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Pray, play, teach: conversations with three Jewish Israeli music educators

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**PRAY, PLAY, TEACH:
CONVERSATIONS WITH THREE JEWISH ISRAELI MUSIC EDUCATORS**

by

AMIRA EHRLICH

B.A., Hebrew University, 2000
M.A., Hebrew University, 2005
M.Ed., Levinsky College of Education, 2008

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Approved by

First Reader

André de Quadros, Ed.D.
Professor of Music, Music Education
Chair of the Department of Music Education

Second Reader

Kinh T. Vu, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music Education

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Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2018

Major Professor: André de Quadros, Ed.D., Professor of Music, Music Education, Chair
of the Department of Music Education

ABSTRACT

The current study focuses on what, how, and why music is being taught in the practices of three Jewish Israeli music educators. Participants included three high school music directors working in three main Jewish subsectors that constitute the main streams of public education in contemporary Israeli society: secular, ultraorthodox, and national religious. In contemporary Israeli society, these subsectors of Judaism are organized into communities differing in nuanced religious affiliations, geographic locations, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The subtle differences between these communities constitute practical and philosophical conceptualizations of being Jewish in the contemporary State of Israel. The government-mandated education system in Israel recognizes these subsectors as separate and segregated streams of education, organized into separate institutions, inspectorates, and curriculums. Music education in Israel, however, is mandated through a single national curriculum for all socioreligious sectors. The interest of this study is in the ways this single curriculum is enacted by various sociocultural nuances of Judaism in contemporary Israeli society.

The research design was based on Scollon and Scollon's 12-month framework of nexus analysis, developed for explorations of cultural implications underlying everyday

actions. The study included three phases: (a) engagement—acclimation in practice sites and contexts; (b) navigation—discovering the key elements and moving between the individual and the social constructs that each practice entails; and (c) change—analysis that challenges the existing practices and inspires transformation. Data accrued through observation, interviews, and one focus-group session. The final stage focused on participant involvement in data analysis and representation. Findings are presented through a series of narrative texts: portraits of each participant, followed by scenes of practice, annotated with narrative testimonials designed from the words of participants. Introductory chapters address the main constructs upon which these narratives rest and fuel the interpretations that follow each of the narratives.

Findings reveal interrelationships between music education and Jewish-Israeli intrareligious tensions. Conclusions call for further attention to the cultural implications of music educators' situated work, in Israel and abroad.

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PART ONE: BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND DESIGN

Mapping Israeli Jewishness

On June 7, 2015, Israeli President Reuven (“Rubi”) Rivlin gave a speech that later came to be known as “The Speech of the Tribes.”¹ Rivlin described the new Israeli social order as a construct of four tribes living in conflict, naming the four main sectors of society as secular, religious, ultraorthodox, and Arab. Since 2015, this concept of conflicting tribes has become an explicit and dominant feature of Israeli public discourse. Living in Israel, one cannot avoid the ongoing public debate among these tribes as they battle over public resources, social and cultural legitimacy, and the allocation and design of public spaces. The three Jewish sectors further struggle over the rights to proclaim who and what is Jewish or Israeli.

Indeed, Pew Research Center’s March 2016 survey report on Israeli society proclaimed, “Deep divisions in Israeli society—not only between Israeli Jews and the country’s Arab minority, but also among the religious subgroups that make up Israeli Jewry” (p. 5). The survey described Israeli Jewish identity as a “complex” entity (p. 6), constituted by a set of subcategories that function as “separate social worlds,” and that are “reflected in starkly contrasting positions on many public policy questions” (p. 5).

The data included in this Pew survey, echoing President Rivlin’s speech, also resonates with findings of earlier sociological research of contemporary Israeli society. Deshen (1995) deemed the relevance of subcategories of Jewish religiosity to the

¹ A Hebrew transcription of this speech can be read at:
http://www.president.gov.il/ThePresident/Speeches/Pages/news_070615_01.aspx

understanding of contemporary Israeli society no less than “inescapable” (p. 1).

Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999) described a “social and cultural struggle taking place in modern Israel between the subgroups of Israeli society over the meaning of Jewishness and Israeliness” (p. 288). Ben-Rafael (2008) claimed that “tensions between secular and religious sectors constitute a salient feature of Israeli society,” depicting Israeli society as a “conflictual multiculturalism” where intrasocial tensions soar in an ongoing competition for public resources (p. 90). Further, this tension is no less that “endemic to the very nature of institutional developments” in contemporary Israeli society (Ben-Rafael, 2008, p. 90).

A Pathology of Complexity

Ackerman (1997) defined “Jewishness” as “a sense of membership in the collective of the Jewish people and a concern for its future” (p. 1). Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi (1991) explained that, although religion is often viewed as a source of unity in Israeli society, “it is often a source of division and tension” (p. 3). Bouganim (2008) attributed Jewish Israeli sectarianism to “an unresolved friction between the demands of historical Judaism, as developed over two thousand years of exile, and those raised by the proper functioning of a state that aims to be simultaneously democratic, open, liberal and Jewish” (p. 68). Similarly, Ben-Rafael (2008) explained that “the relationship between nationalism and religion among Israeli Jews has brought about cleavages involving different types of religiosity” (p. 100).

Eisenstadt (2004) described contemporary challenges of Israeli society as the result of a multiplicity of ethnic and religious identity structures that sometimes overlap

or further complicate each other. In an attempt to organize categories of sectarian differences in Israel, Eisenstadt mentioned five poles of tension oscillating among (a) Jews and Arabs, (b) secular and religious, (c) Ashkenazim and Sephardim,² (d) natives and immigrants, and (e) right-wing and left-wing. The possible variations of intersections between these poles grants Eisenstadt's theory a kaleidoscopic quality that is confusing, if not overwhelming.

Commenting on the complexity of categorizations of Israeli Jewishness, Ben-Rafael (2008) noted that "Israeli Jews are the only Jews in the world for whom Jewishness is a primary collective identity and does not constitute an identity second to a non-Jewish national identity" (p. 93). Ben-Rafael (2008) suggested that "one may speak of 'Israeli Jewishness' anchored in a notion of sovereignty and a conviction—whether or not objectively justified—that it enjoys more freedom of action than any other form of Jewishness" (p. 92).

It is this sense of freedom that Sheleg (2010) set out to trace in an exploration of new shades of socioreligious affiliation that evade traditional categorizations. Sheleg's account of Israeli Jewishness conveyed a pathology of complexity in the grey areas between religiosity and secularism. To make sense of this richness, Sheleg offered two main typologies of Israeli Jewishness: cultural Jewishness, and spiritual Jewishness. Various subcategories of religiosity, secularism, and ethnicity intersect with these categories in Sheleg's analysis. Like Eisenstadt (2004), Sheleg's approach unfolds into a

² Referring to ethnicity: Ashkenazim are typically Jews of Western and Eastern European descent; Sephardim are Jews of North African and Middle Eastern descent.

kaleidoscopic complexity.

No one study can hope to capture all the intricacies of a society so rich in socioreligious divides. What remains is to navigate between histories of categorizations and the realities that defy them. In the following paragraphs, I explore some of the most traditional categorizations of Israeli Jewishness, with a special focus on the Israeli public education system. I then consider how the lens of social-constructivist thought can act as a balance to the reliance on structural generalizations.

Mapping Sectors of Israeli Jewishness

Historically speaking, Israeli Judaism has three main variants: ultraorthodoxy, nationalist orthodoxy, and secular nationalism (Deshen, 1995). All three sectors are expressions of recent “religio-cultural patterns” that “manifest various symbolic innovations,” but all include traditional symbolic content (Deshen, 1995, p. 6). A fourth variant of Israeli Judaism is immigrants from Muslim countries, known as “Sephardim” (Deshen, 1995, p. 6). The religious tendency of Sephardim toward “traditionalism” claims an overlap between ethnicity and religious orientation in this group (Deshen, 1995).

Mapping contemporary self-definition of Israeli Jewishness, Pew Research Center (2016) noted that “Nearly all Israeli Jews identify with one of four categories: (1) *Haredi* (commonly translated as ‘ultraorthodox’), (2) *Dati* (‘religious’), (3) *Masorti* (‘traditional’), or (4) *Hiloni* (‘secular’)” (p. 5). Ben-Rafael (2008) cited these same four typical categories, in reverse order, dubbed “(1) nonreligious, (2) traditional, (3) religious, and (4) ultraorthodox” (p. 89).

Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi (1991) generalized a differentiation between the majority subculture of “*Hilonim*” (secular) and the minority subculture of “*Datiim*” (religious; p. 6). In this minority, Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi further distinguished Zionist-Orthodox and non-Zionist ultraorthodox, noting the existence of “various grades and shadings of Orthodoxy” that characterize the religious spectrum of Israeli society (p. 6).

Despite nuanced differences, a consensus emerged among scholars in the depiction of these three or four historical main subcategories of Israeli Judaism. Other scholars challenge this sense of consensus, adopting new critical approaches to Israeli history and sociology (e.g., Morris, 2007; Ram, 1995). Shafir and Peled (2002), for example, interpreted contemporary Israeli structures of identity through the prism of three alternative concepts: colonialism, ethnonationalism, and democracy. Shafir and Peled’s interpretation led to a completely different discourse of Jewish-Israeli identity structures that are beyond the scope of this current research. The focus of this study is grounded in state institutional structures, most notably in the public education system, which exists as three main streams of secular, national religious, and ultraorthodox, as outlined above.

This is not to say that sectarian divisions in Israel are all clear-cut and simple. Yonah, Mizrahi, and Feniger (2013), for example, addressed the lack of an official stream of traditional (*Masorti*) Judaism, depicting this fourth subsector as existing “in-between.” Other contemporary scholars (e.g., Ben-Rafael, 2008; Eisenstadt, 2004; Sheleg, 2010) took interest in gaps between institutional definitions and individual diversity and contributed to deepening the sociological discourse of differentiation in Israeli society. Yonah et al. further differentiated sociological studies grounded in

institutional structuralism and ethnographic works that explored micronuances that evade fixed categorizations. The educational focus of this current study begins in recognition of formal socioreligious categories of Israeli public education, described below. As a starting point for this study, it is important to understand the institutional structures involved, even as the ethnographic nature of this study will later challenge the very categories that it first describes.

Sectarian Structures of Israeli Public Education

In education, scholars have described the sectarianism of Israeli state education as a system based on civilizational and ideological principles, historically designed as part of the Zionist effort (Elazar, 1997; Tzameret, 2003). Israel's Ministry of Education emerged from three pre-State social streams of socialist, civic, and Jewish religious inclinations (Tzameret, 2003). Contemporary counterparts of these streams are secular, traditionalist, and national orthodoxy in pre-State and early State eras, with ultraorthodox left outside the system (Elazar, 1997).

Pre-State educational institutions exist in separate "trends" of education—separate schools for Zionist socialists, religious Zionists, and general Zionists (liberals), later merging into the two basic streams of Israeli state education: Jewish secular and Jewish religious State School systems (Elazar, 1997; Tzameret, 2003). The third "trend" was soon to be established as independent schools that served the ultraorthodox communities, receiving some funding from the government, but offering the curricular freedom of noncompliance with State school standards.

All these sectors shared in setting the main goals of Israeli education as "the

transmission of Jewish civilization and heritage, and the fostering of group solidarity” (Elazar, 1997, p. 7). Historical sectarian differences emerged between notions of Jewish heritage in pre-State and early State Israel (Elazar, 1997). These variants of this heritage are “characterized by different configurations of symbols” (Deshen, 1995, p. 7). A sense of historical continuity arose in these differences, evident in the way “the same symbols are given different meaning among different religious categories” (Ben-Rafael, 2008, p. 101).

Tensions between the educational streams throughout the early history of the State triggered political crises, the most dramatic case being the collapse of the Israeli government in 1951, following the controversy over dividing new immigrants into secular and religious educational streams (Tzameret, 2003). The educational reforms of Israel in the 1980s were paradoxical, with reforms aimed at accommodating sectarian differences by allowing diverse groups to pursue different visions, resulting in creating a greater sense of social unity (Elazar, 1997).

According to Elazar (1997), as evident in ministry structures and institutions, notions of “Sephardic” or “traditional” Judaism do not merit a separate classification or “trend” of education in Israeli society. Nevertheless, the Ashkenazi–Sephardi split has been a core interest of much sociological study of Israeli education, especially in relation to questions of inequality (e.g., Swirski, 1990; Yonah et al., 2013). Israeli media have reported cases of ethnic segregation in public schools, but such cases represent illegal enactments rather than legislation, as no official trend of public education rests on ethnic category. An attempt to establish a fourth official trend in education began in 2008, with

a law advocating a combined trend of a mixed secular and religious school, called “*chinuch mishalev*” (combined education). To date, a few dozen combined schools exist throughout the country and researchers are beginning to document their impact on Israeli society (e.g., Horovitz, 2017; Raichner, 2016).

In this current study, I have chosen the three historical trends of Israeli public education as a convenient starting point to explore practices of music education against the backdrop of Jewish Israeli sectarianism. Future studies can explore other categorical distinctions, such as an Ashkenazi–Sephardi split, or sites of traditional *Masorti*, or other pluralistic approaches to Judaism that can be found in some combined trend schools and in other communities. The ethnographic approach applied in this study is grounded in a social-constructivist approach that begins in structural categorization, but seeks to unfold the detailed nuance that each structure entails. In the following paragraphs I ground this approach in contemporary scholarship of Israeli Judaism and Jewish Israeli education.

Challenging Categorical Definitions

A typology of three main variants of Israeli Judaism (ultraorthodox, Nationalist Orthodoxy, and secular nationalism) is useful in “conceptualizing religious phenomena at a relatively low level of abstraction, down to particular communities, social circles, and even individuals” (Deshen, 1995, p. 7). In summarizing sectarian differences, studies are needed to describe the divergences of these groups, but also the prevailing sense of overall desire for a unity that can be called “Israeliness” (Elazar, 1997, p. 41). Similarly, Deshen (1995) encouraged academic sensitivity to a “typology of variants” in describing “the value of the concept of ‘Israeli Judaism’ in its potential for researchers to recognize

particular phenomena which they might otherwise overlook, and to which they might otherwise be insensitive” (p. 6).

Ben-Rafael (2008) characterized the variants of Israeli Judaism as “articulated through confrontations” (p. 93), expressed by kinds and degrees of religiosity, described as “a continuum of approaches” (p. 108). Fischer, Hotam, Wexler, and Gur-Ze’ev (2012) interpreted Israeli society as a “contemporary ‘post secular’ emergent society” (p. 262), consisting of “a meltdown between the religious and the modern, the secular and the theological, faith and political action—a breakdown of the core separation that starkly informed the secular (as much as the religious) master narrative” (p. 263).

A Social-Constructivist Approach

Considering the tradition of sectarian categories of Israeli Jewishness, and the internal complexities that such categorizations entail, Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999) suggested “the development of a social constructivist approach to the study of Jewish Israeli identity and its cultural variations” (p. 293). Social representations are “reference points in relation to which individuals position themselves according to specific social experiences they share with other individuals” (Doise, Clemence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi 1993, p. 155). Horenczyk and Bekerman explained that “while a culture as a whole may offer its members a number of tools for construing a certain representational field, different individuals (and different subgroups) will make differential use of these tools” (p. 289).

Postmodern complexities of studying identity shift from studies of Jewish identity to the study of “Jewish identification and involvement” (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1999, p. 282). Scholars conceptualized and operationalized Jewish and Israeli identities “as

being closely related to individual and social constructions of culture,” asserting “strong connections between identity and culture” that should eventually lead to the reviewing, and renewing, of educational approaches (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1999, p. 294).

Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999) described their methodology as

the study of ethnic and national identity in general, and of Jewish and Israeli identities in particular, in terms of the meanings people assign to the stuff of daily social and cultural reality in which ethnicity and nationality are embedded. This orientation calls for interpretative methodologies that allow for the discovery of meaning from within the personal, social, and primarily the cultural worlds of the individual. (p. 282)

Grounding their work on Moscovici’s (1984) and Vygotsky’s (1978) theories of social psychology, Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999) summarized characterizing features of constructivist social-representation theory and methodology:

1. originating in everyday social interaction,
 2. furnishing individuals with a commonsense understanding of their experiences in the world,
 3. being collectively created and collectively maintained,
 4. facilitating and regulating social interaction, and
 5. playing a major role in the formation and development of social groups.
- (p. 283)

The importance of applying such a methodology to the study of educational

contexts in contemporary Israeli society includes the crucial reconsideration of “the possibility of cultural transmission and our perspectives regarding the nature of curricular development geared toward the support of identity development” (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1999, p. 293). One possible result of such work is in the future inclusion of “pedagogies that would sensitize youths to the dialogic nature of cultural processes and attune them to a careful listening and managing of the multiple voices emanating from continuously emerging and developing social contexts” (Horenczyk & Bekerman, 1999, p. 293).

