980, Reynolds 2000). Alongside her foundation in Arab-Andalusian and eastern Arabic music, Alaoui has a classical training in piano and voice, and was at one point a serious student of ballet. Describing her dual-formation, she tells me, “so from childhood I am bilingual in mind, bilingual in music, bilingual in many things. It’s all to say that I have these two—West and East—and they fight...Not now, but back then. Of course, music reconciles all this. But this explains why in my work, especially the creative work I have always tried to build bridges” (personal communication).²

Indeed, Alaoui’s recording career to date reveals an increasingly wider scope of musical interests, each of which put her “home” tradition of Arab-Andalusi music in dialogue with various, mostly Western genres. Her first studio recording, *Arabo-Andalusian Music of Morocco: Gharnati* (1995 Ethnic) came at the invitation of noted Andalusi orchestra leader Ahmed Piro. Whereas recordings of Arab-Andalusian music to date had generally featured a single *nawba*, or Andalusi musical suite in its entirety, Alaoui had the idea to perform a curated selection of songs from several *nuba*, highlighting the spectrum of Andalusi musical modes (*tab*) which feature in *gharnati*, and Arab-Andalusian music more broadly. Alaoui followed her debut recording with *Alcantara* (Auvidis Ethnic 1998), an album whose diverse repertoire included Renaissance European songs, original settings of Andalusi poetry, and even a Sephardic song. The title conveys multiple meanings: Arabic for “the bridge,” it refers to the record’s bridging of European Early music and Arab-Andalusian music, and bridging of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish cultures. Rendered in Roman script, *Alcantara* contains the Spanish word *cantar* (to sing), leading Alaoui to refer to her effort as a “bridge of song” (1998 *Alcantara* liner notes and personal communication).

By this time Alaoui had moved to Europe permanently, dividing her time between Granada and Paris. Performing regularly on the European continent in the late 1990s, Alaoui’s set lists were featuring a combination of *gharnati* and early music repertoire, material drawn from her increasingly eclectic studio recordings. While her musical horizons had broadened to take in music from as far afield as Italy, France, and the

² I return to the topic of Alaoui’s musical education in Chapter Five, where I discuss the role of multi-musicality in her musical collaborations.

Balkans, it was a chance conversation that would steer Alaoui to her next artistic endeavor. Following one of her concerts, an audience member approached Alaoui and commented that her music, in particular her vocal style, seemed very reminiscent of Portuguese fado. It was a genre with which she was utterly unfamiliar, and her curiosity was piqued.

The Voice of the Queen Rings Familiar

Hearing for the first time Amália Rodrigues, Portugal's *Rainha do Fado*, Amina Alaoui was floored. The classic *fadista*'s melancholic voice was moving, to be sure, but for Amina something else, something more profound, was happening here. Listening to Rodrigues, Amina had the uncanny experience of recognizing something familiar:

Not having developed any ear for fado, I listened with great attention. As such I was even more aware of the emotion in Amalia Rodrigues's songs. I was literally spellbound. A musical impulse overwhelmed my mind and gave way to a sound reality I had never before realized. I discerned (*décelai*) musical familiarities between Arab music and fado, which was only to corroborate the testimony of the music lover that I had the opportunity to cross (Alaoui 2003).

It is the affective, and pre-reflective dimensions of Alaoui's experience that I wish to seize upon here. Alaoui is describing a visceral encounter with the voice of Amália Rodrigues, one that, in the moment, overwhelmed her. The self-evidence of the connection between fado and Arab music suddenly revealed itself to be, as she puts it, "a sound reality I had never before realized." The phenomenological power of this encounter—the sensing of a reality previously unrealized, motivated Alaoui to seek out the roots of fado. If this connection was so obvious, so unavoidable in its force, she wondered, to what extent was there a demonstrable historical connection between fado and Andalusí music?

In 1999 Amina secured the *Villa Médici Hors Les Murs* award, an artistic research grant from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to investigate the history of fado. She began making visits to Portugal to explore archives of historical documents, speak with fado specialists and musicologists, immerse herself in recordings, and attend performances in various tabernas de fado (Alaoui 2003, 56). Amina published her findings and hypotheses on the historical and musicological connections between Arab music and fado. In her article, she reopens a longstanding debate over the origins of fado. Scholarly consensus has more or less placed fado's origins in the early 1800s, arising from the shadowy periphery of society in Lisbon's Mouraria, and primarily influenced by Afro-Brazilian music encountered through Portugal's colonial project (Gray 2007, 107. See also Gallop 1961 [1936]; Nery 2004). Amina instead pursues the now-largely discredited Arab thesis. Pointing to work by Portuguese Arabists like José Adalberto Coelho Alves, she argues that fado, as a folk music, could not have arisen overnight in the nineteenth century, but instead had to have much deeper roots, and bore the traces of the dominant Andalusí

music culture that suffused the region over the course of centuries. She goes on to suggest an alternative, Arabic-derived etymology for the term *fado*, generally taken to come from the Latin *fatum* (fate), and considers possible organological ties between oud and Portuguese guitarra.

In Amina's analysis, she notes specific overlaps in vocal technique and related aspects of performance practice linking fado and Arab-Andalusian music. These range from extended melismas and other melodic ornamentations, *glissandi*, to vocal trills, and similar uses of *rubato*. Regarding the latter, Amina observes a parallel in how fado songs often slow down towards the end of a piece, only to speed up again to conclude, whereas in Arab-Andalusi music, the musical action slows and comes to a full rest at the conclusion of a slower section of the nuba (suite), signaling the transition between slower and faster sections of the suite. It was the affective deployment of these vocal techniques that had struck Alaoui's audience member, as it had so moved Amina upon hearing Amalia Rodriguez.

It is impossible to say with any certainty whether the shared features Amina perceives reflect actual musical continuities, or if they are instead simply commonalities one could observe in any number of musical systems, in the Mediterranean region and far beyond. It is not that we need to take her claims at face value. Even if one is persuaded by the idea that an Andalusi influence shaped the folk music of Portugal, we still would need to reconcile the many other forces that came to shape fado. The likelihood that Arab-Andalusi musical practice underwent significant changes in post-expulsion North Africa presents an equal, if not greater challenge to Amina's thesis. That being said, most salient from the perspective of mnemohistory are Amina's own experience of a perceived connection, the subjective conclusions she reaches in her research, and how that total experience propels her musical poesis. It is Amina's creative use of the past as remembered that is of most significance to my argument.

In many ways, Amina is defending a position that persists in the popular imagination. Scholarly consensus aside, Lila Gray points out that many Portuguese listeners discern an Arab quality in fado, particularly in the vocal ornaments of Amalia Rodrigues (2013, 81-2). Gray goes on suggest that, while now accepted as quintessential and eternal characteristics of fado, these Arabesque features in fact originated with Amalia in the 1950s-60s, something of which few fado aficionados are aware.³ In the Mouraria or Alfama of Lisbon, two areas considered to be ground zero for fado, the association is wrapped up in the reconstructed architectural "vestiges" of Portugal's Moorish past (see Colvin 2008). "Whatever the Arab contribution to fado might have been, it is relegated in

³ Alaoui's reported experience would seem to contradict Gray's assertion. First, Alaoui's study of fado vocalists extended far beyond Amalia Rodriguez. As she writes, she "later listened, always with great professional concentration" to other fadistas, first via an Anthology put out by Lisbon's *Museo do Fado*, later in the course of attending live fado performances (2003). Moreover, as cited above, Alaoui's analysis of the vocal features common to fado and Andalusi music goes far beyond melismas, extending to other techniques of sound production, phrasing, and rhythmic delivery.

the popular imagination to a mythic, pre-historic past, a token vestige that only serves to underscore the success of a Christian Portuguese reconquista (Gray 2013, 82).

Reconfiguring Fado's Affective Tools of Memory

The concern over fado's origins forms part of a larger debate about fado's connection to Portuguese national identity. Over the course of the 20th century, beginning with José Pinto de Carvalho's seminal *História do Fado* (1903), fado emerged as a folk music genre that was viewed as capturing the essence of a Portuguese national character. While some defended the virtues of this association, others, most notably those in Salazar's *Estado Novo* regime, lamented the association of fado with the underclass, and with a somewhat self-defeatist nostalgia for a lost empire (Elliott 2010, 21-25). As Elliott points out, fado becomes a stand in for nation in an ideological power struggle over the nature and direction of Portuguese society.

This complex relationship between a popular music genre and national identity is the common point of departure for a growing body of fado scholarship that has emerged in recent decades. Much of this work consolidates around particular affective dimensions of fado as they relate to themes of loss, nostalgia, and the importance of place (Colvin 2008; Elliott 2010; Gray 2007, 2013). These themes are said to be conveyed through a kind of master emotion known as *saudade*, which Richard Elliott describes as "a supposedly 'untranslatable' term for yearning only Portuguese people are claimed to feel" (2010, 3). Elliott references Svetlana Boym's discussion of *saudade*, in which she draws parallels to Eastern European terms, all of which "share the desire for untranslatability, the longing for uniqueness" (Boym 2001, 13, in Elliott 2010, 29). *Saudade* in this view is the quintessentially, and uniquely Portuguese self-expression of eternal, nostalgic longing.

Writing on the affective power of (particularly female) fadistas in performance, Gray posits, "The national, historic, timeless soul which could be channeled via *saudade* through the fado voice, particularly the voice of Amalia Rodrigues, helped to structure an imaginary of group belonging and national memory, as well as to shape an idea of Portugal which was static, where time stood still" (Gray 2007, 109). Developing this idea further in her subsequent monograph on fado, Gray argues that a less static, fluctuating kind of history is made emotionally palpable through the experience of fado. Rhetorically framing her argument in a series of questions, she asks:

What might history feel like when rendered and experienced in musical sound?
What kinds of forces might come together when history "flashes" affectively to the fore for a musical instant and is recognized as something named, marked?
How might musical experience and talk, practice, performance, and discourse come together in a musical *genre* in such a way that the genre itself functions as a sensitive mode, at once capable of containing, liberating, reinforcing, and transforming story—the sound of a vocal turn capable of releasing tales and the multiple desires that order the stuff of history, where story's valences are

dependent on the aesthetic of sonic form and sound's affective sensuality? (Gray 2013, 71-72)

I include Gray's quote at length because her argument goes a long way in helping to understand the patrons' emotional response to Amina Alaoui's performance in the Beja taberna do fado, which I heard about from Alaoui, but did not personally witness. Amina reconfigures that same power which Gray accords to *saudade* and to its foremost channeler, Amália Rodrigues. The paradoxical quality of *saudade*, which according to Elliott and Gray is at once open and overdetermined, makes such a move possible. It is precisely this overdetermined quality of *saudade* that renders it a vessel for the anxieties that Portuguese bring to their relationship with their own history. Yet the object of *saudade* has to be open enough to float as a signifier. Lament for a lost love can—and must—as easily shapeshift in the next moment. *Saudade* is in this sense already an open affective mode. Amina is tapping into a *saudade* already unmoored from its object.

Amina deploys all of the affective sensual power of the fadista's *saudade* in order to tell another story. Where for the Portuguese that poignant sense of loss is bound up in the loss of an overseas empire, Alaoui seizes these very same sentiments and redeploys them as a lament for the effaced traces of al-Andalus in Portugal. When fado performers and listeners bear witness to loss—be it that of a venerable age, a lover, or family members gone to the New World—Amina substitutes the figure of al-Andalus. Where fado often references its mythic birth in the Mouraria and Alfama—tracing the ghostly outline of places that are no longer, their architecture transformed, whitewashed of their Othered past—Amina restores a mythic Moorish hue to the Mouraria and quite literally re-voices the Alfama. Finally, where a typical, self-referential fado device would be to recall absent fadistas of the past, Amina instead invokes another kind of composer, Muhammad Ibn Abbad al-Mu'tamid (1040-1095), the Andalusí Taifa leader known as the “poet king of Sevilla,” a native-born son of the region whose reign extended across the Iberian southern coast from Seville to the western edge of what is now known as Portugal's Algarve region (literally “the West” in Arabic).

If these constitute the ideological content of Amina's intervention, the question remains as to just *how* she seizes the emotional power of the fadista to reinterpret *saudade*. At this point I need to expand the object of my analysis, from Amina's performance of “Fado al-Mu'tamid” in the Portuguese *taberna*, to the more fully formed intervention Amina later makes with the same song on her 2011 recording, *Arco Iris*. Where necessary I will draw distinctions between the experiences of the live performance and the recording.

Arco Iris and the Politics of Timbre and Language

Amina's 2011 album *Arco Iris* was her first solo project for the European recording company ECM, and her second overall for the label.⁴ Both *Arco Iris* and the preceding project, *Siwan*, fit within the diverse wheelhouse that comprises ECM's catalogue, which runs the gamut from avant-garde and classic jazz, to European art musics, and contemporary improvisation, among other genres. The music on *Arco Iris* features her settings of Andalusí, medieval European, and twentieth-century Portuguese poetry, sung in Arabic, Spanish, and Portuguese, respectively, and highlighting various combinations of nylon-string guitar, mandolin, oud, violin, *daf* (Middle Eastern frame drum) and other hand percussion.⁵ In 2014, when I first sat down with Amina Alaoui to discuss the tracks on *Arco Iris*, she described "Fado al-Mu'tamid" as being the centerpiece of the disc:

This piece is very original. If I am going to do something with fado, I have to bring in some new dimension. Well in this piece you have all the ingredients. It is sung in Arabic. A fado in Arabic doesn't exist, no one [has done it]. One. Second, a fado played without Portuguese guitar, that doesn't exist. And third, well, here the guitar comes in. Furthermore, there are flamenco techniques, classical. The oud comes in [and] it becomes a unique piece.⁶

Amina's intervention begins with a transgressive gesture in the form of a novel musical mixture that she introduces into fado. Foremost in that mixture is the use of Arabic language. Amina's use of Arabic was unquestionably the overt cause of the commotion in the Beja taberna. For the taberna listeners, not only has she, as a non-Portuguese singer, defied the implied notion that *saudade* can only be understood by the Portuguese, further, she has rendered fado semantically unintelligible to her audience. While language is obviously a powerful signifier, the affective dimensions of singing in Arabic extend far beyond the linguistic. Her vocal articulation, melodic ornamentation, and timbre are all factors that present as a cohesive whole.

For a discerning audience concerned with "fencing off" fado as uniquely Portuguese, as Elliott (2010) describes it, timbre can represent as much of a threat as can language. The emotional attachment of meaning to timbre is hardly unique to fado. To take another

⁴ Though 2009's *Siwan* was released first, Alaoui and guitarist José Luis Montón, several years prior, had already finished composing much of the music for what would become *Arco Iris*.

⁵ In addition, Amina's son Idriss Agnel contributes electric guitar to the track, "Que fare."

⁶ All quotations are my translations from Spanish unless indicated otherwise. My conversations with Amina took place, for the most part, in Spanish, though at times Amina would switch to French in order to express certain ideas, or, on occasion, opt for English to emphasize a particular point—all this in addition to musical and non-musical terms and phrases in Arabic and even Hebrew.

More than merely intellectual performance or a tactic to keep an interviewer on his toes, I take the way in which Amina deploys a multilingual competence as part of the complex ways in which she relates to music, illustrative evidence of a particular multimusical sensibility. Unpacking and rethinking multimusicality as a kind of sensibility is the subject of Chapter Five.

example, Armenian-American musicians in New England have often received a hostile reception when performing part of their familial musical heritage that included Turkish-language repertoire (Goldstein 2010), a sensitive matter within a community of mixed diasporic origins and different political allegiances. Beyond the fact that Armenian-Americans were singing in Turkish, it was the *sound* of Turkish that offended the sensibilities of those of strong Armenian nationalist sentiment. One musician recalled receiving a phone call at his hotel room after a performance, asking that he not bring a particular clarinetist colleague to play the next day, because the player sounded “too Turkish.” As it turned out, this player’s ornamentation, use of microtones, and overall sound were partly enabled by his use of a metal (likely Albert-system) clarinet, a departure from the more commonly heard hardwood, Boehm-system instrument. It was this exotic timbral quality (in the ears of the complaining party) that my interlocutor felt was the chief source of the objection.

Particularly in live performance, the conditions of possibility for a creative musician are enabled and partly constrained by the social forces operating on that performance context. Following Foucault’s notion of governmentality, Jocelyne Guilbault refers to these forces as “the tactics of management and methods—the micro practices of power rather than its institutional forms” that discipline musical production (Guilbault 2007, 240). Musicians in New England’s Armenian community have learned over the years that the same song they play to raucous reception at a festive *Kef* night, they should avoid playing at other events where some (often a very vocal minority of the community) have made clear their objection. In Amina’s case, she did not have the benefit of years of trying out Arabic-language fado on Portuguese audiences. Though by now a frequent visitor and fado aficionado in the making, by no means was she a member of the community. Yet those same disciplinary forces were on display when she first performed “Fado al-Mu’tamid” in the *taberna*. That night, she worked with what was available to her in that situations. She was accompanied by two musicians on Portuguese guitarra and viola (nylon-string, “Spanish” guitar). As her live performance largely conformed to the stylistic conventions of fado, particularly as regards instrumentation and harmony⁷, the main transgression that night, from the perspective of those vocally objecting, centered on the use of Arabic language.

The studio recording of “Fado al-Mu’tamid” is another matter. Alaoui had originally sought a Portuguese guitarist for the *Arco Iris* project. After beginning to work up some of the material, she came to the realization something was not working. In her estimation, it was *demasiado marcado*—too marked as Portuguese (personal communication). Switching to French, she tells me:

⁷ In her live performance, Amina was accompanied by two musicians, playing Portuguese guitarra and viola (nylon-string, or Spanish guitar). Prior to beginning the piece, she had offered minimal, but sufficient direction to the musicians, asking them simply to repeat a particular fado accompaniment from earlier in the evening (personal communication).

How to explain it? I did it with Portuguese guitar but it was, too targeted as fado, too traditional (*trop cible fado, trop traditionnel*), and I didn't see it happening. I said, "I am choosing to sing a fado. I am not Portuguese. I am an Arab singer, I am a singer on Portuguese soil. If I were to sing it as a Portuguese [person] would, what would I be bringing to it? I have to bring something new to it." And I thought about the Portuguese guitar for this project, and I thought, "no."

Instead, Alaoui settled on personnel whose novel combination of instruments departs significantly from fado's iconic instrumentation and its timbral signature. By introducing a blend of European and Middle Eastern sounds, along with the Arabic lyrics, Alaoui further unmoors fado from its usual world of sound and signifiers. In place of Portuguese *guitarra* and *viola*, Alaoui utilizes guitar, mandolin, violin, oud, and a hint of percussion. Like the Portuguese guitar, the mandolin uses paired courses of metal strings. Though the Portuguese guitar is tuned lower, the two instruments share a significant overlap in register. The metal strings and high register of the mandolin thus reference the timbral role of the Portuguese guitarra.⁸ At the same time, Amina points to historical evidence of the mandolin's inclusion in nineteenth-century fado accompaniment as ample justification for her choice to incorporate the instrument into *Arco Iris*' musical mixture.

The ensemble roles these instruments take differ as well. José Luis Montón's flamenco guitar dominates, combining melodic lead and rhythm accompaniment roles, while Eduardo Miranda's mandolin alternately doubles or responds to the guitar's main melody. The oud and violin enter midway through and play a subtler role, adding color in the latter half of the piece. Sofiane Negra's oud can just barely be discerned, echoing the mandolin's gestures from two octaves below. The violin, played by Saïfallah Ben Abderrazak, comes in at the third of four verses, also playing sparsely, following the vocal line with long, sustained notes. Percussion is limited to the occasional brush of a frame drum.

⁸ There are two styles of Portuguese guitar, referred to as Lisbon and Coimbra-styles, and associated with the respective cities in which they are played. The Lisbon style is the guitar most often used in fado. It features a shorter scale and higher tuning as compared to its sibling Coimbra variety, and has evolved from a smaller-bodied instrument in the 19th century to the larger shape it takes today. For an English-language source on the organological history and usage of both styles of Portuguese guitar, see Cristo 2014. Portuguese readers should consult Cabral 1999. For more technical info on tuning and construction, see also Fernandez 2010.

0:00	Guitar intro
0:22	Melodic head: mandolin enters doubling guitar, <i>daf</i> (large frame drum) fills with occasional brushing sound
0:45	Guitar and mandolin diverge, mandolin responding to guitar line
1:12	Vocals enter, verse 1
1:40	Guitar and mandolin repeat head
2:11	Vocals, verse 2
2:40	Oud enters underneath mandolin, barely perceptible in the mix
3:06	Verse 3 begins at melodic and emotional apex of piece; violin enters
3:57	Guitar, mandolin repeat head, joined by oud.
4:21	Verse 4, full ensemble
5:18	Guitar and mandolin tag just the initial phrase of the head
5:30	End of piece.

Figure 2.1. Arrangement, “Fado al-Mu'tamid”

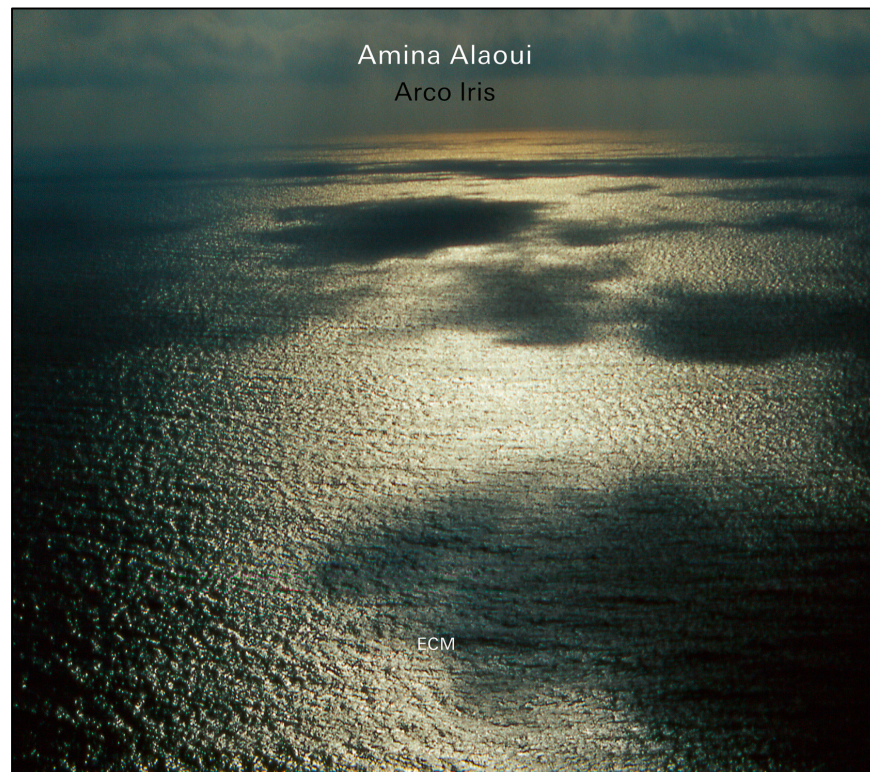


Figure 2.2 *Arco Iris* album cover (photo by Alejandro Torres)

At another point in our conversation, Amina returns to the components of her musical mixture, this time acknowledging just how threatening and transgressive these kinds of innovations can be within fado circles, and drawing parallels to similar attitudes within flamenco:

Also, the xenophobia that people in fado have as far as that is concerned, [it is] the same as here [in Spain]. The idea of singing flamenco better than us! Who is going to sing fado better than us? So there you can't play around. You can't play around. If I, as a foreigner, offer a heartfelt homage, to something that enchants me, that I like a great deal, [it is because] there are some roots that I recognize. That is what I drew out. It is in this song. And here it is. It has content from Andalusí music, it has fado, it has flamenco, and the three together are there. Probably more than the rest of the disc... [The rest of the record] didn't contribute any great revolution, but here [with Fado al Mu'tamid], yes. It is a tremendous revolution.

Amina casts “Fado al-Mu'tamid” as a rebuff to narrow-mindedness and a politics of authenticity that disciplines musical production. She draws a parallel between essentializing arguments that one needs to be Portuguese in order to perform or understand fado, and Spanish—particularly Andalusian—in order to play flamenco.⁹

At the same time, she acknowledges the need to possess sufficient musical competence in order for her music to be taken seriously and, in particular, to be heard as fado.¹⁰ If the high art of fado is to command and convey *saudade*, then it follows that within fado, musical competence must include mastery of the skills and knowledge sufficient to emotionally affect an audience.

Alaoui's use of Arabic, in concert with her creative juxtaposition of specific genre-associated instrumentation, style, and timbre, are some of the ways in which she sonically undercuts these nationalist and racialized narratives. If this sonic mixture feels like a cohesive sound world and not a world-music mashup of disparate pieces in juxtaposition, then her recognition of the common roots of fado, flamenco, and Andalusí music might resonate with her audience. And with it, her counter narrative that fado (and flamenco) must surely bear some trace of Andalusí culture, I argue, might resonate as well.

⁹ I address flamenco's origin myths in Chapter 3.

¹⁰ My usage of *competence* builds upon Benjamin Brinner's development of this term as “individualized mastery of the array of interrelated skills and knowledge that is required of musicians within a particular tradition of musical community and is acquired and developed in response to and in accordance with the demands and possibilities of general and specific cultural, social, and musical conditions (Brinner 1995, 28). The distribution of competence within a collaborative ensemble is the subject of Chapter 4.

“It has a History, this Fado”

To this point, I have talked about the affective deployment of a style, Arabic language, and the timbral dimensions of language and instrumentation. Amina’s choice of text is the final ingredient in her sonic intervention.¹¹ Amina Alaoui named “Fado al-Mu’tamid” after the composer of the lyrics, Muhammad Ibn Abbad al-Mu’tamid (1040-1095), born in the town of Beja in what is now southern Portugal, in the early years following the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate. Locked in a political and military struggle against the Castilian King Alfonso VI, al-Mu’tamid made an ill-fated appeal to the Almoravids for help against the Christian forces. It was that decision that led to his own eventual downfall, and the collapse of the other taifa principalities around him. The Almoravid ruler Yusuf ibn-Tashfin not only successfully pushed back Alfonso, but then betrayed and overran the Taifa rulers, and exiled al-Mu’tamid and his family across the Strait to Aghmat, near Marrakech, to live out the rest of their lives as prisoners (Jayyusi 1992, Kennedy 1996; Watt 1965; see also Scheindlin 1974).

As a patron of the arts and a valiant fighter who eventually succumbs to the advancing Christian armies, al-Mu’tamid encapsulates many of the romantic tropes of al-Andalus perhaps better than any other figure. Besides being the last taifa prince of Seville, al-Mu’tamid is best remembered as being among the finest of Andalusi poets, continuing to produce poetry even in captivity. Thus, when Amina Alaoui sets out to sing a fado in Arabic, she chooses a poem composed by the last Muslim ruler over what will become Portugal; moreover, it is a poem that narrates the composer’s own exilic imprisonment. In Alaoui’s liner notes to “Itimad” she says:

Incarceration produced this astonishing poem by Al-Mu’tamid ibn Abbad dedicated to his wife Itimad who lived in the next cell. He sent this love poem to her by slipping it between the bars of her window. This famous poem expresses an ardent love with poignant tenderness in the context of a tragic destiny: a fallen king, exiled from his homeland, who would die in prison.

¹¹ While her live audience in Portugal could not understand the words she was singing, Alaoui’s recording for a major European label with international distribution offered her the opportunity to address a far larger audience. The *Arco Iris* record liner notes provided an English translation of the original lyrics, drawn from poetry composed in classical Arabic, Portuguese, medieval and modern Spanish. The decision to offer only an English translation reflected the ECM label’s predominantly European and American audiences. Alaoui also included an original essay in both the original French and an English translation, a portion of which appears in the conclusion, below.

Fado al-Mu'tamid

*Invisible to my eyes, thou art ever present
to my heart*

*Thy happiness I desire to be infinite, as are
my sighs, my tears, and my sleepless nights!*

*Impatient of the bridle when other women
seek to guide me, thou makest me submissive
to thy lightest wishes.*

*My desire each moment is to be at thy side—
speedily may it be fulfilled!*

*Ah! My heart's darling, think of me, and
forget me not, however long my absence!*

*Dearest and sweet name! I have written it
in the folds of this poem, and I have traced
the letters of it: Itimad!¹²*

This poem of longing for a lost love might also be taken as an allegorical reference to the poet's lost kingdom in al-Andalus. Reinterpreted as a fado, Amina has shifted the object(s) of *saudade*. Just as the Portuguese fadista pines nostalgically for a lost love, or for the Mouraria or Alfama district in Lisbon, Amina—through her protagonist author—laments the loss of historical memory itself.

“You Don't Know your History!”