This vision promotes a cultural understanding of curriculum. Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999) defined such a vision as

much more than just choosing a cultural focus or the preferred cultural values according to present historical constrains; [rather] the conceptualization of curriculum and its repositioning within the given context of social relations, which encompass the pragmatics of those same relations and the interaction of those with the social institutions in their sociohistorical context. (p. 294)

Relating Theory to Field Experience

My experience of contemporary Israeli society is of a nation traumatized by its past melting-pot ideology, but still uncomfortable with multiculturalism. Rivlin’s tribe construct depicted this discomfort, even as it offered one possible solution. In the speech, the President expressed worry over the ignorance and lack of a common language that characterizes this sectarian social structure. Rivlin noted the structure of a socioreligious

segregated public education system as a main catalyst of a social divide. As an expression of hope, Rivlin suggested the tribal structure can override the misconception of a minority–majority paradigm. Furthermore, such a structure can evolve into a construct of partnership, where every tribe feels secure and important, committed to general intertribal solidarity.

During the years I have worked to complete this study, living in Israeli society, I have witnessed two contrasting trends that relate to this tribal conception. On the microlevel of individuals, I encountered numerous millennials who advocated a new fluidity in Jewish identity. These individuals defy old dialectical definitions of being either religious or secular. Some prefer a lack of definition; others claim that Israeli Jewishness is a spectrum rather than a choice between two poles.

On the macrolevel, Israeli public discourse has been obsessed with deepening the divide between anything religious and everything secular. Summer 2017, for example, had the media in an uproar, expressing violent opposition to a so-called trend of religious coercion in public education. Secular parents protested occurrences of Jewish content in kindergarten assemblies, and incidents of punishment against alleged immodest dress in elementary schools. The Ministry of Education came under attack, accused of promoting a monopoly of Jewish orthodoxy under the guise of Jewish identity and cultural studies. Mainstream Israeli media made a case for an overall attack on Israeli secularism, and in doing so counterattacked Israeli religiosity.

Conclusions and Methodological Implications

Against the backdrop of these intrareligious tensions, the current study aimed to explore three contexts of Jewish Israeli education through the practices of three music educators working in three main Jewish subsectors that constitute contemporary Israeli state education: secular, ultraorthodox, and national religious. Main research questions are (a) What are the musical and pedagogical repertoires of each music educator; (b) What are the sociocultural contexts of each practice, framed by aspects of time and space: calendars, work hours, locations; and (c) In what ways (if at all) are these practices of music education in Israel expressive or responsive to cultural tensions characteristic of contemporary Israeli society?

By focusing on what, how, and why music is taught in each participant's practice, I describe ways music education is enacted in the various sociocultural nuances of Judaism in contemporary Israeli society. In doing so, I adopt a social-constructivist approach to Israeli Jewishness, following Horenczyk and Bekerman's (1999) search for "contextualized and socially construed meanings," aiming to reveal "where, when, and how, Israeli Jews see their Jewishness and their Israeliness" (p. 284). Like Horenczyk and Bekerman, I recognize that

for Israelis and Jews living in Israel, the meanings assigned to Jewishness and Israeliness are closely related to the meanings given to other main components of their social and cultural worlds. Moreover, the meanings of each of the elements emerge out of the networks connecting them within the broader context of culture and society. (p. 284)

Like Horenczyk and Bekerman (1999), I believe that the opening of explorative windows in which Jewish Israelis are invited to reconsider “themselves and their narratives contextualized in the complex dynamics of institutional and social life within a sociohistorical perspective might help inject new life into our educational enterprise” (p. 294).

In my choice of study participants, I acknowledge institutional categorizations of Israeli state education. At the same time, I hope to discover the intricate ways individuals, communities, and even institutions, defy categorization. Sectarian definitions informed my selection to the limited extent that any individual can represent one given category.

Study Design

Purpose

Living in Israeli society during these years of research, my daily exposure to Israeli public discourse affirmed the intuitions that led me to the design of this study. My curiosity piqued about the role music educators could play on the backdrop of sectarian intrareligious battles. I became interested in how teachers, working in different socioreligious sectors, framed their practices, and how aware they were of the cultural implications of their work.

Having spent over a dozen years working as a high school music director in a national-religious state school, I used my own field experience as a springboard for thought. My choice to involve three other high school music directors in this study was based on two main factors: the advantage of my experience and expertise in this field and the structure of Israeli high school music education that deems the national music

curriculum a common base for all programs.

In high school, much more than in elementary or preschool, it is possible to assume that the same curriculum guides all teachers in all sectors, aimed toward the same matriculation examination. This commonality made the challenge of tracing cultural impacts more intricate. Because all three teachers were teaching the same elements of Western music theory, harmony, and music history, the question of cultural specificity rose beyond the content level. Seeking to study the depth of cultural significance became more approachable as exploration delved into the meanings teachers attributed to their actions. It is these meanings, rather than the actions themselves, that emerged as the focus of this study.

Process

Scollon and Scollon (2004) presented an ethnographic methodology of nexus analysis, defined as “mapping of semiotic cycles of people, discourses, places, and mediational means involved in the social action” under study (p. 608). Gee (2011) promoted a form of discourse analysis devoted to the study of “who-doing-what” (p. 23). Scollon (2001) described the basis of nexus analysis as an incorporation of ethnography (what), discourse analysis (how), and motive analysis (why). Burke (1945/1962) grounded motive analysis in “the scholastic hexameter” of “who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when” (p. 228).

The current study worked to unfold three socioreligious-situated nexuses of practice, constituted by who, doing what, with who, with what, how, when, where, and why. The underlying premise addresses mediated actions that constitute practices of

contemporary Israeli music education as a matrix of microactions enacted on broader social-cultural trajectories. In pursuing this line of study, my interest was not only in my own capacity for interpretation. My aim was that the three study participants play an active role in the interpretation of their own work. The work of the Scollons (2001, 2004), and that of Blommaert (2005), discussed below, modeled the kind of methodological frameworks that align with the main philosophical underpinnings of sociocultural thought.

These methodologies led me to seek other theoretical inspirations in expanding my potential partnership with participants in a way that would be more like studying *with* than studying *about*. To this end, I chose a participatory framework (aligned with Denzin, 1997; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005), and selected participants who took interest in such an exploration. I invited all participants to take part in this attempt to contemplate cultural implications of Israeli music education as an insight into socioreligious tensions that shape local public discourse.

Recruitment. In selecting and recruiting study participants, I used Patton's (2002) notion of "information-rich cases" (p. 46). The sampling considerations included convenience and networking, alongside an intuitive speculation that these participants embody socioreligious aspects that were primary to my study. Previous personal collegial knowledge of these participants led me to believe they would provide ample and interesting scope for the current study.

To confirm my speculations, and move beyond personal intuitions, I evaluated my selection of participants with two panels of experts consisting of three Ministry Music

Inspectorates and three sociologists of Israeli education. Having presented these experts with the rationale and purpose of my study, I discussed options for possible participants. Having presented my ideas for the selection of participants, and considering other possibilities suggested by the experts, I chose three participants indicated by both panels of experts as representing the diversity of contexts that evoke the socioreligious categorizations of Israeli Jewishness that interests me:

1. Malka—an ultraorthodox female high-school teacher in an urban setting,
2. Shira—a national-religious female high-school teacher in a suburban boarding school in the center of the country, and
3. Yoni—a secular male high-school teacher in a kibbutz community in the north of the country.

This choice entailed the recognition of geographical context as core to the socioreligious categorizations of Israeli society. Diversity of context includes geographical locations and community typologies respectively: urban ultraorthodoxy, suburban national orthodoxy, and secular kibbutz tradition.

Prior collegial knowledge of participants served me in the grounding of my selection on an inclination toward contextual diversity. Preexisting acquaintances with participants served the deep mutual trust essential to my quest to engage in dialogue: studying *with*, rather than the study *of*. Thus, I selected participants based on a preconception of richness and uniqueness of contextual features that at once comply with socioreligious categorical structures and challenge them. By engaging in this study, I hoped to discover gaps and deviances that would serve as justification for my selection,

in the challenging of any preconceptions that I had as I entered the field.

Design. I designed this research in the spirit of Scollon and Scollon's (2004) 12-month framework of nexus analysis, developed for explorations of cultural implications and meanings behind everyday actions. Blommaert (2005) justified this approach in the assertion that "we must look into macro-processes in order to understand micro-processes" (p. 236). In uncovering relationships between microactions and macrotrajectories, Scollon and Scollon described their methodology as "the analytical act of opening up the angle of observation to take into consideration these broader discourses (of past origins and future actions) in which the action operates" (2004, p. 11).

Scollon and Scollon's (2004) nexus analysis was established as the methodological implication of Scollon's (2001) mediated discourse theory, grounded on a Vygotskian approach to action, mind, and culture. In this sense, methodology is almost inseparable from the theoretical underpinnings of sociocultural thought, outlined in the following section. Before doing so, however, I offer a practical description of my research design.

The study began as I shadowed each of the three participants, accompanying them and observing their teaching workdays; getting to know them and their locations. For 3 months of observation, I split my weeks among the participants, devoting a day or 2 to each, simultaneously acclimating myself to all three settings. This constant moving between sectors sharpened my attention to detail and was a key factor that contributed to my research experience in the intensity of immersion.

After this period of observation, I scheduled three 2-hour interviews with each

participant. My conceptualization of interviewing followed Bruner's (1990) inclination toward "the narratives of natural conversation" (p. 115) rather than formal question-answer exchanges. The interviews were open and fluid, structured around the three main questions: (a) who are you and how did you become who and what you are; (b) what is it that you are doing (in your practice of music education); and (c) what social and cultural meanings do you attribute to your work. During the interviews, when appropriate, I referred participants to data from my observation logs.

The final stage of data collection took place in the format of a focus group. I invited the three participants to meet each other. The focus-group discussion was open and fluid. I suggested themes that included mutual introduction, challenges of Israeli music educators, and thoughts about socioreligious segregation in Israeli society. Mostly, participants talked among themselves, with minimal comments from me.

Analysis. Initial data analysis began in the interviews with the participants, as they reflected on their work and suggested interpretations. Because all research communication took place in Hebrew, the next phase of analysis was translation. Following Liamputting's (2010) approach to language issues in cross-cultural research, and Richardson and St. Pierre's (2005) notions of the writing process being an instrumental part of the research process, I conceived of translation as an integral phase of interpretation and analysis. As I transcribed the Hebrew data, I e-mailed each member copies of the data that related to them for member checks. At the same time, I began shaping short narrative texts in English that translated, interpreted, and formatted the Hebrew data, in search of a representational style that would be accessible to wide

audiences and appropriate for the academic endeavor at hand. I sent these sample English texts to the participants and requested their feedback. One of the three participants had difficulty with the English, but was happy to use the text samples as a basis for work with her English-language tutor.

Participants' responses to these initial texts opened a new realm of conversation and correspondence. Each was reading narratives shaped out of their own words, and all read some texts that represented general interpretations and focus-group interaction. Much more than member checks, this stage of the study facilitated a reflection of each participant on how they were being represented, and reinforced their awareness of the purpose and main themes emerging from the study.

At this time, it became most evident that the theme of stereotyping was going to be the major challenge of representation. The stereotypes of Israeli Judaism was an emergent theme that arose throughout the study. In many ways, the study was structured around recognizing stereotypes and confronting them, to break them down. The challenge of representation doubled this effect, in the translation from Hebrew to English, and the transition from a local audience to an international one.

Representation. I present the final product of this study through a series of narrative texts aimed at introducing the reader to the three participants' respective worlds. Scenes of practice of Israeli high school music education alternate with narrative testimonials designed from the words of participants. Introductory chapters address the main constructs on which these narratives rest, and fuel the interpretations that follow each narrative.

Sections two, three, and four of this work include different layers of text, some of which are differentiated by alternation between plain text and block text. I use plain text for texts that are narrated by me from a stance of observance, or discussions and reflections of my own. Participants' words, in their self-narrated portraits of section two, and their self-commentary in section three, appear in block text. In section four, plain and block text alternate as I narrate a three-way conversation that took place between the participants.

As a whole, this work hopes to reveal an insider's understanding of Israeli social tensions as emergent through three practices of music education. In this work, I hope to inspire further thought about the cultural implications of the situated work of music educators, in Israel and abroad.

Inspirations for Research Design

The thought behind this study's design was inspired by a multidisciplinary array of theoretical groundings including influences of (a) cultural psychology (Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Wertsch, 1998), (b) interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982), (c) linguistic anthropology (Blommaert, 2005; Gee, 2011), and (c) critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001). I describe further methodological inspirations that address issues of participatory research (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Maguire, 1987), and creative analytic practices (Denzin, 1997; Richardson, 2001; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) in a separate section that focuses on the research process as it unfolded toward the final written representation. The current chapter outlines philosophical underpinnings of social constructivist thought that comprise some of the

underlying assumptions on which this study rests.

A Sociocultural Approach

Epistemologically speaking, I place my study at an intersection of postmodern critical theory and social constructivism. The main concepts that constitute this intersection address cultural–historical trajectories of power, knowledge, and communication (Burke, 1945/1962; Foucault, 1972/1980, 1972/2010). Social structure, social action, and linguistic formation collapse into coconstituting and ongoing processes integrating patterns of ways of being, ways of acting, and ways of knowing. Gee (2011) summarized the basis of such an approach as a theory of “language-in-use” that looks at the constructs of “saying-doing-being” that constitute social enactments (p. 11).

Sociocultural approaches stress the reciprocity of words, actions, and meanings; and between individuals and the social contexts in which they act (Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). Study participants are thus perceived as social actors acting in social spaces (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). Rogoff (2003) promoted culturally informed research as a means to expose regularities and patterns of change that underlie one’s own everyday life and of those of others. Rogoff further asserted the importance of cultural study in emphasizing cultural diversity as “a resource for the creativity and future of humanity” and “for protecting humanity from rigidity of practices” (p. 18). In sociolinguistic terms, Gumperz (1982) asserted that “socio-cultural differences and their linguistic reflections ... play an important role ... in creating and maintaining the subtle boundaries of power, status, role, and occupational specialization that make up the fabric of our social life” (pp. 6–7). Sociocultural

knowledge of self and others thus becomes a crucial asset in community and national resilience, most relevant to current Israeli socioreligious realities.

Bruner (1990) advocated the study of “contexts of practice,” insisting “it is always necessary to ask what people are doing or trying to do in that context” (p. 116). Gee (2011) noted the “important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity)” (p. 2). Blommaert (2005) suggested the importance of connecting “micro-instances of social practice with macro-levels of social structure and history” (p. 19). Fairclough (1995) described the potential of exposing such connections through studies aimed at critique of hegemonies and contribution to “social and cultural change” (p. 96). Scollon (2001) similarly advocated exploration of interrelationships between social boundaries and the socialization of social actors by focusing study on “trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas and objects” (p. 608). The underlying assumption is that unique moments of social action affect and alter the very trajectories on which they build and are enacted.

Exposing Ways of Knowing and Experiencing Music

Specific to music education, Barrett (2011) proposed possible insight to be gained into intersections of culture and the development of musical thought and practice. Barrett suggested the lens of cultural psychology is useful for “the investigation of diverse settings and practices” (p. 5). Also, such study “provides opportunities for music educators to question some of the taken-for-granted assumptions that have shaped music education” in terms of “aims, theories, and practices” (Barrett, 2011, p. 5).

Most specifically, Talbot (2013) advocated applications of cultural psychology

and discourse analysis to the study of sites of music transmission as a crucial means of expanding “understanding of multiple ways of knowing and experiencing music” (p. 47). Talbot (2011, 2013) grounded such studies on Foucault (1972/2010), Blommaert (2005), and Scollon and Scollon (2004). In designing complex ethnographic analyses of music teaching and learning, Talbot (2013) applied Scollon and Scollon’s guidelines for nexus analysis in research on practices of music education. Talbot (2013) recommended this methodology as an important and effective way of unveiling aspects of “who we are, what we do, and how we do it” (p. 56). Talbot asserted that unveiling such basic underpinnings in sites of music education is crucial to establishing relevant and effective practices of music education in an age of globalization.

Nexus Analysis

Scollon and Scollon (2004) defined the methodology of nexus analysis as the uncovering of “what (ethnography), how (discourse analysis), and why (motive analysis)” that constitute a given practice (p. 10). Burke (1945/1962) grounded motive analysis in “the scholastic hexameter” of “who, what, where, by what means, why, how, when” (p. 228). Scollon and Scollon’s interpretation of Burke assumes a reciprocal relationship between small specific actions and the large social constructs on which they are enacted.

This approach is an effective strategy of unveiling sociocultural regularities, constantly moving between individuals and their social context. Doing so addresses the challenge of globalization, defined by Burke (1945/1962) as “encouraging tolerance by speculation” through “an attitude neither local nor imperialistic” (pp. 442–443). Although

written in a very different historical and geographical context, Burke's (1945/1962) words resonate with the mindset behind the current research endeavor, located in the complex realities of contemporary Israeli society. Burke's (1945/1962) definition can thus act as no less than a compass in directing the theoretical and methodological constellation of the study at hand.