In the course of her research Alaoui sought the birthplace of al-Mu'tamid, in a small town in Alentejo called Beja. She recalls her trip in search of the home of the Poet King:

And when I went to Beja to the palace where he was born there wasn't even a single piece of ceramic left from that time. Everything [had been] transformed. Everything. There wasn't even a single memento from that palace. I remember

¹² Al Mu'tamid Ibn Abbad, translated by Tyler Fisher, liner notes, *Arco Iris*. The poem takes the form of an acrostic spelling the name of al-Mu'tamid's beloved ITIMAD. Tyler Fisher's translation of the same poem for the Arco Iris liner notes maintains the acrostic form in English. Alaoui had recorded the same poem of al Mu'tamid in a very different musical setting on Siwan, under the title “Itimad.” One other poem, “Oh Andaluces” / ”O Andalusin” also features on both records.

that day. I arrived at two in the afternoon. No, earlier than two, I got there at noon. I went to the palace. I left weeping. I had planned to spend the night in Beja and then go on to Silves. I ate in Beja and took the bus back to Lisbon, I couldn't face any more.

Amina had gone to Beja seeking some physical trace; absent that, she imagined at least a small monument, perhaps a plaque or something, anything. As she recalled to me, it was the experience of Beja whitewashed of any trace of the famous Andalusí ruler and poet, bereft of any *lieux de mémoire*, that served as catalyst in her decision to set one of his poems to a fado. "You have all this and you erase it," Amina tells me. "Well, I am going to remember it." ("*Tenéis] todo y borráis esto, pues yo voy a recordarlos.*") Switching to English, as if to underscore her point, she says, "I will do my effort that you will recognize this part of your story [sic]." Bringing al-Mu'tamid's lyrics back to life as a fado poetically returns the king from exile, re-sounding his words through Portuguese space. In this sense the song performs a kind of repatriation. Alaoui's homage to fado simultaneously performs an homage to the last Muslim ruler of the western stretches of al-Andalus, born on what would later become Portuguese soil.

It is impossible to separate the forensic quality of Amina's search from the activist intention of the music from which that search results. Describing her intention with *Arco Iris*, she tells me:

I wanted to connect that Moorish past and the earlier, Andalusí tradition with this present that we call flamenco or fado. What occurred between this and the other? So, also, it is how to remember that there was an historical injustice in wanting to cut this memory. Clearly fado didn't fall from the sky, and flamenco either. There is, behind them, *baggage*.

Baggage, which Alaoui renders in French, has a double meaning here, referring to two modalities of collective memory. On the one hand, fado and flamenco are informed by musical precursors, as is any musical tradition. Her article speaks to what she perceives to be Arab-Andalusí-derived, music-technical contents of fado's baggage. On the other hand, though, Alaoui is making a larger point here: it is the notion that a music culture carries with it the weight of its past, the burden of its relationship to its own history and sense of identity, and all the broader entanglements with what are often contentious views of social, cultural, and political history. The contents of this figurative (nearly metaphysical) baggage have as much to do with a culture's historical narratives and origin stories, as it does its musical techniques, practices, social conventions, aesthetic values, and affective powers.

Prose for a Rainbow

Early in my communication with Amina, she had encouraged me to read the liner notes to *Arco Iris*, in which, alongside the names and dates of the source poets, photos and info on the personnel, and English translations of all the lyrics, she included a suite of short, poetic essays of her own composition, in both the original French as well as an English translation. Grouped under the title “Prose for a Rainbow,” the essays served as a kind of poetic guide to the album’s musical mixture, and a stream-of-consciousness ode to the creative process itself:

...No regret will impregnate my song, nor nostalgia be its measure. As is well known, saudade means melancholy. Does it not then correspond to the Arab’s black mood, or the Andalusian’s emotional solitude? Be that as it may, the joy of re-encounters offers greater surprises than petrified traditions. Nostalgia for Al Andalus is not my joy.

This music transcribes an Iberian peninsula carried towards a dialogue with the potential of might be. It is a poetic geography that entertains the dream of the impossible: human horizons that transcend borders, lyrical Mediterranean idioms that are open to the universe and the intelligence of being, of mutual communication....

The drama of history is the ghost of the past. I venture forth on the trail of the Morisco of 16th-century Iberia. Far from wanting to reconstruct gestures and customs, the sensation of soul alone is enough for me: no name and no land to attach a lineage to. Acculturated, memory diluted, obliged to bury God and the language of ancestors, crushed by the terror of the purification of the blood and national identity. However the internal convolutions of the Morisco soul are also musical and poetic; I sublimate them! “The Gods weave misfortunes for men so that the generations to come have something to sing about.”¹³

In relating Amina Alaoui’s journey with *Arco Iris*, I have outlined a kind of progression in her experience of musical connection with fado. Its precursors are to be found in Alaoui’s early musical training, which engendered a multimusicality that primed her to hear linkages, note points of connection and perceive areas of continuity between musical cultures—what we might call a habitus (Bourdieu 1977) of attuning to connection. So attuned, her initial encounter with fado is marked by a phenomenological sensing of the familiar. It is this pre-reflective, affective experience of connection that animates her intellectual research into the history of fado, and motivates her musical learning of the genre, further developing her multi-musical competence.

The creation of *Arco Iris*, with “Fado al-Mu’tamid” as its centerpiece, marks the convergence of three factors: Alaoui’s own, evolving experience of musical connection; a

¹³ Homer’s *Iliad*, as cited by Alaoui.

growing conviction that her experience reflects a musical and historical reality, one that has suffered historical erasure; and her desire to explore these perceived common musical roots, answering the call of her muse while redressing a series of historic injustices.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the series of events that led to Amina Alaoui composing, performing, and later recording “Fado al-Mu’tamid.” I have shown how Alaoui redeploys the affective tools of the fadista and the timbral palette of fado, Arab-Andalusi, and flamenco, both in live performance and on record, in order to sonically intervene in Portuguese collective memory. She invokes—literally calls upon (*invocare*)—the “Poet King” of Seville, Portugal’s most famous Andalusi leader, to remind her listeners not only of Portugal’s Arab past as she understands it, but of a cultural legacy that unites the Iberian Peninsula with North Africa. More than mere acknowledgement of a past denied, effaced, and forgotten, Alaoui’s fado Andalusi is the culminating step in her own experience of a musical connection between fado and her own Arab-Andalusi musical heritage.

While Amina’s musicological analysis, as well as her reading of history, are open to considerable critique, it is important to distinguish between the generally agreed-upon history, on the one hand, and Amina’s subjective experience, on the other. To dismiss her account because it does not accord with the current scholarly consensus would be to misapprehend one of the key arguments I wish to make in this dissertation. Having experienced a profound, personal sense of connection to fado, Amina went looking for something, in a way, that she sought to restore. In her view, a historical linkage broken. A leader, and later a people, exiled to North Africa, and with them, collective memory exiled to the margins of legend. Memory here is creative: Amina’s composition constitutes a kind of poesis, a remaking of the world drawn from the past as remembered. The culmination of her experience of musical connection is a creative response—a poesis of musical remembering.

In the next chapter, I will turn to La Banda Morisca, a group from southern Spain whose music and message in many ways complement those of Amina. While these artists share in the strong sense of compatibility and connection—both historical and musical—between the traditional musics of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa, they differ in artistic resources, compositional and collaborative methods, and musical choices. Bringing to bear perspectives born of two shores, through their music they chip away at the edifice of a collective memory that would divide people and deny a history of the past as remembered, heard, rediscovered anew.

CHAPTER THREE: THE MOORISH TRACE IN LA BANDA MORISCA

¿Quién, con el argumento de mi incapacidad, osará condenar mi aspiración y mi esfuerzo, tendentes a comprender y a gozar las creaciones culturales de mi país; ni, menos, mi intento de llegar a proporcionar nuevos elementos para la elaboración del juicio estético de los demás? Pues este es todo el secreto de esta obra.

[Who, arguing that I am incapable, would dare to condemn my aspiration and my effort to understand and enjoy the cultural creations of my country, much less, my attempt to provide new elements in order to expand the aesthetic judgment of the rest? Well, this is the whole secret of this work.]¹

-Blas Infante, 2010 [1931]

Orígenes de lo Flamenco y Secreto del Cante Jondo

Chapter Three continues and extends some of the arguments I laid out in Chapter Two regarding Amina Alaoui's *fado Andalusi*, applying them to a second case study of La Banda Morisca, a contemporary group from the region of Cádiz along Andalusia's southwestern coast. In this chapter, I argue that La Banda Morisca's integration of North African and Middle Eastern music with Andalusian folk and flamenco constitutes another intervention in Iberian collective memory, one both contextually and musically distinct from that of Alaoui's *Arco Iris* project.

La Banda Morisca's project is motivated by the belief that a deep music-cultural legacy of al-Andalus persists in present-day Andalusia, and that this "trace" or "imprint" (*huella*) holds the key to understanding *andaluz* identity. Beyond simply echoing the historical counter-narratives promulgated by Spanish Arabists and Andalusian nationalists, however, I propose that these notions of the past as remembered fuel La Banda Morisca's creative poesis. As they combine musical elements that they view as sharing a common cultural provenance, they push back against the predominant, received notions of Spanish history and identity that have largely effaced from collective memory the cultural contributions of Arab-Berber, Muslim, Jewish, and *gitano* communities.

To make the case for La Banda Morisca's sonic intervention in Iberian collective memory, I first introduce the band members and provide some background on the band's stated mission, much of which is encapsulated in the double-entendre of the group's name. I then contextualize this mission by laying out, in brief, the major debates in

¹ All translations are my own unless indicated otherwise.

Spanish historiography that have shaped much of Spanish collective memory in the 20th century, and continue to do so today. Looking to the contemporary Andalusian context, I highlight the work of Andalusian activist, writer, and legal scholar at the University of Córdoba, Antonio Manuel, whose ideas about a “Moorish trace” living on and embodied by contemporary Andalusians resonate deeply with the thinking of La Banda Morisca, in particular that of the group’s founder, José Cabral.

I then turn to La Banda Morisca’s eponymous debut album, a record that emerges as a thematic exploration of the Moorish trace in Andalusian music culture. Among the CD’s eleven tracks, I highlight as a marquee example of the band’s concept the opening piece, “Zaide,” a sixteenth-century ballad recounting the love between Moorish hero and heroine—a gallant knight and the daughter of a local king. Capitalizing on a history of transmission and circulation that connects northern Morocco with southern Spain, the Sephardic Jews of Tetouan with the *gitanos* of Cadiz, and the melodic modes of flamenco with those of North Africa and the Middle East, La Banda Morisca’s reinterpretation of “Zaide” gives poetic voice to these socio-musical connections. Musically prompting the Andalusian collective memory, their song gestures towards the humanist sentiment at the heart of *Andalucista* movement that would unite all its inhabitants—past and present—under the common banner of Andalusia.

Greetings from Al-Andalus

La Banda Morisca was founded in 2013 by José Cabral, who had previously fronted the successful neo-traditional folk band La Jambre, one of the first groups to popularize Andalusian folk music through novel, ensemble arrangements.² Cabral started La Banda Morisca with his cousin, bassist Juanmi Cabral, and singer JoseMari Cala, all of whom hail from the province of Cádiz in southwestern *Andalucía*. They then recruited another Andalusian, the classical saxophonist Antonio Torres, and eventually landed drummer Andrés Rodríguez, who would join the band full-time following the release of their first record. The original incarnation of the band also featured French-born woodwind player and Radio Tarifa co-founder, Vincent Molino, as well as Wafir Sheikh Gibril, a gifted, versatile multi-instrumentalist (accordion, oud, percussion) originally from Sudan, who had played on the early Radio Tarifa records.³

² Spain’s neo-traditional movement bears some similarity to other later 20th-century folk music revivals in the U.S., U.K., and elsewhere in Europe. The transition from a monophonic, vocal or solo-instrumental tradition to an ensemble one is particularly reminiscent of Irish neo-trad. scene that started in the 1960s and came to the fore in the early 1970s (Smyth 2004). The difference in the Spanish case is the timing. As in other domains of popular culture that flowered in the years following the death of Franco and the transition to democracy, the Spanish neo-traditional music movement came later than its European and American counterparts. La Jambre was among the vanguard pioneers on the scene, the emergence of which coincided with the world music boom of the late-1980s to early-1990s.

³ Vincent Molino and Wafir Gibril both play on the band’s two studio albums (each of which Molino engineered and produced), and have been integral contributors to the development of La

The name La Banda Morisca (The Moorish Band) carries a clever double meaning. In one sense it denotes a group of self-described *morisco* (Moorish) musicians.⁴ For a contemporary Spanish audience, the band name is suggestive of Arab music, or medieval Spanish music, or possibly both. The “Moorish Band” is a geo-historical reference as well, describing the liminal, shifting border region dividing Muslim- and Christian-held territory during the centuries-long period of divided *taifa* (Muslim principality) rule in al-Andalus. Hence the “*frontera*” (border or frontier) in place names like Jerez de la Frontera, a legacy in name that echoes centuries-old geopolitics.

For Cabral and La Banda Morisca, the Moorish Band embodies the cultural wellspring that gives rise to Andalusia and the common origin point from which Andalusian (Spanish) and *Andalusi* (North African Berber-Arab) social memory derive. In pursuing their original synthesis of Spanish folkloric and Middle Eastern and North African musical resources, La Banda Morisca are musically working through some of what Spanish historians, Arabists, *Andaluz* intellectuals, and flamencologists have long debated. La Banda Morisca seizes on the perceived connections between musical styles, upon what they believe to be the vestiges of Arab culture that have been hidden at the margins, effaced systematically by the Spanish Inquisition’s rigid imposition of Catholicism, forced conversion and eventual exile of its Jews and Muslims, and by the post-Spanish Civil War purges of Republicans under Francisco Franco, centuries later.

La Banda Morisca are seeking and finding hints that lie at the margins of music and cultural experience, hints that exist in everyday lived experience for them, a ghostly imprint of a past that is just below the surface of conscious memory. In order to understand how La Banda Morisca came to think about music and Andalusian identity in these terms, it is important to comprehend the intellectual lineage in Spanish thinking that informs the band’s ideology.

Banda Morisca’s music. The collective network of these two musicians links Spain’s Early Music scene to the Arab-Andalusi and Sephardic music communities in Europe, Morocco, and North America (e.g. Tarik and Julia Banshee of Al-Andalus Ensemble, Eduardo Paniagua, Luis Delgado, Begoña Olavide, Judith Cohen, to name just a few).

As La Banda Morisca’s musical direction has taken shape, as well as for practical reasons (both Molino and Gibril live in Madrid, a six-hour drive from Jeréz), Molino and Gibril have stepped back somewhat from their earlier, heavy involvement with the band. As of this writing, the *madrileños* still join the band for festivals and larger concert events. Meanwhile, La Banda Morisca continue to experiment with new personnel, particularly for their touring lineup, most recently adding violinist Belèn Lucena, a Cadiz-based performer and teacher at the Puerto de Santa María Conservatory, who joined the band for their second U.S. tour, in the fall of 2016.

⁴ *Morisco*” the diminutive form of *moro* [“Moor”, both from the Latin *maurus*] was the perjorative term for converts from Islam or their descendants living in 16th century, Christian-ruled Spain. The parent term *moro* persists in Spanish vernacular as a catch-all term of Otherness, both in Spain as well as in Latin America. In present-day usage, *moro* can mean, with or without intended slight: Moroccan, North African, African, Muslim, unbaptized, dark-skinned, as well as “jealous, possessive” and dominating (Spanish Language Dictionary of The Royal Spanish Academy. See [Rhttp://dle.rae.es/?id=PqZDbAp](http://dle.rae.es/?id=PqZDbAp)).

Still Debating Spain's Moorish Legacy

Debates about the nature of Spanish national identity are older than the nation itself. Ferdinand and Isabella's conquest of Nasrid Granada, the last Muslim stronghold, established 1492 as the end of Al-Andalus and the beginning of their attempt to consolidate a national identity. The eventful 16th century that followed their victory is bookended by two expulsions: that of Spain's Jews in 1492, and ultimately, of the remaining population of Muslim-descended *moriscos* in 1604. The intervening years saw an increasingly systematic persecution of Jews and Muslims in an attempt to maintain power and shape a national narrative of unity: that of a religiously, linguistically, and culturally unified nation.

The question of a Moorish legacy is one Spanish Arabists, historians, politicians have wrestled with for the better part of the last four hundred years (See Baxter Wolf 2009, Monroe 1970). As exemplified most famously by a series of widely cited debates between two fellow Republicans-in-exile, the philologist and historian Américo Castro and historian Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, the ideological battle is often reduced to a binary of maurophobic vs. maurophilic polemics. For his part, Sánchez-Albornoz (1956) asserted that Spanish identity coalesced in the pre-Islamic period of Visigothic Christian rule, relegating the nearly eight centuries of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula to the status of a mere "interruption" in an otherwise Christian continuum (Aidi 2006), a historical-political narrative embraced and promulgated by Francisco Franco's regime.⁵ In stark contrast to Sánchez-Albornoz, Castro became the leading counter-narrative voice in Spanish historiography. Castro believed that Spanish cultural identity arose in al-Andalus, through a synthesis of Arab, Christian, and Jewish elements that developed in the relatively harmony of "*convivencia*" ("coexistence") (1948).

While Castro is critiqued today for overreaching with respect to inter-religious harmony in al-Andalus, his argument for Spanish identity as inherently a multicultural hybrid has won out with most historians of Spain today (e.g. Menocal 2002). To judge from the prevalence of "Tres Culturas" festivals, institutions, and events in southern Spain today, it would appear that Castro's thinking has become mainstream. Yet beyond the touristic sphere of the cultural heritage industry, in the popular imagination a standard narrative persists of Spain as essentially Catholic. Along with that narrative, xenophobia pervades much of Spanish society, directed most explicitly towards Spain's eternal others: Jews, Moors,⁶ and *gitanos* (the latter despite their adherence to the Catholic faith).

⁵ This despite the fact that Sánchez-Albornoz was a staunch opponent of the Franco regime and leading pro-democracy advocate in exile.

⁶ Moor (*morisco*) is a pejorative catch-all term broadly applied to Muslims, Arabs, and West Africans, but in the Iberian context applies most often to North Africans, especially Moroccans.

Unconscious Cultural Inheritance

Américo Castro devoted a chapter of his monumental *The Structure of Spanish History* (1954) to “Islamic Tradition and Spanish Life,” where he calls attention to everyday Spanish practices:

Much less explored than the Arabisms in Ibero-Romance are certain traditional ways of life and expression that have no meaning outside the Islamic frame...[the] lines left on the face of the Peninsula by 900 years of Christian-Islamic interaction...The customs preserved by the Spanish Christians are a vivid reflection of the Moorish prestige which at times "depressed and humiliated" (Menéndez Pidal), but which, in spite of this, forced an unconscious imitation, even after the political and military splendor of Islam had vanished (Castro 1954, 107).

Few today would dispute Castro’s argument that Iberians were to some extent enculturated by the dominant Islamic power in al-Andalus, and that aspects of that culture held conscious appeal in newly Christian Spain. In its main sense, the term “*mudéjar*” refers to Arab-Islamic styled architecture, fashion, music, cuisine embraced by medieval Christian Spaniards. Castro’s idea of an “unconscious imitation” brings attention to a more subtle level of influence.

Seeking to strike a more nuanced and balanced position than the generations of historians who preceded her, Susan Fuchs (2009, 11) nonetheless seizes on a similar point to Castro’s, when she describes the everyday cultural continuities that comprise the Moorish legacy. These clearly discernible cultural survivals disrupt the clean historiographical narrative of wholesale cultural displacement that still predominates in popular understanding, in Spain and throughout the West (and I would add, throughout the Arab world as well.) Despite increasingly systematic persecution, Fuchs writes:

Andalusi cultural forms nonetheless survived for decades in a variety of guises. The neat model of supersession that appears so frequently in official historiographies is thus primarily a rhetorical fiction designed to consolidate an emerging sense of national identity. And yet, for all that, it has been extraordinarily powerful: for centuries Spain’s self-fashioning has been predicated on the strict boundary between then and now, mapped onto Moors versus Christians. Even from our own more sophisticated historiographical purview, we tend to assume that everything changed in 1492. Yet a culture profoundly marked by Andalusi forms survived in sixteenth-century Spain, long after the fall of Granada, and stood as an often unacknowledged challenge to the official narrative of supersession. Its various quotidian practices, often linked to Moorishness by Spaniards and especially by travelers to Spain, usefully complicate our understanding of historical rupture and the construction of national identity, by showing how daily life confutes or modifies ideological strictures.

Fuchs goes on to describe what she calls a “Moorish *habitus*” (2009, 5) - the idea of an often-silent Moorish presence that develops out of what was for so long a frontier society and emerges as part of a hybrid Moorish culture. Fuchs’ reframing of the Moorish debate moves past romanticized, nostalgic notions of a glorious, tolerant past, and instead suggests that more attention be paid to the overt ways in which Spanish culture - from literature to material culture, speech, mannerisms, folk customs, children’s games, and of course, art and architecture, provide the evidence in plain sight for how aspects of Andalusí/Moorish culture survive in the Andalusian present.

Fuchs’ notion of a Moorish *habitus* resonates with some of the foundational ideas around which the Andalus nationalist movement took shape. Blas Infante, the “father of Andalus nationalism” was a proponent of the “Arab thesis,” believing that southern Spanish society was deeply influenced by Arab-Islamic culture that dominated the bulk of the Iberian Peninsula from 711 to 1492, and persisted long thereafter. For Infante and others like Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) and Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), flamenco was the quintessential folkloric expression of the Andalusian people. Subscribing to the notion that flamenco emerged in the interaction of marginalized peoples whose paths crossed in the turbulent sixteenth century,⁷ flamenco, and Andalus culture by extension, exhibited all the hallmarks of not only, Arab, but, importantly, gitano influence as well. Building on some of these same ideas, Lorca and Falla in particular sought to translate a gitano essence and a Moorish influence into a kind of universal aesthetic (Washabaugh 1997, 53). Infante, too, balanced his Andalus particularism with a more humanist universalism. Indeed, the Andalusian flag, designed by Infante, bears the inscription “Andalucía, por Sí, para España, y la Humanidad.”

The legacy of Infante persists in the thinking of the present generation of Andalus intellectuals like Antonio Manuel and José Ruiz Mata. While some of their arguments might veer toward the polemical, Manuel, in particular and political agendas notwithstanding, makes a compelling case that vestiges of al-Andalus persist, very much embodied in the Andalus people and in their environment. In his 2010 book *La Huella Morisca: El Al Andalus que Llevamos Dentro (The Moorish Imprint: The al-Andalus that we Carry Inside)*, Manuel writes:

La huella morisca no es una visión científica ni erudita de un episodio histórico que ocurrió hace ahora 400 años. Es la revelación de una parte clandestina y traumática de nuestro pasado que aún mantenemos latente en el alma y en las cosas y costumbres y paisajes que nos rodean. Una visión intuitiva de algunas evidencias que no vemos. Un por qué de lo que fuimos y seguimos siendo.

⁷ As the hypothesis goes, moriscos fleeing Inquisitorial persecution and reprisals following the Morisco Revolts sought refuge among the gitano populations who had arrived on the Peninsula a century earlier and who continued to live in semi-isolation, eventually integrating among them (Barrios 2000, Infante 1931).

[The Moorish imprint is neither a scientific nor scholarly vision of a historic episode that occurred four hundred years ago. It is the revelation of a clandestine and traumatic part of our past that we still maintain latent in the soul and in the things, customs, and landscapes that surround us. An intuitive vision of something evident that we do not see. An explanation of what we were and continue to be.]

Manuel interprets a host of Andalusian customs as bearing the imprint of Islamic or Jewish practices, more specifically the practices of *moriscos* and *conversos* navigating life under the watchful eyes of the Spanish Inquisition. He offers numerous anecdotal examples, from the Andalusian laborers' word games that encode the *Shahada* (the Muslim profession of faith), to his own aunts' habits of cleaning the house on Saturdays, casting open all the doors and windows of the house in a public demonstration of working on the Jewish Sabbath. While some of Manuel's examples rely on his own novel interpretations, many others are well documented rituals that date from the sixteenth century.

For Manuel, though, this Moorish trace or imprint (*huella*) extends far past the artifacts of material, ritual, and communicative culture. Beyond the linguistic debts *castellano* owes to Arabic, or the architectural legacy so evident throughout not only Andalusia but much of Spain, Manuel is referring to an Andalusian psychological inheritance, one imbued with trauma and loss that persists, unconsciously, in Spanish collective memory.

“A Stew of Elixirs” – La Banda Morisca’s Musial Mixture

José Cabral refers to himself as an “*andalucista intelectual*,” drawing a distinction from the contemporary Andalusian party and its political agendas, and instead following the universalist-humanist line of thinking that he considers to be at the heart of the Andalus national project spearheaded by Blas Infante.

In visits in the summer of 2014 and again in 2015, José Cabral referenced Antonio Manuel's text on several occasions, suggesting that I would understand more about where he, José, was coming from once I had read the book. Following Manuel, Cabral sees in the Moorish trace the keys to answering the mystery of Andalusian identity, which for most Andalusians remains a kind of unquestioned void. This is how Cabral frames it. Under Cabral's artistic direction, La Banda Morisca are seeking, through their music, to give shape to that Moorish trace imprinted on the Andalusian musical soul.

La Banda Morisca's music conveys a thesis that the Strait of Gibraltar, if not the bulk of the Mediterranean, constitutes a single cultural zone. As with Radio Tarifa before them, what the market categorizes as "hybrid" or "world music," to Cabral and LBM is the most authentic and unified of not only Andalus, or even Spanish, but Mediterranean musical expression. In a 1998 interview, Radio Tarifa's co-founder and the principal arranger, Fain Dueñas, framed his band's project as follows:

People in Spain and France reproach us saying: “You are doing Arab music!” I don’t think this is exact. We play Arabic songs like *Lamma Bada* and we play some songs from the Berbers in Algeria but most of our work is based on traditional Spanish music. The *muwashahat* like *Lamma Bada* [was] just one of the traditions of Spain. When I say Spanish I do not mean any nationalism at all. We like to work with all the traditions that pass through Spain, like Arab or Jewish, or South American. Spain is, in fact [the] result of those mixtures; we are in the frontier between Africa and Europe, and we are part of the Mediterranean culture, which is very old and very rich.” (Dueñas in Saba 1998)

Fifteen years on, La Banda Morisca’s online promotional materials echo a very similar sentiment:

La Banda Morisca (LBM) es una agrupación de músicos de distintas procedencias pero convergentes en las músicas de raíz y tradición, con la firme inquietud de experimentar en la herencia cultural de Al-Andalus y su reflejo en el sonido de la actual Andalucía, el Magreb y próximo oriente. Como base principal de las composiciones se encuentran desde los rudimentos del flamenco hasta los ritmos Shaabi del norte de África y las antiquísimas 'moaxajas' de origen andalusí.

[La Banda Morisca (LBM) is a collective of musicians whose distinct backgrounds converge around traditional and roots musics, with a resolute curiosity to explore the cultural legacy of al-Andalus and its reflection in the contemporary sound of Andalusia, the Maghreb and the Near East. The main basis of their compositions converge around the rudiments of flamenco, the *chaabi* rhythms North Africa, and the ancient *muwashahs* of Andalusí origin] (La Banda Morisca.org 2017).

In the dedication to their 2013 debut record, Carlos Chaouen⁸ describes the musical offering as follows:

*Una amalgama,
Un potaje de elixires que proponen un modo único de psicoarqueología musical,
'pneuma puro' en la atmósfera que lo rodea.
Algunos serán capaces de sentir en esta obra los sonidos de su propia sangre
(andaluza, gitana, árabe, judía, universal...)
Desde la cadencia del amor, la melodía de la fe, la hermandad y el destino.*

—

[An amalgam,
A stew of elixirs that proposes a unique mode of musical psycho-archeology,
'pure pneuma' in the atmosphere that surrounds it.
Some will be able to sense in this work the sounds of their own blood
(Andalusian, Gypsy, Arab, Jew, Universal...)
From the cadence of love, the melody of faith, brotherhood, and destiny.]

Chaouen's dedication does more than merely hint at some of the elements that comprise La Banda Morisca's musical mixture; his poetic introduction lays the groundwork for La Banda Morisca's sonic intervention in social memory. To claim that this musical mixture "proposes a unique mode of musical psycho-archeology" is to suggest an active process of discovery born of introspection. Importantly, this operates on both a personal and collective level. When Chaouen asserts that the listener will perceive "Andalusian, Gypsy, Arab, Jew, Universal" and "feel in this work the sounds of one's own blood," he not only invokes the *andalucista* sentiments of Lorca and Infante; he echoes and amplifies Manuel's assertion about the Moorish trace in Andalusian culture, and in that of Spain more broadly. Chaouen enjoins the listener to enter a space where sound is both the source of identity and the means by which identity is revealed. Collapsing psychoanalysis and archaeology, Chaouen's rhetorical move is an invitation to unearth Spain's buried cultural past by plumbing the unconscious depths of the Andalusian psyche.⁹

⁸ Carlos Chaouen is the artistic name adopted by the Cádiz-born musician Juan Carlos Sánchez Ceballos. (<http://www.carloschaouen.com/about.html>).