Implications for the Current Study

In applying Scollon and Scollon's (2004) framework of nexus analysis, I worked to trace the ways acts of music reveal, create, and construct social and cultural trajectories. In the current research, I worked to unfold three different socioreligious-situated practices of Jewish Israeli music education, constituted of who, doing what, with whom, with what, how, when, where, and why. The main focus of this study was on what, how, and why music is being taught in three different socioreligiously affiliated practices of Israeli music education. Research questions are (a) What are the musical and pedagogical repertoires of each music educator; (b) What are the sociocultural contexts of each practice, framed by aspects of time and space: calendars, work hours, locations; and (c) In what ways (if at all) are these practices of music education in Israel expressive or responsive to cultural tensions characteristic of contemporary Israeli society. Through these questions, I describe the ways music education is enacted on various sociocultural nuances of Judaism in contemporary Israeli society.

To unfold these trajectories, I applied a research design of multiple nexus analysis. I proceeded along Scollon and Scollon's (2004) three-stage model (recommended for a study period of 12 months). I interpreted each stage into my own

language:

1. engagement—getting acquainted and acclimated to the practice sites and contexts;
2. navigation—discovering the key elements that comprise the practice, and moving between the individual and the social constructs that the practice entails; and
3. change—analysis that challenges the existing practice and inspires transformation.

In the current study, the final stage focused on participant involvement in data analysis and representation, discussed further in the following section on research as relationship.

The process of data collection aimed to reveal a multitude of perspectives, by applying Scollon and Scollon's (2004) interpretation of Ruesch and Bateson's (1951/2006) model of data. As data accumulated, I cross-referenced observations with interviews and one focus-group interaction, alongside subsequent correspondence with participants to generate as many viewpoints as possible, including

- *Members' generalizations*: What do participants say they do (normatively)?
- *Neutral (objective) observations*: What does a neutral observer see?
- *Individual experience*: What does an individual describe as his or her experience?
- *Interactions with members*: How do participants account for your analysis?

(Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 156)

Finally, in reading the final representational product of this study, three individual practices combine as a prism for insight into intrareligious considerations of Israeli Jewishness as they function in Israeli society at large. I convey this sense of experiencing the individual practices on the backdrop of Israeli socioreligious realities in the autoethnographic disclosure and in the illustrative vignette that closes this section, before moving on to a comprehensive representation and analysis of the individual participants.

Research as Relationship: Final Methodological Comments

Scollon and Scollon's (2004) concept of nexus analysis begins in acknowledging the importance of ensuring ethical and productive relationships between the researcher and each research participant that are more about studying with, rather than the study of. This approach advocates research reports that represent voices of all participants and demonstrate collaborative partnership relationships enacted throughout. Scollon and Scollon's tradition of nexus analysis further inspires an inherent sense of sociopolitical awareness. The final stage of "changing the practice" should emerge naturally from a transformative self-reflexive tone encouraged throughout. Sharing the research procedure with participants as it unfolds should cultivate a communal sense of change, manifest first and foremost in and through the research interactions.

In this spirit, the current study was designed as a participatory model of research: a research effort that would be collaborative, iterative, ongoing, and reflexive (Denzin, 1997; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). This framework was inspired by poststructural and postmodern recognitions of the constructivist function of language in society (Richardson, 2000). In the pursuit of personal accounts and construction of stories, this

study also builds on feminist theories of qualitative research (Jolly, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Maguire, 1987). The sociological aspect of the study aimed to balance “the personal to the cultural” (aligned with Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740).

Participatory and engagement frameworks of research diminish the effects of researcher–participant power dynamics (Denzin, 1997; Liamputting, 2010). Participatory frameworks invite study participants to take an active role in data analysis, and even in the shaping of the final representation. By engaging participants in the interpretation of their own words and actions, I invited them to address underlying social meanings they do not usually think about in their daily lives. In this sense I believe all study participants (including myself) have undergone change through the process of research: in revealing tacit tensions that constitute their practices, and legitimizing aspects of teacher initiative, personal agency, and pedagogical creativity.

Throughout the current study, it was crucial for me to make my own socioreligious biases explicit. During every interview and interaction with participants, I took care to express how I felt my interpretations were influenced by my own life experiences and my own social situatedness. In doing so, I encouraged participants to consider their own self-perceptions and interpretations from a sociological point of view.

Creating Research Through the Reconstructions of Words

Throughout this study, I translated and reconstructed the words of participants not only as data, but as part of the interpretation. Richardson (2000) insisted that “Writing is also a way of ‘knowing’—a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it” (p. 923). Using

variations of participants' own words to comment on their actions, I created a multilayered text where three study participants, alongside the primary researcher, comment and interpret. The construction of these texts, with ongoing consultation with participants, acted as a valuable tool for mutual self-discovery, thought, and discussion of emergent meanings.

Research data and correspondence with participants all took place in Hebrew. As the researcher, one of my main tasks and privileges was the translation of data from Hebrew to English. In the context of the current framework, however, the act of translation can be compared to other acts of text reconstruction and design that facilitated the analysis process of the study. Indeed, Liamputting (2010), stressed the cultural implications of translating research data, cautioning against literal translations that may ignore cultural resonances of specific words. Liamputting advocated for “interpretative flexibility” (p. 11): a translation process that focuses on equivalences of meaning rather than linguistic parallels.

The transparency through which I aimed to stress that translation was an act of interpretation and analysis guided my correspondence with the participants. During recruitment, I made clear that participants would be expected to read study texts in Hebrew and English, and attained their consent for this process. Malka, for whom English is especially challenging, promised to bring study texts to her English tutor as material for her private lessons. Throughout the study, I consulted participants in the translation of excerpts of data. As representational texts began to take shape, I e-mailed them to the participants, asking for their opinions and comments.

As a researcher, I had to negotiate my commitment to the participatory paradigm in deciding when and how to revise my writing in response to participant critique. In one instant, a long telephone conversation with a participant revealed her hesitation and disappointment with one of the general texts that included her alongside the other participants in a way that made her uncomfortable. At the end of the conversation, the participant admitted that the text reflects “a common truth of a situation,” but still makes her uncomfortable. She even added that if she were me, she’s not sure she would change anything in the text, and further admitted that this conversation *about the text* changed her perspective on some aspects of her teaching behavior that she may now rethink. I did revise this text in later versions of representation, and included a broader perspective, integrating the participant’s discomfort into the narrative as a way of rounding her character in the backdrop of a social reality about which she is still unclear.

Postresearch Spin-Offs

An interesting by-product of this research project emerged, as two of the study participants consulted me in future projects of their own. Malka shared her concerns about enrolling in a doctoral program, and sought my advice. As she contemplated her plans for continued academic study, Malka and I decided to embark on a research collaboration concerning other aspects of music education in ultraorthodox society. Malka had planned a survey design for this new study, and after her experience of my research, offered collaboration in hopes of deepening the data from a more narrative perspective. To date, we have begun data collection, and hope to complete analysis by 2018.

Shira also used our research time together as inspiration for furthering her own interests. Although less invested in academic research, Shira decided to involve me in a professional project she was leading in cooperation with her local music inspectorate. At the time, Shira was leading a group of national-religious music teachers in a dialogical effort to explore the possibility of creating a specialized curriculum and matriculation examination for their sector. As she described her efforts, Shira asked my advice, and later asked if I would be interested in joining this group. I expressed interest in hearing the group and sharing my own experiences in this field, and had a few communications with the local inspectorate on this subject. To date, the National Music Inspectorate has approved Shira's new curriculum for use in her music program.

I interpret these postresearch collaborations as a type of give-back characteristic of participatory models of research. I also see in these spin-offs evidence of relationships of mutual sharing that I aimed for throughout my study. It may have been easier to create such affinity between female colleagues, or between religiously oriented colleagues: two categories that could explain how this happened with two of three participants. It may also be that Yoni sees his professional life in a different light and is happy focusing on his own writing career in ways that are less conducive to collaboration.

Wearing Israeli Jewishness: Autoethnographic Disclosure

Just as ethnographers often begin with a grand tour of their site of study, I would like to take the reader on a grand tour of my closet, as a gesture of exposing the biases, inclinations, and privileges through which I engage with my current field of study. The ways I negotiate my wardrobe in my daily life as a Jewish Israeli woman are illustrative

of many of the cultural negotiations with which I engaged throughout this study. My own history of defining my Israeli Jewishness through clothes is somewhat of a microcosmos of the main themes of this study, and therefore a useful place to begin acclimation to the study field.

Jewish Israeli society often seems to me overobsessed by categorizations and subcategorizations of people, much enacted through nuance of outer appearances. External signifiers that stem from religious dictates characterize socioreligious subsectors of Judaism in Israel, mostly emergent from the laws of female modesty, as interpreted by different streams of Jewish observance. Much attention to detail is crucial to understanding and deciphering social dress codes that differentiate subsectors of Israeli Judaism. In the words of poet H. N. Bialik: “zar lo yavin zot” (“A stranger would not comprehend”).³

Over almost 2 decades of my adult professional life as a music educator in Israel, I accumulated an eclectic and extensive wardrobe, allowing me to fit in almost naturally to diverse social contexts of Israeli Jewishness. I take care to do so while always maintaining some flare of personal style. Ultraorthodox students I have taught have confirmed this feeling of mine, commenting on my adherence to community style, not just as technical dictates of modesty, but as nuance of fashion. These students noted that although other outsiders often visit them in makeshift clothing that suits their laws of modesty, I seem to come dressed naturally, wearing a different suitable and stylish outfit

³ From the poem “Biyom Kaitz, Yom Ham” [“On a Summer’s Day, a Hot Day”], reproduced in the Ben-Yehuda Hebrew Literature Project: <http://benyehuda.org/bialik/bia022.html>

every week, unlike other outsider-teachers' long skirts that they wear as if it were an on-the-job uniform.

Discussing my self-definition of my current socioreligious affiliation, a close friend and colleague concluded that I seem to negotiate my own Jewish Israeli identity in my professional life "very much like a chameleon." If this is true, the variety in my closet enables and reflects this attribute that is central to the success of my current study.

A Short Self-History in Clothes

Part of my obsession with clothes as identity traces to the national-religious secondary school system where I was raised. National religious girls' high schools include strict rules of modesty that do not always overlap with those adhered to in each student's family. Growing up in a U.S. modern-orthodox family that immigrated into an Israeli national-religious community, the complexity of my closet began in the differentiation between what I could wear at home (knee-length skirts or dresses with short-sleeved and somewhat lowcut tops, and open sandals) and what I could wear to school (emphasis on elbow-length sleeves, longer skirts, and insistence on stockings all year round). In a way, even my choice of higher education was impacted by dress codes, in that I refused to study in a local Jerusalem college that upheld such school standards and was even stricter than my high school. I wanted to exercise my right to wear sandals without socks and tee-shirts in the summer!

During my undergraduate studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, I began an extensive flirtation with two new aspects that would have a lasting effect on my closet: I finally dared to wear a pair of pants; and I met the man who later became my husband.

University campuses in Israel are integrated social spaces in which one is recognized and categorized by their choice in clothes. My husband admits a major factor in his decision to approach me and ask me out was that I was wearing a skirt. Had I shed that national-religious signifier in favor of a pair of jeans, I may have missed out on the man of my dreams.

My career as a music educator began as a teacher in national-religious schools around the same time I completed my undergraduate degree and married. Totally dependent on a job in sectorial schools, my new marital status required me to pledge allegiance not only to a skirt, but to an at least partial head covering to hide most of my hair. At this point in my life, this dress code came naturally to me and I did not feel much resistance to the notion that the Israeli Ministry of Education actually had a legal right to either not hire me or fire me from any national-religious teaching position, should I decide to stray from these dictates.

The first decade of my career echoed my high school experience of developing a double closet—one for school and one for home—with the addition of a vast array of hats, scarves, headbands, and handkerchiefs that I now used to cover my hair in school and at home. Even when I secured a part-time position in a secular school, I was identified there as one of the religious teachers, primarily because of my head covering (although I allowed myself to wear pants to the secular school and at home).

As the years went by, a wardrobe of maternity clothes augmented my closet. More pertinent to this life summary, however, is the growing gap between school clothes and home clothes, as I chose to focus my career on a full-time position in a national-

religious school. Home became more and more defined by the preference of pants over skirts, and on my 30th birthday—after 11 years of full-time teaching and 10 years of marriage—I removed my head covering from my personal wardrobe, agreeing to maintain the custom on school premises, but insisting on allowing myself to be bareheaded in my own life contexts.

Ironically, at this point an ultraorthodox colleague approached me to offer me a job. Ultraorthodox dress codes are much stricter than national-religious dictates in that they demand sensitivity to fabrics, cuts, and colors, alongside stricter standards of covering up: longer sleeves, higher necklines, longer skirts, thicker stockings, and absolutely no hair showing from underneath the head covering. The new job offer came with explicit recognition that this was not at all how I dressed in my personal life, and a warning that these standards must be upheld on campus only. Something in this explicit recognition of differentiation charmed me. The double closet I had developed all of my adult life suddenly became explicit, intended, and legitimized. I took the job and, through my acceptance of these terms, made my first steps into music-teacher education.

As my job slowly expanded in the context of higher education, I became affiliated with a Jewish secular college, even as I was teaching twice a week on the self-segregated ultraorthodox women's campus in Jerusalem. Other days of the week, in Tel Aviv, I was teaching mixed groups of predominantly secular students, who, outside of the Jerusalem campus, had no way to categorize me as other than them: my personal closet and my professional closet were now merged into one, with national-religious or ultraorthodox signifiers occupying designated shelves for designated days in those fields.

Beyond Hem Lines and Hats

As I conceptualized and planned this current study, my personal history and my evolving closet functioned in the recognition of my access privileges to fields and sites of diverse denominations of Israeli Jewishness. Furthermore, my acquired ability to blend into diverse Jewish sectors played an instrumental role in my study design. The outline of my personal history-through-clothes exposes some of biases I have accumulated along with the garments.

The matrix of the current study spans three study sites embedded in three subsectors of Israeli Jewish society: secular, national religious, and ultraorthodox. Although I grew up in a national-religious community and school system and still reside in a community that identifies with this affiliation, I perceive of my socioreligious identity today as almost as eclectic as my closet. Not only in terms of wardrobe, I feel comfortable today in secular social settings that many of my national-religious neighbors have either not experienced or see as off limits to them. Although it is still hard for me to use the words “comfortable” and “ultraorthodox” in the same sentence, the thick stockings are mostly to blame for this, rather than the human encounters of friendship and professional sharing.

I have brought this sense of human encounters, friendships, and sharing to this study. In a society dominated by stereotypical sectarianism, where women are instantaneously categorized by the length of their skirt and extent of their head covering, perhaps it is not surprising to find a desire for personal distinction in self-perception and in conceptualizations of others. The interactions that constitute this study maneuver on a

binary spectrum of the stereotypical and the unique, in a joint effort to look beyond hem lines and hats. Oxymoronically, challenging stereotypes requires recognizing them. In the most literal sense, my study effort had me not only recognizing stereotypes, but wearing them as well.

In colloquial Israeli discourse, proclaiming unique identity and unbound sectorial affiliation has become such a common attribute of many Generation Y religious Israeli Jews that it has become a cliché. The evolution of my closet, in many ways, can be seen as a personal journey toward the cultivation of a very personal, perhaps unique, Israeli Jewishness of my own, even if such a journey and its results have become somewhat kitsch. Fashionable or not, I wear my Israeli Jewishness with pride, shifting my chameleon skins with respect. This pride and this respect has enabled me to conduct and to present this study, through which I hope to illuminate interesting constructs of Israeli Jewishness as enacted and embodied in contexts of music teaching and learning.



Figure 1. Illustrations by Chaviva Bilayer (my sister)

Illustrative Vignette: A Day in the Life

May 11, 2016. 5 AM.

With insufficient sleep, I feel compelled to get out of bed and embrace the rare experience I have set up for today: I am determined to visit all three research sites in 1 day. Not just any day—Israeli Remembrance Day—the national Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and terror victims; the day on which Israelis of all shades of Jewishness preach unity. Indeed, as I ignite my car engine, the radio broadcaster seems to have read my mind, claiming that “on a day like today we *truly are* all *one* nation.”

Beforehand, back in my bedroom, I force myself to use excitement and determination instead of coffee, as I pull on a pair of pale blue jeans and a white tee shirt: this is me, wearing my Israeli Jewishness in the blue and white colors of the Israeli flag. This outfit will suit two of three research sites today. Although national-religious schools usually require replacing my *pair* of jeans with a jeans *skirt*, I will be observing *public* ceremonies today, and the public spaces of the national-religious community will accept my lack of skirt if they take place outside school premises.

It is still dark as I leave my house, but light enough to see the Israeli flags waving from my neighbors’ windows. By the time I exit onto Route 6—Cross Israel Highway—the sun is high in a sky that seems to be arranging itself in just the right shades and proportions of blue and white. As I drive under this sky in my blue jeans and white tee shirt I feel part of the landscape. On the radio, the iconic voice of Israeli tenor Yoram Gaon sings “The Ballade of the Wounded Solider,” with a crescendo of the massive cry, “my brother! O brother of mine,” and tears fill my eyes.