Figure 3.1 *La Banda Morisca* album cover (illustration by Antonio Alvarez Gordillo)

Antonio Manuel describes the Moorish trace as the latent memory of *trauma*: cultural repression, public suppression of language, custom, identity, and memory. For Manuel, to recover this past would imply a kind of public catharsis, an idea that Chaouen’s “psycho-archaeology” seems to pursue. Chaouen opens his dedication by referring to *La Banda Morisca*’s record as “[u]na amalgama,” a term that, like its English cognate “amalgam,” can refer simply to a blend of elements, but in this context might be understood better as a kind of cultural fusion. Chaouen’s usage, though, offers an additional valence, one that recalls a possible Arabic derivation in *al-malġam*, meaning an “emollient poultice” (possibly of Greek origin, in turn). Combining these meanings, Chaouen hints—as I read him—at a kind of alchemy at work in *La Banda Morisca*’s “stew of elixirs,” a cultural fusion with the capacity to heal.

In various published interviews, and in my own conversations with the band, members describe their “stew of elixirs” in more matter-of-fact terms. Nevertheless, they all embrace the underlying idea of deep underlying connections, and compatibilities, between the elements in their musical mixture. In a 2014 interview (García), José Cabral offers a concise explanation of why their musical fusion works so easily, and how it informs his band’s mission:

La verdad es que son músicas que tienen un origen común y, por tanto, es muy fácil fusionarlas. Son músicas modales que funcionan muy bien y que tienen su origen en las llamadas moaxajas, aquellas canciones profanas de origen andalusí que se extendieron y vertebraron todas las música[s] populares del Mediterráneo. En cierto modo, lo que pretendemos es refundir aquello que se separó en otro momento por cuestiones que no vienen al caso, recuperar aquel mestizaje que caracterizó al territorio de la Banda Morisca.

[The truth is that these are musics that have a common origin and, for that reason, it is very easy to fuse them. They are modal musics that work very well [together] and that have their beginning in what are called *moaxajas*, those profane songs of Andalusí origin that extended throughout, and provided a backbone for all the popular musics of the Mediterranean. In a certain sense, what we are trying to do is melt back together what was separated at another time by matters that are irrelevant, to recover that mixed lineage (*mestizaje*) that characterized the territory of the Moorish Band.]

There is a lot to unpack here, as Cabral makes several rhetorical gestures that merit attention. First is his assertion about modal musics. While North African *chaabi*, *al-Ala* (Moroccan Arab-Andalusí music), and flamenco are, indeed, modal-based musics, this is not the whole story. *Chaabi* and *rai* also bear the imprint of French and Spanish popular song and at times utilize basic western chord progressions, while flamenco can best be described as a system of modal harmony (Fernández 2004, Manuel 1989).

Second, he asserts that the musics in question share a common root in the Andalusí *muwashshah*, a matter on which Spanish scholarship remains divided. Here Cabral takes as a given the Arabist position that the *muwashshah* (along with *zajal*) directly informed the Spanish *romancero* and the early balladeering of French jongleurs. Moreover, while scholars continue to build a case for a shared Mediterranean socio-musical ethos (Cooper and Dawe 2005, Plastino 2005, Manuel 1989, Steingress 2002), Cabral strains the argument when he suggests that popular song throughout the Mediterranean, as it were, begins in al-Andalus. Though perhaps most important is how Cabral proffers the notion that a common cultural heritage implies a musical compatibility.

What is most salient, though, is not some historically verifiable truth, or even scholarly consensus, but rather the way in which Cabral and his band mates make use of “the past as remembered,” finding in the narrative of Spain’s Moorish legacy the inspiration for their own creative impulse to “melt back together” what was once forcibly separated. To evaluate La Banda Morisca in this light is to pursue what Jan Assmann (1997, 8-9) calls “mnemohistory,” to consider how “the present is ‘haunted’ by the past and the past is modeled, invented, reinvented, and reconstructed by the present.” As Assmann describes his approach, “the aim of a mnemohistorical study is not to ascertain the possible truth of traditions...but to study these traditions as phenomena of collective memory” (ibid).

La Banda Morisca’s music participates in reshaping Spanish collective memory by adopting this narrative of music-cultural connection and running with it, letting it fuel a fusion that is at turns intellectual, complex in its arrangements, and at other moments playful, even provocative, often freewheeling in its blend of Spanish, North African, European, and Middle Eastern music and verse—the ingredients in La Banda Morisca’s Mediterranean “*potaje de elixires*.”

With regards to instrumentation, La Banda Morisca’s debut record centers on an interplay of plucked strings, woodwinds, and percussion from North Africa and the Middle East, Spain, and elsewhere in Europe. Given the multi-instrumental abilities of the musicians, all of whom also sing, their debut record features a kaleidoscopic range of timbral combinations across ten tracks. José Cabral’s main instruments are oud, an instrument he describes as a bouzouki but morphologically resembles an Algerian mandol, and six-string banjo.¹⁰ In addition he plays Moroccan guimbri and a Turkish saz on several tracks. Woodwinds are a constant throughout the record—the classically trained Antonio Torres on saxophones, with Vincent Molino on ney and Renaissance crumhorn. Wafir Gibril plays accordion on nearly every song. Juanmi Cabral’s electric bass undergirds the whole, along with a rich percussive palette of darbouka, bendir (frame drum), riq and pandero (Middle Eastern and Spanish tambourines, respectively), krakebs (iron castanets) contributed by a host of guest percussionists.¹¹

The songs on *La Banda Morisca* draw principally from the Spanish *romancero*, or ballad genre, a large body of Spanish poetic works, the earliest of which date perhaps as far back as the 13th century (Menendez Pidal 1910, 1968) and reflect the cultural mix of the Iberian Peninsula, both in the period of al-Andalus, and in the decades following the Christian conquests. Many of these texts speak to the Moorish perspective on interfaith encounter, be it amorous or martial; often in these romances the Moors figure as protagonists and heroes. “*Álora La Bien Cercada*,” for example, narrates the siege of the Moorish-held town of Álora, and the unlikely victory of the outnumbered Moors, when a young boy slays the leader of the Christian attack by firing an arrow through his head. “*Alboréa de las Calabazas*,” with its thinly-veiled references to pregnancy, recounts a love affair between a Christian man and a Moorish woman, “*La Morita*,” conflates the

¹⁰ While the banjo may appear out of place among the many North African and Middle Eastern instruments listed, it is not uncommon to hear the instrument in North African chaabi, featuring prominently in the music of Nass El Ghiwane, one of Morocco’s most famous and influential groups since their start in the early 1970s. The banjo has also found acceptance in some Arab-Andalusi musical settings, particularly in Algeria. Tenor (four-string) and six-string versions are most common, as opposed to the five-string incarnations utilized in American bluegrass and old-time music. Unlike the latter’s fingerpicked or strummed styles, tenor banjos (and at least in North African context, six-strings as well) are played with a plectrum, a facile enough transition to make for an oud player.

¹¹ Ant Romero, Uthman Benyahya, and Sebastián Rubio are credited as percussionists on the record. Radio Tarifa co-founder Fain S. Dueñas plays darbouka on “Mi Carbonero.” Andrés Rodríguez, who was brought on mid-way through the recording sessions and would go on to join the band full time, plays drum kit on “Álora, La Bien Cercada.”

figure of the Moorish girl with that of the gitana. “*Alhama*,” references Ferdinand and Isabella’s taking of the Alhambra, laying blame for the end of Muslim rule on the Peninsula at the feet of Granada’s last taifa ruler, Boabdil.¹²

Scattered among these offerings are interpretations of two popular Arabic-language songs that not only enjoy broad circulation throughout the Mediterranean, but also speak to the kinds of socio-musical connections upon which La Banda Morisca are seizing.¹³ The first of these is “*Bint al Shalabia*” (“the girl from Seville”). Most famously associated with Lebanese superstar Fairuz, the song has seen a near-ubiquitous diffusion in the Mediterranean zone and beyond, with covers running the gamut from Tunisian divas, Balkan brass bands, Turkish Arabesk arrangements, Israeli “East meets West” fusion projects, to eclectic world-music send-ups.

The second Arabic-language piece is the Algerian *chaabi* song “*Ya Rayah*” (“Oh, Traveler”). Algerian *chaabi* is an important point of reference for La Banda Morisca. An urban folk music that developed in Algiers from the 1920s-1950s, *chaabi* blends Arab-Andalusian and (particularly Kabyle) Berber elements with aspects of Spanish and French popular song.¹⁴ Not lost on La Banda Morisca, as well, is the fact that Algerian *chaabi* ensembles historically featured a mix of Muslim and Jewish musicians.¹⁵ The Algerian-French musician Dahmane El Harrachi, in particular, serves as a musical touchstone for several members of the band. Says José Cabral: “*Lo tenemos que poner al principio del disco. (El Harrachi) es otro elemento de nosotros, es la manera de tocar, ¿no? Ese toque argelino, fue él que inició el rai, ¿no?*” [We had to put him towards the beginning of the disc. (El Harrachi) is another element of ours, his way of playing, no? That Algerian style—it was he who invented *rai*, no?]

El Harrachi’s “*Ya Rayah*” was brought to a wider international audience through Rachid Taha’s 1993 cover. With a universal, all too relevant theme of the restless, weary

¹² Abu Abdullah Muhammad XII, known in Spanish as Boabdil, was the last Muslim ruler to hold power in al-Andalus. Following a year-long siege of Granada by the forces of Ferdinand and Isabella, he surrendered the city on January 2, 1492. Popular legend has it that he wept as he left the city in exile, whereupon his mother Aisha scolded him, “you weep like a woman for what you could not defend as a man.” A Granadan friend recounted to me how for many residents of the city, Boabdil remains a tragic figure in collective memory who, to this day, invokes sympathy for having lost the city that he so profoundly loved.

¹³ In addition, Sara Habasha (Wafir Gibril’s spouse) sings an Amharic lullaby that, paired with a Catholic devotional *mariana*, serves as a kind of interlude in the middle of the album.

¹⁴ A point of clarification: the term *chaabi* is used in both Algeria and Morocco, with distinct meanings between the two. Algerian *chaabi* is the more narrowly defined genre I describe above, more closely associated with that’s country’s Arab-Andalusi tradition, as well as by the use of Kabyle language and instruments exclusive to the genre, namely the Algerian mandole. By contrast, in Morocco, *chaabi* denotes a more open category that encompasses a range of popular folk musical practices, especially those influenced by groups like Nass El Ghiwane.

¹⁵ Safinez Bousbia’s recent documentary, “El Gusto” (2011) chronicles the reunion of expat-Jewish and Arab *chaabi* musicians. The culminating concert event features the ensemble playing a spirited rendition of El Harrachi’s “*Ya Rayah*.”

migrant, “*Ya Rayah*” has spawned countless covers in several languages. While to their knowledge, La Banda Morisca’s recording is the first in Spanish, versions of the song have been recorded in French, Greek, Turkish, Hebrew, and Basque.

Medieval *romance* ballads, pan-Mediterranean, Arabic-language songs with lyrical and musical ties to al-Andalus—such are the various kinds of concoctions that emerge from La Banda Morisca’s “stew of elixirs.” Among these, one track in particular stands out as tying together the various strands on La Banda Morisca’s eponymous debut record, and speaks most directly to the band’s message. I turn now to this, the album’s opening track, and take up in greater detail the musical example of “Zaide.”

Zaide, from Sephardic to Gitano Romancero

BA-didilah-BAdala, BA-didilah-BAdala, BA-didilah-BAdala. La Banda Morisca’s eponymous debut opens with a percussive mix of *bendhir*, *darbuka* and *doholla* sounding a modified Moroccan *chaabi* rhythm. In staccato stabs, a plucked banjo plays a short phrygian melody. Adopting the role of the balladeer, José Mari Cala, sings, “Por el Castillo de Luna que galante paseaba Zaide...” (By the Luna Castle rode the gallant Zaide...).

“*Una declaración de intenciones,*” (“A declaration of intentions”) is how Cabral describes “Zaide” and its pride of place on the record. “*Porque están allí todos los elementos, ¿no?*” *Elementos gitanos, elementos flamencos, elementos magrebí, elementos algo que me dé la gana.*” (“Because all the elements are there, no? Gitano elements, flamenco elements, Moroccan elements, the element of doing whatever we like”).

The *Romance de Zaide* is actually two romance ballads blended in oral tradition: *Por la calle de su dama* and *Mira Zaide, que te aviso* (Along his Lady’s Street, Look, Zaide, I am Warning You) (Weich-Shahak 2013, 76-77). Most Hispanists (Alvar 1951, Weich-Shahak *ibid*, 77) attribute the texts to Félix Lope de Vega, a contemporary of Miguel de Cervantes, and second in renown only to the author of *The Quixote* among writers in the Spanish Golden Age. *Mira, Zaide, que te aviso* and *Por la calle de su dama* are but two among a large number of *romances moriscos* (Moorish-themed ballads) penned by the very prolific Lope de Vega. As with other medieval *romances*, there exist several variations on the Zaide storyline, but the essential narrative centers on a conversation between the Moorish knight, Zaide, and his love, a princess named either *Zaida* or *Cilinda*, per different versions of the ballad. Much to Zaide’s dismay, the king has arranged for his daughter to marry “an ugly Moor” from within his kingdom. In the very concise version of the ballad recorded by La Banda Morisca, Zaide then encounters (and presumably dispatches) his rival on the battlefield outside Granada. When the king inquires about the gallant knight, he is told that Zaide fights for no one. Finally it is revealed that Celinda (as the name is rendered in English) remains faithful to her love, having gifted Zaide roses and jasmine before the battle.

Zaide (as performed by La Banda Morisca)

*Por el Castillo de Luna que galante paseaba Zaide
Aguardando que saliera Cilinda al balcón a hablarle
Y sale Cilinda al balcón, más bonita que cuando sale
La lunita en su oscura noche y el sol entre tempestades*

*Ya sé que tú eres valiente, que procedes tú de buen linaje
Que has “mataito” más cristianos que gotitas de sangre vales
Y que te quieren a ti casar, que tú tratas a mí de olvidarme
Con un moro “feituco” que del “reinato” de tu “pare”*

*Por los llanitos de “Graná,” que galante paseaba Zaide
Se ha “encontraído” en batalla
Con aquel moro “feituco” que del “reinato” de tu “pare”*

*Ha preguntado el rey moro que de quién era esa estandarte
Y le ha contestado un serranito que de uno que no tiene “pare”
Pero Cilinda le vino a dar rosas y jazmines por la “madrugá”*

—
[The gallant Zaide walked near the Luna Castle
Waiting for Cilinda [*sic*] to come out on the balcony to speak to him
And Cilinda came out on the balcony,
Lovelier than the moon in the dark night
Or the sun in between storms

I know you are brave, that you come from good lineage
That you have killed more Christians
Than all the droplets of blood in your body
And I know that they want to marry you off—
And that you are trying to forget me—
With an ugly Moor from your father’s kingdom

In the meadows of Granada
Where the gallant Zaide walked
He found himself in battle
With that ugly Moor from your father’s kingdom

The Moorish king asked who this standard-bearer served
And a mountain dweller said of him that he was a man without a master
Yet Cilinda came and gave him roses and
Jasmine in the early morning]¹⁶

¹⁶ “Zaide” lyrics and translation as they appear in the liner notes to *La Banda Morisca* (2012).

For La Banda Morisca, the appeal of the romance of Zaide has as much to do with the poem's circulation and continued relevance in contemporary Spanish culture as it does with the story it narrates. The ballad is still sung in flamenco circles in and around Cadiz, and forms part of the *cancionero sefardí* (the Judeo-Spanish ballad tradition).¹⁷ Zaide, thus, largely owes its preservation to *gitanos* and Sephardic Jews—two communities persecuted in Spanish history and marginalized in Iberian collective consciousness. Yet it is precisely through these communities that Zaide signals a key point of cultural connection, both past and present, linking the living folkloric songbook of Andalusia with that of Andalusian northern Morocco.

Hispanists and Jewish music scholars, alike, have long taken an interest in the *cancionero sefardí*, as it constitutes an important branch of the Spanish *romancero* corpus (Armistead and Silverman 1986, Hemsí 1995). Beginning in the late-nineteenth century, much of this interest focused on northern Morocco,¹⁸ which boasted a large Sephardic Jewish population.¹⁹ It is in the context of this scholarship that Zaide surfaces in a number of Moroccan field recordings and related writings. Near the turn of the 20th century, Menéndez Pidal (1907) makes reference to Zaide being performed on both sides of the Strait, in Gibraltar and Tangier. Throughout the 20th century the ballad remained in circulation among the Jews of Tangier and Tetouan. Paul Bénichou included a version of Zaide in the 1944 edition of his *Romances judeo-españoles de Marruecos* (1968). In the 1950s, Manuel Alvar (1951) and Arcadio de Larrea Palacín (1952) both recorded versions of the *Romance de Zaide* in Tetouan. Samuel Armistead and Joseph Silverman (1986), working alongside Israel Katz, did the same in Tangier in the early 1960s. When Jews departed North Africa en masse in the 1950s and '60s, Zaide's circulation extended to Israel, as Susanna Weich-Shahak (2013) documents in her anthology *Moroccan*

¹⁷ Following the 1492 edict of expulsion or forced conversion, those among Spain's Jewish community who opted for exile resettled in North Africa, Turkey and the Balkans, the Americas, and eventually elsewhere in Europe, and of course, Israel. The *cancionero sefardí* is a rich body of Jewish folk songs that makes up part of the cultural inheritance of Spanish Jewry. As with linguistic and other differences within Sephardic culture more generally, the *cancionero sefardí* reflects two main diasporic trajectories—North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.

¹⁸ According to Diego Catalán, it was "... 'lord' F.D. Mocalta [who] ordered the first compilation of the Sephardic *romancero* from North Africa over a century ago, This 'eminent Spanish-Israelite figure' residing in London asked for this compilation from Salomón Levy in Orán around 1896" (Catalán in Weich-Shahak 2013, 9).

¹⁹ At its height, Morocco's Jewish population is thought to have exceeded 300,000, a mixture of Sephardic Jews known in Morocco as *megorashim*, Hebrew for "the expelled ones," and *toshavim*, or "residents," a much older Moroccan Jewish community with roots in antiquity (Kenbib 2011). Following the Second World War, the Jewish population of the country rapidly dwindled, the vast majority moving to Israel between 1948 and 1967. In Tetouan, Tangier, and Fez, cities with historically vibrant Jewish communities, very few remain. Today there are approximately 3,000 Jews living in Morocco, nearly all in Casablanca. For more on this history, particularly on Morocco's relationship to its Jewish population, see Benichou and Schroeter, 2011; Ben-Layashi and Maddy-Weitzman, 2010.

Sephardic Romancero, including the two ballads of Zaide as recalled by a Tetouan-born emigreee.

Unlike other romances that were maintained by Sephardic Jewish communities in the Balkans and the New World, Zaide seems to have had a more limited sphere of historical circulation. Commenting on the two ballads of Zaide, Paloma Díaz Mas asserts, “Sephardim from Morocco are the only ones that preserve this romance and must have learned it from a loose song sheet” (in Weich-Shahak, 77).²⁰ Díaz Mas’ comments echo Paul Bénichou’s belief, asserted decades earlier, (cited in Alvar 1951, 293) that Zaide was likely a relatively late import, introduced “in some printed form, possibly a loose sheet.”²¹ By “loose sheet” Benichou and Díaz Mas are referring to the *romances de pliego*, also called *romances de ciego*, [blind man’s ballads], sheet ballads sold by itinerant blind singers who were active not only throughout Spain, but also in the Spanish Protectorate zone of northern Morocco (Weich-Shahak 2013, 16).²² The provenance of Zaide within the Moroccan Sephardic romance tradition is not tremendously significant for our purposes; rather more important is the orbit in which the ballad travels. Zaide, distinct from most other Sephardic ballads, highlights a unique cultural circulation linking (in particular southern) Spain with northern Morocco.

If Zaide found one receptive home among northern Moroccan Jews, it found another in the flamenco heartland of Cádiz and Sevilla in lower Andalusia. It is just one notable example among a host of *romances* that have entered into the flamenco canon and become *flamenquizado* (“flamenco-ized”), part of what has become known as the *romancero gitano*, or *romancero flamenco*. The influence cuts both ways: As Faustino Nuñez (2011) notes, the *romancero* is a likely source of influence, both musically and lyrically, on many of the earliest flamenco song forms. Nuñez cites the work of flamencologist Luis Suárez Ávila, whose ethnographic research on the *gitanos* of El Puerto de María suggests a possible origin for flamenco in the *gitano corrido* tradition. From the 1960s through the 1980s, Suárez Ávila (2006) collected several recordings of *Zaide, por la calle de su dama*, among them a version by a then-little-known amateur singer known locally as “El Chozas.”

A native of Lebrija who spent his life in Jerez de la Frontera, Juan José Vargas “El Chozas” (1903-1974) was a day laborer by trade, never a professional flamenco singer. Nonetheless, he came to some renown in the flamenco world late in his life. Following Suárez Ávila’s involvement tracing the connections between *gitanos* of Cádiz and the *romancero*, El Chozas appeared in an episode of “*Rito y Geografía del Cante*” a popular

²⁰ Paloma Díaz Mas is credited with writing the descriptive commentaries on the ballads in Weich-Shahak’s 2013 anthology.

²¹ “*Creo asiste toda la razón Bénichou cuando dice que es muy probable que su romance 'haya llegado a los judíos en época muy próxima a nosotros, en alguna colección impresa o pliego moderno'”* (Alvar 1951, 293). Weich-Shahak’s introduction to her 2013 anthology would seem to contradict this thesis, as she explicitly names the few “blind man’s ballads” she has marked for inclusion; the two ballads of Zaide are not among them.

documentary series made for Spanish television in the 1970s. El Chozas' place in the flamenco canon was further solidified posthumously, when his rendition of the "*Romance de Zaide*," was included in the authoritative anthology of flamenco singing, the ten-disc *Magna Antología del Cante Flamenco* (Hispanavox 1992 [1982]). While other, more famous performers like Juan Peña "*El Lebrijano*" and Antonio Mairena also recorded various incarnations of the piece, it is El Chozas' performance that directly inspired La Banda Morisca to record their own interpretation of Zaide.

When I asked José Cabral about the appeal of El Chozas, the bandleader described the diminutive flamenco singer in very personal terms, both an inspiring musical figure and a very local reference point. "*Era un personaje*," says Cabral. "*Un [estilo de] soleá personal. Hacía lo que le daba la gana, un tío completamente anárquico.*" ("He was a big personality. A personal way of singing *soleá*. He did whatever he felt like doing, a completely anarchic guy"). Personal interpretation is a prized aesthetic within flamenco, but El Chozas' style exceeded the normal range of artistic license, even for flamenco. Whether singing a capella or with accompaniment, he would take liberties with phrase lengths, stanzas, and other codified flamenco poetic and musical structures. He would insert another flamenco form in the middle of his verse. His microtonal inflections often rendered major and minor tonality all the more ambiguous in any given melodic line. On the spectrum from the raw, untrained amateur to the polished *café cantante* professional, El Chozas personified the former, but rendered with such musicality, this remains part of his great appeal.

Beyond the musical attraction, El Chozas offers a very local reference point for La Banda Morisca. Says Cabral, "*Estuvo toda su vida aquí en Jerez. Coincidió con mi abuelo trabajando en el campo.*" [He spent his whole life in Jerez. He was a contemporary of my grandfather, working in the fields.] In El Chozas, La Banda Morisca had a local figure who concisely pulled together several strands of Andalusian culture: a Cadiz-based *gitano*, singing a *romance morisco* uniquely associated with the Sephardic Jews of Tangier and Tetouan, and penned by a Spanish national literary icon of the Golden Age. However recently and whatever the circumstances under which Zaide entered both the Sephardic and *gitano* repertoires, in Zaide, La Banda Morisca render overt the points of musical connection between "Andalusian, Gypsy, Arab, Jew, Universal." Their musical arrangement of the tune amplifies some of these connections.

La Banda Morisca's Arrangement of Zaide

Taking as its starting point the text of Zaide as performed by El Chozas, and preserving much of the melodic essence of his rendition, La Banda Morisca build a complex, ensemble arrangement that, nonetheless, radically transforms the piece. Introducing a timbral palette combining Middle Eastern, North African and western instrumentation, adding newly composed instrumental melodies, the band highlights the modal relationship between flamenco, Arabic, Arab-Andalusi, and European Early Music,

establishing a theme that they will pursue throughout the record. In what follows, I elucidate their arrangement and the thinking that informs it.

La Banda Morisca's first move is to set the song in a Moroccan *chaabi* rhythm, immediately reframing what had been a "*cante primitivo sin guitarra*" in a North African groove. The choice of rhythm was an easy one, as Cabral is quick to point out to me how similar a Moroccan *chaabi* is to a flamenco *tanguillo* rhythm:

Es muy cercano a nuestro ritmo, vamos, al tanguillo...Pues mira, el tanguillo es un compás que se mide de tres maneras, se puede medir en seis por ocho, cuatro por cuatro, o en dos por cuatro. Se puede sentir de esa manera. El chaabi es igual, es idéntico.

[It is very close to our rhythm, well, to *tanguillo*...Look, *tanguillo* is a rhythm that be measured in three ways—it can be counted in 6/8, 4/4, or 2/4. It can be felt in that way. *Chaabi* is the same; it's identical.]²³

La Banda Morisca's *chaabi* has a twist, though: instead of 6/8, they phrase the pattern as a 9/8. Again, José Cabral:

Pero nosotros damos una vuelta más y lo que tenemos es nueve. Pero vamos, es una vuelta que no se nota. Simplemente es para dejar respirar la voz porque si no se hace muy seguido o muy despacito.

[But we give it one more turn and what we have is (in) nine. But come on, it is something that you don't notice. It is simply to let the voice breathe, because if not, it makes it either fast or really slow.]

Moving the rhythm to 9/8 does, indeed, allow Vocalist JoseMari Cala to complete each verse comfortably. But it is less a question of speed, *per se*, than one of poetic form. The *romance*'s poetic structure has sixteen syllables—two verses of eight syllables each. A count of nine allows Cala several options with each verse. He delivers most lines of the octosyllabic text in syllabic fashion, using the final beat to breathe. As an alternative, he concludes some lines of syllabic-rendered text with a melismatic flourish, the phrase ending on the downbeat of the next measure. Elsewhere he copies El Chozas in melodically adorning a syllable in the middle of a phrase for emphasis, as on the word "Cilinda." Again, Cala concludes his phrase on a downbeat, as he does throughout the piece, following a concept of musical phrasing common to both flamenco and Arab-Andalusi music. Owing to the cyclical nature of the incessant 9/8 rhythm, the fact that the stanzas do not all correspond in measured time is irrelevant. Perhaps more to the point: the western concept of musical measures doesn't even apply. What I am suggesting here

²³ This apparent similarity between *tanguillos* and Moroccan *chaabi* is often invoked in the context of flamenco-Andalusi collaborations in southern Spain. In Chapter Four I further address the relationship between the rhythms.

is that the modified *chaabi* rhythm, and Cala's phrasing within it, not only speak to potentially shared musical features between one particular flamenco *palo*—*tanguillos*—and a more ubiquitous North African rhythm; they speak to overlaps in musical sensibility, as understood and as *experienced* by the band.

Even more salient than rhythmic compatibility is the way that La Banda Morisca exploits the modal connections between flamenco and Arabic music. The Andalusian-Phrygian tonality that predominates in much of flamenco follows the Phrygian mode (from tonic E: E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E), with a major third (G#) appearing mostly in harmonic accompaniment. Some within flamenco scholarship believe it likely that this modal harmony derives from the Arab *maqam* system, particularly *maqam hijaz* and *maqam bayyati* (see Fernández 2005; Manuel 1989 and 2006, 27).²⁴ For those partial to the idea that flamenco's origins lie in a 17th-century, gitano-morisco convergence (Barrios 2000, Infante 2010 [1931], Ribera 2000 [1927]) the musical affinity between flamenco tonality and Arab *maqam* offers some of the most compelling evidence.

It is this musical connection that La Banda Morisca make a central theme of their debut record. "*Pero entre hijaz y frigio nada más que hay una tercera... Este juego del hijaz y el frigio está en todo el disco. Éste es el disco.*" ["But (the difference) between hijaz and phrygian, it's nothing more than a third... This play between hijaz and Phrygian runs throughout the record. This *is* the record."]

The game starts with the album's opening melodic head. After the percussion establishes one cycle of the 9/8 *chaabi* rhythm, Cabral's banjo enters after the next downbeat, playing a phrase that begins in Phrygian and ends in *hijaz*. That mixed-modal melody then becomes an instrumental answer phrase, when, in another of the bands' innovations, they create a call and response between Cala's vocal line and an increasingly dense assortment of instruments.²⁵

A different modal game is at work in the song's chorus: a modulation to the parallel major. The arrangement was born out of the ambiguous microtonality that characterized El Chozas' performance. There are several moments in which El Chozas's third scale degree hovers ambiguously between major and minor, often drifting quite sharp. Again, he is singing unaccompanied, and microtonal inflections are the norm in flamenco, and one of the powerfully affective dimensions of El Chozas' singing. Whether intentional or not on his part, La Banda Morisca heard that nearly-major third and seized on the idea to shift to major to create an instrumental chorus section, further expanding the

²⁴ The microtones within those *maqamat* (the second scale degree in Bayati, and the sixth in Hijaz) would then have undergone a process of diatonicization over time. Such a theory would help account for the microtonal inflections characteristic of flamenco *cante*.

²⁵ The call-and response is a musical structure that the band links to both *gnawa* and Arab-Andalusi music. "*El tema es muy plano. Los romances gitanos son muy planos. Entonces el arreglo tiene que cambiar de modalidad, no, de modalidad.*" ["The piece itself is very plain," said Cabral. "So we had to do something to make a more interesting arrangement."]

arrangement. Says Cabral, “*Quizás un fallo. Pero que bendito fallo, que nos da un arreglo!*” (It might even have been a mistake. But what a fortunate mistake, as it gave us an arrangement!”)

Both the shift to major and the call-and-response structure are places where the band identifies other musical connections between North African and southern Spanish musics. Cabral points out the use of *hijaz-al kabir* in Andalusí music, a mode whose pitches effectively correspond to the western major scale. He mentions the *macho* in flamenco as well, in which the voice and accompanying instrument(s) modulate to a major key. Typically used as a closing figure, the *macho* can serve as a kind of refrain, an answer phrase that complements or otherwise responds to the preceding verse (Nuñez 2011). Alongside the instrumental call-and-response sections of *Zaide*, the band likens the *macho* to similar echoing structures common to both Arab-Andalusí music as well as North African *gnawa*.

Following this instrumental refrain, the latter half of *Zaide* departs dramatically from El Chozas’ version of *Zaide*, further complicating the arrangement, and creating a space for the band to creatively engage two other mnemohistorical links. The musical shift begins in the middle of the second stanza with a short musical breakdown. A quieter dynamic accompanies Cala as he sings of Celinda’s engagement to the rival Moorish knight, with soft percussion, electric bass, and the low notes of a saxophone conveying the gravity of the lovers’ situation. This gives way to an instrumental interlude composed by Vincent Molino, wherein *ney*, saxophone, and accordion play a hocketed melody inspired by European Early Music.

Finally, in the third stanza the song shifts directions again: Cala departs from El Chozas’ melody and instead sings the verse as a *saeta*: another mnemohistorical strand tying together Arab, Jewish, Gitano, and Christian Andalusian. The *saeta* is a centuries-old form of Catholic song often closely associated with *Semana Santa* [Spanish Holy Week] processional. As parades with carved wooden figures of Jesus and Mary are borne through Spanish streets, *saeteros* deliver emotionally charged devotions and laments on the themes of the crucifixion and maternal sorrow. Though a more archaic form of the song, the “*saeta antigua*,” persists in small, rural pockets, the *saeta* as it is most often performed today has undergone a significant process of *flamenquización*, bearing the sonic imprint of flamenco’s long melismas, tonality and phrasing, most profoundly the melodic formulas of the *seguriya* (Nuñez 2011).

As Edward Stanton (1978, 90) notes, “the mythic roots of traditional Andalusian music” are very much bound up in the imagined histories of the *saeta*. Hypotheses abound as to the *saeta*’s origin, including Arabic, Jewish, and pre-Christian narratives. Arcadio de Larrea saw a possible melodic connection between Moroccan popular song and the *saeta*. Larrea, for his part, was chasing down a lead from Garcia Lorca, who had suggested a fraternity between Moroccan folk songs and the flamenco forms of *siguriya* and a *saeta*. As Stanton reports, the Jewish origin theory has gained more of a foothold, specifically the idea that the *saeta* has its antecedents in *conversos*’ clandestine performances of the

Kol Nidre service that opens *Yom Kippur*, the Jewish High Holy Day of Atonement—newly converted Christians making coded renunciation of the vows they took under Inquisitorial persecution. In the end, scholars have for the most part dismissed both Moroccan/Arab and Jewish theses for lacking persuasive evidence. Yet, importantly, both ideas persist in the popular imagination—among flamenco scholars and in the rhetoric of the Andalusian cultural tourism industry (Nuñez 2011 and Bryant 2016, respectively, to cite just two among countless references).

The point I wish to emphasize is how the affective dimensions of these narratives resonate with La Banda Morisca Morisca and inform their music making.²⁶ For La Banda Morisca, the move to singing the third stanza *por saetas* accomplishes both musical and extramusical goals. Musically, the move to saeta, preceded by the instrumental bridge section, offers a temporary reprieve from the incessant 9/8 chaabi rhythm driving the song up to this point. Saetas are usually sung in free rhythm, or else performed to the drums and horns of a *Semana Santa* marching band. As Cala sings of Zaide encountering his foe on the field of battle outside Granada, a march-like rhythm accompanies him. The weight of *saetas* slows the narrative delivery and charges the moment with a deeper, nearly spiritual quality. The 9/8 feel returns in the final stanza. From here to the conclusion of the piece, Cala's delivery alternates between the highly melismatic saeta form and the more syllabic delivery of the romance.

This brings me to some important, closing points about La Banda Morisca's creative process. It must be said that whatever the political implications of their music, for the members of La Banda Morisca, their project is first and foremost about a musical exploration—following their individual and collective muses—and about the camaraderie that the experience continues to engender among them. With that in mind, and lest my *posteriori* analysis suggest otherwise, it is equally important to recognize that the band doesn't go in with an *a priori* arrangement of Zaide, or any of their songs for that matter. There is no set formula or agenda for combining these musical elements. Rather, in my conversations with all the members of the band, they each described how their music emerges out of their group process, a healthy kind of anarchy that serves the creative impulses of the band members. In the end, theirs is a more freewheeling kind of intervention. As they convert an a capella ballad into a vehicle for a Mediterranean ethnic folk-rock fusion, Zaide makes a more expansive, open-ended appeal for seeing and seizing upon felt connections between musical styles and historical trajectories that link the two, long shores of the Gibraltar Strait.

²⁶ That this is true for musicians on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar speaks to one of the larger arguments of this dissertation. See, for example, the comments by Samira Kadiri, a noted interpreter of Arab-Andalusian music in Tetouan, about the links between the saeta and Arab-Andalusi music (in Flores 2009, 32). In addition to being a performer and recording artist, Kadiri is Director of the *Maison de Culture de Tetuán*, as well as the chief organizer of the annual Tetouan International Oud Festival.

0:00	Intro: 9/8 “chaabi” rhythm played on bendir and darbouka
0:03	melodic head: banjo plays melodic theme #1 hijaz/Phrygian mixed modality
0:13	first stanza: call and response between vocal and accordion/saxophone
0:25	banjo interrupts with brief ostinato, establishing shift to parallel major (Arab-Andalusi <i>hijaz al-kabir</i> / flamenco <i>macho</i>)
0:27	verse 1 continues, “y sale Cili’...” call and response now in major
0:46	instrumental refrain introduces theme #2, in major, tutti
1:08	closes with theme 1 reestablishing hijaz/Phrygian game
1:13	second stanza, “ <i>Ya sé que tú eres valiente,</i> ” vocal call now sung in Andalusian folk harmony; responses now played by full ensemble
1:28	breakdown: bass guitar, low saxophone notes, minimal percussion accompaniment “ <i>Y que te quieren a ti casar...</i> ”
1:50	interlude #1 - Vincent Molino “musician’s arrangement” hocketed melody saxophone, ney, accordion
2:19	third stanza, banjo and <i>gumbri</i> play march-like ostinato to reintroduce narrative
2:27	another modal shift, “ <i>Por los llanitos de “Graná”</i> sung as a <i>saeta</i> Last phrase sung to close of theme #1 “ <i>que galante paseaba Zaide</i> ” Saeta melody picks up with the following line, “ <i>Se ha “encontraído...</i> ”
3:16	interlude #2, Saxophone with buzzing timbre predominates
3:27	fourth stanza follows second stanza’s arrangement
3:54	closing melody in major
4:06	end of piece

Figure 3.2 La Banda Morisca’s Arrangement of “Zaide”

Conclusion

Like Amina Alaoui, La Banda Morisca are also inspired by their own experience and belief in, a musical and cultural connection linking Andalusia with North Africa and the Middle East. Yet the musical manifestations of these beliefs differ substantially.²⁷ Sonic interventions born of opposite Mediterranean shores, their artistic divergence reflects their unique positionalities. While Alaoui speaks from the perspective of a Moroccan-born, Andalusian expat, the core members of La Banda Morisca make their case as (primarily) autochthonous Andalusians whose musical style, genre emphasis, and lyrical content are bound up in the particular cultural politics of southern Spain.

Flamenco is thus more central to La Banda Morisca's musical mixture, and with it, an emphasis on the integral role of gitanos in shaping the larger cultural soundscape of Andalusia. A generation before Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca began to create their musical mixtures, gitano musicians, artists and academics were already playing an outsized role in the development of flamenco-Arab music fusions, projects that linked musicians from both sides of the Gibraltar Strait.

That influence is critical to understanding the third case study in this dissertation. In the next chapter I take up Jalal Chekara's *Flamenco Andalusi*. While Alaoui's *Arco Iris*, and La Banda Morisca's debut album draw upon flamenco forms and source material, neither group can be said to actually perform flamenco. By contrast, Chekara does make such a claim; indeed, flamenco features more centrally in Chekara's project, as we will see.

²⁷ I develop this comparative analysis further at the close of the dissertation.

CAPTAR FOUR:

TAN CERCA, TAN LEJOS: JALAL CHEKARA'S FLAMENCO ANDALUSÍ

In the preceding Chapters Two and Three I explored how the past as remembered informed the creative output of Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca, fodder for these artists' sonic interventions in Iberian collective memory. Where many of the numerous so-called "fusion" projects in southern Spain might make token reference to the Iberian Peninsula's historic *tres culturas*,¹ Alaoui's and La Banda Morisca's projects are notable for their intense mining of the past—especially the distant past—to fuel cohesive, novel musical sound worlds that speak to the present. In this respect, and in the context of other intercultural musical collaborations in the Western Mediterranean, I believe these artists to be more the exception than the rule.

There are still other intercultural collaborators in the region, however, who follow a different logic. They might not produce as cohesive mixture, nor even necessarily endeavor to do so. Or perhaps more accurately: their very notion of what constitutes cohesion or a successful musical mixture may follow a different aesthetic impulse to that of Alaoui and La Banda Morisca. Moreover, and quite relatedly, their engagement with the past might occur on somewhat different terms.

Such is the case with Jalal Chekara's Flamenco Andalusí, and the projects that influenced his approach to musical mixture. In this chapter I wish to consider this other stream of Andalusian intercultural musical collaboration, which draws its main influence from the more recent past, and builds upon a different experience of musical connection linking styles, specifically between flamenco and Arab-Andalusi music. Here I shift my focus slightly. Where in the previous chapters I weighted the analysis towards considerations of how the past as remembered fuels a musical poesis, here I wish to examine more closely the musical and social details of intercultural collaboration. I am interested in exploring how, on a practical, music-making level, collective memory, musical competence, and real differences between musical styles might co-articulate the conditions of possibility for intercultural musical collaborators.

¹As a marketing category of the heritage culture industry, *tres culturas* tends to refer to projects featuring Arab-Andalusi, Early Music, or Sephardic musics, either alone or in combination. Among some of the more flamenco-oriented projects, the term *cuatro culturas* has gained some small momentum in recent years, part of an attempt to recognize and validate the massive *gitano* contribution, not only to flamenco, but to Andalusian culture more broadly.

“Where do I Come In?”

It is May, 2014. We are at the *Fundación Tres Culturas* in Seville, a multi-level architectural gem originally built to serve as the Moroccan Pavilion for 1992 Seville World Expo. Beneath a stained-glass ceiling that communicates light to the ornate main hall above, Jalal Chekara’s ensemble have gathered to prepare for the evening’s concert, a CD-release show to promote Chekara’s² new record, *Tan Cerca Tan Lejos* (So Close, So Far Away).

Seven musicians sit in a rough circle. Youssef M. on qanun; Brahim, viola; Mostafa, oud; Mohcin, darbuka; and Tino on guitar, surround the two singers: Jalal, violin in hand, and Vicente, a flamenco vocalist who doubles on cajón. A second percussionist, additional vocalist, and dancer are on the way. The musicians are working for the most part without charts or notation. The oud player, alone, has a music stand with some loose pages in front of him. In a mix of Arabic and Spanish, he has jotted down song titles, Andalusí musical modes and rhythms and the corresponding flamenco forms.

Though by this time I have attended several of Jalal’s shows featuring different live personnel, sat through sound checks, and spent a good deal of time with several members of the band, this is the first rehearsal I have been able to witness. Jalal agrees to let me observe, though not without some initial hesitation. This is an important show, and the only rehearsal with the entire group of musicians, several of whom did not play on the record.

One song in particular, the album’s title track, is proving to be challenging. The guitarist, Tino, is struggling to find his entrance. “*Dónde está el uno*” (Where is the ‘one’) he asks again, unsure of the downbeat. Jalal repeats his violin line, in time with the darbuka. Time and again the guitarist misses the mark. A conversation ensues about Tino’s point of entrance, and whether looking for the “one” is even the best way to hear the rhythm. The point of entry, so obvious to the six Moroccans, continues to elude both the Dutch-born guitarist as well as the Spanish singer and percussionist.

Finally, Youssef Chair (pronounced *sha-EEr*) arrives. The elder member of the ensemble that evening, Youssef composed the lyrics and some of the music for the record. Tonight he will be playing darbuka alongside Mohcin. Chair plays with an effortless confidence that reflects his command of his instrument. From the first strike of his drum, the whole energy of the ensemble changes. It is as if the loose joints in a table leg are suddenly tightened, and now the structure locks into place. Someone suggests that Chair play a

² A point of clarification regarding the way I refer to my interlocutors in this chapter. Jalal Chekara’s ensembles performed under many names before settling on “Chekara” as the name of his current ensemble project. As such, I will use “Chekara” when I describe Jalal Chekara’s collective ensemble, and make use of Jalal’s first name when referring to him personally, apart from his band. Similarly, I will refer to Jalal’s uncle, Abdessadeq Chekara by his first name, though the reader should bear in mind that among Moroccan musicians, as well as their Spanish collaborators, the name “Chekara” is usually taken to refer to Abdessadeq.

two-stroke pickup to lead everyone in together. Within just a couple of passes Vicente has found a spot to lock his *cajón* rhythm with Chair's *darbuka*. This seems to make all the difference. Tino, in turn, now has a more comfortable point of reference in the *cajón*, and suddenly, much to his and Jalal's relief, Tino is able to find his entrance.

At least, for now.

Tino's dilemma raises a series of important issues concerning how musicians of diverse backgrounds and trainings collaborate. To begin with, before the ensemble even convenes, there is the matter of conceptual approach. Since there are myriad ways of combining musical styles, it is important to consider the musicians' visions for the collaboration, in particular that of the ensemble leaders, and the degree to which a leader's vision is shared by the other participants, or even communicated to them. Aside from the practical concerns of financial feasibility and market appeal, a musician's conceptual approach and aesthetic notion may be shaped by historical precedent, previous training or other formative experiences entangled within one's own relationship to a lived past.

A conceptual approach to collaboration has to accommodate another reality, however: the different musical competences of the participants. When a group of musicians come together, the distribution throughout the ensemble of what each musician knows and is capable of performing becomes a determining factor in the mix. Yet at the same time, as Brinner (2009) has argued, the collaborative encounter can also spark musical growth and the expansion of musical competence, as musicians can potentially learn from one another and expand their own competences.

How is a musical mixture conditioned by the different individual competences of the participants? How might these divergent competences inform, or dictate, the conceptual approach to fusion? How is the collaborative encounter also a space of individual and collective agency in which musicians can develop new abilities and approaches to their craft? What do collaborative processes reveal about the relationship of musical systems implicated in the mixture? Finally, how might this inquiry shed light on some of the more elusive qualities of musicianship: the largely intuitive, aesthetic, and creative dimensions of musical *habitus* that coalesce in musical sensibility? The purpose of my inquiry is less to offer any definitive answers, than to suggest a productive way of considering these questions about musical thinking and intercultural, collaborative music making in the context of collective memory.

As a case study in the cognition of fusion, I focus on Jalal Chekara's Flamenco Andalusi, suggesting that Chekara's brand of musical mixture may best be understood as a juxtaposition of styles. I argue that this juxtaposition not only results from the interface of two bodies of divergent musical competences—one flamenco, the other Arab-Andalusi—but also that it follows in a lineage of similar socio-musical encounters and maintains fidelity to a particular way of conceiving of intercultural musical collaboration. Indeed, in this case collective musical competence itself is partially conditioned by the way

musicians relate to the past. Understood in this light, *tan cerca, tan lejos*—so close, so far away—becomes an apt metaphor for how the record’s musical content reflects social relationships both within Andalusia, and across the Gibraltar Strait.

I first situate the band’s approach to musical mixture within a concept of *encuentros* (encounters), describing how precursors to Chekara established a formula for collaboration that his music would follow a generation later. These ensembles’ different individual musical competences, when taken together, constitute the group’s distributed competence—a field of interactive music making possibilities for the ensemble. I then turn to Chekara’s 2014 album *Tan Cerca Tan Lejos*, a collaborative recording project that literally spans the Strait of Gibraltar. An account of how the record was made reveals how a division of musical competence within the ensemble plays out in the recording studio. Centering on the record’s title track, I show how musicians relate differently to an ostensibly shared rhythmic foundation, a situation that epitomizes the challenge of interfacing, not only musical systems, but also distinct musical sensibilities at the root of musical competence.

Musical Competence and the Cognition of Fusion - Thinking about Thinking

In all their cultural manifestations globally, musical skill and knowledge as a single entity constitute a realm so vast that it strains our imagination to contemplate its outer horizons. Its centrality to any understanding of music and the making of meaning seems self-evident. Indeed, it is hard to imagine an ethnomusicological monograph that does not address, at least indirectly, musical thinking in its cultural determinacy. Any study of performance practices, musical teaching and learning, musical style, music transmission, in one way or another must speak to musical thinking. And yet, as an explicit frame of inquiry within ethnomusicology it remains relatively understudied, a promising direction for musicological research.

The study of musical competence constitutes one sub-field within the larger field of music cognition. Laying the ground for such an enterprise, Benjamin Brinner’s *Knowing Music, Making Music* (1995) offers a theoretical framework for studying musical thinking and interaction in performance. My usage of “competence” follows that of Benjamin Brinner (1995, 28) who initially defined the term as follows:

individualized mastery of the array of interrelated skills and knowledge that is *required* of musicians within a particular tradition of musical community and is *acquired* and developed in response to and in accordance with the demands and possibilities of general and specific cultural, social, and musical conditions [emphasis in original].

From this intentionally open starting point Brinner more systematically elaborates various categories of knowledge and their organization. While not meant to be an all-inclusive

list, or fixed categories, nonetheless they offer a robust starting point for considering musical thinking, particularly in performance.

The task of mapping competence, as an *array of interrelated skills and knowledge*, is an immense one, made more difficult by many factors, of which two are particularly relevant for the purposes of this chapter. The first concerns the fact that musicians have, as Brinner puts it, different “ways of knowing” (ibid., 34-39). Knowledge varies across several categories, as explicitly held and able to be articulated, or intuited; actively deployable on one’s instrument, or passively understood; consciously held or unconsciously embodied and automatic; declaratively known in the abstract as a musical fact, or known as a procedure for accomplishing a musical task. Posing a particular challenge for the ethnographer are the *intuitive, passive, unconscious procedural* qualities of competence that musicians possess but cannot speak to—knowledge and skills of which they may not even be aware. Often, but not always, these are the qualities of competence that form the background, the musical habitus.

The second factor I wish to highlight is that competence refers to a complex of *individualized* traits that are negotiated socially within musical communities. Thus we can speak in the abstract of the competence required to perform a particular genre of music, or in one or another social setting, but it is the individual musician who possesses the necessary skill and knowledge, the individual whose competence is worked out in dialectic relationship with the expectations of a community (ibid 46).

Studying musical collaborations can provide a means to address both of these major challenges of exploring musical competence. By attending to the social negotiation of what works musically—the practical measure of musical competence—it is possible to achieve some insight into some of the more hidden aspects of musical competence, particularly when musical sensibilities differ from one musician to the next.

Besides Brinner (2009) and a few notable exceptions (e.g. Clayton et al. 2005, Iyer 2002, Kippen 1987), few ethnomusicologists have engaged deeply with cognition and musical collaboration as related matters.³ This chapter addresses a gap in what I am calling the “cognition of fusion”—the study of musical thinking in the context of musical mixture. Mixtures, or fusions, takes various forms, which are conditioned in part by the distribution of competence within the ensemble. Regarding projects that draw from divergent musical systems, it is crucial to understand the body of musical skills, perspectives, and the ways in which people are conceiving of what are doing. Attending to these competences, and where they overlap or diverge within the ensemble, can help identify some of the actual similarities and differences that delineate musical systems, and illuminate the different strategies musicians employ when mixing musics. Fusions, or intercultural musical collaborations are, of course, more than the interface of different musical styles. They result from the interface of musical sensibilities. They are sites where different musicians tune in differently.

³ For an example within the cognitive psychology of music, see Goebel and Palmer 2009.

Writing on “styles of fusion” Brinner (2009, 217-220) offers three comparative measures by which to evaluate musical mixtures: *contrast* – the degree of similarity between the musics in play; *dominance* – whether or not one music takes precedence over another; and *blend* – the relative stylistic cohesiveness of the mixture, from “stark juxtapositions” to “seamless integration.” These categories provide a very useful rubric for organizing a more detailed musical analysis—a qualitative account of the musical sound produced by the ensemble. At the same time, they offer a framework for approaching the collaborative processes that give rise to that musical sound. In seeking to better understand Chekara’s “flamenco andalusi,” and the projects that influenced the band’s thinking, it is this set of processes, and how they come to be adopted, that most concern me here.

Encuentros as a Conceptual Approach to Fusion

Chekara’s conceptual approach to combining flamenco with Arab-Andalusi music follows a similar pattern to the precedent set by two high-profile 1980s collaborations between *gitano* artists and Moroccan musicians, each of which have had a lasting impact in southern Spain.

In 1983, the gitano playwright, author, and scholar José Heredia Maya developed an idea for a live, musical theatre production that would bring together Arab-Andalusi and flamenco musicians and dancers. He called his project *Macama Jonda*, a bilingual riff on several levels. The Arabic word *macama*, Maya translates as “encounter, reunion,”⁴ and phonetically suggests *maqam*, the term for Arabic melodic modal system, while *jondo* recalls the Spanish term *cante jondo*, literally deep song, the term for the oldest and most serious, a capella form of Andalusian folk and flamenco song. Thus “*macama jonda*” is a “deep encounter” that brings together the flamenco and Arabic music.

The lineup featured an A-list of prominent gitano flamenco artists within Granada’s tightknit scene, most notably the *cantaor* (flamenco singer) Enrique Morente and *bailaor* (dancer) Manolete, alongside Abdessadeq Chekara’s ensemble, which included Abdessadeq on violin and vocals and his brother, Abdullah Chekara on oud (Jalal’s uncle and father, respectively). The performance was held at Granada’s Teatro Manuel de Falla, a venue located just below the Alhambra on the same hillside above the city. It played to a rave reception and led to the later release of an LP by the same title (Ariola 1983). Both the show and the album which followed remain a touchstone point of reference for many subsequent, *flamenco-árabe* fusion efforts.

It is important to situate Maya’s gitano-led, collaborative project in the larger context of the seismic cultural and political shifts taking place in Spanish society at the time. Though economic and social liberalization had already in the 1960s, it was Francisco

⁴ Contrary to José Heredia Maya’s intention of a fraternal encounter and show of convivencia, the Arabic word *makama* مصادم suggests more a combative encounter, as in a battle (Wehr 1994).

Franco's death in 1975 that served as the catalyst for the sweeping changes that culminated in Spain's transition to democracy in 1978. During this time, Maya was becoming a leading advocate for the rights of gitanos, for centuries an intensely marginalized community in Spain. Maya published poetry in *caló* (the vernacular language of Spanish and Portuguese gitanos), and became the first Spanish university professor of gitano ethnicity (Belausteguigoitia 2010). Maya also played an outsized role in the institutionalization of flamenco as its own academic discipline in Spain.⁵

It was in this context of promoting and validating gitano culture that Maya created *Macama Jonda*, which he viewed as a successor to his first theatrical work, *Camelamos Naquerar*. In the album liner notes to *Macama Jonda*, he writes:

We want to show the possibility of encounter between men and between peoples, symbolizing it in the marriage between an Andalusian man and a Moorish woman of Tetouan, allowing us to convey some of the fundamental traits [i.e. marriage rituals] of both peoples.

With "*Camelamos Naquerar*" I considered the inhuman struggle between different cultures; With *MACAMA JONDA*, on the contrary, I want to insist on the necessity of encounter and of the fraternal embrace between all people. We can hear how Andalusian music, which was sung in the Alhambra before the 16th century, mixes comfortably with contemporary flamenco.

This new show seeks to be a symbol that gathers together similarity, brotherhood and marriage through a kind of virginity between innocent people, among innocent men. It strives to stand as a symbol of understanding among all, an understanding that makes possible the creation of a space wherein one can live in hopeful anticipation of a celebratory and joyful existence...

In this special moment inaugurating autonomy in Andalusia and in the whole country and initiating an age of hope, *MACAMA JONDA* seeks to show, to incite the public, towards coexistence. In "*Camelamos Naquerar*" people can identify with the problem; in *MACAMA JONDA*, people owe it to themselves to participate in this miracle of collective celebration, solidarity and fraternity, that is playing out on stage.

We have multiple interests in putting together this performance, but we want to insist on the musical theme. It is curious to note that Andalusian music that once belonged to the most refined part of society, and was the most refined music, and that even today throughout North Africa remains distinct from other [indigenous] Maghrebi music, is maintained in some cases, with little stylistic change, among

⁵ *Flamencología* (flamencology), a field largely dedicated to the history and sociology of flamenco. It was not until 1992 that flamenco was incorporated into the music conservatory system.

the most long-suffering and marginalized classes in later-day Andalusia. In this sense, MACAMA JONDA accentuates the enthusiasm that for historical reasons is beginning to wane and at the same time offer an initial response

“For the first time in five hundred years, we will bring together what was already united,” said one member of the Orchestra. May it always be so, and may it serve as an appeal to all [emphasis in original].⁶

José Heredia Maya’s statement seizes on some of the same rhetorical tropes of Andalus nationalism that I discussed in the previous chapter, but redeploys the narrative in a manner that foregrounds the notion of a specifically gitano-Andalusi historical and

⁶ The full text appears in the original liner notes as follows:

Queremos mostrar la posibilidad del encuentro entre hombres y entre pueblos, simbolizándolo en la boda de un andaluz y una mora de Tetuán, esto nos permite mostrar algunos rasgos fundamentales de ambos pueblos.

Con <<Camelamos Naquerar>> planteé la inhumana pugna que se da entre culturas diferentes; con MACAMA JONDA, por el contrario, quiero insistir en la necesidad del encuentro y el abrazo fraternal entre todos los hombres. Escucharemos cómo la música andalusí, la que cantaba en la Alhambra antes del siglo XVI confraterniza con el flamenco actual.

Este nuevo espectáculo quiere ser un símbolo que recoja la semejanza, la hermandad y el casamiento por la virginidad entre los pueblos inocentes, entre los hombres inocentes. Quiere alzarse como símbolo de entendimiento entre todos, entendimiento que posibilite la creación de un ámbito donde se puede vivir de ilusión de una existencia festiva y alegre.

En MACAMA JONDA, como hemos dicho, un andaluz se casa en Marruecos con una mora de Tetuán y se recoge en la obra el rito tradicional en torno a la virginidad de los novios. Resulta así una parábola sobre la inocencia, sobre el no pecado original, plena de blancura, de albor, de pureza.