A little more than 1 hour into my drive, I turn off Route 6. *Emek*—the valley—lies before me, cozily blanketed in a thick morning mist: A patch work of green and gold plains, punctuated by harvested haystacks, sporadic rows of trees, rectangular shacks protecting agricultural vehicles, and random groupings of red-roofed houses comprise the villages and kibbutzim of the region. Over 100 years of Jewish history fill my lungs. I meditate a prayer to the Gods of research, feeling there is no place I would rather be this morning than here, in the *Emek*.

7 AM.

I am early enough to observe last-minute rehearsals of the on-stage kibbutz music program I am studying. As I near the municipal performance center I can hear a girls' choir warming up. The foyer of the building lines with the names and photos of fallen members of the surrounding kibbutzim. Today, Remembrance Day, each name bears a candle lit in memory of the fallen, and the foyer shines and flickers with collective memory.

On stage, the music program's ensemble consists of eight boys and two girls on bass, two guitars, drums, clarinet, trumpet, two flutes, keyboard, and singer. The sides of the stage are decorated with olive trees and branches; white paper doves hover from the ceiling. The stage backdrop hosts two flags: a regional flag of the *Emek*, and a national flag of Israel. The stage is lit in blue.

I watch as Yoni listens to the ensemble, moving quickly from song to song, giving the young musicians some final tips and pointers from below the stage. At moments, he conducts them with soft, gentle, almost nonchalant gestures of his right hand. Mostly, his

left hand is folded over his chest and his right hand cradles his chin, as if deep in thought.

I am surprised to recognize the instrumental opening as national-religious musician Yonatan Raziel's 2012 setting of Genesis 32:12 (Mechon Mamre Hebrew-English Bible) "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children."

Although the arrangement is strictly instrumental and no words are sung, I did not expect this choice in an official kibbutz event, and ponder if, indeed, on a day like today, we are indeed all one nation.

But when the female vocalists take the stage, my mind fills with this week's media controversy of the ban on female vocalists in mainstream university and military ceremonies, dictated by so-called religious considerations. Such considerations are beyond the kibbutz-oriented secular idealism of the community of the *Emek*. I recognize only some of the sad contemporary pop songs of loss and sorrow sung in perfect two and three-part harmonies, backed by the ensemble. These teenagers embody a professional standard of performance, mimicking traditions of Israeli Military Entertainment Corps.

Rehearsals are cut short because it is time to begin. The theater hall fills with young students, and teachers who greet each other as family members would. The front row is reserved for "the family," which I learn to be the family of a local fallen soldier in whose memory this year's ceremony is dedicated. The musical numbers punctuate the ceremony, which includes reading the names of all fallen alumni, and students reading texts from the diaries of fallen alumni of the regional school.

The ceremony peaks with the moving words of the mother of the fallen soldier,

who talks about the life and the death of her son, concluding with a plea to the youngsters to live life to the fullest. Her son was wounded in the 1980s and died after almost 13 years of fluctuating hope, pain, and despair. The mother returns to her seat in the audience, the stage fills and the audience rises, as the ceremony concludes with the singing of *Hatikva*⁴. No one but Yoni, the music teacher, knows who I am; my voice mixes with theirs; I feel part of this place. But I am quick to get back on the road.

8:50 AM.

Heading South, the landscape becomes too familiar for me to notice. The plains give way to hills and mountains, covered by forests in the distance. Olive trees decorate the sides of the winding roads.

On the radio, a broadcaster plays “A Letter to My Brother” by Kobi Aflalo, as a tribute to the mother of a fallen soldier he is interviewing. When the song ends, the broadcaster argues with the mother: “This song is too up-beat to be played on Remembrance Day, no?” The mother tells how the songwriter, Kobi Aflalo, met her during the *shiva*⁵ for her son, and how this song planted seeds of hope in her. “Hope and faith,” insists the bereaved mother, “are surely a part of Remembrance.”

An hour later, I follow traffic-police indications, pulling off the highway to the shoulder, parking my car alongside dozens of private cars and municipal buses. I walk from my car, back along the highway, crossing under in a tunnel to the shoulder on the opposite side of traffic. An abandoned military station from the British Mandate period is

⁴ The Israeli national anthem.

⁵ Week of mourning.

the location for this municipality's Remembrance Day ceremony, geared toward the majority of national-religious communities that populate the area. The national-religious girls' music program I am studying is responsible for this year's ceremony and I observed their rehearsals last week on school premises.

It is not yet noon, but the sun is blazing overhead. I arrive midceremony and no seats are left under the makeshift bright blue canopy erected for the occasion. I stand on the sidelines, next to security officers and police officers, male and female. The outdoor makeshift stage leaves no room for the dark audience privacy of the kibbutz theater performance hall. Even on the sidelines, I am exposed and even recognized by distant friends and acquaintances. In my personal life, I am affiliated with this community.

The back drop of the stage is decorated in blue and white, with photos of fallen terror victims of the past year, with the words of Psalms 22:8-9: "For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, 'Peace be within you.'; For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your prosperity," most famously composed into a melody by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach.

From the rehearsals, I already know that *all* the melodies the girls will play are Carlebach compositions. Rehearsals took the general form of compiling chord progressions and working together to decide on the best structure of parts and choruses: no written parts; no orchestration; much improvisation. Shira, the teacher, expects the students to work on their own and take artistic responsibility for the ceremony. At one point the guitarist noticed: "Hey! All these songs share the same progressions," to which her teacher, Shira, replied almost humorously: "Well, what do you expect? It's all

Carlebach.”

Carlebach, chords, and instrumental backgrounds are expected of these national-religious music students in the ceremonial context with no chance for female vocals here, for religious reasons. Furthermore, the function of music is that of atmospheric background simultaneous to textual readings. In Jewish Orthodox tradition, music is forbidden during mourning periods.

Family members of terror victims speak during the ceremony with words of faith, punctuated by scripture quotations, including Ezekiel 16:6: “Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, ‘Live!’.” The high school girls run the ceremony, managing the stage, and narrating; telling stories of fallen terror victims and the morals they can learn from the lives of these heroes.

The ceremony culminates in a series of prayers: “Oh, Lord Full of Mercy,” Then Psalms 83:

Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

² For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

³ They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

⁴ They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

⁵ For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee.

Next, a bereaved father reads the *Kaddish*.⁶

At precisely 11 a.m. all rise as the national siren rings, marking 2 minutes of silence to be observed throughout the country. A heavy silence falls on the crowd. Finally, a moment before *Hatikva* marks the end of the ceremony, the pledge of faith: all sing *Ani Ma'amin*—the traditional song of faith—as a national-religious appendage to the national anthem.

11:05 AM.

Back through the tunnel and across the highway, I get back into my car. I must stop at home before my journey continues. Blue jeans, or any blue and white for that matter, will not suit entry into the walls of ultraorthodoxy. Hiding my national pride beneath a long and loose fitting black skirt and long-sleeved, collared black shirt, I get back in the car, hoping none of my neighbors are watching.

I park my car on a narrow one-way street in an urban maze of four-story apartment houses. I know that one of these apartments on this very street belongs to Malka—the teacher I am about to observe. On the sidewalk, passing by makeshift kiosks, a pizza shop, and fruits and vegetable vendor, I fit in perfectly with the men in long black overcoats and hats, and women in long, loose clothing. Although my head is uncovered, my current hairdo could easily pass as a wig.

⁶ The traditional Jewish prayer for the bereaved.

I cross the street, and walk along the concrete grey wall that rises above my head. The wall is covered with pasted black and white printed announcements, rabbinical decrees, and obituary notices. As I turn the corner, the wall turns into a metal gate, with bars covered with a metal board to keep outsiders' eyes out. I find the entry into the gate, where another high grey concrete wall separates the girls' high school from the neighboring boys' preschool *Talmud Torah*.⁷

Inside, I am the only one in dressed in black. Young girls scattered around the court yard and running through the hallways all adorn light-blue collared button-down shirts and dark navy blue thick-pleated skirts. Although fast days and holidays elicit a *white* shirt substitute in the school uniform, today, they are only blue because here, within these walls, recognition of *National* holidays is forbidden. Painfully ironic, many of these girls' brothers, uncles, or grandfathers defended the State of Israel as soldiers and police officers. Some may have even given their lives for the country. To say today that ultraorthodox Jews are anti-Zionist is a highly inaccurate oversimplification. I imagine that many of the students here have their own way of observing Remembrance Day outside of school. The gap between persistent past traditions of ultraorthodoxy and contemporary society is embodied in the institutional limitations that differ from individual- and even some community inclinations.

The walls of the music room donated by the International Sephardi Congress, are lined with Scripture quotations referencing music and musical instruments. Malka, addressing a group of eight 12th-grade students, is reviewing the Romantic period in

⁷ Ultraorthodox boys' elementary schools are known as *Talmud Torahs*.

music history, as if there were nothing historic about *this* day in *this* city at all. Malka is uncomfortable with my observation today because she is suspicious of my motive to show that ultraorthodox ignore national holidays. My presence makes her contemplate the proper mode of action and she chooses to teach as usual.

A confused student tries to summarize: “So the Romantic composers are all about emotion, huh? Unlike the Classical ones?” “It is not so strictly black and white,” replies Malka, characteristically advocating extreme caution of generalizations, and acknowledgement of complexities. “In *music*, nothing is black and white!” retorts an almost desperate and frustrated classmate. Malka sighs. They are confused, and the examination is only 1 month away, but Malka’s sigh ends in her confirming: “Nothing is black and white. In music. And in *life*.”

The discussion shifts to examples of groundbreaking Romantic composers. Malka tells the class: “Well, we haven’t, and will not, study Wagner, but he is an example.” “Wasn’t he a Nazi?” someone asks, and Malka is quick to rectify the historic dates and periods.

One reason we will not study Wagner is simply because most of his music is operas, and we do not study operas. And not just operas, but content based on myths—stuff that we will not study because of the pagan content.

As Malka describes some of Wagner’s musical innovations, one student admits, “I am tempted to listen to his music.” Malka replies in a rabbinical tone: “You *can* listen to his music.” Another student seizes the opportunity and asks her teacher: “Teacher, do *you*

listen to his music?” Malka avoids answering, closing the discussion in a tone of authority: “It would be very interesting to discuss this. But we will not.”

Feeling choked by my black collar, long sleeves, and skirt, I notice that the high rectangular windows in the room are all open, but hidden by thick woolen curtains. I am anxious to get back to my car and remove my black overclothes to reveal my blue and white. I wonder what occurred in these walls an hour ago when the national siren was heard.

Before I leave, Malka feels at ease to confront me: “What did you hope to see today?” she asks in an ironic tone. We sit down and talk for a while, and I confess that it would be quite stereotypical for me to represent the ultraorthodox as “uncaring and ignorant on Remembrance Day.” I try to reassure Malka that I find her insistence on breaking down the “black and white” certainty of traditional ultraorthodox education quite inspiring, and that I hope that in conveying this I am doing more than confirming prejudice. Malka, in response, thanks me for this conversation and admits that next year she will rethink how to approach Remembrance Day in the classroom, because her discomfort in my presence today has made her think.

14:00 PM.

As I enter my car, after a long day of engaging my three study sites, the morning radio broadcaster’s words echo in my head: “On a day like today we *truly are* all one nation.” Are we?

PART TWO: PORTRAITS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section begins with a brief historic overview of the sociological nature of music education in Israel. After this theoretical grounding, three chapters follow, one chapter dedicated to each of the study participants respectively:

1. Malka—an ultraorthodox music teacher teaching in an urban ultraorthodox girls' high school,
2. Yoni—A secular Jew, raised on a kibbutz, teaching in a secular kibbutz-affiliated regional high school, and
3. Shira—a national-religious music teacher teaching in a suburban national-religious girls' high school.

Each chapter begins with a constructed self-testimony, translated and designed from interview data. I asked participants to tell about themselves through three main questions: (a) Who are you; (b) What is it you do (as an Israeli high school music director); and (c) What meanings do you attribute to your work. Each chapter consists of a constructed monologue that responds to these questions. The monologues appear in blocked text, followed by interpretative comments in which I summarize and relate emergent themes to relevant theoretical literature.

The central theme of my interpretations aligns with the sociocultural focus of this study. My intent was to create three culturally situated portraits that reflect a true-to-life quality, even as they respect participants' privacy rights. Adhering to this delicate balance required participant involvement in reading and commenting on drafts as the chapters took shape. Theoretical groundings for these chapters rely mostly on sociological

writings regarding each of the socioreligious sectors that the participants each, in some way, represent. The construction of the narratives and their interpretations dance between the stereotypical identification of individuals, as situated in socially constructed categories, and the nuances that make each individual unique.

Contextualizing Israeli Music Educators as Social Agents:

Historical Perspectives

Music Education as Socialization in the Zionist Era

The history of music education in Israel reinforces the interpretation of music educators as social agents. Even in the pre-State era, Zionist communities in Israel and abroad used music as a central instrument of nationalistic education and socialization (Hirshberg, 1995; Regev & Seroussi, 2004). New repertoires of pseudofolk songs were composed and disseminated in efforts to cultivate social solidarity. Leading musical figures from 1880 through the first decades of the State were active music educators deeply involved in the creation and dissemination of this “invented tradition” (Hirshberg, 1995, p. 147). Analyzing the historical repertoire of invented folksongs between 1920–1950, Shahar (1989) estimated that about 30% of folksong composers were employed as public school teachers, and others who did not teach were socially situated in positions conducive to community dissemination. Greenberg (1962) noted that music lessons in school during these pre-State years was almost exclusively confined to singing; so much so that “The teacher of music in the school was actually called *hamoreh lizimrah* (the singing teacher)” (p. 160).

This social role of communal singing and diffusion of nationalistic folksong

repertoire continued into the decades following the establishment of the State of Israel, and its Ministry of Education. Greenberg (1962) noted the outstanding abundance of musical activity in the early years of Israeli Statehood, citing music as “an integral and necessary part of the lives of the Israeli people,” and a crucial factor in the cultural life of the country (p. 1). In education, Greenberg described the Israeli school as a “workshop for the spirit of a nation” (1962, p. 68). Greenberg summarized the socializing function of music education in this system:

Israel has put a great deal of faith in music education as a powerful force in both integrating her heterogeneous population and helping each individual to develop into an Israeli citizen, full of national feelings for his country. Through music education, Israel has learned to bring her new citizens to an understanding of Hebrew, the land, and the problems of the new nation. Music education has been a strikingly effective force for fusing Israel’s many cultures. (1962, p. 239)

The socialization factor of music education in pre- and early State eras was a catalyst of early Zionist melting-pot ideology.

Music in the Segregated Sectors of Israeli Education

Wingard (1954) summarized the “trends” structure of Israeli State education, describing the political orientations of the secular, religious-Zionist, and ultraorthodox movements that became the three main streams of Israeli public education. Regarding the unification of these three trends into an official State Ministry of Education, Wingard noted that about 85% of curriculums were identical, claiming that “differences were more

an issue in politics than an actuality in the classroom” (1954, p. 36). Greenberg (1962) noted that singing lessons were an integral part of school education in all three trends, with much less time devoted to singing in the religious trends than in secular schools. Religious trends, according to Greenberg, limited the scope of songs to a mostly religious repertoire.

Surveying the writings of 19 leading music educators active through the first 2 decades of the State, Mizrachi (1984) categorized educators as belonging to three trends: (a) general (secular) education, (b) kibbutz education, and (c) religious education.⁸ Mizrachi interpreted Israeli music education from 1948 through the 1960s as entailing three main purposes: socialization, acculturation, and individuation. Mizrachi offered the following examples of how these three terms might function in the context of music education (see Table 1)

Table 1

Mizrachi’s Division of Music Education.

Socialization	Acculturation	Individuation
Music education used as a means to impart norms for public social behavior (in synagogue; at a ceremony; at a concert, etc.), or educating toward social solidarity (p. 14).	Music education with a focus on imparting artistic/aesthetic values of musical culture, and transmitting musical treasures of the art of music and of other cultures (p. 15).	Music education with the purpose of extracting the musical potential of the student through practice, discovery, creativity, and expression suitable to the students’ abilities and of their choice (p. 17).

Note. Adapted from Matarot hachinuch hamusicali bibeit hasefer bi’Israel: Deot vihashkafot shel Ishim u michanchim [Objectives of music education in Israeli schools: Opinions and outlooks of personas and educators], by M. Mizrachi, 1984, Tel Aviv, Israel: HaMerkaz HaMetodi LiMusica.

⁸ In the time span of Mizrachi’s study there still was a distinct differentiation from kibbutz education, which has since then been immersed into the “general”/“secular” category. During that period, the country lacked official Ultraorthodox public schools and Ultraorthodox music teachers.

Mizrachi's (1984) survey revealed the ongoing prioritization of the function of socialization in all trends of Israeli music education included in the Mizrachi study. These findings indicate a continuity between pre-State and post-State Israeli music education as instrumental to the cultivation of social coherence and solidarity.