En este momento especial de estreno de la Autonomía en Andalucía y en el que el país entero inicia una etapa esperanzadora MACAMA JONDA quiere mostrar, incitar al público, a la convivencia. En <<Camelamos Naquerar>> la gente se identifica con el problema, en MACAMA JONDA deberá participar del milagro de la fiesta colectiva, solidaria y fraterna que se realiza en el escenario.

El interés de este espectáculo es múltiple, pero queremos insistir en el tema musical. Resulta curioso observar que aquella música andaluza que pertenecía al ámbito más refinado de la sociedad, que era la música culta, y que aún hoy en todo el norte de África se mantiene diferenciada de la música propiamente magrebí, se perpetúa, en algunos casos y estilo sin apenas modificaciones, entre las clases más sufridas y marginadas en la Andalucía posterior. En este caso, MACAMA JONDA va a acentuar el entusiasmo que por temas de nuestra historia se empieza a advertir y a la vez da una primera respuesta.

<<Por primera vez en quinientos años se va a unir lo que ya estaba unido>> decía un miembro de la Orquesta, Y que sea para siempre. Y que sirva de reclamo para todos.

cultural connection. The high-art status of Arab-Andalusi music then becomes a tool to elevate the status of flamenco as not only an Andalusian—but most specifically, a gitano—cultural patrimony. Maya then juxtaposes the prestigious lineage of Andalusí music with the suffering of Spanish gitanos. *Macama Jonda*, in this light, is meant as a statement of solidarity between marginalized communities integral to the cultural foundation of contemporary Andalusian society.



Figure 4.1 *Macama Jonda* album cover (illustration by Jesús Conde)

While less focused in its message than *Macama Jonda*, Juan Peña “El Lebrijano” and the *Orquesta Andalusí de Tanger*’s 1985 album *Encuentros* (Ariola) *Encuentros* does echo some of the same sentiment, particularly in the one overtly political track from the record, “Dame la Libertad” (Give Me Freedom). Released two years after *Macama Jonda*, the album is heralded as another pioneering example of a gitano, flamenco artist working alongside Moroccan musicians. Though a follow-up record proved critically and commercially less successful, El Lebrijano continued to work with North African artists

for the rest of his career,⁷ performing in recent years with Faiçal Kourrich, a talented, classically trained violinist from Tangier.⁸

“Encounters” aptly describes how these artists’ approaches to mixing musical systems, a meeting of two sides. With respect to the musical blend, it is more accurate to describe these projects as juxtapositions rather than highly integrated fusions. A common rhythmic framework, and at times a shared musical mode, serve to link the two sides. Flamencos and Arab-Andalusi musicians would often trade standalone vocal or instrumental sections, one side alternating with the other, coming together to play a shared melodic head.⁹ Two brief examples speak to how this works in practice.

Macama Jonda’s piece “La Novia,”¹⁰ is based on a flamenco tango, a *compás* that adheres to a comparatively straightforward 4/4 rhythmic framework, as opposed to the majority of flamenco forms that are based on a 12-beat cycle. Percussionists Abdelaziz Harrak and Mohamed J’luf enter first, establishing the 4/4 groove. Paco Cortés enters on guitar, playing and repeating the main melodic riff [00:17]. Abdessadeq answers on violin with a sparse line that further establishes the mode [00:26]. The entire ensemble then enters, repeating the melodic riff several times [00:40]; here the violinists and rabel closely double the guitar, with minimal heterophonic variation between the lines. The chorus of flamenco singers then enter together [01:12-3:21], their *palmas* (hand claps) playing a four-beat tango pattern in time with Harrak and J’Luf’s rhythms. Alternating vocal and instrumental sections follow more or less follow this pattern for the rest of the piece (which clocks just over 10 minutes).

“Dame la Libertad” was arguably the most successful track on El Lebrijano and The Andalusi Orchestra of Tangier’s Encuentros album, becoming a fixture of El Lebrijano’s live set for years to follow. Like “La Novia,” it opens with percussion, the darbuka and daf in this case playing a 6/8 pattern. Qanun, rebab, and violin play a melodic refrain [00:07], backed by the guitar’s *rasgueado* strum adding rhythmic support and pedaling a single chord. In contrast to “La Novia,” “Dame la Libertad” features twin vocal sections, one Arabic and the other Spanish. The Arabic verse enters first, singing this same refrain

⁷ Juan Peña “El Lebrijano” passed away on July 13, 2016, during the writing of this dissertation.

⁸ The collaboration has served Faiçal Kourrich well; he is now a visiting artist with Berklee College of Music’s Mediterranean Music Institute, an initiative begun in 2011 and based in Berklee’s recently established campus in Valencia, Spain.

⁹ This approach to collaboration has been critiqued by several of my interlocutors in Spain and northern Morocco alike, as “*corta y pega*” (cut and paste). A similar pattern of trading riffs can be observed in countless “world music fusion” records from the 1980s-90s. To name but one notable example among many, VM Bhatt and Ry Cooder’s *A Meeting by the River* (1993, Water Lily) captured an encounter between musicians utterly unfamiliar with each other’s musical system and literally meeting for the first time.

¹⁰As of this writing, the studio recording can be found on YouTube, along with photos and lyrics from the original liner sleeve: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqC4zALTVQY>. Video portions of the original performance can be found as well: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPAAbGXpQz3E>.

and doubled by bowed strings and qanun [00:25]. The accompaniment gives way to an ostinato when El Lebrijano enters [00:50], singing what is effectively an alternate, “flamenco” chorus, a different melody over the same harmonic pedal. On his repeat of the chorus, the strings shadow him. For the remaining three minutes the song proceeds through a series of handoffs, as the vocalists trade Spanish and Arabic vocal sections. Throughout, palmas, darbuka, and daf maintain the 6/8 rhythm, holding together what are otherwise two pieces juxtaposed as one.

While the degree of internal musical contrast as well as the relative balance of attention between styles varies from song to song within these projects, “La Novia” and “Dame La Libertad” are indicative of much of the rest of the material on both *Macama Jonda* and *Encuentros*. Roughly equal time is accorded to both sides of the collaborations, yet these are projects clearly directed by the Spanish artists, and flamenco dominates the collaboration. The Spanish artists figure more prominently in the project’s promotion and credits as well. On *Encuentros*, guitarist Paco Cepero is credited as Musical Director, while the seven Moroccan musicians remain nameless, appearing only under the title “*Orquesta Andalusi de Tanger*.”¹¹ In the case of *Macama Jonda*, when Ariola issued the soundtrack on LP and, later, on CD, all the artists are mentioned by name, and Abdessadeq is properly credited as Director of the Tetouan Andalusi Orchestra.

Despite whatever measure of cohesiveness they are able to achieve and convey to audiences, these kinds of musical mixture require relatively little in the way of bimusicality on the part of the participating musicians, at least in the sense of a working knowledge of each other’s musical system.¹² This is especially true of the Spanish artists and intellectuals who spearheaded those early 1980s encounters. El Lebrijano had no training in Arab-Andalusi music when he hired an ensemble of musicians from Tangier to play on his record. Nor did José Heredia Maya when he organized *Macama Jonda*. Neither spoke Arabic. To the degree that these collaborations required verbal communication, their success depended on the linguistic competence of the Moroccan-born participants, most of whom were from the North of Morocco and could communicate in Spanish.

For Jalal Chekara and many others, the conceptual approach of *Macama Jonda* and El Lebrijano with the Orchestra Andalusi of Tangier provided one model for how to go

¹¹ I have spoken with the *qanun* player on *Encuentros*, Abdessalam Naiti, who lives in Granada and still performs with various Arab-Andalusi traditional and fusion projects. A very well respected player within the community, the soft spoken and humble Naiti had little to say about the process of making *Encuentros*, stating just that it was a comfortable, easy collaboration from his perspective. I hesitate to draw any concrete conclusion from our conversation, as he and I had only met a few times prior, and he may have been more reserved, or cautiously polite, in speaking with me. Still, I have no reason to doubt that the process *was* genuinely easy for him. Playing on *Encuentros* posed no more difficulty than any other gig, precisely because this was in the end, a juxtaposition, and thus there was no need for Naiti or the rest of the *orquesta* to deviate from what they normally played in other, more traditional setting.

¹² Chapter Five presents an extensive rethinking of this basic notion of bimusicality.

about the business of mixing flamenco with Arab-Andalusi music. While not fully determinant, they set a powerful precedent for future collaborations, one that shaped the thinking of a generation of fusion music makers.

Jalal stands apart from his fusion-musicking peers in one critically important way: is he is uniquely positioned at the nexus of Abdessadeq and Abdullah Chekara, Enrique Morente and José Maya, his direct predecessors and mentors.



Figure 4.2 *Encuentros* album cover (uncredited photo)

Jalal Chekara's Familial Legacy

Originally from the northern Morocco town of Tetouan, Jalal has been living in Granada since the early 1990s. Within the dense community of musicians who call Granada home, few if any can claim as famous lineage a musical lineage. Before I can address in detail Jalal's musical training and competence, and how he came to be making fusion music in southern Spain, it is first necessary to understand the legacy bequeathed to Jalal via his very highly regarded uncle, Abdessadeq Chekara.

A master of Arab-Andalusi and Moroccan *chaabi* (popular folk music), Abdessadeq Chekara (1931-1998) was a gifted singer and violinist who founded and directed for

several decades the Orquesta Andalusi de Tetuán. An innovative tour-de-force, he expanded the reach and scope of Arab-Andalusi music, performed and recorded other Moroccan folk repertoire, and developed a unique style that blended aspects of classical Arab-Andalusi music with some of the more popular folk idioms that fall under the heading of chaabi (literally “of the people”). For many Moroccan musicians, not only in the north, but throughout the country, he is a touchstone.

Abdessadeq Chekara’s renown extends across the Strait as well. In 1961, with the aim of documenting and preserving that heritage, a UNESCO-project recruited Chekara to make one of the first recordings of Arab-Andalusian music. In 1968, Chekara assembled a quartet in collaboration with Gregorio Paniagua’s Atrium Musicae, to record the Anthology of Early Spanish Music, a landmark recording in Spain’s burgeoning Early Music scene (Paniagua 2005). In Granada, though, at least in flamenco circles, Abdessadeq Chekara is unambiguously remembered for his work with Macama Jonda, twenty years later.

Such was the formidable familial legacy Jalal Chekara was to join. Jalal’s formative musical introduction was familial. He would frequent the *zawiyya* (Sufi brotherhood lodge) where his father and uncle often played music. First learning the oud, he showed a keen musical aptitude and quickly transitioned to violin, joining the Orquesta Chekara de Tetuán as a young teenager of 13. The Tetouan Conservatory provided a formal training in Western music and expanded his musical competence.

It was at the invitation of flamenco star Enrique Morente that Chekara came to Spain. Granada’s most famous flamenco singer was born in the *albaicín* neighborhood, growing up in a house that literally faced the Alhambra. A fervent admirer of Garcia Lorca, Morente had long been intrigued by Andalusia’s Arab past, and in the years following Macama Jonda, had worked occasionally with Abdessadeq Chekara, just one among many collaborative projects that defined Morente’s career.¹³ It was in the context of Morente’s flamenco-árabe experiments that he had reached out to Jalal to come to Madrid, where Morente was living at the time. Jalal credits Morente with introducing him to local musicians, getting him work, and most importantly, providing a basic technical foundation in flamenco (Chekara, personal communication).

Though he hadn’t planned on staying in Spain long term, Jalal’s professional trajectory began to unfold through a series of collaborative projects and session appearances. In 1992 the British composer Michael Nyman enlisted Jalal and the Tetouan Andalusi Orchestra to collaborate on a record, *The Upside Down Violin*, a commission for Seville’s World Expo. (A live recording would come a decade later; see Nyman 2003). When Yehudi Menuhin gathered bowed string players in various traditions to record *All the*

¹³ Enrique Morente is a singular figure in the history of flamenco, at once firmly entrenched in the vanguard of traditional flamenco, and at the same time a visionary experimentalist and ceaseless musical innovator who stretched the boundaries of the genre. Perhaps most provocative of these efforts was his flamenco-Andaluz rock collaboration on the 1995 record *Omega*, covering Leonard Cohen and setting to music verses from Lorca’s *Poet in New York*.

World's Violins (1994 Virgin Classics), the call went out to Tetouan. By this time, Abdessadeq's health was failing, and the invitation fell to Jalal. Jalal's collaboration with Menuhin yielded "No.42: Arabian Song," which became the opening track on the record.

With Abdessadeq's passing in 1998, leadership of the Orquesta Chekara de Tetuán fell to Jalal. By this time Jalal was carving out a path collaborating with flamenco musicians and dancers in Madrid, Seville, and Granada, first with Enrique Morente, but then striking out on his own with Cus Cus Flamenco, a band formed with Segundo Falcón and the singer Arcangel. *Inmigrantes*, a critically acclaimed theatrical production with dancer and choreographer Maria Ángeles Gabaldón followed, as did live performance appearances with Estrella Morente, Enrique's daughter and a fast-rising flamenco star in her own right.

It was not until 2008 that Jalal made the first recording under his own family name: *La Chekara y el Flamenco, 1ª parte* (Música es Amor, 2008). Recording under the name "Orquesta Chekara de Tetuán" the liner notes describe the album as "devoted to Jallal's [sic] uncle and to the orchestra itself, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the birth of the ensemble and the 10th anniversary of his founder's death." Promoting the idea of a continuous lineage of collaboration that commenced with Macama Jonda and is now entering a new generation under the leadership of Jalal, the record featured several of his uncle's compositions.

Chekara's project differs from its predecessors in several important respects. First, Jalal is a musician of Moroccan heritage leading the ensemble. I do not mean to suggest that Jalal has inverted all power dynamics in southern Spain, but in fronting an ensemble he has achieved something his forebears, and most of his contemporaries, have not. Second, as a musician and bandleader Jalal does possess knowledge of flamenco forms, and has a great deal of experience working with Spanish musicians. And yet, beyond a basic familiarity with one another's music style, there is not a great deal of overlap between what flamencos know and Arab-Andalusi musicians know in the case of Jalal and his ensemble. Furthermore, the division of competence is not equal. For their part, the Moroccan musicians involved in these collaborations tend to know a little more about flamenco, whereas the opposite—flamencos knowing about Arab-Andalusi music—tends to be less common.¹⁴

The reasons for this disparity are complex, as are the power relations. Foremost to keep in mind is that the collaborations I am discussing here take place in southern Spain. The Moroccan-born participants are immigrant musicians who have had to acculturate, to a greater or lesser extent, both to southern Spanish society in general, and within the context of fusion music making. Acquiring competence in flamenco, or at least the kinds

¹⁴ This is not to generalize all collaborations. There are, of course, many Spanish musicians who have dedicated themselves to learning eastern Arab music, either *sharqi* or Arab-Andalusi music. Begoña Olavide, and the Paniagua family are notable examples. (See Reynolds 2000, Shannon 2015). My observations here more narrowly apply to flamencos working with northern-Moroccan, Andalusi musicians.

of competence necessary for musical mixture, is a strategy born at least partly out of necessity, for some Moroccan musicians.

That said, even before setting foot on Spanish soil, these musicians grew up in Tangier or Tetouan hearing flamenco and Andaluz folk-rock music that circulated around the Strait. That is to say, flamenco forms a part, however peripheral, of their enculturated musical sensibility, something that primes them to be able to successful in these collaborations, and (as I will explore in Chapter Five), what we might understand as a kind of flexibility as a feature of their musical competence.

Tan Cerca Tan Lejos

In the fall of 2012 Jalal began work on his second album, *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos* (So Close, So Far Away). The title is apropos on a number of levels. Built on the idea of musical and aesthetic compatibility between flamenco and Andalusi music, the album, in fact, highlights some of the divergences in musical competence among the participants. As a process of juxtaposing two musical styles, the title track, in particular, epitomizes how Chekara's musical mixture needs to accommodate, and results from, these different knowledges and skills.

Recorded in Tangier, Morocco, and Seville, Spain, the process of making *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos* literally spans the Strait of Gibraltar. Jalal first convened an ensemble of Moroccan players to record the Arab-Andalusi tracks for the record. He then brought those tracks to Tino van der Sman, who was to add the flamenco portion of the record. The process echoes the "encounters" approach in the sense of a juxtaposition of two distinct ensembles, each playing its own musical styles in turn. However, in this case, there would be no actual, co-present encounter, per se. Except for Jalal recording some overdubs in Tino's home studio in Seville, the two ensembles would have no direct contact. This set the stage for a rather one-dimensional fusion effort, as the flamenco musicians would have to accommodate the rhythms, tempi, and modal framework of the Moroccan parts.

The reasons for this divide-and-conquer approach derive from a complicated mix of musical competence within Jalal's social network, financial considerations, and the aforementioned historical precedent for this kind of collaboration. As to competence, while there are very strong players among Andalusia's Moroccan community, several of whom are within Jalal's social network, particularly in Granada, a greater concentration of qualified, Arab-Andalusi players reside in Morocco. Financially, Jalal's limited recording budget would go much further in a Moroccan studio, working for the most part with local players, versus hiring their Spanish-based counterparts to play on the record (personal communication). The Tangier sessions afforded Jalal the opportunity to work with several high-level musicians, including Elias El Houssaini and Youssef Chair. El Houssaini composed some of the music, handled arrangements and directed the *Ensemble Chekara Andalusi de Tetuán*, while Chair penned the Arabic lyrics for the record.

Whereas his debut record, 2008's "*La Chekara y el Flamenco, 1ª parte*" (*Música es Amor*) had featured several pieces originally composed by Jalal's uncle, Abdessadeq, the new record was to feature mostly new music. While Jalal is a very talented violinist and singer, he seems most at home as an interpreter of music and improviser, rather than a composer of new repertoire. The abilities of El Houssaini and Chair filled the gap in Chekara's own musical competence as a writer. Moreover, writing specifically for Jalal, El Houssaini and Chair could play to Jalal's strengths, allowing him to maximize his interpretive, performative competence.

Beyond the issues of musical competence and financial feasibility, Jalal's decision to record in Tangier befits the kind of transnational existence that is characteristic of many southern Spanish residents of North African heritage, who maintain strong ties with family and community across the Mediterranean.¹⁵ In Chekara's case, familial and musical connections to home are one and the same. Viewed in this light, the presence on the record of a senior musician like Youssef Chair takes on added significance. By prominently featuring Chair, someone who bridges Jalal's generation and that of his uncle, Jalal displayed a measure of deference, not only to the Chair personally, but by extension to all his musical elders and forebears, none of whom are more important than his father and late uncle, whose mantle Jalal has inherited. It was the sound of this musical legacy that Jalal Chekara literally carried across the Strait, cultural capital embodied in his playing and singing, and now digitally captured on files bound for the Andalusian capital, Seville.

¹⁵ This is particularly true for those with ties to the northern Moroccan cities of Tangier and Tetouan. Among musicians, especially those with kids, it is common for folks to spend part of Ramadan in Morocco, or to avoid the hot stretches of Spanish summer in the more temperate climate of northern Morocco.



Figure 4.3 *Tan Cerca Tan Lejos* album cover (photo by Pepe Zapata)

“Me Costó Mucho” - the Challenge of Adding Flamenco Parts to the Mix

In Seville, Jalal delivered the Tangier tapes to Tino van der Sman. Tino would wear several hats for the project. Not only was he to play guitar on the album, but he would also serve as the record’s producer and recording engineer on the Spanish side. I first met up with Tino following a Chekara concert in Alcalá de Henares, outside Madrid. When I mentioned I was interested in discussing the forthcoming Chekara record, his pithy reply came in the form of a common Andalusian turn of phrase: “*me costó mucho!*” Literally meaning “it cost me a lot,” a better translation would be “it was vexing!”

A few weeks later I traveled to Seville to speak with Tino at more length. We met near his apartment at a café that sits in the shadow of Seville’s *Metropol Parasol*, an undulating wave of white, wooden latticework humorously dubbed *Las Setas* (the mushrooms) and built over the Antiquarium, an archeological site turned museum whose ruins date from Roman times through the 12th century C.E., when the Almohads ruled over the city.

Tino repeated what he had told me weeks earlier, that the album had been “vexing” to produce. While van der Sman elaborated many reasons why the album posed some serious difficulties, for the remainder of this chapter I will focus on three challenges Tino faced in completing the record: 1) following Chekara’s conceptual approach, to overdub independent flamenco sections and integrate these with the Andalusi tracks; 2) dealing with the interface of two musical systems, particularly the rhythmic differences; and 3) reconciling the limits of his own musical competence, both as a player and mixing engineer. These are actually three inter-related aspects of one fundamental challenge: that of combining relatively diverse musical styles with the operating premise that they share common rhythmic and modal frameworks. I’ll address each facet of these challenges as they apply to the record generally, then speak more specifically to a key musical example, the title track from the record.

As to conceptual approach, Tino’s process followed a similar basic format as in Chekara’s live shows, which in turn, continued in the collaborative mould established by Macama Jonda and El Lebrijano’s *Encuentros* projects. Alternating sections in each song would feature Andalusi and flamenco styles in turn, guided by a shared rhythmic framework and, if not compatible melodic modes, then at least a shared tonal center. The result is that many (but not all) of the tracks feature, essentially, two songs in one - an original Andalusi melody and text interwoven with an original flamenco piece. As the subtitle of Chekara’s album, *Flamenco Andalusi* is at once a self-ascribed genre category and a way of framing their concept of musical mixture. While Andalusi and flamenco generally share equal time on the record, “*flamenco andalusi*,” suggests that this is an Andalusi-infused take on flamenco. All song titles are listed in Spanish, despite the fact that the song titles in most cases reference the Arabic lyrics. Additionally, nearly every track on the CD follows the flamenco convention of the song title followed, in parentheses, by the flamenco *palo* (form), with two exceptions: the penultimate track, “Te Echo de Menos” is listed as a “*qasida magrebi*” while the final track—a live recording featuring Enrique Morente, is simply titled “Enrique Morente, In Memoriam.”¹⁶

At the outset, Jalal offered little guidance as to how the flamenco portions need fit with the Andalusi sections. Tino and vocalist Vicente Gelo were given pretty free license as to what to play to make the fusion work, the guiding principle being to utilize the same rhythm and keep to a common tonal center. “They give me a piece, helter skelter,” said Tino. “Add the flamenco. Do whatever you want” (personal communication). Given the stylistic privileging of flamenco in the mixture, and the fact that this is *his* record, Jalal’s limited involvement in the early Seville sessions initially might come as a surprise. His deference makes perfect sense, however, when understood as following the juxtaposition

¹⁶Chekara’s naming of the flamenco *palo* follows the precedent established by Macama Jonda, and marks an important difference as compared with La Banda Morisca and Amina Alaoui. La Banda Morisca’s repertoire includes *muwashshah*, romances, *gharnati*, as well as flamenco pieces, though they have had to change how they refer to some flamenco-based pieces in light of audience objections. Amina, for her part, does not reference flamenco *palos*, though in several cases it is a flamenco form, one transformed in some way, that structurally undergirds the piece.

model established by El Lebrijano and by his other mentors in Macama Jonda, and when viewed in the context of Jalal's own musical competence.

Jalal was much more involved, as it turns out, once the basic flamenco sections began to take shape. Besides overdubbing additional violin and vocal tracks, his input was especially important during the lengthy process of mix down, in this case quite literally a kind of *bricolage*, to borrow one of Brinner's preferred term to describe processes of blending musical elements in Israeli-Palestinian collaborations (2009, 257). Here Jalal was an equal partner, as Van der Sman recounted.

Among Tino and Jalal's aesthetic goals for the record was to vary the mixture of Spanish and Andalusí parts from song to song, or within the same song. A few sections would feature strict divisions of flamenco and Andalusí parts, but where possible, they would integrate the two sides into a more cohesive ensemble, creating the appearance of one large, co-present ensemble playing simultaneously. By way of examples, "*Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos*" features flamenco *palmas* joining the Andalusí rhythm section, and finds a violin accompanying Vicente Gelo's vocal. Similarly, "*Esos Ojillos Verdes*" opens with an oud riff rhythmically supported by *cajón*; again, violin undergirds Gelo's voice, this time playing *pizzicato*.

Where there was a stricter division between flamenco and Andalusí portions of a song, it was of particular importance to soften the "starkness" of the juxtaposition. One of the strategies Jalal and Tino employed was to extend the overlap between flamenco and Andalusí sections at the points of transition between the two (personal communication). The best example of this is "No Tengo Quien Me Quiera." A beautiful call and response between Gelo's vocal line and the Andalusí ensemble opens the piece. The ensemble is joined surreptitiously by guitar and *palmas* before Gelo reenters to announce the transition into *malagueñas*. By contrast, the record's more blended pieces are punctuated by the flamenco-less "*Te Echo de Menos*," the aforementioned *qasida magrebí*. The inclusion of this piece reflects an Arab-Andalusí practice when performing a particular *nuba* (classical Andalusí suite) of including a separate, "standalone" song sung in vernacular Arabic and featuring a solo performer (see Glasser 2008, 15).

What I wish to reiterate here is that, as a band, Chekara's musical mixture is conditioned by two major factors: first, it follows in rough form the conceptual approach established by their influential predecessors. More than mere precedent, these artists, as personal mentors to Jalal, shaped his own conception of what was possible with respect to these flamenco-Andalusí collaborations, and thus informed his own developing musical competence with respect to fusion. Second, the mixture is the result of a divergence in the participating musicians' main competences. Jalal's knowledge of flamenco and his ability to integrate his own playing with flamencos is intuitive; he possesses a *passive* knowledge of flamenco guitar accompaniment; and his ability to respond to flamenco harmonic progressions is *intuitive* and *procedural*. Jalal's body of flamenco competences reflects a practical training acquired mainly through performance. Brinner describes a similar process at work in Javanese *gamelan*, where intuitive knowledge characterizes

much of competence in a similar model of learning through musical performance (1995, 146).

Describing Jalal's musical competence within flamenco, Tino notes the absence of interplay between dancer and instrumental accompanist:

Jalal knows the flamenco dance structure. So we follow the structure of the *baile*... So what [the dancers] do is dance as in the *tablao* [flamenco venue]. The only difficult thing is that they don't accompany. It is not possible to *demand* (as in, there is no give and take with the dancer). [Ordinarily] the dancer indicates a *remate* (a musical structure used to end a section of the performance) and the guitar comes in before and... [trails off] but this is normal. You can't ask for all that. But then, she has to dance a little bit as if it were a CD [as accompaniment].

Tino is describing a one-way communication from the instrumentalist to the dancer. The *bailaora* (dancer) can still improvise, but the wonderful dynamic interplay between dancer and the other musicians is lost. For many, that interplay is a defining characteristic of flamenco. Absent this key element, the performance has more in common with a *tablao* performance — the kind of formulaic thirty-minute flamenco show put on for the tourists. Far from a critique of Jalal's skills and knowledge, however, Tino's observation calls attention to how Jalal has developed the necessary collaborative competence to allow him to create music with flamencos in the mold of his mentors.

We might similarly describe Tino's competence mixing with Moroccan *chaabi* and Arab-Andalusi music.¹⁷ Even more than Jalal, though, Tino's crucial role as engineer in the collaborative process does more than reflect the divergent musical competences of the participants. His experience trying to add flamenco parts to the independently recorded Andalusi tracks reveals important differences in the *musical systems* implicated in the mixture. In the section that follows, I look at a clear example of flamenco and Arab-Andalusi musics' differing approaches to rhythm, as they play out in the title track from Chekara's *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos*. My aim is to point out some music-technical differences between the styles, and to consider how these inform distinct flamenco and Moroccan-Andalusi musical sensibilities.

¹⁷ In Chapter Five I address Tino's musical competence as a performer.

Blending Flamenco and Arab-Andalusi Rhythmic Matrices

Chekara's 2014 album opens with the title track, "*Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos.*" A rhythmic framework ostensibly common to both flamenco and Andalusi music undergirds the fusion. Listed as a *tanguillos*, a reference to the flamenco form, Jalal and Tino seek with this piece to integrate the *tanguillos* rhythm with what is thought to be a compatible 6/8 Moroccan rhythm. Many musicians with whom I have spoken, from both sides of the strait, have pointed to the ease with which *tanguillos* works with Arab-Andalusi or *chaabi* 6/8s, making *tanguillos* a popular choice for mixing flamenco with Arab-Andalusi. Yet *tanguillos* and a Moroccan 6/8 hardly describe the same rhythm. In fact, these are each polyrhythmic complexes, in addition to which, each manifests with a very different feel.