Curriculum: Balancing the Local With the Universal

Music has never been included in the National Core Curriculum of the Israeli school system. Music exists as an elective school major in Israeli high schools, eligible for an official State matriculation examination. In elementary schools, principals can choose music as an additional school subjects, and to date, about 85% of secular schools do so (National Inspectorate of Music, 2016). In the Israeli Ministry of Education, an appointed National Music Inspectorate and a staff of regional supervisors dictate educational norms for this subject. Over the years, a few music subject curriculums have been published and revised, the most recent of which was in 2011.

Wingard (1954) quoted a 1948/1949 "Proposed Curriculum for Music in the High Schools," credited to the Office of Education and Culture, Office of the Music Supervisor. Two of the 4 years of study are mostly dedicated to Western Classical traditions of choral singing, orchestral genres, and opera. Other main components of this curriculum included pentatonic scales (in general, and as applied in Israeli song); Bible cantillation (including background study of Indian ragas and Arab maqamat); modes (as applied in Greek theory, Byzantine music, Gregorian chants, Beethoven, Schumann, Bartok, and Israeli music); religious vocal music (of Christian and Jewish traditions); and almost a full year of nationalistic music, mostly focused on Israeli song and music. These

aspects of the curriculum align with the nationalistic focus of early Israeli education, balancing local forms and traditions with universal concepts and repertoires.

The richness of this historical curriculum is striking in comparison to the most current 2011 National Music Curriculum revision. In a previous study, I critiqued the 2011 Music Curriculum as implicated in dictating a Western-Classical hegemony that creates a hierarchy of knowledge and undermines local traditions (Ehrlich, 2016). One central claim I noted was the insistence on a common core for all high school music programs in all socioreligious sectors. Basing this common core entirely on Western-Classical musical literacy may work to create a common language for all musicians in Israel, but it does nothing to promote a vitality of connection and meaning within each social sector. Furthermore, the embedded hierarchy between core and elective knowledge sets a clear standard of only one valued kind of musical professionalism.

The rationale section of the 2011 revision of the music curriculum proclaims a need to balance the local with the universal, and grounds this claim in theory and in the contemporary social context. My critique questions the language, structure, and content, and suggests that the curriculum may be accomplishing exactly the opposite of what it says it should be accomplishing. Whether accepting my critique or not, the continuity of a discourse of balance entails Israeli music curriculums shifting about every 30 years or so, juggling and reconceptualizing the local and the universal in music education.

Acculturation and Individuation: Israeli High School Music Programs Today

The universalist approach of the current music curriculum dominates most high school music programs in Israel today, resonating with Mizrachi's (1984) definition of

acculturation. Past dominance of nationalistic socialization is therefore marginalized in favor of a universal socialization into musicianship—or, Western-oriented musicianship. This is most evident in the structure of the State matriculation examination, which all high school music majors complete. The examination includes harmony, ear training, music history, and performance. Each school can choose the style of performance and an elective, but the base of the examination is identical.

To date, Israel houses about 130 high school music programs, the clear majority in secular schools, a small but growing portion in national-religious schools, and an almost nonexistent few in ultraorthodox schools (National Inspectorate of Music, 2016).⁹ In the past decade, the Inspectorate has approved a separate track for jazz-music programs, altering the matriculation examination for students in this track. Nevertheless, all Israeli high school music majors are tested predominately on the basics of Western musical literacy.

Despite these curriculum dictates, in a most recent field study of Israeli high school music programs, Ben-Alon (2016) interpreted high school music programs as laboratories for teenage self-discovery. He interviewed 10 high school music directors, all from secular school systems. Ben-Alon's findings indicate a space for diversity in the limits of the curriculum and matriculation examination. The music directors in Ben-Alon's study agreed that individuation was the most meaningful aspect of their work in how they negotiate their own musical personalities as directors and in the main goal they set for their students.

⁹ To date, no official high school music programs exist in the schools of the Arab sector.

Conclusions for the Current Study

Ben-Alon's (2016) study exemplified the importance of engaging teachers in dialogue, and asking them what they think they are accomplishing in their practice. Acknowledgment of the main attributes of the history of Israeli music education raises questions about current balances between socialization, acculturation, and individuation, alongside questions of possible differences between the segregated sectors of education. The current study offers a model of engaging music teachers from all socioreligious sectors in interpretive reflection in extrapolating individual fields of practice and in exploring the implications for Israeli society.

Malka

The title "musician" is huge: I would be proud to call myself that, but I'm not sure I'm worthy. I think I have much to learn; and I plan to learn. I think what I am entitled to call myself is an educator. But I am an unusual educator within my community. There is a big dissonance between what I represent, how I look, and how I actually live. Because I am involved in music, I think that my community accepts this. I am not sure it would be so easy if I were just a general educator like a homeroom teacher. My brother-in-law describes me as one who "eats lettuce and listens to Beethoven": for him, this means that I'm different, but I'm okay. Because I'm a teacher nobody really asks too many questions. And whatever may seem strange to them, they attribute to something they don't really understand: music.

Some ultraorthodox women who study or interact outside the community like to think that they are different or brave. I just think that part of my personality is being a bit different, and this is how I am; not because I'm some kind of progressive or rebellious ultraorthodox, but because I'm me. I am by no means rebellious or progressive. I studied in the secular music academy, but I would not recommend this to anyone from my community.

I feel I was born into music. Not that I had such a musical family. But my mother gave me music as a gift, and I knew how to appreciate this gift. I started electric organ lessons in the second grade. I think my mother always dreamed of playing, and so I also dreamed of playing. She bought me the organ as a gift. I don't remember practicing very much till the seventh grade.

I am the eldest child and I was an only child until Age 5. When my sister was old enough for music lessons, she was struggling in school, and so there was less time for her to invest in music. Later she played guitar and studied accordion. In the end, she also studied music and got her B.A. in music. It might have been something that my mother dreamed, and then we all just did it.

I had an excellent teacher: she taught me theory, interpretation, music history: I learned everything, by the way. I owe much of my career to that start. When I came to the Seminar,¹⁰ I was advised to choose a “real” instrument; an orchestral

¹⁰ Ultraorthodox girls' secondary schools are known as *Seminars*: they include high school and professional education—Grades 9 through 14—after which Ultraorthodox women are expected to pursue employment in the professional track they studied in Grades 13–14.

instrument. Till then I never felt that the organ was second rate: on the contrary, through the organ I was learning so much about music. The organ allowed me to learn everything: I was playing Bach fugues in four voices, getting a real feel for polyphony. I was reading loads of music, and learning about styles, and even about instrumentation. Methodologically speaking the organ is a wonderful start.

The local music store owner within our community had two daughters who taught electric organ: double keyboard, two-story organs including bass keyboard. The “good” girls in the neighborhood—the Beis Y’akov¹¹ girls—went there to study organ, like the girls you see today who play the violin. Back then it was organ. All the “good” girls had organs at home—all the organs are gone now. It was a symbol of social status: like some families have pianos; in our neighborhood, back then, it was organs. Later, as a teacher, I fought to prove the organ was a “serious” instrument, but today I agree that there was something commercial about that trend, that, at some level, was all about money.

When the first Seminar music program opened, it was clear to me that I was going to sign up. I had geared myself up to this from the seventh grade: back then no such program existed, but I knew I would study music. I am not as talented as most of the music students who can just sit down at the piano and play anything. All that I know I learned through hard work and perseverance: years of ear training and self-discipline. But I knew I wanted music: I came to music from

¹² Holy Scriptures.

love, and from the logical side of the brain. I loved the theory, the mathematics of it.

The funny thing is that I wasn't accepted to the program. I had amazing motivation, but the head of the program—who's now my boss—didn't think that was enough. I know today that motivation and intelligence go a long way, and when I see that in a student, I know that they can succeed. But back then, I wasn't accepted, and I had to fight for it. Maybe that is why I always feel like I have to prove myself. I was the best student in ear training, but still felt I had something to prove.

I had a close friend in the Seminar who was super talented. This also made me feel inferior. But we were best friends, and we still are. We did everything musical together: we played, we wrote, we listened. I cut most of my Seminar classes and spent my time either playing alone or playing or talking with my friend. Together we dreamt up whole curriculums: we had notebooks full of lesson plans for ear training, and music history. Our dream was to teach these subjects. Back then it was only a dream; no such programs existed in our community. We both taught instrumental lessons privately, and so we bundled our students together and opened private groups for ear training and music history. That's how we started.

We taught recorder and then at one point, I bought a flute. I thought I was going to love the instrument but I was disappointed. The mouthing techniques weren't

for me. At 19, I realized that what I should be playing is piano, but I thought it was too late. People around me told me that my organ playing had ruined my touch. It's a shame because I think I could have been a great pianist. Had I persisted I could have been a great accompanist by now: I read four voices so easily, but that's when I chose viola instead.

When I was in the 10th grade I began teaching. The organ teacher began referring young students to me. A few years later, I began teaching music in elementary schools. In those schools, afternoon recorder lessons were something that nobody took seriously. I took the job and told myself that I was going to make a difference. And I did; I gave it my all: I was never late, and no students were ever absent! That's how "tight" I held it. And the parents could see the difference. And the administrators.

At 22 I married, and spent 1 year at a State religious college to get my degree. Once I married, it was acceptable for me to study in a non-ultraorthodox institution. I was lucky that they accredited me for all my Seminar studies. The college required 1 year to complete my degree, but I spread it out over 3 years, and in that time had three babies. As I studied, I began teaching alongside my friend in the ultraorthodox conservatory. We were teaching organ and fighting for recognition of the organ as a "serious" instrument. We developed a pedagogical strategy and would observe each other's lessons: we were "serious" teachers. Two of my sisters soon came to teach at the conservatory as well. When one of my

brothers asked to start instrumental lessons, I told my parents that boys must study Torah,¹² not music.

I was giving birth once a year then and working as a teacher. Around my fourth child, I was invited to play in the community women's orchestra: It was a terrible orchestra, but at least it was a paying job. Aside from reading the notes and keeping time, nothing really happened in that orchestra. I was learning more repertoire, but also ruining my ears. It didn't take me long to leave.

We all came to music as a subject for teaching. That's how our community works: you enroll in a Seminar to learn to teach—so some learn to teach math, others music—no big difference there. But the problem was that I didn't want to learn all the general-education stuff. We pulled together a petition demanding to let us only study music. I wanted to be a music teacher, but didn't feel I needed the extra training as a general teacher that was required back then in all the Seminars.

For 10 years, I was working hard, and having a baby every year. I was earning 2,500 NIS a month. My husband was a Yeshiva¹³ student in one of the best and most prestigious Kolels.¹⁴ But my husband played a major role in raising the kids and keeping house while I was studying and working. That's how it was possible.

Because I was mostly working in afternoon classes, I would get up in the

¹² Holy Scriptures.

¹³ Institute for Holy study.

¹⁴ A *Kolel Yeshiva* is a place for Holy study for male adults who choose to devote all their time to learning. Traditionally their wives work and provide the family with income, alongside stipends from the Yeshiva.

morning, send all the kids to school, and then go back to sleep till noon.

Remember, I was just about always nursing a baby.

I think a good way to try and understand my perspective on the cultural aspects of my work is to talk about my own children. All of my sons play instruments: this is quite unusual for ultraorthodox boys, but they grew up watching me develop musically and it was natural for them. I don't expect the boys to invest in formal music education; they don't have the time for that. They are all enrolled in mainstream ultraorthodox Yeshiva institutions for Holy study and they are consumed over 12 hours a day. My sons all study in Yiddish-speaking institutions—that's an indication of how ultraorthodox they are.¹⁵

The house is full of instruments: recorders of all sizes, a piano, and even a darbuka-drum. Some of my sons tried their luck on other instruments, like clarinet and flute. When they got to the point that they needed to invest time, they realized that music is not so simple. I was happy to see them reach that realization: that's an important educational message that I believe in; that you must work at what you want to achieve, not just in music. It's a message for life.

For my daughters, it's different. They have loads of time on their hands.

Sometimes they get home from school and they're all alone. I refuse to hear any complaints about boredom, and I don't want them hanging around outside. One of

¹⁵ The strictest and most mainstream Ultraorthodox institutions still teach in Yiddish rather than in Hebrew.

my daughters studied recorder until fourth grade and studied 1 year of piano, and then she wanted to quit. She asked me: “just because you’re a music teacher I must study music?” She is very smart but not used to investing time in study or practice. I told her that music is part of her education, just like all the subjects that she must learn in school. When she’s older, she can decide whether or not to continue, but for now it’s my decision as her mother. It worked. I also started playing duets with her and asked her teacher to give her easier pieces that could be just for fun. After another year, she was playing recorder and piano just for fun. She plays on a very high level now, and she enjoys it. So, I think it is a process of exhibiting parental authority, alongside a rationale, and this leads to perseverance that enables enjoyment.

I don’t know if my daughters will choose music as a profession. They don’t have to, and I won’t push them into it. I won’t think that the music that they learned was a waste. It obviously was an important lesson for life, and a way to build their character and give them a rich pastime. I think that those who choose music as a profession should be very talented in music. But for everyone, studying an instrument is a matter of education, of character, and it really should be a must. It educates for self-discipline, attention to the details, and these are mind-states that I want kids to apply to everything in life.

This high school music program is a dream come true for me. I couldn’t have dreamt it better. When we started off, the school gave me everything: they spent

thousands of shekels on instruments; we had a full chamber orchestra here and a choir. The performance level was amazing.

In the future I imagine myself guiding young teachers. I am at a pivotal point now because I must choose how to continue my studies. I want to register for a doctoral program, but I don't know if I want to do it in music or in education. I know I have a lot of musical knowledge that I am still missing. There are gaps in our teacher training that I would love to fill. I don't think I ever got any training in popular music or Eastern music. Whether I like it or not, these influences are evident in all sectors, even the ultraorthodox. I don't have the expertise to deal with these influences.

Eats Lettuce and Listens to Bach

When I ask Malka if her friends and neighbors think she is strange or unconventional, she shrugged: “Nothing more than that I eat lettuce and listen to Bach.” Although I have family and professional connections in the ultraorthodox community, I have never met an ultraorthodox viola player before. In fact, Malka's passion and commitment to music seemed to me a rare professional choice for a woman of her community. Furthermore, her choice of viola—not violin or piano—seemed to make her stand out in her community. “I have often regretted this choice,” Malka confided in me, “realizing how my overall musicianship could have benefited more from focusing on piano, or at least a less lonely instrument than viola.”

For several years, Malka made her living as an ultraorthodox viola teacher in her

neighborhood: a professional definition which, had I not taken the liberty to change some details in my descriptions, is so categorically distinct that it may even compromise her right to privacy. Nevertheless, Malka refused to frame herself as unique in her community and relegated her passion for Classical music (“listens to Bach”) alongside what her friends see as a characteristic of her thin figure (“eats lettuce”). Responding to my inquiries, Malka insisted that “choosing a career in music education in my community is just like choosing any other career; there is nothing unique or special about my choice.”

Good Girls Play Organ

In the late 1980s, an old corner music shop used to exist on the outskirts of one of the main and most self-segregated ultraorthodox neighborhoods of the city. “During those years he sold many two-story electric organs,” Malka reminisced about the old shop’s owner. “It was more of a commercial thing than a purely musical pitch. In those days playing the (electric) organ was a sign of excellence: the *good girls* all played organ.”

Ultraorthodox constructs of femininity resemble 19th-century European norms of musical femininity (Perl, 2007) as entailing associations with gentleness, passivity, perfection, and beauty (Green, 1997; Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe, 2002; O’Toole 2005a, 2005b). Malka’s adolescent experience resonates with these descriptions in that music was designated as a proper feminine pastime, and the organ most specifically considered a high-ranking endeavor. Despite the store owner’s commercial interest, Malka remembered the two-story organ of her teenage years with a deep sense of appreciation: “Today, as a music educator, I understand just how much of my musicianship I owe to

that instrument, and maybe it's a shame that they went out of fashion."

Beyond Black and White

Today, Malka prefers not to teach private viola lessons, because she has stopped taking lessons herself: "On this instrument you must be in constant progress or you lose everything," she explained. Malka considered herself lucky to have been "in the right place at the right time" to have been chosen as music director in an ultraorthodox girls' high school. She perceived this job as allowing her to "live her calling." Malka described her teaching music to adolescent ultraorthodox girls as "a rare opportunity to challenge some of the cultural assumptions that they grew up with, moving them beyond the black-and-white of ultraorthodox traditions of education."

Tzadok's (n.d.) ethnographic study of ultraorthodox schools described strict indoctrination "that leaves no room for thought" (p. 21). Tzadok depicted children learning to recognize a "positive" and "negative" in everything, with teachers exhibiting "a clear-cut black versus white world view" (p. 19) repressing expressions of independent thought. Malka recognized such attributes in the mindset of some of her students and found this "troubling and frustrating." In her work as a high school music teacher, she hoped to counteract such upbringing.