A flamenco *compás*, or rhythmic form,¹⁸ can be binary, ternary, unmetered, or follow a 12-beat cycle, corresponding to the particular *palo*, or song form. The 12-beat cycle, in particular, generates a number of different rhythmic possibilities. Flamencologists, instructors, and practitioners differ in the way they represent, perceive, and manifest these groupings, but all would agree on the following, basic organization. For *palos* that utilize twelve-beat *compases* (plural), the beats are subdivided into ternary and binary groupings, as in 3-3-2-2-2, or some modal displacement of this pattern: 2-2-2-3-3, or 3-2-2-2-3. Additionally, depending on the *palo*, rhythmic stress can fall on the first or last beat in each grouping.¹⁹

Tanguillos is a particularly interesting flamenco *palo* in that it exploits a lot of the metrical possibilities of the flamenco 12-beat cycle. Flamenco scholar Faustino Nuñez describes *tanguillos* as follows:

"The main characteristic of the *tanguillo* is the *compás* (rhythmic organization) on which it is realized, a *polyrhythm* in which the entire metric universe of flamenco converges: the superposition of three *compases*: 6/8, 3/4, and 2×4 [sic], giving rise to the seemingly simple rhythmic organization of *tanguillo*, which combines the binary rhythm with a ternary subdivision (6/8), with [another] binary rhythm of binary subdivision (2 x 4), and a ternary [rhythm] with a binary subdivision (3/4). These three overlapping bars give rise to what we know as *tanguillo* rhythm" (Nuñez 2011, my translation).

While *tanguillos* differs from some other flamenco *palos* in its strong polyrhythmic character, in the course of my research most musicians described *tanguillos* as being principally in 6/8.

¹⁸ *Compás* (pl. *compases*) has many meanings. It can refer to meter, or the basic rhythmic organization of the piece, or can mean simply playing in good, consistent time, as in *buen compás*. Most broadly it describes the total complex of rhythmic and harmonic elements that pertain to particular *palo*. (See Fernández 2004, 22)

¹⁹ For more on flamenco music theory, see Fernandez 2014.

With respect to Arab-Andalusi rhythm, “Tan Cerca Tan Lejos,” utilizes a three-note pattern called *insiraf quddam* (Bakkali, persona communication). This is a syncopated pattern, whose emphasis falls on the last beat of the pattern. — *Tek Tek DUM*. the Moroccan Arab-Andalusi context of *al-Ala*, this pattern is one of several rhythmic modes that comprise a complete *nuba* (suite). In practice, certain movements within the *nuba* begin at a moderate tempo, then accelerate towards the conclusion of the movement. Scholars and practitioners differ as to whether or not the rhythmic pattern performed at these two tempi constitute different rhythms. At slower tempi, Chaachoo (2012) describes *insiraf quddam* as being 3/4; when played at faster tempi, Chaachoo refers to the same rhythmic pattern as being in 6/8.

In either case, the beat-stress, feel and conceptual organization of this rhythm have little do with a western concept of 6/8 as a compound duple. In contrast to a western notion of a stressed downbeat, the rhythmic stress of *insiraf quddam* falls on the third beat, reflecting a tendency to emphasize melodic phrase endings characteristic of Arab-Andalusi music and much of Moroccan music, more broadly. Moreover, in a good deal of Moroccan Andalusi sung music, vocal melodies feature a syncopated entrance (Bakkali, personal communication). This is true of the melody to “Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos;” entering on an upbeat, the vocal phrase gathers energy as it pushes towards its conclusion. The concluding punctuation occurs on what Tino possibly misconstrued as the downbeat. Differences at the more subtle level of microtiming further complicate matters. “They have a super beautiful, dragged feel, really nice,” says Tino, “but a flamenco can’t play over that. In fact, the *tanguillo* was, for the percussionist—someone I had sent for because he is one of the best in Spain—it was an ordeal.”

Tino’s struggle with *tanguillos* began in the recording studio, and persisted on stage. He humbly concedes, “As to the rhythm of the piece in *tanguillos*, there are some things that I really just don’t understand. It’s very difficult. I have had concerts with them where I was rhythmically totally lost. I had to look at where the audience was clapping *palmas* in order to see where the time was [within the cycle]. They [Moroccan-heritage musicians] have a rhythmic concept very different to mine and it’s challenging.”

Also, Tino’s observation hits on a key point that I wish to highlight. On the one hand his comments suggest that there are real differences between the *tanguillos* rhythm and the Arab-Andalusi rhythm his collaborators are playing. On this level he is referring to what we might call “music-technical” differences between the two rhythmic patterns, distinctions one could record, measure, and analyze. However, Van Der Sman’s subjective experience of feeling “lost” begins to get at a much more elusive and complicated issue: that of how musicians of diverse musical trainings, competences, and understandings orient themselves in time.

The challenge of crafting, and then performing, “Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos,” highlight overlaps and distinctions in rhythm-melodic logic²⁰ between the collaborating Arab-Andalusi and flamenco-trained musicians. By *rhythm-melodic logic* I mean to suggest that the way in which rhythm and melody are inter-related, and conceived, denotes a fundamental feature of an enculturated musical sensibility. Differences between Northern Moroccan (if not Arab-Andalusi more broadly) and western European/flamenco musical sensibilities account for much of the confusion on the part of Tino and the percussionist he hired for the session.

All of which brings us back to where I began this chapter, at that moment in rehearsal prior to Chekara’s album release show when the musicians were struggling to get on the same page, “in phase but out of synchrony” to reverse Steven Feld’s (1988, 82) characterization of Kaluli singing,

Conclusion - Mind the Gap(s)

I began my discussion of the distribution of musical competence within Chekara’s self-described “flamenco andalusi” because this moment offers some insight into the different knowledges, trainings and musical sensibilities in relational play within the ensemble. In trying to better understand musical thinking in the context of fusion, it can be productive to attend to the gaps in musical competence between members of the group, as these may speak to significant differences between the musical systems involved. How musicians navigate these system differences informs the music that results. Moments in which musicians struggle to “get on the same page” are worth attending to, because they often speak to larger gaps in musical knowledge, which may or may not correspond with differences in thinking or sensibility from one musical system to the next. In the case of the opening vignette, while it is possible that another guitarist would have found his entrance without difficulty, I believe Tino’s struggle in that moment has less to do with any individual lack of ability on his part and more to do with fundamental differences between flamenco and Arab-Andalusi—as well as chaabi—musical systems with respect to rhythmic and melodic logic. Those systemic distinctions (which amount to cultural differences) between musical systems engender different kinds of knowledge, and develop skill sets particular to the musical system.

Chapter Four raised several issues concerning how musicians of diverse trainings and backgrounds collaborate to combine musical styles. I argued that the juxtaposition of styles that characterizes Chekara’s brand of musical mixture owes to two inter-related factors: a fidelity to the previous generation’s compositional and collaborative model, and divergences in musical competence between flamencos and Arab-Andalusi-trained

²⁰ The earliest usage I have found of the term *rhythm-melodic* dates to 1939, part of the title of a pedagogical piece composed by George Dasch. I first heard the term from David Locke, in lectures on West African musical systems.

musicians. By no means am I claiming that the musicians have nothing in common musically, nor am I suggesting that Jalal, Tino, and their collaborators are unidimensional in their musical competences. To the contrary, the ways in which these musicians do possess some familiarity with one another's style are critical to their ability to collaborate. I do, however, note ways in which the Moroccan-heritage musicians possess a more multidimensional musical competence than their flamenco-trained colleagues, acquired through a general process of acculturation from living in Spain, and more actively through the experience of learning to play alongside flamenco musicians. This is particularly true of Jalal, whose ability to move between the two musical systems—and the networks traced by their respective social orbits—proves an invaluable asset in his role as bandleader.

Despite an often-close relationship between Spanish flamencos and their collaborators of North African heritage, at least within the Granada scene, musical collaborations like Chekara's speak to the ways in which many in Granada's Moroccan community still live a transnational life that straddles and criss-crosses the Gibraltar Strait: so, close, and still so far away. The ways in which these musicians understand, feel, perform and seek to reconcile the differences between flamenco and Arab-Andalusi music speaks not only to music-technical differences between the styles, however. Once we have a better sense of both the assemblage of divergent competences that collectively constitute the ensemble's distributed cognition, as well as the music-technical differences between the two styles, we can move from a discussion of knowledge and skill (how we nominally understand competence) to begin to address the deeper matter of the performers' divergent musical sensibilities—this abstract, elusive, and often hidden aspect of competence.

The issue of musical sensibility in the context of musical mixture figures not only in Chekara's music, but also in the projects of Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca. As such, musical sensibility provides an opening to consider these case studies in a comparative light, and forms the subject of Chapter Five.



Figure 4.4 Poster for the documentary film *Tan Cerca Tan Lejos* (photo by Pepe Zapata)

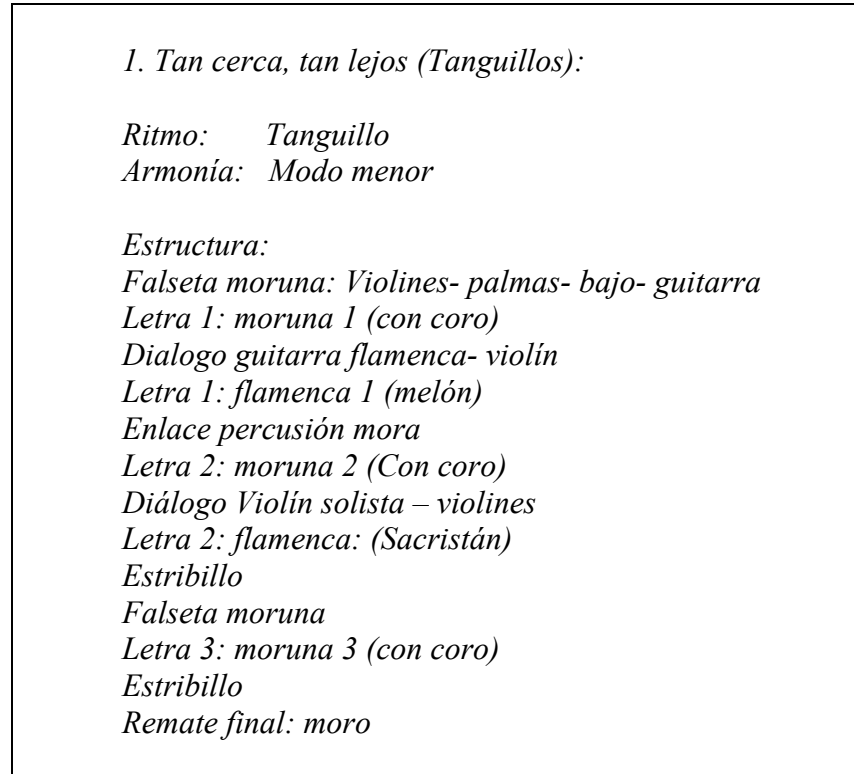


Figure 4.5 Structure of “Tan Cerca Tan Lejos” as analyzed by Pilar Alonso²¹

²¹ Flamenco guitarist and teacher Pilar Alonso compiled this chart for use with her own fusion project in Granada. Looking for new material for the group, she turned to the recently released *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos*, and charted the structure of several pieces from the record. Written from the perspective of a flamenco guitarist, the above chart offers some insight into a flamenco musician’s frame of reference. First, she refers to the rhythm as “*tanguillos*.” Possessing a deep knowledge of flamenco, she is able to identify some of the sources of the coplas. (Whether spontaneously improvised or preconceived, flamenco vocalists assemble lyrics from a corpus of texts, often combining lines or full stanzas from multiple sources. See Manuel 2006 for more on this process.) The chart uses *mora* or *moruna* to describe the Moroccan contributions to the piece, whether lyrics (*letras*), a violin solo (*falseta*), or a percussive bridge section linking stanzas (*enlace*).

CHAPTER FIVE: TOWARD A THEORY OF MUSICAL SENSIBILITY – RETHINKING (MULTI)MUSICALITY THROUGH COLLABORATIVE MIXTURE

*Fusion requires being multiple.*¹
– Amina Alaoui

Multiplicity and Sensibility

As I describe in Chapter Two, when I first sat down to interview Amina Alaoui, she established the parameters of the conversation by describing her own, multifaceted musical formation. She was referring to the fact that she had training in western classical music as well as ballet, while, at the same time, she had been reared on the Arab Andalusí music of her grandmother, who sang, taught, and instilled in the young Amina a love of *gharnati*, the Arab-Andalusí song form nurtured in Tlemcen and Oran in western Algeria, and later brought to Rabat, and Oujda, Morocco. With each successive album in her career, Amina explored new musical directions and in the process acquired new musical competences. She wanted to make sure I understood that her whole music-making life was born in the push and pull of her own component musical selves, and continues to develop in an unfolding stylistic expansion of musical experience. Alaoui's musical multiplicity is far more than the sum of her musical knowledges and skills. For Alaoui, *being multiple* defines her musical sensibility, her way of attuning to the world.

Multiplicity is a theme that features, in different ways, throughout this thesis. As is the case for many of the musicians in the groups they lead, Jalal Chekara and José Cabral have each achieved some measure of musical competence in more than one stylistic domain. Yet such a description hardly begins to describe the complex profile of these musicians' knowledges and skills, how they understand and relate to their own abilities—that is, the totality of what those multiple competences mean to the musicians—let alone how this multiplicity informs the musical mixtures they seek to create. While to this point I have discussed the projects of Amina Alaoui, La Banda Morisca, and Jalal Chekara in relative isolation, in this chapter I bring together the three case studies by exploring in greater depth the question of multiple musical competences, or *multimusicality*.

There is another, larger issue in play here: the multidimensional nature of musicality itself. Multimusicality exposes a theoretical challenge to account for music making knowledge and skill as they relate to matters of belief, desire, and the imaginings of self in relation to the world. Drawing on ideas I have been establishing throughout this dissertation, in this chapter I wish to shift the conversation about musical competence, or

¹ “Prose for a Rainbow,” liner-note essay from Alaoui's album *Arco Iris* (ECM 2011).

musicality, to consider the deeper issue of *musical sensibility*. By musical sensibility I am referring to the organizational ethos that underlies competence and interaction—the *ways of relating* to what we know, to the people and world around us, and to ourselves. Sensibility, in this view, integrates a complex mix of knowledge, skill, experience, as well as an individual aesthetic grounded in personal belief, identity, and social disposition.

In John Blacking’s classic *How Musical is Man?* he defines music as “humanly organized sound,” describing that organizing force as “patterns of interaction of human bodies in society” (1973, 3-31 and x-xi, respectively), and making the case for musicality as a socially and culturally specific, yet universally shared, human capacity. Though the term “sensibility” does not appear in the text, I would argue that it is Blacking’s own acculturation to a Venda musical sensibility that grounds his argument. Indeed, Blacking describes Venda music as “an experience of becoming, in which individual consciousness is nurtured within the collective consciousness of the community and hence becomes the source of richer cultural forms” (ibid., 28). It is precisely this emergence of individual musical sensibility within the context of, in fact, multiple collectives that I wish to explore in this chapter.

Just as there are myriad ways of “being musical,” we can speak of different ways in which musicians attain and deploy multimusicality. In the context of the case studies before us, multimusicality is part of what informs a musician’s *collaborative musical sensibility*. I argue that being multimusical entails more than competence in more than one style or tradition; it constitutes *a particular quality of musical competence* in and of itself, one that plays an especially important role in intercultural collaboration, and in musical mixtures more broadly. I see this quality emerge in the different ways in which collaborating musicians utilize flexibility, and even restraint, with regard to processes of composition, arrangement, and live, improvised performance. While flexibility and restraint can take many forms, as I will discuss, it generally entails a willingness—even a desire—to abdicate part of one’s “core competence” (Brinner 1995, 83), to give up something in the collaborative exchange. Rather than dogmatic adherence to stylistic convention, evidence suggests that the multimusical musician may be more open and able to adapting to suit the creative or practical needs of the collaborative music-making situation.

I first consider musicality in the context of Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences (2011). Gardner provides a useful way to think about some of the component dimensions of intelligence as they relate to music making, in general, and collaborative musical mixture, in particular. Putting Gardner in conversation with Brinner’s thinking about musical competence and interaction (1995, 2009) I describe a *multimusical, collaborative sensibility* as a framework for addressing musical mixture, with implications for understanding music making more broadly. I limit the conversation here to three key facets of sensibility, which I conceive in terms of ways of engaging *within and among musical systems, interpersonally, and intrapersonally*.

I turn, next, to the literature on bimusicality and its related neologisms, re-examining this intellectual lineage through the lens of musical sensibility. The neologisms scholars have produced (*bimusicality*, *multimusicality*, *polymusicality*, *intermusability*) underscore the way in which the core term, musicality, or musical ability, often remains a constant. While hardly taken for granted, the scholarly conversation does not often address, head on, what we mean by musicality or musical ability as these relate to concepts like musical competence or musical intelligence. Yet this notion of *ways of relating*— that is, relating to musical systems, interpersonally and intrapersonally—run throughout this intellectual lineage, a meta-reflection (Darmawan 2011) on sensibility lying just below the surface.

Through several ethnographic examples, I then show some of the different ways in which this sensibility manifests in the context of collaborative musical mixture, and how multimusicality is implicated. I look at the notion of flexibility and restraint in the musical sensibilities of Mostafa Bakkali and Tino van der Sman, two of Jalal Chekara’s closest collaborators. I then address two musical pieces: “*Flor de Nieve*” by Amina Alaoui and José Luis Montón and traditional gharnati piece, “*Ya Adili Billah*” as it was arranged by La Banda Morisca.

The examples I provide can hardly speak to all the facets of musical sensibility, or exhaust all the ways that being multiple engenders cognitive flexibility. My principal aim with this chapter is to try to illuminate the mutually constituted space between competence and interaction, between musical knowledge/skill and its socio-cultural negotiation: the space of musical sensibility.

Musical Intelligence and Competence

My thinking about multimusicality as a complex domain of competence draws some inspiration from Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983, 1991, 2011). Gardner’s groundbreaking idea launched a reconsideration of what had long been a narrow, monolithic concept of intelligence. For Gardner, linguistic and mathematical knowledge and ability, which had long dominated received notions of intelligence, constitute but two among a host of different component intelligences, each of which, in his view, are relatively distinct, and functionally autonomous. The full list, expanded since Gardner’s original publication, now distinguishes eight types of intelligence: *spatial*, *bodily-kinesthetic*, *musical*, *linguistic*, *logical-mathematical*, *interpersonal*, *intrapersonal*, and *naturalistic*.² Intelligence, in this view, is conceptually synonymous with competence; together, the component intelligences comprise the range of human intellectual competence. Key to Gardner’s theory is the idea that in any human endeavor, people draw upon a mix of these capacities.

² While he has not made significant research into these to warrant officially adding them to his canon, Gardner has tentatively suggested two other possible intelligences: “existential” and “pedagogical” (1991, 4-8).

Musical intelligence, according to MI theory, involves “the ability to produce, remember, and make meaning of different patterns of sound” (Davis et al. 2017). Gardner’s official Multiple Intelligences website offers a more clinical definition: “sensitivity to rhythm, pitch, meter, tone, melody, and timbre. May entail the ability to sing, play musical instruments and/or compose music (e.g. musical conductor)” (MI Oasis, 2017). Musical intelligence, then, is just one of the intelligences required to play music, alongside bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, and the personal intelligences. A more accurate definition for musical intelligence might have been *sonic intelligence*, were it not for the fact that musical competence is not just about attuning to sound; rather, people who exhibit musical intelligence have developed ways of applying their sonic sensitivity to the task of music making. Musicking thus involves ways of relating sonic capacity to other embodied-cognitive ways of meaningfully organizing the world.

In the years following the original publication, people in education, music psychology, and other fields were quick to adopt his theory. In Gardner’s later writings and subsequent editions of his landmark book he addressed a few ways in which he felt people misunderstood his ideas, two of which have direct bearing on this conversation.

But by the middle 1990s, I had noticed a number of misinterpretations of the theory. As one example, the concept of intelligences was often conflated with that of learning styles; in fact, an intelligence (the computing power of an individual’s musical or spatial or interpersonal capacity) is not at all the same as a style (the way in which one allegedly approaches a range of tasks). As another example, I noted the frequent confounding of a human intelligence with a societal domain (e.g., musical intelligence being misleadingly equated with mastery of a certain musical genre or role) (2011, 14).

These are, in fact, related issues. The theory of Multiple Intelligences rests on the idea that each intelligence operates somewhat autonomously. Yet, at the same time, we can only recognize the manifestation of intelligence within a particular *domain*: an area “available for study and mastery within a culture” (Gardner 2011, 31; see also Brinner 1995, 40). Once we shift the conversation from the abstract level of intelligence to the only slightly more concrete level of music as a cultural domain, we can begin to talk about how different people exhibit different cognitive patterns, a unique profile of engagement. This could be as simple as engaging more through bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, versus spatial or logical-mathematic. The point is, a musician might cultivate over time (or a music-making *situation* might call upon) a particular balance of intelligences, what I might term *ontological strong suits*—patterned ways of relating that are self-reinforcing over time.

Within any culture or musical system, competence is bound up with interaction (Brinner 1995). Interpersonal ways of relating, I suggest, are what underpin musical interaction. The mutually informing nature of these elements, especially in the context of collaborative music mixture, force us to think more about knowledge and skill on the one hand, and their social negotiation.

The way in which Gardner addresses intrapersonal intelligence comes closest to what I would describe as a sensibility. Intrapersonal intelligence, according to Gardner, refers to:

the development of the internal aspects of a person. The core capacity at work here is *access to one's own feeling life*—one's range of affects or emotions: the capacity instantly to effect discriminations among these feelings and, eventually, to label them, to enmesh them in symbolic codes, to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behavior" [emphasis in original] (Gardner 2011, 272).

Of course, the cultivation of an intrapersonal sensibility does not happen in an isolated vacuum. Gardner recognizes that intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence are, in fact, deeply intertwined:

[A]n emerging sense of self proves to be a key element in the realm of the personal intelligences, one of overriding importance to individuals the world over. While a developed sense of self is ordinarily viewed as a quintessential manifestation of intrapersonal intelligence, my own inquiry has led to a different conclusion. The wide variety of "selves" encountered throughout the world suggests that this "sense" is better thought of as an amalgam, one that emerges from a combination or fusion of one's intrapersonal and one's interpersonal knowledge. (Gardner 2011, 275)

As applied to music, two important propositions emerge from my reading of Gardner's theory:

- 1) as a domain of human cognition, music making (as well as musical listening) calls upon multiple ways of relating to musical sound;
- 2) the personal intelligences (interpersonal and intrapersonal) are at once intimately interconnected with one another, and qualitatively distinct from the other component intelligences.

These two ideas offer a useful way of framing the cognition of musicality, as a complex sensibility, a multifaceted set of ways of relating to musical sound (i.e. utilizing musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial intelligences) in combination with ways of relating inter/intrapersonally.

I see in musical sensibility a way to further our understanding of how competence and interaction mutually invoke one another. Gardner describes a person's particular combination of all the component intelligences as that individual's unique intelligence profile. When it comes to real-world music making, however, it would be more productive to consider the idea of an individual's sensibility profile, or what I am calling a *collaborative (multi)musical sensibility*, which involves three core aspects: how musicians engage and relate to musical systems; how the musicians relate to each other interpersonally, and how musicians understand themselves, their own desires, worldview,

and ever-emerging sense of self. My recourse to parentheses for the prefix “multi” has two aims. First, I wish to underscore the point that all musicality is, in fact, multifaceted, as well as dynamic, ever emergent. Following Blacking (1973), musicality in this view is a universal human capacity shaped by particular social and cultural contexts. Second, and more specifically, I am making the claim the subjects of my study involved in multimusical collaborations develop sensibilities particular to the cultural contexts of fusion.

Musical System (or Inter-System) Sensibility. This refers to how musicians know and relate to the music-technical aspects of a given musical system, as well as how they understand the relationship among the different styles involved in the mixture. While the ability to discern actual musical similarities between styles is very important, system-to-system relating as a *sensibility* has more to do with one’s belief about how musics can, and should be combined, based upon a sense of the boundaries that define styles, the historical precedent for a given mixture, the set of beliefs about music-historical linkages between styles, all in relation to a sense of what is both aesthetically desirable, and socially acceptable in a given music-making context.

Inter-system sensibility takes into account the nature and degree of an individual’s musical competence within each style in the mix—one’s level of relevant multimusicality, as well as the horizons of one’s musical imagination, and openness to other musical possibilities. Just as musical sensibility within a single style or system involves a mix of different intelligences across various domains of competence, so too, will that mix of intelligences likely be brought to bear in the context of musical mixture. If a musician’s way of relating to musical sound leans heavily on bodily or kinesthetic intelligence, or on visual-spatial reasoning, these same intelligences may inform their sensibility profile in the context of musical mixture. However, their way of engaging the various domains of competence (Brinner 1995) may, in fact, differ substantially from one musical system to the next, depending on their knowledge, skill, training, and performative experience within each musical system, and the “profile” of the system itself.

Interpersonal Sensibility. How musicians relate to one another is perhaps the crucial aspect of a collaborative musical sensibility. How a musician relates interpersonally is bound up with other aspects of musicality, particularly musical competence. Multiple musical competences, and especially shared, or overlapping musical system competence and sensibility may be important factors influencing the interpersonal relationship. Power relations are, of course, an important factor in any social relationship. Rather than the actual power balance or imbalance, itself, interpersonal sensibility has to do with a musician’s own *sense* of what is both possible and desirable in the context of the relationship, whatever the power dynamic.

Intrapersonal Sensibility. Intrapersonal intelligence is essentially the capacity to know one’s self. However, as a facet of musical sensibility, a reflexive predilection amounts to far more than self-assuredness; rather, self-exploration helps guide all music-making

decisions and informs the acquisition of musical competence(s). Importantly, intrapersonal relating also must take into account personal history, the direct influence of forebears, and one's own sense of positionality in relationship to their own past. Like other ontological strong suits that comprise a musical sensibility, capacity breeds more capacity. Musical growth in this sense is tied to a core value of ever seeking to better know one's self.³

The three aspects I am outlining here represent just one possible way of theoretically organizing musical sensibility, and are not meant to be taken as an exhaustive list. Instead, I see this effort as beginning to link some of Howard Gardner's key ideas about multiple intelligences with Brinner's important thinking about musical competence and interaction. Just as music making draws upon several, if not all of Gardner's component intelligences, so, too, do my categories of sensibility intersect and cross-cut the four "constellations of concepts" around which Brinner (1995, 169) organizes interaction:

Interactive network comprises the roles assumed by performers and the relationships or links between them, *interactive system* refers to the means and meanings of communication and coordination, and *interactive sound structure* is a constellation of concepts associated with the constraints and possibilities inherent in the ways that sounds are put together...[A]ttention must also be given to the "why" of interaction, the goals rewards, pitfalls, and sanctions that may be subsumed under the rubric interactive motivation.

Much, but not all, of what Brinner places under the banner of interactive network, which has mostly to do with the interactive "rules of the game," I would subsume under the heading of musical system sensibility. Brinner's *interactive network* concerns the pragmatic dimensions of leadership and other roles within a collaborating ensemble, as well as the relationships between participants. As I read him, interactive network relationships have less to do with interpersonal dynamics, per se, and more to do with those dynamics within the context of generally agreed-upon, structural roles of particular instrumentalists, vocalists, and other participants (e.g. composer) within a given musical system. The structures that govern interpersonal relationships within an interactive network flow from the conventions of the musical system.

However, to the extent that the particular ways in which two or more musicians relate to one another have a bearing on how the game is played (to continue the metaphor), certainly interpersonal sensibility, as I have defined it, plays a significant role. The same goes for interactive system. These are quite literally the agreed-upon "cues, responses, prompts, signals, and markers [which] constitute a [musical] system (ibid., 183).

³ While practical concerns about audience reception and the commercial viability of a project often contribute to a musician's artistic direction, and thus comprise some part of one's intrapersonal sensibility, here I wish to distinguish these external factors from the more internal matter of self-knowledge. I recognize, nonetheless, the difficulty in parsing these elements of musical motivation, as some artists, by necessity, are motivated at least in part by monetary gain, while some seek personal validation through an audience.

Interpersonal sensibility comes into play insofar as the way in which these communications contribute to an affective dimension of connection between musicians.

I'll offer a very brief ethnographic example, when Amina Alaoui and José Luis Manton performed together at an event called *Poesía en el Laurel*. Held in the courtyard of an active convent just outside Granada, the show featured a mix of poetry readings, music, and theatre. This was in August, 2014, a full three years after *Arco Iris* was released. Amina and José Luis had not performed together for many months, yet their communication and performance showed no signs of rust. For most of the set, José Luis would play an introductory passage on guitar before Amina entered, but on the few occasions when Amina began a cappella, José Luis would, in very subtle fashion, play the tonic note to provide Amina with a reference pitch. I remember distinctly the one time he didn't give the note. With a casual glance, raising one eyebrow, Amina cued José to play the tonic note. He smiled, played the note, prompting Amina's smile in return, and she began the piece.