Prior to her high school teaching position, Malka realized her devotion to music in her own family setting as well: all 10 of her children participate in musical activities. This fact becomes even more important in that most of Malka's children are boys, for whom formal music education and regular participation in musical activities is quite limited in ultraorthodox communities. Malka herself has managed to complete an academic

master's degree in music in a secular institution, while bearing and raising her 10 children and providing her family's income. Malka's professional life and achievements allowed her husband to devote himself to Holy Scripture study, even as he functioned part time as a stay-at-home father, caring for their children.

Friedman (1999) suggested a type of ultraorthodox feminism in women's support of their husbands' learning as a function of their own spiritual aspirations. Yafeh (2007) interpreted this aspect of gender inequality as a division between the male sphere of spirituality and the female domain of the mundane. Nevertheless, this dictate opens interesting possibilities for female social and personal development (Freidman, 1999). With the men of this society exempt from work in favor of Holy study, the women must acquire an education broad enough to enable future employment (Almog & Perry-Hazan, 2011). The women of these communities, through cultural exposure, must gain the professional and technological training needed to ensure family financial security (Shilhav & Friedman, 1989). El-Or (1994) defined this construct of ultraorthodox female education as a paradox of education and ignorance.

Malka was cautious about recommending academic study for her female students, fully aware of community suspicion about academic learning at large, and particularly of secular institutions. What was right for her may not be right for them and she must be cautious. Nevertheless, she had no problem agreeing to my suggested explicit claim that her efforts in music education in her community were "contributing to students' potential prospects for social mobility." In so saying, Malka acknowledged the subcategory of Sephardic ultraorthodoxy associated with the low socioeconomic status of many of her

students: “In many ways, they come from a community that is worlds apart from my own,” she summarized.

Yoni

I was born and raised on a kibbutz in Northern Israel; that pretty much defines me. My mother was the legendary kibbutz music teacher, so music was always a big part of my life. On the kibbutz there was a whole network of musicians: composers, performers, and teachers of course. My mother was a big part of that. Till this day I often run into old women from the kibbutz who remember my mother as their teacher.

Actually, my mother was my teacher too. As the kibbutz school music teacher, of course she taught my class. This was very awkward for me and I made trouble. I refused to sing. Today I still feel inferior in singing skills, and I regret my stubbornness. I also didn't want to listen to Classical music—only jazz and rock. That was my rebellion. If I remember correctly, they eventually kicked me out of that music class because I was too much trouble. Rumor has it that I actually broke a recorder!

My father was a real kibbutznik—he was all macho, all about working in the fields. Of course, he served in an elite commando unit, and his army experience remained a central part of his life even in old age. My mother played piano and accordion and was a big sing-a-long guru: any song that you could sing she would accompany perfectly. Today she still does this with her grandchildren. So, my

Dad was all muscles, and my mom was all music, and I knew I had both within me. I knew early on that I was more inclined toward the artistic and aesthetic sides of life.

When I got the chance, I enrolled for music lessons with a music teacher named Igor from a neighboring kibbutz. It was a special class for kids who were crazy about music, and I was driven by a deep curiosity. Igor taught us in a holistic way: we would start talking about something, and then explore it from all aspects and points of view. This is very different from the way we teach today—theory, history, and performance each as a separate topic. In many ways Igor's way of teaching music as a holistic whole is something I still aspire to today.

Back in the 70s, growing up in the kibbutz, it was difficult to define my identity through music and the arts. But that's what was happening to me. My artistic aspirations were shaping who I was becoming. I kept up a macho image by serving in a commando unit in the army and all that, but deep inside I knew it wasn't for me. I see myself as a kind of split personality—I am different within different contexts.

One way I dealt with this inner conflict was by playing guitar as a social instrument. I kept the piano to myself, as a private and personal outlet when no one was looking. On guitar, I could live up to some of the social expectations that I felt surrounded me. Guitar is manly and cool: I played rock; we had a band. At the same time, from age 10, I was studying Classical piano with private teachers.

In fourth grade, the kibbutz tested the musical potential of all the children and provided music lessons for all those who were found to be talented. So, I had free piano lessons from the kibbutz.

Education is one of the biggest enterprises of all the kibbutzim. Music education was also a big part of that. All the children learned to read music. Whole classes were taught recorder and mandolin. The talented kids got lessons on piano or violin. We grew up away from our parents, in the “Children’s House.”¹⁶ I had a piano in my parent’s house, and in the kibbutz Club House. I preferred practicing piano in my mother’s house and playing guitar when my friends were around. I never studied guitar; I don’t even remember how I got one. Everything I know on guitar is from informal learning. Some of it I remember I learned from an educational television show that we would watch in the Club House. I can play any song by ear on guitar—in one key only—but still, this is something I still can’t do on piano.

In high school we had a band. We were pretty bad, but it was cool. We were a group of intellectuals: we took interest in avant-garde theatre and art that was going on in Tel Aviv. We took no interest in the fields and agriculture of our parents. We dreamt of becoming the Israeli Beatles, and of leaving the kibbutz for the city.

¹⁶ Traditional kibbutz structure included a communal lifestyle, with all children growing up together in the “Children’s House,” where both formal and informal education took place, and all children lived together in a kind of dormitory, outside their parents’ homes.

My big breakthrough was after my army service, when I had enough money to make it to Berklee in Boston to study jazz piano. First, I spent 6 months in New York working as a mover. Then I had enough money for tuition and I was accepted, so I moved to Boston. It worked out nicely because close friends of my parents were on sabbatical in Boston and they took me in.

In kibbutz terms, the thing to do after the army is to trek around the world. That didn't interest me. So, for the first time, I felt like I was breaking free of kibbutz norms when I invested my money in studying music in Boston instead of trekking. During that time in Boston, my identity became fixed: I knew I was a musician and that was it. I never thought of myself as a music teacher. When I came home after graduating jazz composition at Berklee, I was looking for a job and the kibbutz offered me a job at the Arts Center, teaching music ensembles. It just happened.

At first, I was splitting my time between Tel Aviv and the kibbutz. I was struggling in Tel Aviv to pull together a few musical projects. I was playing jazz, trying to make a living. We did a few gigs each month but it wasn't going anywhere. I needed some kind of job security, not just financially. I added more and more teaching: private piano lessons, and ensembles. Next, I decided to try and teach jazz history. At the same time, I was developing myself as a novelist. Teaching jazz history for me was like storytelling. I even wrote a booklet on jazz history, just for the fun of it.

Jazz history is a great story: it's a story of human triumph; of rising from the depths. I love telling this story, and listening with the students to the music. There is something so eternal and universal about this music and its story that all the kids "get" it.

After years of teaching ensembles and jazz history, I was looking for new challenges, new stories. So, I started teaching Western music history. It was all almost new to me. I had to study it all again myself to remember the time periods, the composers. Western music history is trickier than jazz history. It's not all one narrative: it's more complex, and it's also much less cool. I have to work hard to make it relevant for the kids. The music has a power of its own and they can "get" that. But you have to get them to listen hard enough.

After Western music history, I began teaching music theory, which was more natural to me. At that point in my career I was getting tired of endless private piano lessons; over 30 individual students a week. I was looking for ways to teach more in the classroom than in private lessons. I was also beginning to realize that getting ahead in this profession required a teaching license and I went and got one in 2 years of study in Tel Aviv. These studies were frustrating for me. I was happy to be learning the basics of education, but I expected more pedagogical training. In retrospect, maybe it was better that I made my pedagogy up as I went along, but I still suppose there is a way to teach how to teach music, and I never got that.

Aside from teaching these few classes, I had yearly responsibilities for the musical aspects of the regional Remembrance Day ceremonies. Remembrance Days get very personal in the kibbutz. Most ceremonies will tell a story of a family from within the community. When I choose the songs, I try to get it right. There are so many songs about leaving and loss, and once a song is broadcast on the radio on Remembrance Day, it enters the repertoire. Writing arrangements is a skill that I have—like a good shoemaker—but it is not my outlet of artistic expression.

When I was already well acquainted with the school from leading three ceremonies a year and teaching all of these classes, the legendary local high school music director decided to retire and asked me to take over. I was still not fully imagining myself as a music teacher, not to mention music director, but she convinced me to give it a try.

Being a music teacher is about getting kids to listen: to really listen. My job is to expose them to music. All the facts and history they may forget, but they will know how to listen. I often think of my childhood music teacher, Igor. He still is my inspiration. But he lived in a very different world; he made his own world; he never had to comply to Ministry dictates or worry about matriculation exams. And maybe that is best. Sometimes I think that in the future I will leave the school system, open my own private educational studio, and be like Igor. But for now, I choose to remain within the system.

I believe in choice: no matter where we are in life, it is our choice to be there. So I won't complain about being stuck in school music. This is my choice. And if I have to teach composers or periods that are not my own first choice, it's okay; it's all part of the deal. I will let my students know that I'm not in it for the grades. Grades don't really matter to me. I want them to know that I am an educational figure, but a different educational figure. They are used to teachers who judge them in numbers and demand excellence. So, I come to them as somewhat of a surprise.

I think that my role as a teacher is about helping individuals understand themselves. In a world that is more and more social and extroverted, I think music in adolescence is a good way of finding out what you like, who you are, what your unique individuality is about. Even finding a place where you belong; a culture that is not just your mom or dad but is all yours. This is more difficult to do when teaching straightforward Mozart or intervals. But when we get to controversial stuff—like Modern and Postmodern music—these materials raise a classroom debate where students are challenged to find their voice.

When I thought of going independent and opening my own private studio, I realized that I may not have all the organizational skills that it takes. At one point, my wife suggested that I open a high school program in a local urban school. I am not sure that I would like working in an urban setting, people-wise. Here on the kibbutz, the Arts Center where the music program takes place is like a second

home to the kids. There's something in the atmosphere that is still like the kibbutz of my childhood.

Teaching in the high school music program takes place between 4 and 8 p.m. Some mornings I teach private lessons to adults. Other mornings are free; I like to have free mornings for writing. One of my dreams is to write a book on piano pedagogy. I think I want to build a parallel between learning an instrument and learning a second language. I feel there is some connection, and I would like to work it out into a method: what learning is actually all about.

When people ask me what I do for a living I tell them that I am a music teacher. My wife nudges me to answer "high school music director" because then it means that I do more than just teach. I think music teachers are privileged to work with the emotional and personal aspects of students that other teachers barely touch. When you work with a student, musician to musician, you have something in common, and you have a greater impact.

When people hear I am a music teacher they usually say, "what fun!" or ask "what instrument do you play?" Everyone wants to play an instrument, so they imagine that it is all pure fun. It used to be embarrassing to admit you were a teacher in Israel. In many ways it still is, but a music teacher, now that's a different story. Of course, when I add that I'm a high school music director, it adds more status—there's an official matriculation exam, and that makes it impressive. Nowadays teachers in Israel are making more money, and getting a

bit more respect. I met several male teachers who left high-tech jobs, gave up 90% of their salary to become teachers. People are looking for something meaningful. In teaching you connect with other people, and influence their growth.

Guitar with Friends; Piano to Myself

As the son of the kibbutz music teacher, it was natural for Yoni to be chosen to study piano. Legend has it that, as a child, perhaps in defiance of his mother, Yoni broke a recorder. Later in life, he made up for the broken instrument by mastering recorder, guitar, piano, and much more. Yoni's musical curiosity later pushed him to further his education by traveling independently, on two buses each way, to a local music master named Igor. "Igor taught *music*," Yoni explained to me. "It was not piano, or theory, or composition: it was a holistic entity that Igor hoped would interest us in all aspects it comprised." Troubled at first by his lack of vision or ability to respond to my invitation to imagine himself in an optimum future, Yoni finally admitted in our final session, "Yes. If I could choose to be an independent non-Ministry teacher, yes, I'd be a kind of Igor."

Hirshberg (1995) and Regev and Seroussi (2004) depicted the respect traditional kibbutz culture had toward musical pursuit, evident in the important community roles allotted to kibbutz musicians. Simultaneously, Dar (1995) and Dror (2004) described the ethos of kibbutz male machoism that looked down on elaborate emotional expressiveness, like that associated with music. Still, Yoni's passion for music did not interfere with the social expectations of Israeli male machoism he encountered in his kibbutz upbringing. Yoni is proud of his full 3-year military service, which he completed

in a commando unit.

Recalling adolescence, Yoni was reluctant to specify any instances of social stigma he may have encountered, but admitted, “for some reason I kept the piano to myself. Piano is what I played at home in a closed room. When I was out with friends, I played guitar.” Dar (1995) and Walley (2005) described the prominence of peer culture in kibbutz adolescents, attributing this to the communal lifestyle and to the central function of peer groups in a society where children were raised together in Children’s Houses rather than in their parent’s homes. Dar further theorized about the traditional kibbutz upbringing as cultivating an integral inner contradiction between the individual and the communal that can result in a type of personality split.

To Boston and Back Again

Having completed his military service, Yoni traveled to New York, working as a mover, carrying refrigerators on his back to make money for music school. Like many post-army Israeli musicians, he might have harbored a hidden dream of being discovered. When he had enough money, though, he left New York for Boston’s Berklee College of Music to study jazz piano. He returned to Israel after his studies and for a short time tried his luck as a pianist, composer, and musician-for-hire in Tel Aviv. Yoni imagined that some of his students dream of following this very path, and took pride in the select few who have already done this and “made it. Bigtime!” Mizrachi (1984) noted that despite the significant role music played in the communal ideology of kibbutz tradition, self-expression and self-fulfillment prevailed as primary goals of kibbutz music education more than in other Israeli sectors.

Yoni did not imagine himself as a music educator, certainly not a school music teacher, but somehow, “it just happened.” Living up north in a kibbutz near his hometown, Yoni began his career as a studio piano teacher, slowly expanding into a youth ensemble director, and finally classroom teacher. All his high school classes took place in the regional Arts Center, traditionally called the *Ulpana*.

A major function of Yoni’s position includes planning, rehearsing, and performing all regional Remembrance Day ceremonies. This is so central to his community that it is paid for by the hour, and shapes Yoni’s school year around the three main Israeli public days of remembrance: Yitzhak Rabin’s memorial in November, Holocaust Day, and Remembrance Day for fallen Israeli soldiers and terror victims in May. “November always comes too early,” Yoni admits, “with hardly enough school time to rehearse. But all the school teachers know that if a kid is part of the ceremony, I can call him out of his lessons for rehearsal; they all respect that.”

For the past 2 years, Yoni has worked as the music director of the regional high school music-major program. This new job increases Yoni’s school and community responsibilities and need to negotiate school contexts. Yoni laughed at thinking of himself as a *school* teacher, much less as a subject director: “You ask me what it *means*, what it *takes*” to be a subject director. “I’m not sure I know and I’m not sure that I’ve *got* it.”

A Storyteller

What Yoni sounded sure of, is that, at heart, he is a storyteller. This self-view helped him explain his passion for teaching music history: “It’s really just about telling a

story. Letting the music do what it can, and telling a story.” Unsure of his professional future, Yoni admitted he is a novelist. He had published one book and was currently writing another. For the purpose of my study, I invited Yoni to participate in weaving his narrative, and feel lucky to have found such a potentially active participant.

Shira

I come from a musical family. My grandfather was a synagogue custodian who performed as a musician at community weddings. One day when I was five or six, my uncle—who is also a musician—took me to a recording studio. It was the first time I had ever seen a full grand piano. He let me play the piano and I fell in love. Later, I begged my parents for a keyboard, and it was my uncle who bought me one. I played all the time, but my parents never thought of sending me for lessons until I asked.

My parents decided to become religious when I was young and sent me to an ultraorthodox school. I began studying accordion when I was in the fifth grade. When I started ninth grade in an ultraorthodox Beis Y’akov high school, my parents got a letter warning that I either quit music lessons or be expelled from school. I grew up with an inner conflict, feeling guilty about the time and the effort I was investing in music instead of in Holy study. No one said it out loud, but it is something that was constantly going on inside me.

There were other expressions of conflict and tension surrounding religion in my childhood. My mother loved the rock band ABBA. I remember thinking to

myself, is that what a pious religious woman should be listening to with such passion? Or, my father was a military man. In the ultraorthodox community that they chose to live in at that time, army service was unheard of. As a child, I remember thinking, if it is wrong to serve in the military, is my father wrong?

Today people laugh that I am undefinable in terms of religious sector. Maybe it's because of my childhood. But it's funny because I feel that I belong to the national-religious sector in how I dress and where I live, and even who I work with. When I was 15, I left the ultraorthodox school system and switched to the national religious. In many ways, my parents shifted with me. Today no one in my family is ultraorthodox.

When I finished high school, I signed up for National Service,¹⁷ but chose to serve while living at home, because my parents had just bought me a piano. I found a private teacher who was amazing. It was the first time I realized what musical knowledge is: someone who knows what they are doing as they play. I played by ear, but was amazed to see that there's a whole bulk of knowledge to learn. My students today get all that from me straight off. I tell them, if only I had gotten this knowledge that you're getting when I was your age. In my time, it was different. Institutions were only about Classical knowledge.