On its face, the moment is unremarkable, but from the perspective of interaction and musical sensibility, it says a lot. The cue is a clear example of an interactive system of communication at work. As well, José Luis and Amina are each playing roles in an interactive network, as it is the job of the accompanist to provide the reference note, and, absent a pitched instrument, the prerogative of the singer to request it. But *how* it is delivered and how José Luis responds offer some indication of the interpersonal sensibility of each performer, and rapport that undergirds their interaction. Amina could have demanded the note with a more urgent, aggressive look; José Luis could have responded any number of ways. Instead, with one subtle exchange the musicians communicated to each other, and to the audience, a mutual ease and joy, and a clear sense of understanding, comfort, and affection between the musicians.

As Brinner cautions, “[m]otivation may be the aspect of interaction least susceptible of systematization” (1995, 201). *Interactive motivation*, which Brinner (ibid., 200) describes as a combination of ethics and aesthetics, straddles all three aspects of musical sensibility as I have outlined them. Aesthetic judgments form part of one's way of relating to a musical system, or, in the case of musical mixture, one's inter-system sensibility— one's way of understanding how diverse musical resources ought to be combined. Aesthetic values play a large part in intrapersonal sensibility. As I will discuss later in the chapter, for a musician like Amina Alaoui aesthetics and ethics are inter-related, central concerns. Interpersonal sensibility, as I am defining it, involves affective dimensions of human engagement as well. These relate not only to one's unique interpersonal disposition, but also to one's values and aesthetic orientations. An example of motivation as a multifaceted sensibility comes in Brinner's interview with Bustan Abraham member Nassim Dakwar:

“No matter how busy we are Bustan is our top priority because our home is this ensemble. We don't work for anyone. We don't belong to anyone. Everyone feels that this is *his* project.” He elaborated on the democratic process that made this

possible, “And I say this in all honesty: In Bustan there are very good musicians, with the correct view of things. And everyone who says a sentence we weigh what he has said and analyze it. And we play it and listen and decide whether it’s right or not, appropriate or not. There are enough ideas, and very good ideas” (Dakwar in Brinner 2009, 127).

The latter part of Nassim’s statement relates to a combination of intersystem and interpersonal musical sensibility—how the band as a collective navigates a sense of what is possible and desirable. But the first part of Nassim’s comment, describing Bustan as a metaphorical home speaks to the heart of deeply felt personal sensibility. Nassim’s comment perfectly captures what I mean when I describe musical sensibility as an organizational ethos underlying both competence and interaction—*ways of relating* to what we know, to our collaborators, and world around us, and to ourselves.

As Brinner notes, key to his theory of interaction is that the constellation of concepts he proposes must be seen as overlapping conceptual categories:

It is imperative that interactive network, system, sound structure, and motivation be understood as overlapping views or perspectives, mutually illuminating rather than mutually exclusive; they are all necessary for a complete depiction and understanding of interaction (ibid).

I would describe my theory of musical sensibility in very much the same terms. Far from distinct channels of sensibility that a musician turns on or off in different musical situations, musical system, interpersonal, and intrapersonal sensibilities should be understood as ever in dialogic relationship.

The musicians who comprise the projects of Amina Alaoui, Jalal Chekara, and La Banda Morisca each feature different profiles of collaborative multimusical sensibility, uniquely engaging and relating uniquely to the various, multiple dimensions that inhere in their own musicality. I have not lost sight, however, of the need to address the original sense of multimusicality—as possessing competence in more than one musical style, genre, tradition, or music culture. The implications of being multimusical, I will argue, far exceed simply being able to perform adequately in stylistically different socio-musical settings. The literature on bi/multi/polymusicality leads us to reconsider the “musicality” part of the equation. I turn now to the ways ethnomusicologists have theorized multimusicality, more commonly known as bimusicality. Despite the different applications of this concept, in my reading, the idea of a multimusical sensibility runs like a silent undercurrent throughout this literature.

Bi-musicality and its Related Neologisms

Though the idea of learning the music of one's interlocutors has its origins with the early comparative musicologists Abraham and Hornbostel (Baily 2008, Cottrell 2007), it is Mantle Hood (1960) who is credited with coining the term "bi-musicality." Hood argued that music scholars ought to achieve at least a basic performative competence in the music they were studying. Applying a linguistic concept to musical competence, Hood considered learning the musical system as akin to speaking the local language. More than simply a prerequisite for gaining access to a community and conducting meaningful research, achieving performative musical competence in the music under study was, in Hood's view, key to reaching any real depth of understanding of the music culture in question.⁴ As the participant-observer model has become an integral tool in ethnomusicological research (Rice 2003), most scholars writing on bimusicality have conceived of, and understood the term mostly in terms of the researcher's own competence.

The bi-musicality literature takes one of two paths. One of these directions continues to consider the value and import of the ethnographer learning the music of the other, along the lines of Mantle Hood (e.g. Baily 2001 and 2008, Rice 2003). The other direction recognizes the ways in which multimusicality manifests among musicians themselves. I'll return to the reflexive branch of this intellectual lineage later in this chapter. First, though, I wish to follow the line of thinking that examines multimusicality as an area of external inquiry.

Along the way, scholars have advanced the conversation by offering alternative terminologies and interpretations of the basic concept, including *multimusicality* (Davis 1994) and *polymusicality* (Brinner 2009) to allow for the possibility of three or more stylistic competences, each term offering a different valence on the same core concept. John Baily's *intermusability* (2008) seeks to sidestep the numerical hurdle, avoids the possible inference that musicality be taken to be synonymous with innate talent, and emphasizes the direct, social exchange that musical learning both requires and enables. At times scholars have used different terms interchangeably, or have chosen parallel cultural phenomena (e.g. bi- or multilingual, multiethnic, bi-cultural, etc.), as in Manuel Peña's discussion of the "bicultural bind" facing middle-class *tejanos* (1985). As Peña's work demonstrates, bimusicality need not be the sole purview of the researcher.

⁴Hood's paper "The Challenge of Bi-Musicality," presented in 1959 at the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, marked an early ideological divide forming within the then-nascent field of ethnomusicology. Voiced as a broad critique of how a good deal of music research suffered, in his words, from a "lack of musicality" (1960, 55) Hood's musician-scholar model anticipated and would come to stand in some contrast to the cultural-anthropological approach Alan Merriam articulated just a few years later in his massively influential *The Anthropology of Music* (1964).

Stephen Cottrell is another among those rethinking the concept of multimusicality as a feature of the musicians or musical cultures they study. Cottrell explores bimusicality as a pragmatic skill for London freelance musicians (2007). Critiquing the notion that bimusicality necessarily involves one's "home" tradition, and an exotic "other" tradition, he describes how freelance musicians in London develop performative competence in multiple western musical styles, a phenomenon he refers to as "local bimusicality" (ibid., 102). Somewhat akin to Mark Slobin's idea of code switching (1993), Cottrell takes competence to refer not only to playing in a stylistically correct manner, but knowing and adhering to the social codes appropriate to particular performance contexts.

While Cottrell is concerned with the issue of competence and not sensibility, per se, his attention to social codes hints at a kind of differentiated musical sensibility that musicians bring to different stylistic performance situations. A fuller picture of musical sensibility would have to take into account the relationship the London freelancers have to each of the musical systems in play. Such a relationship involves a mix of musical system-, interpersonal-, and intrapersonal sensibilities. Between the two genres, does jazz or classical constitute their core competence? Do they feel more "at home"—both musically and socially—playing classical or jazz? Does their bimusicality emerge solely out of a need to make a living, or did a genuine interest or passion also motivate the acquisition of new stylistic competences. The answers to these questions are crucial to addressing the gap between multiple competences as detached knowledge and skill versus a more contextualized understanding of musical learning, desire, and relating as they inform the complex contours of multimusical sensibility.

Martha Ellen Davis (1994) expands the concept of bi-musicality or multi-musicality (she uses both terms interchangeably, with hyphen), observing how it operates at both the individual and collective level. Writing on Caribbean sacred musics, Davis employs the concept to help make sense of an increasingly hybridized "urban 'creole' music" in the Caribbean, one that draws from Euro- and African-influenced musics and develops over time, in the long wake of colonial encounter (ibid., 146). Rather than code switching between different socio-musical settings, as in the case of Cottrell's freelance musicians, Davis describes how a musician's performance style might vary from one moment to the next *within a single event*. In this sense, bi- or multi-musicality characterizes, for Davis, an emergent form of cultural syncretism, embodied by individual musicians, manifest within a musical event, and reflective of the complex intersection of people and ideas that defines the Caribbean.

From the perspective of multimusical sensibility, these represent rather diametrically opposed situations. Where Cottrell's musicians cultivate a kind of bifurcated musical sensibility, compartmentalizing two modes of behavior—two distinct ways of relating—Davis is describing how new musical genres coalesce through a multigenerational process of integrating distinct musical sensibilities.

In the context of collaborative musical mixtures, multimusicality operates somewhat differently than in the cases Davis and Cottrell describe. Fusion musics challenge us to

consider other dimensions of competence and musical sensibility specific to the requirements of blending styles. This is where I believe the other branch of the multimusicality literature—the one that continues to think along the lines of Mantle Hood and consider the value and import of the ethnographer learning the music of the other—can be of help.

What I read in this lineage is a progression from an initial concern with the music-technical workings of a musical system to an increasing attention to the interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects of an ethnographer's own musical sensibility. Tim Rice describes his epiphany in solving what he called "*le mystère des doigts bulgares*," finally achieving the fluid movement necessary to properly execute melodic ornaments on the Bulgarian *gaida* (bagpipe), as follows:

Perhaps the most profound discovery was that I learned to fuse my concepts of melody and ornamentation into a single concept most vividly expressed through the hands, not in musical notation—precisely the kind of integration I imagine young Bulgarian boys achieved when they learned this tradition (Rice 1994, 77).⁵

As I understand him, Rice is talking about more than the acquisition of a new musical competence. Rather, he is describing the expansion of his own multimusical sensibility, from what had previously been solely a Western, abstract, conceptual understanding of melody and rhythm, to a more multifaceted, yet integrated sensibility grounded in a kinesthetic, sensori-motor form of engagement.

However, it is Jeff Todd Titon, who, in describing bimusicality in terms of *subject shift*, comes closest to articulating interconnected aspects of what I calling a multimusical sensibility as a way of relating simultaneously to self and other:

[B]i-musicality...can induce moments of what I call subject shift, when one acquires knowledge by figuratively stepping outside oneself to view the world with oneself in it, thereby becoming both subject and object simultaneously. Bimusicality in this way becomes a figure for a path toward understanding (Titon 1995, 287)....

Elsewhere I have written about wanting to ground musical knowing in musical being; that is, I want to assert that there is a special kind of consciousness arising from what, using terms from phenomenology, would be called musical-being-in-the-world; and that this kind of consciousness produces a musical way of knowing (Titon 1994). This musical way of knowing is not limited to insights concerning musical structure or performance, but it operates in the world as a

⁵ Jeanne Bamberger has described this as part of the difference between “formal” and “figurative” modes of musical thinking the former a conceptual, abstracted, and representational way of organizing musical sound, and the latter more an intuited sense of musical sound that guides procedural thinking (Bamberger 1991).

whole, and particularly in the social world. Bi-musicality leads to a particularly active form of musical being and knowing (Ibid., 295)...

For me, bi-musicality has never just meant lessons in acquiring musical technique. Bi-musicality helps me understand musicking in the world, and my being in the world musically, from a particular viewpoint: the musical knowing that follows from musical being (Ibid., 296)

Titon is describing the cultivation of a multimusical sensibility, one in which interpersonal and intrapersonal ways of relating are intimately and inextricably bound up in one another. Rice's account, on the other hand, focuses on the relationship between intersystem and intrapersonal aspects of multimusicality. Collectively, they offer insight about how a multimusical sensibility coalesces around ways of relating to musical sound, to others, and to one's self.

While Rice and Titon are talking about the ethnographic enterprise, and speaking from the perspective of scholars, we would do well to apply these insights about the process of developing a multimusical sensibility to studies of musical collaboration. Titon's eloquent idea of a subject shift, that bi-musicality is a metaphor for seeing yourself and the person you are in dialogue from an out-of-body perspective, offers a way of looking at the interpersonal and the intrapersonal aspects of musical experience and makes the very convincing argument that the two are really hard to separate. Rather than thinking about this subject shift in terms of my own relationship with my interlocutors, I want to think about this in terms of the musicians themselves.

As I revisit each of the case studies, I will describe some of the interactive aspects of a collaborative, multimusical sensibility, and consider different manifestations of a flexible multimusicality in Chekara Flamenco, Amina's *Arco Iris*, and La Banda Morisca. As I have explored in the preceding chapters, each of these projects presents its own set of interpersonal relationships and collaborative challenges. It is no surprise, then, that while they draw inspiration from a common narrative—that of a shared music-cultural heritage linking Spain with North Africa and the Middle East more broadly—for the most part these groups manifest very distinct musical results.

(Inter)System Sensibility in Chekara's Flamenco Andalusi: Flexibility and Restraint

At the beginning of Chapter 4 I introduced Mostafa Bakkali, one of the Moroccan-born musicians rehearsing prior to Jalal Chekara's CD release show in Seville. In that chapter, part of the point I wanted to make was how Mostafa is able to adapt his playing, adjusting the way he interprets a 6/8 rhythm to fit a flamenco *tanguillos*. This is just one of the ways in which Mostafa displayed a flexible musical sensibility.

Mostafa's musical sensibility emerged, as well, in the context of the oud lessons I took with him in Tetería La Fuga, his tea shop on *calle* Elvira, in Granada's little Morocco.⁶ As in my lessons with Amin and Mehdi Chaachoo in Tetouan, my meetings with Mostafa functioned more like open-ended conversations, mixing Arab-Andalusi music theory, technique, repertoire, Moroccan musical, social, and political history, and life story.

Mostafa's default style of playing borders on brash: he achieves a loud, bright tone by using an aggressive right hand attack in combination with striking the strings near the bridge. I had initially assumed this was a style he cultivated in the busy ensemble settings in which *al-Ala*, Morocco's Arab-Andalusi music, is performed. After all, his playing style seemed in keeping with several of the Moroccan Andalusi oud players I had heard live and on recordings prior to my fieldwork.⁷ I soon realized that other performers within the same tradition varied tremendously in tone and volume. After a few lessons with Mostafa, I had concluded this was just how he played.

However, over the course of our lessons, a far more complex profile of musical sensibility began to emerge. The more I got to know Mostafa, the broader I realized his musical knowledge ran, as our conversations expanded to include other Moroccan styles of music. The product of an Andalusi, conservatory training in Tangier, he, in fact, possesses a voracious musical appetite. The turning point came when I expressed an interest in learning more about *gharnati*.⁸ Mostafa lit up and launched into a whole history of the musicians and the genre, tracing the movement of the genre from Algeria to Morocco, and noting the contributions of Jewish musicians alongside their Muslim counterparts.

⁶ Once a gathering point for a network of Moroccan musicians and the site of occasional Arab-Andalusi music sessions, *Tetería La Fuga*'s touristic business declined in the wake of the global economic downturn. Mostafa finally closed *La Fuga* in the summer of 2015. As of this writing, he had no plans to reopen the establishment.

⁷ I note a parallel here between Arab-Andalusi oud technique and the bluegrass mandolin technique cultivated by Bill Monroe and maintained in traditional bluegrass circles. A bright, loud attack, doubling of notes, and an insistent, driving tremolo are among their shared characteristics.

⁸ The seeds of this conversation had been planted some weeks earlier when a stellar young musician, Brahim El Idrissi, had visited *La Fuga*. I knew of Brahim as a violist, but, like nearly all trained Arab-Andalusi musicians, he had learned oud from an early age. Passing him my instrument, he played an impromptu, and beautiful rendition of a *gharnati*.

As he launched into a tune, it was Mostafa's *sound* that left me dumbstruck. From the first note he was a completely different player. Gone was the edgy, aggressive, pronounced right hand attack, and in its place a smooth, relaxed, lyrical tone and feel. I don't think Mostafa was quite aware of how different he sounds when he plays *gharnati*. When I called attention to it and asked him about whether he was trying to get a different sound out of the oud, he politely acknowledged me but didn't think anything of it or really didn't think he was doing anything differently. This was, after all, the same person who dismissed what I heard as distinct rhythmic patterns by saying "it's all 6/8." Still, for someone whose playing seemed so marked by one musical sensibility, the sudden shape-shift in his musical personality threw me for a loop.

How can we understand Mostafa's sonic transformation? Between *gharnati* and *al-ala* we are talking about two different North African genres, each with stylistic norms. My sense is that, in part, Mostafa unconsciously adapts his playing to mimic the legato quality of *gharnati* as it is sung. We might consider this simply another manifestation of Cottrell's "local bimusicality," transposed to Morocco. Yet a notion of code switching as simply swapping out one set of behavioral rules for another does not account for the unconscious aspect of Mostafa's transformation, nor does it speak to the deeper matter how Mostafa relates to each of these genres. Attuning to musical sensibility, this latter point seems key to me. Mostafa's core competence, and core training is in *al-Ala*, a genre he loves and to which he is dedicated. By comparison, *gharmati*, if not an avocation, is a standout genre within the vast, larger soundscape in which he immerses himself. He simply has a different relationship to this genre, a slightly more distanced perspective which, I believe, quite literally frees his hand.

Whatever the reason, I conclude that part of what defines Mostafa's multimusical sensibility is a kind of flexibility, one he brings not only to the musical mixtures in which he participates, but even to his own engagement with the different musical styles that comprise his own multimusicality.

Indeed, a flexible music sensibility can be thought of as somewhat akin to what the best talented session musician must do. Some session musicians "do their thing" - they are hired to add a specific sound to a record. Others are more chameleon, fitting their playing to the needs of the song or album. The best players might do both - at once recognizable, yet malleable to fit the recording context.⁹ Along with Mostafa Bakkali (and we will see later with José Luis Montón as well) it is this latter camp to which Tino van der Sman belongs.

More than just the depth of knowledge of all the musical styles involved, inter-system sensibility takes into account how musicians conceive of the relationship between the styles—where they overlap, where they diverge, and how they think they can be combined in a way that makes musical sense. In Chapter four I discussed how Jalal

⁹ In the world of American roots music (an amalgam of U.S. folk, rock, country, jazz) Marc Ribot, Greg Leisz, Emmylou Harris come to mind.

Chekara's *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos* record involves musicians with strong core competences and relatively little instances of multimusicality. In part, this helps explain how the musical mixture feels like a juxtaposition and not an integrated fusion.

While Tino van der Sman lacks knowledge and experience in Arab-Andalusi music, his many roles on Chekara's *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos*, from engineer to producer, and flamenco guitar player unquestionably constitute a form of multimusicality. I am more interested, however, in one feature of Tino's multimusical sensibility, namely, the way his musical flexibility manifests as *restraint*.

Tino faced a formidable task in trying to integrate flamenco parts to the Andalusi tracks Jalal Chekara had already recorded in Tangier. Setting aside the complicated matter of mixing the record, just playing guitar over an Andalusi rhythmic accompaniment proved particularly challenging. Some of this is owing to the limits of Tino's musical competence, to be sure, but in another sense, it came down a matter of personal style. In a 2014 interview I had with Tino he said, "my form of playing doesn't fit (*no encaja*) with Arabic [music]. Not at all! I am very harmonic. I listen to a lot of jazz and the like."¹⁰ Tino's answer was to change how he played in order to accommodate the fusion:

Then, another process that I realized was that I had to annul (*anular*) myself as a guitarist...if you listen to the disc there are maybe three *falsetas* (solos) or so, but it is all very much to the side. I am not very central as a guitarist. Yes, I support a lot, but... it was about the work of eliminating myself. Look, I produced the disc, but I was really careful, when I added *falsetas* they were always, first of all rhythmically simple, because it worked better. Melodically folkloric. And perhaps that's been the key to it working.

Tino's process of adjusting his own playing, restricting himself to what served the mixture, raises an interesting issue that scholars need take into consideration when considering musical competence and the cognition of fusion: that of restraint, and what we don't hear in the musical mixture. Very often a musician's competence will greatly exceed the musical needs of the situation, such that what is captured on record or in live performance constitutes but a small fraction of the knowledge and skill of that musician. Knowing how to appropriately restrain one's playing—that is, knowing what *not to play*—is just as important as knowing what *to play*. This is true of any musical performance situation, but it takes on a different value in the context of fusion, as a key aesthetic dimension of musical competence. As both player and record producer, Tino was making a creative decision about where to take the music. His personal preference for the modern, jazz-influenced, harmonically dense strain of *nuevo flamenco* was, by his own reckoning, out of place in the context of a melodically rich Andalusi style devoid of harmony, and as such, had to be left out. I suggest that we consider Tino's self-imposed restraint a feature of his musical sensibility, one that shapes the resultant musical mixture.

¹⁰ Tino's word choice is illuminating. *Encajar* can mean "to fit in," "to correspond," but can also have more physical, or literal connotations, as in "to shoehorn" a foot, or "to box (something) in."

Calling attention to these subtle, literally silent, aspects of musical competence move us closer to an understanding of musical sensibility in the context of collaborative mixture.

In the examples of Mostafa and Tino I focused on one aspect of multimusical sensibility, namely the way in which musicians relate to different musical systems, either independently or collaborative musical mixture. In the next example, I want to talk in more detail about the interrelated aspects of interpersonal and intrapersonal sensibility as features of Amina Alaoui's collaboration with José Luis Montón.



Figure 5.1 Mostafa Bakkali backstage at Fundación Tres Culturas, Seville, 2015
(photo by Ian Goldstein)

Interpersonal Sensibility in Amina Alaoui and José Luis Montón's "Flor de Nieve"

It is well known to anyone who has ever made music socially that the relationships between musicians in a group stand as probably the foremost factor in the success of the collaboration. I wish to move beyond clichés about group chemistry (or the lack thereof), to consider the quality and depth of the interpersonal engagement as a factor in the kinds of musical mixture that result from these collaborations.

Amir-John Haddad, multi-instrumentalist and leader of the self-described "Mediterranean World Music Fusion" band *Zoobazar*, has a pithy phrase to sum up the importance of interpersonal relations in the context of mixed musical systems. When I sat down with Amir in Madrid and asked him about the keys to a successful musical fusion, I had expected him to talk about shared rhythmic frameworks, or overlaps in modal-melodic structure. Instead he told me: "*No hay fusiones de músicas, solo de músicos.*" ("There are no fusions of musics, only of musicians.") I read in his position more than merely a genre-defying attitude towards combining jazz and rock with flamenco, Balkan, and Middle Eastern musics. According to Haddad's philosophy, the critical catalyst for any musical mixture is not any inherent music-technical compatibility between styles as diverse as '70s funk and '30s *rebetiko*, but rather the relationships between collaborative music makers themselves. I take Haddad's comments as a starting point for an account of how interpersonal sensibility plays out in José Luis Montón and Amina Alaoui's "*Flor de Nieve.*"

Amina Alaoui points to José Luis Montón's multimusicality as a key factor in her decision to work with him on the project that would eventually become *Arco Iris*. Amina knew that the Catalan-born musician had both a classical and flamenco background, and that he had worked with Hossam Ramzy on the latter's *Flamenco Árabe, vol. 2*. A talented solo performer, José Luis has made a career of working with top-flight, genre-defying artists, most notably the violinist Ara Malikian and flamenco/bolero singer (and fellow Catalanian) Mayte Martín.

Amina saw Montón's collaborative, multimusical experience as an asset. While it's hard to parse out the matter of their interpersonal chemistry, I conclude that part of the strength of their rapport, so evident on stage, can be explained by the ways in which each musician has cultivated a deep capacity, ability, and interest in relating interpersonally with their collaborators. In this way, their multimusical sensibility sets them up for success in their relationship.

I spoke with each of them independently about their experiences making *Arco Iris*. A couple of ethnographic vignettes paint a picture of their dynamic. In particular, I will focus on one song that exemplifies their interpersonal sensibility as a strategy for collaboration.

I first met José Luis, in Madrid, following his concert with the Argentine guitarist, Guillermo Rizzotto, at the Casa de la Guitarra, a high-end guitar shop and intimate concert venue, perfectly situated in a plaza across from both the Royal Conservatory and the Reina Sofía Museum, all of which lie a stone's throw from Madrid's Atocha station, a touristic ground zero for the city.

Over *cervezas* and a late dinner following the show, we discuss José Luis's and Guillermo's current duo project, and *Arco Iris*. My strategy for eliciting his comments on the recordings was one I had begun with Amina earlier in my fieldwork. I had two recorders with me. From the first I could play back audio, in this case the studio tracks from *Arco Iris*. The second recorder would tape our conversation, with the studio record playing in the background.

To my surprise at the time, he tells me that "*Flor de Nieve*" was an *alegrías*. Among flamenco palos, *alegrías* and the branch of palos to which it belongs, are in part defined by their being in a major key. In this sense, they depart from the more common, "Andalusian" harmonization of most flamenco palos. Having heard *Flor de Nieve* many times at this point, I cannot identify it as an *alegrías*. This is because *alegrías* is normally played at lively tempo, moreover, it didn't follow the lyrical structure of a flamenco *alegrías*. In short, it sounded nothing like *alegrías* to my reasonably knowledgeable ear. So José Luis begins to tap out the rhythm. The traditional way of marking *compás* (rhythm) is to knock on a tabletop with the middle knuckle of a closed fist. José Luis does just this, but his knocking is so slow that I still can't make out the pattern. "Can you count it for me?" I ask. He nods, smiling like a kid performing a magic trick, knowing something that his audience does not. As he counts, the *alegrías compás* emerges from the music, materializes, as it were. "Damn!" Guillermo exclaims. "I like it even more now." For both of us, the piece is transformed.

When Amina presented José Luis her idea for "*Flor de Nieve*," based on a *gharnati* melody, they both quickly settled on *alegrías*, which seemed a natural choice to set the tune because the *gharnati* and *alegrías* feature a major tonality. In other words, the system to system relationship in this case was not rhythmic but rather modal melodic.

However, their strategy was to transform the *alegrías*, in this case by radically slowing it down to the point of making it unrecognizable. As it turns out, this kind of transformation was part of a compositional strategy on the part of José Luis and Amina. José Luis mentions that they utilized several flamenco palos throughout the record, but that most of these are obscured in one way or another.

I argue this was more than just a compositional strategy. Amina's concept suggested that in order to create something new, a new musical language, a true musical fusion, each side needs to give up something in the exchange, sacrifice some part of one's self. Hers is a strategy for relating the systems, it's a strategy for how to compose and create new music from distinct styles, and it's a personal ethos. Anything less, in her estimation,

leads to mere juxtaposition, a critique she levels against many of the self-described fusion projects in southern Spain.

The cohesiveness of *Arco Iris* depends, I maintain, on a kind of flexibility and restraint that is engendered by these two multimusical collaborators. It equally depends, however, on Amina's vision, which bridges interpersonal and intrapersonal sensibility.

Intrapersonal Sensibility

A year after that first meeting with José Luis, during a follow-up fieldwork trip, I met again with Amina and was able to elicit more of her perspective on the process of composing "*Flor de Nieve*," through which we gain a sense of how the intrapersonal is bound up with the interpersonal as part of her overall multimusical sensibility.

It is August, and a heat wave has descended on all of Spain. Situated at the base of the Sierra Nevada mountains, Granada normally boasts cooler summer evenings, but the air offers no respite tonight. I meet up with Amina Alaoui in the Plaza Nueva.

We walk the short distance across *Gran Via de Colón*, to a cafe in a small plaza downtown, opposite a modernist glass and steel building that houses the newly built Museo de Lorca, yet to open to the public. We catch up, talk of cyber security and whether to trust Google Drive. Talk turns to music, to my work these past two weeks, to bands covering *gharnati* songs that she has recorded. I ask her about a specific change she made to one song the whether there is a source recording I can compare to the final version for the *Arco Iris* record. She says she'll sing it to me, but when a busker comes and sits literally at our feet in the dirt around a small tree, we decide to switch venues.

On the walk across to the *realejo* (the former *judería*, or Jewish quarter of Granada), she talks about her artistic process. She extemporizes a beautiful, poetic image about how an artist carries behind her the baggage of her past, of her identity, and how the artist walks forward, stumbling in the dark. It is as if her baggage casts a dim light from behind, only enough to illuminate their feet, their next step, to offer some direction. What the future holds beyond that, her creative output, where they go and what they do, that is a process mostly of casting out in the dark.

We stop at a small plaza. I know the spot well. The *taller* of the Tangier-born *guitarrero* Rafael Moreno is a block away, and those of several other guitar builders, just around the corner. The café is closed, the terrace empty of chairs, but I remind Amina of the *gharnati* she used for "*Flor de Nieve*", and she says, "oh yes." We walk out to the middle of the open plaza, I turn on the recorder, and she sings me both versions. First, the *gharnati* as she knew it, then the melody transformed for the record, transformed to fit José Luis's accompaniment *por alegrías*. The first version is tight, the rhythm of the melody closely matching the syllabic content of the text. For the *alegrías*, Amina expands the melody, extends the melisma, but also adds more space.