¹⁷ Religious women in Israel can receive an exemption from army service for religious reasons, and most of them choose to substitute a year or 2 of national service in welfare or education instead of serving in the military. Most national service takes place away from home; girls live in special regional dormitories.

During my year of National Service, I met a friend who was also a pianist. For the first time in my life I had a musical friend, someone to talk music with. We enrolled together at the local religious college. We were very different—she was Classically trained, and I was playing by ear—and we envied each other’s talents. There is a difference between piano and accordion for me. I studied formal lessons on accordion: sheet music, repertoire, and all that. On piano, I was just me, playing by ear, doing what I wanted: my friend was fascinated by this.

I studied in a religious college, and majored in music, but the college focused us on elementary music education. I knew that that was not for me; I never imagined myself as a school teacher. Even though officially the college trains for preschool through high school, they really gave us almost nothing about high school. I suffered through all the preschool training. I chose this college because they had a music track, and it was religious. I couldn’t imagine myself studying outside my community.

Years later, after I completed my degree, when I was teaching part time in high schools, I decided to study in a nonreligious music program. I felt good there: no one made me feel different. They knew that I wouldn’t come to any social events on Friday or Saturday, and that I wouldn’t eat in non-kosher restaurants, but they accepted me as part of the group. Sometimes I would talk spirituality with some of my classmates. I would tell them that the only difference between me and them is that for me there is something beyond: they are in art for art’s sake, and for me

there is something beyond.

It's funny. I had no problem fitting in a nonreligious program, but if you would offer me a job at a secular high school, I think I would decline. First of all, I think secular kids are growing up with all kinds of cultural worlds and music that I just didn't grow up on. Second of all, I don't want to deal with other gaps, like social gatherings on weekends. Now that I relate to my job as educational, including social aspects, I don't think I could really be that in a secular setting.

When I think back about my first college experience, I feel sad. The music program there just isn't attractive enough: it just isn't enough. My professors sometimes call me and ask me to refer young students to them, but I don't feel that I really can. Girls who study with me in high school know more in 12th grade than what they can learn in that college. I dream of going back to college as a teacher and challenging the program there so they can realize how much more they should be giving the students there. I want to teach popular music history and popular music theory and harmony. Just imagine: even the class on piano accompaniment was all about how to accompany songs Schubert style; nothing practical for a contemporary singer-songwriter.

It's a new generation. Girls I have taught graduate high school and go on to perform professionally. Some of my graduates are instrumentalists for leading pop musicians in the religious sector. Those of them who want to study music will choose one of the music-industry-oriented schools: there are two new religiously

oriented programs geared toward popular music and the music industry, and they will enroll there way before they even think of the religious college music program where I studied, even if they can't get an official degree.

If I had the choice today, I would choose a nonreligious school of music.

Something in me is disappointed with the religious programs. They're just not good enough. They're trying to be—bringing in big names from the industry—but something keeps them below the professional standard. I don't want to be there.

Today I allow myself to think for myself; I'm less dependent on rabbinical advice.

I have my principles: you can see, I look and behave very Orthodox, but in the grey areas I will allow myself to decide. I'm not rebellious and I still respect rabbis, but if a rabbi is telling you something that you know is not right, then wake up, use your mind, and don't be fooled.

Women singing for mixed audiences, for example, is something that is sometimes okay for me. It really depends on how much sexual energy I feel is going into the performance. If I feel it's going in that direction, then it's not for me. That is what I tell students who are debating this point, and also how I decide about gigs as an accompanist. A good friend of mine is more religious than me. She asks her rabbi everything: —what music is okay to listen to, and what not. But what does that rabbi know about Bach? I think she lives in conflict all the time. I am beyond that conflict now: I believe that music is an integral part of my spirituality, and I don't need a rabbi to help me decide how to manage it.

When I first graduated, I tried teaching general music in an elementary school for a few weeks after graduation. I quit almost immediately because it just doesn't interest me: teaching kids to listen for "piano" and then "forte" and all that stuff. All that interested me was harmony. One of my professors found me a job teaching a group of high school students harmony. At first, I declined: I couldn't imagine myself in a school setting. My professor told me it was my calling and that I had to try it. So, I gave it a try and I fell in love! I was teaching seven or 10 girls; talking to them about all the things I love. I didn't know how to teach this material: we never got to it in our training. So, I was spending a lot of time planning lessons, with no real idea of how to teach harmony; just making it up as I went along.

I made a lot of mistakes back then. Like in voice leading: I had studied voice leading in college, but I don't think we learned enough. I remember I submitted a sample exam to the Ministry and the Music Inspectorate sent it back claiming there was no such progression! I mean there is such a chord progression in popular music, but this was supposed to be Bach-style chorale writing.

I was making pedagogical mistakes, too, because I had no guidance. I was teaching harmony like it was mathematics—on paper. Of course, I told the girls to try it out on the piano, but in class we could spend hours without listening to any music. Today I know this is absurd. I realized that I could hear everything in my mind, and so I was excited about it. The students could tell I was excited—they

even told me so—but they couldn't hear in their heads like I could.

When I was teaching harmony, it was all about knowledge: musical knowledge. I didn't see myself as an educational figure. The way I tell my story is that I fell in love with education. It started out of a passion to transmit musical knowledge. Just like my professor told me, I had a calling to teach harmony. Because of the frustration I experienced in college, I could see the frustration of other girls. What we were being taught wasn't enough; it wasn't what we needed. I had a sense of order—I knew how to explain the material in an orderly fashion, not because I was taught how to do so, but because I was teaching what I loved. At first it was all about transmitting this body of knowledge to the next generation of religious girls. Seeing the young girls get a hold on harmony in ways that my college friends never got was an amazing and fulfilling experience. I knew I was doing something right.

Back then I took no interest in the social or educational aspects of my work. I was transmitting knowledge. It was only in the second high-school program that I taught in that I realized the educational potential of this job. When the small music program in Jerusalem shut down, a friend of mine from college invited me to teach in her program up north. I began teaching ensembles alongside harmony and theory. I was just beginning to integrate technology and Internet into my life and into my teaching.

In my new position, I began to take interest in my students and the musical and

creative processes they were going through. I would talk to them about life and about music. I used to think that only the talented from birth had a chance at music, but listening to my students, I began to realize some of the struggles music entails. I realized that a music teacher is also a semipsychologist. Many girls would come to me with dilemmas, and I realized how much a life in music is a life of dilemma.

Some girls wanted to go on to study music therapy, and I helped prepare them for improvisation. Theory and improvisation go together for me: when you have it in your mind, you can play around with it on the piano. I also think this is why I am not a Classical pianist; I need to visualize the theory of it in my mind as I play. I think most Classical musicians learn to play without really knowing what is going on in the score. I could never do that. Today, when I teach theory, I want to connect it to the most practical aspects of being a musician.

Today, I define myself as a musician and an educator. If I only say “musician,” people assume it’s only about performance. It’s important for me to keep up my own musicianship. So, a week in my life would include a performance gig or two, teaching in school, a few private lessons and going to hear a good performance, or at least listening to some good music at home. I like to listen to music with headphones, in bed, so I can really immerse myself in it. Listening like that takes me back to when I was 15.

My schedule as a religious musician is dictated around two or three important

times of year that I call money time: One is the month of Elul, prior to the High Holidays: this is a time when I have lots of gigs for spiritual-musical evenings. Then, during the month of Adar, before Purim, I get a lot of requests for accompanying music for dancing. The other side of it is the summer month of Av, when music is restricted because of traditional mourning of the destruction of the Temple. I like the more spiritual gigs. Music is an instrument for bringing spirituality.

If I have to cut back on something it will be the teaching. I am committed to maintaining enough time to practice and to perform and I won't give this up for a bigger teaching job. I prefer to start teaching around noon so I can have the mornings to myself.

When I think about the future, I imagine myself educating the next generation of teachers. When I have a really talented student, I'll tell her that she can be the next music coordinator and I will move on.

Swimming Above the Water

Shira's standards of professionalism and musicianship are a rare commodity in her national-religious community, especially for a woman. Shira felt that she was constantly negotiating the need "to be *serious*; to raise a *serious* generation of musicians from *within* this community." Commenting on Shira's recurring demands for the girls in her music program, her school principal described Shira as always "swimming above the water." Although aware that the principal and other community members appreciated

Shira for this, Shira often believed that “none of them really *know* what it is I am fighting for.”

As a child, Shira’s family shifted among subsectors of Israeli Judaism. Shira remembers her parents moving her to an ultraorthodox school where she was threatened to be expelled if she persisted in piano lessons at the local conservatory. Quitting piano was not an option for Shira or for her parents, and they soon found a private teacher. Throughout her childhood, Shira recalled her uncle—a famous Israeli ethnic pop musician—being her main inspiration. She remembered him taking her into a recording studio and letting her play the grand piano there. This world of professional musicianship and the music industry remains close to her heart and a professional goal that she hopes to pass on to her young students.

An Ethos of Constant Debate

Scholars have summarized the national-religious community as existing on a flux of constant debate (Fisherman, 1998; Sheleg, 2000, 2010). Shira testified to having grown up with an inner conflict between secular cultural, religious, and spiritual aspirations, embodied by her mother’s love for ABBA, her father’s military service, and her own musical passions. Sheleg (2000, 2010) interpreted the national-religious sector as thriving on tensions between the mundane and the spiritual, striving to embody a life of both rather than choosing in the dichotomy. Shira wanted to educate her students to “love God, the Jewish people, and music, with the deepest devotion to each.” “Music,” she explained, “is a way to God and to people.”

Being a national-religious female musician entailed navigating dilemmas. Sheleg (2010) described the aspiration of young national-religious Israelis to take on more central roles in Israeli society and culture. Shira described a troubled sense of pride in graduates who chose to sing for mixed male and female audiences. Describing the success of one of her graduate students, Shira admitted,

I'm proud that she *made* it, but I worry about some of the choices she made, the prices she paid. It is possible to perform before men and maintain female modesty in an appropriate way, and this what I hope to teach my students, and let them decide for themselves.

Shira insisted on maintaining a professional life as an independent musician alongside her teaching: "I must make time for piano, keep up my technique, and I will refuse a few private lessons to allow time for rehearsals and gigs." She would not have agreed to become a school music subject coordinator had she not believed that had found a school that "really *cares* about music; is totally invested." Nevertheless, Shira still found herself functioning as a music-education advocate, facing homeroom teachers, mathematics teachers, parents, and other community members. She complained,

Sometimes, they just don't *get* it. ... just how much *time* it takes to become a *real* musician. ... If a student is completing theory exercises as exercises I don't want her in my classroom, I want it all *applied*, everything *in-use* on her instrument, or on the piano.

Chick Corea and Rabbi Carlebach

Shira chose to study in the same national-religious college I refused to attend because of its strict dress codes. Having spent some of her childhood in ultraorthodox schools, Shira did not mind the dress code. Later in life, she completed other degrees in secular institutions, including the Rimmon School of Jazz and Popular Music in Tel Aviv. “My classmates knew I would never come to social gatherings on Sabbath,” Shira remembered, “but included me in all other socializing as an equal.” Thinking back on her undergraduate national-religious degree, Shira regretted the “overall Western Classical approach that left so much, and so many musical skills untaught.” Shira admitted she dreams of returning to that college to teach there, so future generations can gain a broader music education in that religious setting.

The high school ensembles she teaches play a mix of jazz, ethnic, and Jewish music. Shira prided herself on their inclusion of composers “from Chick Corea to (Rabbi Shlomo) Carlebach.” Shira works to involve her students in developing group arrangements and invites students to send her smartphone recordings of independent practice sessions. Shira teaches students to take responsibility for sound equipment and get acquainted with microphones, cables, and amplifiers, “because these are the tools of the trade.”

Shira embodies the kind of self-esteem and openness she hopes to inspire in her students. She is proud of who she is, and her religious identity is central to her professional image. Nevertheless, she aspires toward cooperation with musicians from other sectors and subsectors, as part of a nationalistic ideology.

PART THREE: CLASSROOM SCENES AND INTERPRETATIONS

This section represents emergent meanings through the triangulation of actions, interactions, and words. To triangulate, I dedicate a chapter to each participant, followed by a summary discussion of all three. In each chapter, I entwine classroom-observation data with participants' interpretative commentary on their respective practices. These chapters include three types of text:

1. (plain text) classroom scene depictions—narrated by me from a stance of observance;
2. (block text) participant self-commentary, addressing key aspects and self-interpretations of their practices;
3. (plain text) discussion and researcher reflection.

I reconstructed the first two types of texts in this section in translation from Hebrew to English and in design of an overall interpretative statement on each participant. I wrote chapter summaries in English as part of the data-analysis process. Participants original expressed most of their self-commentary in general self-contemplation during interview sessions, rather than in response to specific scenes or occurrences. I translated and designed the data to construct a representation of each participant by creating a relationship between actions and words. Choosing observation data that emerged as most salient and representative of each participant, I combined such scenes to relevant selections of self-interpretation from the interview data. Each chapter balances the effort of self-interpretation made by each participant alongside their trust in me as researcher. During the research process, participants' readings of these texts

focused on affirming the resonance of the true-to-life quality that emanates from each of the unfolding characters.

The result is three chapters of representation that aim to embody Habermas's four criteria of social validity, (1976, as interpreted by Whitehead, 2010; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Accordingly, I worked to present scenes and characters that are comprehensible, truthful, sincere, and appropriate, in their relation to participants' actions and spoken perceptions of themselves. Richardson's (2000) criteria for creative analytic practices of ethnography acted as an additional guideline in aiming for texts that would resonate with substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact, and expression of a reality.

All three participants shared Grades 9–12 classroom teaching responsibilities typical of Israeli high school music directors. The two main components of their teaching include (a) music history, sometimes combined with general music appreciation and (b) music-theory basics, including Western tonal harmony and voice leading, combined with ear training. In addition to these subjects, Shira and Yoni conducted class ensembles and wrote arrangements for these ensembles.

Malka

Setting

It is not always easy to find parking on the narrow side streets of the urban neighborhood where Malka lives and teaches. Her home—a small apartment in a four-story building—is only a few blocks from the ultraorthodox girls' high school, called the Seminar. Afternoon traffic on these busy streets is on the road and on the sidewalks,

which are crowded mostly by men in black waistcoats and hats, some pushing strollers or carrying shopping bags. Many women are at work during these hours and some men take an afternoon break from their Holy Studies to retrieve their children from preschool and give them lunch.

The Seminar is surrounded by metal panels that hide its interior from external eyes. Dressed appropriately, I am admitted by the guard, and pass through an empty courtyard into the two-story building. The corridor walls are decorated with the pictures of famous rabbis and their famous quotations. The teachers' lounge is small and crowded; I prefer to head straight upstairs to the music room. The teachers' lounge and the upstairs corridor boast small mirrors, as if to encourage teachers and students to ensure their appearance is in place. The classrooms of the second floor are mostly dedicated to specialized learning subjects in which students major, continuing professional development in those subjects through Years 13 and 14. Alongside the music room are computer laboratories and a sewing room.

The main music room is large and decorated. The walls are filled with biblical quotations that refer to music, illustrated with drawings of musical instruments. In the center of the room is a black baby-grand piano. On the back wall is a double whiteboard: one side is blank and the other full of musical staves. At the top of the whiteboard is an illustration of a piano keyboard. Next to the whiteboards stands a huge wide-screen TV. The opposite wall is filled with tall, thin windows, covered in thick velvet curtains. For classes of 5–15 students, the room feels quite oversized.

Keeping Track of Everything

As a teacher, I am committed to evolve and to learn. I cherish opportunities for colleagues to observe me. I am thirsty for critique and feedback, and I do my best to learn and to change. I've had students come and visit and tell me how my teaching has changed. I hope I will continue to change. One change I can note is in my sense of pressure. I used to be worried about the matriculation exam: the girls start in ninth grade and don't know anything, so how will we make it to the exam? But now I feel I am more relaxed. I want them to experience the music—not just cram the material. So, we no longer insist on as many classroom hours; we try to incorporate as much communal music making as possible; we try to listen to the music that the girls want to play. These are all major changes.

As a high school music director, I have teaching responsibilities: I teach all the grades but I also know every girl, and keep track of where everyone is at. Before the budget cut, I used to teach here 6 days a week. I had a full staff of instrumental teachers: I knew them all and I knew everything that was going on. Now we have less hours and less teachers, and many of our students study their instruments outside of school, but I keep track of everything.

I oversee all the music teachers. We used to have over a dozen; now we're about four. But we still have staff meetings. We discuss repertoire and pedagogy; we share challenges and stories, and see how we can help each other. We actually printed teacher-log booklets and each of us would log in our daily objectives, and

track our work. We planned concerts, competitions, and master classes. We worked together to create a culture of music, not just a classroom subject.

We plan our school year around maternity leaves. When I know one teacher will be missing I have to plan around that. Other than that, we work around the Jewish holidays, and toward the matriculation exam schedule.