In thinking about the way interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of a multimusical sensibility are mutually entangled, I am reminded of how Titon describes bimusicality in terms of a “strategy in which these differences are thrust upon us, not simply because we ‘notice’ them as observers close to the action, but because we live them, we ‘experience’ them in our performance of another music. Bi-musicality becomes a way of life” (Titon 1995, 289). For both Amina and José Luis, engaging their own multimusicality and thriving on the challenge and joy of interpersonal encounter are hallmarks of their ways of music making, and their ways of being in the world.¹¹

La Banda Morisca’s Reinterpretation of “*Ya Adili Billah*”

On the spectrum from juxtaposition to deeply integrated fusion, La Banda Morisca sit somewhere in between Alaoui’s *Arco Iris* and Chekara’s *Flamenco Andalusi*. Their eclectic range of texts and musical source material, willingness to pursue the musical impulses of any band member, and a self-described, “anarchic” mode of collaboration allows for the occasional left turn (a Josquin De Prez interlude here, an Amharic lullaby there). Overall, however, their process has led to an increasingly cohesive, unique band sound. With this last example, I consider how the aforementioned ways of relating: within and between musical systems, interpersonally, and intrapersonally, all play out in the band’s overall musical sensibility.

José Cabral and I are strolling through his hometown of Jerez de la Frontera. We round a corner and find a spot to sit down. La Banda Morisca is hard at work on their second record, much of which I have already heard, either in demo form or in live performance. Between sips of iced *horchata de chufa*,¹² Cabral reflects on his band’s arrangement of “*Ya Adili Billah*,” a *gharnati* that Amina Alaoui had, in fact, recorded on her first record, with Ahmed Piro, and included again on her later, live album *Gharnati: En Concert*. As I told José, only a few days earlier I had just met up with Amina Alaoui and played for her

¹¹ Brinner (2009) discusses a similar, mutual respect as characterizing the collaboration between Alei Hazayit founders Shoham Einav and Jamal Sa’id, albeit in very different political and musical contexts. Both projects feature a talented vocalist with great affective power, and an instrumentalist who takes the lead in musical arrangement. Both projects, as well, combine three distinct musical genres, Alei Hazayit having performed novel arrangements of three bodies of repertoire *shirei erez yisrael* (“songs of the land of Israel), Ladino songs, and Arabic songs. However, whereas “Arab musical practices dominated” much of Alei Hazayit’s musical mixture (ibid., 217), Amina and José Luis sought with *Arco Iris* to create a cohesive fusion of Arab-Andalusi, flamenco, and fado influences in which no single style would dominate the mixture.

¹² *Horchata de chufa* is a sweet milkshake made from tigernut (*chufa*), originally developed in medieval Valencia. I had always associated the name with the Latin American variety, which is often made with rice- or almond milk and vanilla. Until that day with José, I hadn’t made the connection that *horchata* was not only a colonial import to the Americas, but one whose provenance dates to al-Andalus.

some video footage I had shot of La Banda Morisca performing “Ya Adili Billah” at a recent folk festival in Íllora, outside Granada.

"So what did she think?" asks Cabral. "Let me guess, she said we only do one of the verses."¹³

"She liked it," I replied. "She said José Mari nailed all of the inflections, so much so that she is pretty sure that you must have been working from her version of the song, from the record with Ahmed Piro."

Cabral smiled and nodded. "We actually learned it from Bahaâ Ronda. I don't think [José Mari] Cala ever heard Alaoui's version, though I have it."¹⁴

I paused, then added, "She thinks, actually, that you could have gone further, done more to change it."

In fact, Alaoui had called what they were doing more homage, or a new instrumentation of the piece, essentially a cover. She had gestured raising her flattened palm, suggesting that they merely layered a new instrumentation and intro melody over the top of the piece, otherwise not altering it, not making it their own. To be fair, she had only heard a minute or so of a live recording, outside at a café, and over poor camera speakers.

"Well, we did change a lot," Cabral counters. We added new melodies to the beginning and the end, and we changed the rhythm [from a 4/4/ to a 6/8]. He hesitates a moment before continuing. "But at the same time, we didn't want to change it too much. Maybe we respected it too much."

I pressed José on this point about respect. "Yes. With flamenco, it is different. We don't have a problem taking a flamenco piece out of its context (*sacarlo del palo*). It is our music. Well, it is *all* our music, but it is different. We are closer to it [i.e. to flamenco]."

Conscious of the band's own positionality, Cabral's sentiment is worth analyzing. First there is the desire to perform a *gharnati*, part of La Banda Morisca's project of recuperating the musical heritage of al Andalus. *Gharnati*, the reader will recall, means "Granadan" in Arabic, and refers to a song style thought to have been transplanted from Granada to Algeria, and later to Morocco, by Andalusí exiles. I read in La Banda Morisca's mission, in part, a pursuit of the intrapersonal, that is, a desire on the part of the band members to explore the roots of their own musical identity.

¹³ I have translated our exchange, which took place in Spanish.

¹⁴ Both may be true. That is, La Banda Morisca may have based their arrangement Bahaâ Ronda's rendition of "Ya Adili Billah" is, indeed, very reminiscent of Amina Alaoui's recorded version of the piece.

The "respect" Cabral is referring to, however, is something that comes with distance, reflected in the limitations of their Arab-Andalusi competence. This is a repertoire with which, by their own admission, they are less familiar. This is most evident around language. José Mari is *not* an Arabic speaker; he is singing the words phonetically. In a way, the band has to respect the text. Even if they wanted to alter the original poetry, they could not, for lack of the necessary linguistic competence. In addition to maintaining fidelity to the text, the melodic contour, even the melismatic delivery—these are all sacrosanct and inviolable in the minds of the musicians.

By contrast, it is the band's balanced sense of proximity to flamenco that positions them to take liberties with the *palos*. José Cabral, José Mari, and Juanmi Cabral, in particular, grew up surrounded by flamenco music (Jerez, and the entire region of Cadiz, being one of the foundational sites for flamenco). Juanmi is the deepest flamenco devotee in the band. Principally a bassist, Juanmi is actually a very capable flamenco guitar player. On long van rides between gigs, or in their downtime, he often plays, accompanying himself and the other band members as they trade impromptu verses. Yet neither he, nor any of the others exclusively dedicate themselves to playing flamenco. This is a crucial point. Like José Luis Montón, it is precisely their multimusicality—the fact that they are *not* flamenco purists—that frees their hands and hearts to transform or recontextualize the flamenco forms as it suits them.

Interestingly, this freedom earned them some critical feedback early on among flamenco aficionados. In one of our group listening sessions on the road between shows, I had asked the band about the various flamenco *palos* that they utilize throughout their first album. With the exception of one track, a *farruca*,¹⁵ the band recounted how some fiends and supportive members in their audience had approached the band after a few of their first concerts and voiced some objections to the band describing their songs as being in one or another flamenco *palo*. The complaints centered one song the band had referred to as being a *bulería*, when in fact their arrangement included a bridge that departed from the *palo*. While the comments were offered as friendly feedback, the band realized they had tripped a live wire in the form of an audience-established flamenco boundary.

From a music-technical perspective, the band could execute *bulerías* relatively convincingly. Their musical sensibility, though, shaped by individual and collective multimusicality, treated *bulerías* as just one among many colors in their compositional palette. Their relationship to their own musical knowledge and skill, in other words, differed substantially from that of the flamenco purist, for whom *bulerías* constituted an inviolable music-cultural form. It had never even occurred to anyone in the band that they might have been committing some offense. As a result of the audience feedback, when they introduce songs in live performance, they now make a conscious choice to avoid

¹⁵ *Farruca* has a double meaning. As a flamenco *palo*, it is considered one of the lighter, vocal-oriented of flamenco forms, thought to have developed in the context of colonial-era cultural exchange between Latin America and Spain, and particularly related to *tangos*. Apropos of the *canciones de ida y vuelta* (songs of departure and return), *farruca* is also a slang term used both in Cuba and Andalusia to refer to recent migrants from Galicia or Asturias (Nuñez 2011).

referring to certain pieces as being *por bulerías* or *por alegrías*, instead describing them as being derived from such-and-such a flamenco form. For the same reason the track listings on both albums

La Banda Morisca's arrangement speaks to their particular way of relating to the knowledge that constitutes their collective musical sensibility. Their ability to adapt a melody to a new rhythm, even the concept of doing so, forms part of their musical habitus. The way the band thinks musically is reflected in the idea that incorporating outside melodies, or arranging for new instruments does not violate the essence of the piece. Here again a multimusical, collaborative sensibility emerges at the nexus of competence and positionality, conveyed in the band's desire to perform "the song" - respectfully, true to some sense of its melodic and textual essence as they perceive it.

Conclusion

Of course, there are obvious advantages to possessing more, and broader, knowledge and skill in any endeavor. But we must bear in mind that multimusicality is always partial, provisional, and contingent. Like musical competence in general, no one's knowledge is total, and no skill perfected beyond the ability to improve; this is true even when we speak of "expert" musicians. Moreover, at this point in our current, globalized age, few people can truly be described as "monomusical," devoid of any exposure to anything but a single, bounded genre, any more than we can speak unproblematically of such a thing as pristinely bounded musical genres.

From a psychological perspective, we can empirically discern a sensitivity to aspects of musical sound, but parsing out the various component intelligences that are brought to bear in music making, let alone addressing just how these intelligences interact within music, or any other given domain, is messy business. In any musical context, a musician brings to bear a unique combination of intelligences, capacities that intersect across domains of musical competence. In this chapter, I have pulled together the three case studies at the heart of this dissertation to begin to sketch a theory of collaborative multimusical sensibility—not only the admixture of distinct component competences, but, importantly, the ways in which musicians understand and relate to the knowledge and skill they possess.

I see this inquiry as advancing the study of music cognition from an ethnomusicological perspective. I hope to offer a way of better understanding the dynamics of intercultural collaboration and musical mixtures, with implications for furthering our understanding of all manner of music making, more broadly.

CONCLUSION: EXPERIENCING MUSICAL CONNECTION

connection | connexion, n.

1. a. The action of connecting or joining together; the condition of being connected or joined together...
- 2a. The linking together of words or ideas in speech or thought.
b. Consecutiveness, continuity or coherence of ideas.
c. Contextual relation of thought, speech, or writing; context...
3. The condition of being related to something else by a bond of interdependence, causality, logical sequence, coherence, or the like; relation between things one of which is bound up with, or involved in, another...
- 5.a. A personal relation of... intimacy, common interest, or action;
c. Practical relation with a thing or affair.
- 6a. Relationship by family ties, as marriage or distant consanguinity.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

At the outset of this dissertation, I described the phenomenon of experiencing musical connection as “a complex mix of perceiving, desiring, and believing in a musical, cultural, or historical tie between musical practices and practitioners.” As a facet of music cognition — that is, a kind of musical thinking— this can take many forms, from a pre-reflective, phenomenological experience of hearing or playing along with a musical style striking in its familiarity, to a sense of connection acquired through study or long-term engagement with a musical style. For some musicians, the music-technical terms of this connection are most salient. For others, their thinking is influenced by a set of convictions, particular understandings of historic and cultural affinities between peoples and musical styles. In all cases, though, cognition is culturally determined; what musicians know, feel, and believe, is shaped by social and cultural experience.

These artists connect through several shared cultural points of reference: three projects occurring in the same region of the world, at the same time, largely drawing on similar musical resources, and in some measure inspired by similar narratives of historic and cultural affinity. Given these similar circumstances, these artists might be expected to

have more in common musically. Yet, as I mention in Chapter Five, not only do they each sound quite different from one another, but the characteristics of their musical mixtures vary greatly from one to the next. Why does Amina Alaoui's *Arco Iris* achieve a cohesive sound world, whereas Chekara's *Tan Cerca Tan Lejos* feels like an artful juxtaposition of distinct genres, and La Banda Morisca's blend falling somewhere in between the two? How are we to better understand the nature of these musical mixtures?

These musical mixtures, I have suggested, emerge through different ways of experiencing musical connections. I proposed that the experience of musical connection can be understood on various levels. My research into these artists and their work suggests that how musicians relate to different musical styles involved in the mixture, how they relate to one another, and how they relate to the past, all inform the music they make.

Ways of relating provides a useful theoretical tool for parsing the various entangled strands of collective memory, musical competence, and interaction that inform musical mixtures. What emerges from this comparative analysis is a framework for categorizing musical mixtures on a spectrum from highly cohesive fusions to highly disparate juxtapositions. Based on the examples I explore in this thesis, we can begin to discern the outlines of a theory for musical system mixing, a set of procedures, techniques, as well as the kinds of knowledge, and musical sensibilities necessary for such efforts. As it relates to the larger themes of the dissertation, this comparative analysis furthers my main argument: that we gain new insights into musical production when we consider how collective memory and aspects of music cognition relating to musical competence and sensibility mutually inform one another. While this dissertation focuses on cross-cultural musical collaborations in the Western Mediterranean, I believe this way of thinking has far broader applications, offering a novel framework for investigating the creative processes involved in collaborative music making more generally.

We have to be cautious not to inductively assume that this process holds for all musicians at all times, and equally careful to point out that there are myriad factors that affect musical collaboration—each musical situation, each musician, is distinct. It is my hope that in trying to further scholarly theories of musical collaboration or interaction, some of these processes, knowledges, sensibilities, will be consonant with other researchers' and musicians' experiences, and that we can start to build a more substantial scholarly conversation around these issues. I am building on Brinner and others who have written about musical interaction, as well as on the existing fusion scholarship. But mostly my thinking comes out of my conversations with musicians in Spain and in Morocco. To the extent that it is possible to reflect on cognitive processes, on one's conscious and unconscious behavior, on one's interactions with fellow musicians, I have sought to elicit their reflections. In combination with my own, growing understanding of the musical systems involved, and my observations and analyses of the music and of my interlocutors' comments, I believe that this dissertation forwards our understanding of musical thinking, of social memory, and of how the two are mutually implicated.

When Jocelyne Guilbault speaks of “audible entanglements,” she is referring to how musical practices “render audible and visible specific constituencies, and imaginations of longing, belonging, and exclusion” (2005, 40-1). “Far from being ‘merely’ musical,” Guilbault describes how, “audible entanglements...also assemble social relations, cultural expressions, and political formations.” In this dissertation, I have sought to convey how a fuller picture of musical collaboration emerges when we consider the phenomenon of experiencing musical connection as an entanglement of collective memory, musical competence, and interaction—a set of mutually informing forces that manifest in the unique sensibilities of individual musicians.

Futures of Al-Andalus

I have described how, through their music, Amina Alaoui, La Banda Morisca, and Chekara each draw upon notions of a shared cultural heritage in order to fuel a distinct musical poesis, putting into conversation elements from traditional and popular musics of southern Spain, North Africa and the Levant. In so doing, they articulate their own, particular conceptions of the intimate links between these musical systems. While these artists hold in common a belief in the historical linkages and musical compatibilities between these Mediterranean styles, their artistic resources, compositional and collaborative methods, and musical choices all differ.

In thinking about some of the possible implications of these musicmaking efforts, I find very helpful the provocative questions that open Gil Anidjar’s (2008) essay “Futures of al-Andalus”:

Does al-Andalus—the fact of coexistence, the figure of its possibility and impossibility—still have a future, or even many? And if so, what do these possible futures teach us about al-Andalus? Is there, in other words, an “unfinished project” for al-Andalus, for al-Andalus as a figure, of not of modernity, at least of incompleteness, even perhaps, of infinity? What, finally, does it mean to speak of the futures of al-Andalus? (Anidjar 2008, 189)

Anidjar’s concern centers on the figure al-Andalus—the weighty symbol of a putative, unique age of religious and cultural *convivencia*—as at once defined by its having ended and yet, paradoxically persisting in collective consciousness due to its unending invocation. To put Anidjar in conversation with Jan Assmann (1997), Al-Andalus is a kind of mnemohistorical touchstone, alive with what may be contradictory valences and significance for different people at different times, and deeply implicated in discourse within (and in relation to) pan-Arab nationalism, Islam, Sephardic Judaism, Zionism, the Palestinians, the West, and modernity itself. As Anidjar argues, the many politicized meanings that attach to al-Andalus—whether the symbolic paragon of culture, a utopian paradise, or the site of traumatic, exilic loss—all rely on a narrative of finitude. That is to

say, they depend on the idea that whatever al-Andalus may have been, or meant, that time is over; moreover, it can never be recovered. Pushing back on the idea of pluralistic coexistence as having concluded, or even of its having been exceptional in this respect, Anidjar not only complicates received assumptions about al-Andalus, but more importantly, opens a pathway for rethinking notions of difference, and of belonging in the present and future.

Anidjar frames his discussion around Ashis Nandy's ideas about bearing witness as a form of ethical dissent:

To pay that homage [to negotiating difference and resisting mass violence], we are obliged to stand witness to the many lost worlds of culture and culturally-based systems of knowledge that have been proclaimed obsolete and, along with the millions of their living practitioners, exported to the past with a remarkable sleight of hand. So much so that references to these living cultures and to the suffering and indignities of the millions who live with these cultures are seen as romantic time travel to the past (Nandy 2001, x, in Anidjar 2008, 189-90).

Anidjar (2008, 190) continues, "The complex attitude required to bear witness to the future, as Nandy phrases it, must not only give room to the past in its catastrophic dimensions; it must also acknowledge the enduring achievements, and continuing effects, of living cultures."

Amina Alaoui and La Banda Morisca's sonic interventions emerge out of this "complex attitude required to bear witness to the future." Its complexity stems in part from needing to acknowledge trauma while celebrating life and living culture. Through their studio recordings and their public, concert performances, they not only bear witnesses to the multiple traumas of historical erasure; they themselves stand as the survivors, inheritors and "living practitioners" of a shared cultural form.

"To bear witness to al-Andalus," writes Anidjar, is "to enact its being-present and even future" (Anidjar 2008, 191). While Chekara may not seek to intervene in collective memory, he, too, bears witness. The reason I do not extend to Chekara the argument about a "sonic intervention," has to do, mostly with the fact that Jalal, himself, does not define his project in relation to the Andalusian past. Nonetheless (or perhaps even *because* of his relative distance from political discourse), among the three projects, it is Chekara's *Tan Cerca, Tan Lejos*—"so close, yet so far away"—that offers perhaps the most lucid testimony to the realities of transnational existence as experienced by many North African immigrants to Europe.

For her part, Amina Alaoui bears the perspective of the Moroccan-born, cosmopolitan migrant who perceives and pursues a connection between the culture of her birthright and that of her adopted home in the Iberian Peninsula—a return from exile. Recall her dismay at witnessing Beja emptied of any architectural trace of al-Mu'tamid, with no public

recognition of the Poet King. When, in one of our conversations, Amina says, as if addressing a Portuguese audience “I will make my effort that you recognize this part of your story,” in my reading she is making the case for her inclusion in that story. “Fado al-Mu’tamid” proposes its own future of al-Andalus, at once a testimonial to injustice and a gesture of both reconciliation and repatriation.

Relative to these Moroccan-born, immigrants to Spain, La Banda Morisca invert the scheme. Their sonic intervention originates from within southern Spanish society itself—the recovery of the exile within. Recall how Antonio Manuel posits the “Moorish trace” as a series of *Andalusian* internalized traumas—exile, hiding, fear, Inquisitorial persecution, the negation of identity— whose effects persist in the Andalusian psyche, and in cultural practices clandestine and quotidian alike, whose meaning and significance are all but lost to collective memory. When José Cabral insists, “what we are trying to do is melt back together what was separated at another time by matters that are not relevant, to recover that mixed lineage (*mestizaje*) that characterized the territory of the Moorish Band,” he acknowledges the trauma of the past, and communicates the cathartic impulse that drives La Banda Morisca’s project.

Bringing to bear perspectives born of two shores, through their music these artists chip away at the edifice of a collective memory that would divide people and deny a history of the past as remembered, heard, and rediscovered anew. As Assmann writes:

Seen as an individual and as a social capacity, memory is not simply the storage of past "facts" but the ongoing work of reconstructive imagination. In other words, the past cannot be stored but always has to be "processed" and mediated. This mediation depends on the semantic frames and needs of a given individual or society within a given present. If "We Are What We Remember," the truth of memory lies in the identity that it shapes. This truth is subject to time so that it changes with every new identity and every new present. It lies in the story, not as it happened but as it lives on and unfolds in collective memory. If "We Are What We Remember," We are the stories that we are able to tell about ourselves (Assmann 1997, 14-15).

“Nostalgia for al-Andalus is Not my Joy”

Yet neither remembering the past, much less reliving it, count among the goals of musical innovators, a last point I wish to underscore. Rather, Amina Alaoui, Chekara, and La Banda Morisca’s “ongoing work of reconstructive imagination” force us to consider the unique potential of musical mixtures as affective tools of social engagement. In “Prose for a Rainbow, the liner-notes essay to her album, *Arco Iris*, Alaoui writes, “nostalgia for al-Andalus is not my joy.” Rather, in the long, seemingly ceaseless wake of al-Andalus, a creative engagement with the past in the present opens up novel musical pathways and new ways of integrating diverse musical resources, in the process rethinking notions of identity, exile, history, and histories—both past and future—of belonging:

Prose for a Rainbow

A bridge of colours [sic] in the firmament. The divine offering of a moment. Do they insist we see only in black and white, what then of colours?

No regret will impregnate my song, nor nostalgia be its measure. As is well known, *saudade* means melancholy. Does it not then correspond to the Arab's black mood, or the Andalusian's emotional solitude? Be that as it may, the joy of re-encounters offers greater surprises than petrified traditions. Nostalgia for Al Andalus [sic] is not my joy.

This music transcribes an Iberian peninsula carried towards a dialogue with the potential of might be. It is a poetic geography that entertains the dream of the impossible: human horizons that transcend borders, lyrical Mediterranean idioms that are open to the universe and the intelligence of being, of mutual communication.

Song and music explore this possibility in order to open up another path: original expression. No need to discuss the origins of fado, flamenco, or Al Andalus; history and discernment are enough. Here, the music explores the common crucible of these styles. However, in sketching the melodrama of history, tension rises and is spent before returning to calm contemplation of the rainbow.

Here I disassemble the origin, yet the non-origin comes into play in the origin. I cannot regret something without first having tasted its root. What's more, you must first have assimilated your roots in order to absorb the culture of the other. But again, fusion demands being multiple, with hindsight, in order that you are in agreement with rather than identifying with. I am an artist of the present. I abstain from simply copying the styles of the past. I fear I would alter their voices and disfigure their values. According to Goethe, impersonal imitation creates only "empty masks."¹

I adhere to poetic knowledge. By means of the word, I take shelter within the thought. When I sing the meaning, I affect its being, and the music sublimates the wound. For the art of distilling wisdom in a distich is indeed a gift from above: "If your past is experience make your future into meaning and vision."²

The drama of history is the ghost of the past. I venture forth on the trail of the Morisco of 16th-century Iberia. Far from wanting to reconstruct gestures and customs, the sensation of soul alone is enough for me: no name and no land to attach a lineage to. Acculturated, memory diluted, obliged to bury God and the language of ancestors, crushed by the terror of the purification of the blood and

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *West-Eastern Divan*

² Mahmoud Darwish, *Almond Blossoms and Beyond*.

national identity. However the internal convolutions of the Morisco soul are also musical and poetic; I sublimate them! “The Gods weave misfortunes for men so that the generations to come have something to sing about...”³⁴



Figure 6.1 Amina Alaoui and José Luis Montón in concert, La Zubia (Granada), 2015 (photo by Ian Goldstein)

³ Homer, *The Iliad*, as cited in Alaoui 2011.

⁴ Alaoui penned the essay in French, and included both her original, French prose as well as this English translation, credited to George Miller.

“...Que la música no pare!”

This dissertation captures a snapshot in the lives of these artists and their bands. Meanwhile, their collaborative musical explorations continue. When last I met with Amina in Granada, we spoke at length about her next musical project and how she wanted to do something in response to the Arab Spring. For the moment, she was done with Al-Andalus. Medieval poetry, she mused, might not be the most effective way to engage young people. Amina remains hungry to connect, not only to new audiences, but with new collaborators as well. She spoke of her longtime interest in a duo project with a piano player but has yet to find that “right” person. The interpersonal piece is so important. She would need an open, versatile, multimusical collaborator, someone on par with Jose Luis Montón. “Manfred [founder and head of ECM Records] has been waiting for the next record for me, but I need to find the right person to do it with,” Amina tells me. “It would need to be someone of great sensitivity.” All of which I take to mean: it would need to be someone with a compatible *profile of multimusical sensibility*. For Amina, it’s about the experience of connection: an ongoing cultivation of musical sensibility in relationship to herself, her collaborators, and the next audience she is trying to reach.

In November, 2014, at *Le Festival des Andalousies Atlantiques* in Essaouira, Morocco, Jalal Chekara performed alongside Rabbi Haim Louk, a celebrated Israeli singer of Moroccan Jewish liturgical song. Born in Casablanca in 1942, Louk eventually emigrated to Israel, where he is first soloist with The New Jerusalem Orchestra, one of two Israeli ensembles dedicated to performing Middle Eastern and North African musics. As it turns out, Louk was an old friend of Abdessadeq Chekara, and remembered meeting Jalal when he was a young boy.

Their performance in Morocco led to further conversations and an invitation for Jalal to come to Israel to perform with Louk. When I met up with Jalal in the summer of 2015, he was already thinking about a North American tour with Louk and the flamenco singer and fellow Chekara member, Vicente Gelo. “It would be a *tres culturas* concert, but for real!” noted Jalal. In late 2015, Jalal went to spend a month touring around with Louk and his orchestra. This occasion marked the first time Jalal had traveled, let alone performed, outside of Spain and Morocco. Discussions of a larger tour are ongoing. These experiences are expanding Jalal’s musical sensibility and his worldview. As Jalal reports, this was an easy collaboration. They know common repertoire, they can communicate in Arabic, and it was easy for the two to relate to one another even across a generational divide. Both are Moroccan émigré musicians who crossed the Mediterranean to lands of ancestral origin, who are connected by a shared language, and who share relationship with a larger-than-life figure. An underlying, shared way of relating to the past facilitated the creation of a new, meaningful relationship in the present.



Figure 6.2 Jalal Chekara, 2015 (photo by Ian Goldstein)

Meanwhile, I have continued to get to know the members of La Banda Morisca. In between my 2014 and 2015 fieldwork trips, JoseMari and his wife had a son, whom they named Zayde. The arrival of the couple's first child came just in time for the band to finish their second record, released in 2016. The name of the new album is *Algarabya*,⁵ which refers to the vernacular language of late Al-Andalus, a mix of Iberian *romance*, Arabic, and Hebrew. Another meaning of the term survives in contemporary Andalus

⁵ As I noted in Chapter One, “Algarabía” (in its more standard spelling) is also the name the Arabic cultural institute *Casa Árabe* chose for its 2014 pilot project bringing together young Spanish and Moroccan musicians to learn about flamenco and Arabic music en route to performing a fusion concert.

usage, referring to a chaotic, joyful noise, as in the sound of a boisterous *fiesta*. For La Banda Morisca, *algarabya* is the language of connection. It aptly describes what they are trying to accomplish musically: make a joyful noise from the many points of cultural connection they perceive. The second record strikes me as being a more cohesive mixture, as the band seems to have developed more of a sonic identity, partly as a result of having played many more live shows together. The band, as well, expressed their preference for how this album turned out. Like Chekara, La Banda Morisca have looked to expand their touring base. They have had two short U.S. tours, playing at Austin’s SXSW, as well as venues in Chicago, New York, and Boston, where I hosted the band.

I hope to continue to remain in contact with many of the musicians discussed in these pages. In the spirit of future dialogic editing (Feld 1987) I sent along copies of my work in advance of publication. José Cabral wrote back quickly. “Hi Ian. Great to hear from you. We will look at it with pleasure, but surely it is ‘sweet.’ In a few hours I [will be able to] spend some time [reading you]. I hope that all is well by you, and that...the music doesn’t stop.”

As of this writing, I am still waiting on their critiques. I look forward to the next conversation, to the “joy of reencounter” and to all that will follow. Indeed: May the music, and the many productive connections it engenders, continue.



Figure 6.3 La Banda Morisca, *Corral del Carbón*, Granada, 2014
(photo by Ian Goldstein)



Figure 6.4 On the road with La Banda Morisca, 2015
(Pictured from left: Andrés T. Rodríguez, José Cabral, Juanmi Cabral, Antonio Torres,
JoseMari Cala, Vincent Molino, manager Ana Fernandez de Cosa, LBM live sound
engineer, the author. Photo by Ian Goldstein)

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