What You Know; What You Hear; What You Feel

Student: (excited) Teacher! I passed the music theory exam! By two points ... I studied it all with a friend the night before. If it weren't for the 15% on listening skills I would have done even better!

Malka: Not everyone can succeed with a last-minute effort.

Student: You mean me ... I have no brain!

Malka: (encouraging) It is not to be taken for granted. It may not be an enormous success, but you passed! Think how you could have done even better had you not waited to the last minute!

Before a test, Malka offered the girls as much support as she can, handing out practice questions, inviting students to e-mail her drafts of answers, and offering extended office hours. The students seemed very uptight about the examination. Malka assured the students that the examination is not "out to get them" encouraging that yes, they must work, but yes, they can succeed.

Malka drilled the students on cultural and historical characteristics of music-

history time periods. She encouraged the students to study the thin blue booklet that she gave them: a censored version of music history that she and some colleagues have compiled. Students responded to her questions with sporadic outbursts of bits of information. None of them seem to be able to recall or cite a full picture. Bits of information, names of composers, musical genres, and some singing of main motifs are thrown about the classroom in a communal effort to remember what they must know for the examination. Malka was silent. They asked her, “Why are you silent?” She answered, “Because you know. You all know!”

Malka reminded the students that the examination would include listening samples they must recognize to which they must respond. She played a musical example on her computer, and the students perked up: “We know this! It is our school bell! Yes, this is the music before afternoon prayer break!” When the next musical example was played, the students seem discouraged: “How will we ever recognize all those musical works?” they asked. Malka explained,

Indeed, listening to them the night before the exam probably won’t help. In order to remember extended works of music it helps to recognize and remember characteristics and stylistic features. Take a look at the score. What may not be written in your notebooks is written in the score. This helps.

One student was still concerned: “And if I answer noting the characteristics but can’t remember the name of the work? How can you tell if I was right about the characteristics?”, she asks in a nervous tone. Malka answered calmly: “Write what you

feel. There is no strict ‘right’ or ‘wrong.’ You don’t have to convince me about how you feel, but I do need to be able to connect it to the music.”

Malka sat down at the black baby-grand piano in the center of the classroom and played a line from a Brahms symphony. She asked the students to respond to what she was playing in their notebooks. When she finished, she called on one student: “Please share with us what you wrote.” When the first student replied that she did not understand the assignment, Malka explained again.

Student: UGH! I don’t KNOW! I’m not good at this! I don’t know.

Malka: Not what you *know*, what did you *hear*?

Student: I don’t know!

Malka: Did you like what I played?

Student: Yes

Malka: Why?

Student: Because it filled me with emotion.

Malka: What, in the music, do you think inspired that emotion, that feeling? What feature of the music?

Student: Hmmm ...

Malka: (plays the melody again).

Student: UGH! I don’t know!

Malka: You don’t have to *know*. What did you *feel*?

Student: You mean what kind of melody? How do I answer what you asked?

Malka: Good. What kind of melody: for example, did it flow smoothly or was it

chopped up?

Student: (sings the melody)

Malka: Well, you can't really write that as an answer, can you? What words can you use to describe what you just sang? You have the answer, you just don't know how to put it into words. When you practice doing that it becomes easy. (Malka returned to the piano, and played the melody again).

I feel responsible toward this school and its community. I come from a neighboring community—not exactly that of the school. But I feel responsible. The music program adds prestige to the school and I feel that it changes the girls' lives. I look at it as a cultural change—no less. Through the music studies, they encounter an entire world of content that was unknown to them. It opens them up to a new world of references, and I think this is no less than a game changer for many of them. I would even say, an opening for social mobility.

This is not the mainstream ultraorthodox school; it caters to some of the lower-class subcommunities. Actually, this makes it easier for me to teach here. I don't think I would last in the mainstream education. A lot about how I teach wouldn't work there: it's too much of a culture of black and white; no gray areas; no questioning; no critical thought. Working in a lower class school makes it easier to include these aspects that I now find as most dear to me: to develop the critical thinking of the girls, to expose them to broader worlds. The mainstream ultraorthodox girls' education is about reading, writing; a little bit snobbish. It's

all about obedience there. If you ask them to feel something, they don't know how to deal with it. I know because I studied in that school system. I was an excellent student, but when they gave us a dance class, I got a 70. Anything where we had to expose ourselves, or work in a group, and we would just freeze up. I get where it's coming from; the aim is to keep us from being cheap, and to keep us on track.

Even in this school I have a few students of that kind. Like one 11th grader who keeps fighting me. She begs me to dictate summaries to her; she wants me to dictate, so that she can write every word I say. But I want her to think! Even when I taught young children to play recorder, I never taught by imitation. I know some teachers do, but that was never my way.

There are almost no music tracks in other ultraorthodox schools, mostly because it is not considered a great source of future income. Throughout the country, there are about five ultraorthodox high school music programs. I thought of trying to build a regional program: an afterschool program so girls from different schools could all come and learn. That way we would have enough girls for a program instead of the few girls dispersed in different schools. What shocked me was the explicit answer I got from mainstream ultraorthodox girls' schools: none of them want their students studying alongside girls from other schools. Would you believe it?

Beyond Black and White

Talking about Brahms as typical of the Romantic era, the discussion returned to the notion of conservation versus innovation. Malka explained, “Innovation means doing new things. But his innovation is relative; some things that Romantic composers do are not so new in relation to the Classical periods. Others broke all the rules. Innovation is relative.” The students seemed uneasy, but Malka continued: “There is no single characteristic that belongs only to one style. There is no music without emotion, so emotion cannot be a characteristic only of the Romantic period.” One student seemed almost desperate to understand. “So, what you’re saying,” she pushed Malka, “is that it is not all black and white?” Another student was quick to respond, expressing her own frustration: “UGH! Everything in music is not black and white!” she cried. Malka picked up on this and seemed almost amused by the sense of desperation that now fills the classroom: “Everything in music is not black and white,” she echoes, “nor in life.” Everyone laughed, and just for a moment, the tension was broken, but this discussion has made the students very nervous.

My students look at me and see a mainstream ultraorthodox woman: that’s how I dress; its where I live; it’s where my children study. On the one hand, they see me as the most mainstream and observant. On the other hand, they hear me talk about books I have read, music that I play and listen to. They see that I have a kind of openness to the world that is not typical. This is the example that I set for them: that you can be both. It means you can live “modern,” which means open-minded, and this is not always valued. It becomes tricky when you talk about critical

thinking, questioning, and independent thought. Ultraorthodox education cherishes black and white absolute dichotomies: either right or wrong. That frustrates me and it is not something that I can educate toward. My tests are all thought questions, and the students don't know how to deal with that. They are very troubled because they are used to being dictated to, asked closed questions to which they give prepared answers that their teachers dictated to them. I try to do the opposite: I want them to think on their own, and this drives them crazy. I try to do it gradually, to help them open up to it. By the time they reach 12th grade, I want them to know that nothing is really black and white—even if it looks that way at first glance.

There is some ambivalence toward music as a profession in our community. People look up to musicians because they understand that it requires talent. At the same time, people always ask themselves what it's good for, what does music contribute to the world. Music is not naturally associated with making a living in our community; this is more of a recent trend of the Seminars. In ultraorthodox families, music is a kind of social status: those who can afford it want their children to study an instrument, even if they don't really understand what it is all about. I think it's more a matter of providing a good education than anything else. As for anything educational, some families will give up other expenses and invest in music lessons.

There is a glass ceiling for ultraorthodox women in music, as in everything.

Music can never be the number one thing. The number one thing is always family, and religion. Now, if we had institutions where a woman could get paid as a musician, within the community, I know some of us would make the grade. But there is nowhere to develop professional musicianship as a source of income, and without that we always need to make our living somewhere else. If we had a professional orchestra, we could build an audience. People go to such silly entertainments, so why not come to a good orchestra? Some people in our community don't go to concerts because it's mixed seating, so they would come to us.

“Like a Wheel Barrel on a Landslide”

In another music history class on the Romantic period they were studying Liszt. Malka handed out copies of a newspaper review of a Liszt celebration from 2011. Malka requested students read the review and share their thoughts. These girls were not exposed to reading media and were not taught critical thinking. As they read, they stumbled on unfamiliar words and asked for definitions. Malka reminded them that a review is an opinion, not fact.

Malka tried to involve the girls in a discussion or debate: “What do you think of virtuosity? Is it enough? Is it a value in its own right?” One student was quick to reply: “Well it draws an audience, doesn't it?” Malka seemed critical of this response: “And is that the most important criteria? Notice how people want everything bigger and better. People eat cornflakes that are full of sugar, and that's not enough, so they add sugar on top!”

Malka read a sentence from the review and asked a student, “Do you agree?” When the student hesitated, Malka encouraged her: “Read on. Try to understand what it is the author is claiming. We are talking about technique but also about the unexplainable parts of music: something that goes way beyond technique alone. ... You can think about it.”

Moving from Liszt to Berlioz, Malka was teaching the *Symphony Fantastique*, but was restricted from sharing any details of the promiscuous content on which the symphony rests. “What does the word fantastic mean to you?” she asked. The students answered together: “It means perfect!” Malka explained:

Well, yes, that is how it may be used today. But its origin is from fantasy, imagination. When we say “perfect” we may intend something that we can only imagine. This symphony tells a story: a crazy and wild story, so much so that I will not tell the story here. It is not important for us. But we will be able to hear in the music that something crazy and full of fantasy is going on here.

Malka sat, cross-legged, relaxed, playing music from her laptop computer. Between listening to excerpts, she explained and interpreted, and all the students’ heads were buried in their notebooks where they were trying to record every word she said. When the music played, they raised their heads and bent forward in attention. At one-point Malka wanted to show a performance on video, but she had lost her HDMI adapter. She invited the students to sit around her small laptop and watch on the small screen.

In ultraorthodox contexts arts education is a female pursuit. This is because,

technically speaking, girls have time and boys don't because they are immersed in Holy study all day and night. Looking for a way to fill the girls' spare time, music and the arts are considered a gateway to a refined kind of femininity characteristic of traditional societies. This is why, when it comes to music, it is always the Western Classical tradition. You can't get that refinement through jazz, klezmer, or even Hassidic music. At least that is what is commonly assumed by the few ultraorthodox music-education institutions.

As a teacher, I have experienced students working with jazz, popular Hassidic tunes, and Eastern Sephardi influences. These experiences have taught me that it is not really about what you are playing or learning, but how you go about it. In this I think I differ from many peers in my community, because I don't really think it all must be Classical. I want my students to know that whatever they do, they have to strive for 100%. Whether it's music—any kind of music—or teaching, or praying: give it your all, and be serious about it. That is a standard that I try to educate toward.

I don't think there is any possibility of music clashing with religion. How could it? Music is all about spirit and it is abstract, so what is there to clash? On the other hand, a friend of mine told me about a new ultraorthodox conservatory that tried to establish itself through jazz and improvisation and all that. That's where it becomes dangerous. To do jazz you have to get to know the world that the music comes from. There are many songs with lyrics. It becomes difficult and even

impossible to keep up our standards of content purity. Even without the extra-musical. I had one student who played jazz this year. When I saw her recital, I felt remorse: it brings out a style that does not become us. Other teachers who were there saw this too; they agreed with me.

Nowadays everybody is exposed to pop culture and tries to imitate pop singers. We did something like that once, and because we were very aware of the dangers, we were committed to doing it right: toned down, respectable. It worked and was even performed within the school to the school principal's satisfaction. So, it is possible, but you must be very cautious and very aware. I don't think I would do it again. It was only one ensemble doing one piece. I would never open an entire track. And I don't think I would even do the one piece again. There is something about the refinement that we talked about before that is missing there. It seems much less likely to uphold the educational principles that are the main purpose for me: the attention to details, the perseverance.

At home I have a similar struggle. My boys bring home the new popular Hassidic music that they hear from friends. For me this is a catastrophe. My sons try and convince me; they tell me to listen to the words. I know the words are sacred, but the music ... I hear the pounding bass and my ears just shut down. For me it symbolizes a cheap culture, of hanging out, and doing what you want: the exact opposite of the education I believe in; and it's there in the music—no matter what the words are.

My boundaries in music and in everything are very clear. Anything Christian or Pagan, or anything associated with love or immodesty is out. But sometimes I'm in a dilemma. I want the girls to get a full education. I ask myself, if I cut out another work from the repertoire am I losing too much? I taught Berlioz's Fantastique Symphony this year and felt very uncomfortable. I don't know if I really want to teach this piece. I am not worried about myself—I'm already exposed to many things. But I live so openly that I forget what it's like for them—how much of my openness could entice them to search for more—to go beyond the limits that I set for them. It's not only a matter of repertoire, but also in my approach: how much can I shatter their illusion that the world is black and white? How far can I go with critical thinking?

It is always the borderlines that are troublesome. It's easy to say what's in and what's out, but where I have questions, that's where it gets tough. Sometimes I feel like a wheelbarrow on a landslide. I hope I am not losing control or going too far.

“A Gateway to Holy Worship”

Berlioz, Symphony Fantastique, Fifth Movement: It was Friday, the eve of the Jewish Sabbath, and the day's music-history class focused on the “Witches' Sabbath.” Malka played the movement on her computer, instructing the students to “ignore the title, and focus on what it is we are hearing, and what we are experiencing as we listen.” When the movement ended, students shouted out names of instruments they noticed as they

listened. Malka explained: “The main point of the movement is to parody two melodies—the ‘idea-fix’ of the symphony, alongside another more ancient melody from the Middle Ages; a melody that we have heard before in a work by Rachmaninov.” Malka did not name the *Dies Ira*, or explain its history, but played the melody on the piano to remind the students.

The students tried to describe what they imagined and felt when they listened to the music. They noted extreme contradictions in tone and rhythm, but expressed difficulty in recognizing the parody that Malka described as the main point of the movement. Without negating the students’ responses, Malka insisted on discussing the notion of mimicry and mockery: “When children mock each other they mimic and accentuate the tones in their mimicry.” Then, for a minute, Malka stopped talking about the music: “By the way,” she indicated a deviation,

speaking of mimicry, this is what the Sages meant when they talk about “*laytzanut*” (clowning). It means taking something of value and stripping it of its value. There is an immense evil power to clowning, that takes what is most important and turns it into nothing. It is not funny. It is the opposite of funny. It means taking the meaning away from the serious or even the sacred. If any of you have worked as counselors in a youth group, you will know that as educators there is very little we can do in the face of clowning. It is something we must steer away from and be cautious of. But all this is just by the way.

Malka concluded her moralistic speech, and returned to the next musical work they are to study.

When it comes down to it, I'm not sure music is enough for me. Even what I am doing in the high school music program is no less about education—about cultivating personalities—than it is about music. Learning as a gateway for building character. I think I have learned this through my own life. For many years I felt a clash between my career and my home. My husband is responsible for teaching me about life and helping me understand myself better. Without him I don't know where I would be.

I know now that you can't base your entire life on learning to teach music in order to make a living. It's not enough. Imagining my whole life's goal as to make a living so that my husband can study Torah? I don't buy it. This doesn't satisfy me. A person has to build herself. So, I read books now: Holy books. I want to read sacred texts with the same passion as I read about Bach or Beethoven. Our Sacred texts say that you must find something in the world that you love, that you are passionate about, and then use that as a gateway to Holy Worship.

You should look at yourself in the mirror and find what satisfies you. If you are truly satisfied taking care of all your children 24/7—go ahead! But if not, go out and find something that fills you. A student once came to me feeling guilty about practicing her instrument instead of helping her mother. I asked her if she would feel happy helping her mother, and she said no—she wanted to practice. You have

to be where it's right for you to be. Are you really smiling at your kids, or are you just waiting for them to fall asleep so that you can practice? The schools all teach girls that their duty is toward their husbands—to work so that he can study; to raise the children so that he can study. This is not enough, and I tell them so. It is hard for them to hear.

“The Business of Making People”

Ear-training class takes place in a regular classroom on the first floor. A dozen double tables were lined in three rows. A smart blackboard was fixed to the wall of the classroom, and an upright black Steinway piano aligned the side wall at the front of the classroom. Malka sat, hands on piano and head twisted, facing the students. Malka called out the notes before she played them, inviting the girls to sing: “Sol, do, mi, sol, do.” The students answered in hesitant whisper. Malka continued and then stopped, asking the students to describe what modulation has taken place in the music. As she played, Malka's eyes were on the students rather than on the piano.

“Now I'm going to play some chords,” Malka explained. “Listen carefully and sing the notes separately.” Malka addressed each chord to one student, testing each girl's singing one by one. After each chord she played, Malka stood up and approached the student whose turn it was to sing. The most confident of them sing in a hesitant and questioning whisper. Malka looked each student eye to eye, expressing confidence: “Yes, you've got it,” or “Come on, you know what you're doing.” When a student sang off key, Malka maintained her gentle and supportive tone, and asked her, “Are you sure about that? Maybe you want to listen again and try again?” The student accepted this advice,

tried again, and succeeded.

When it is her turn, the last student in the front row refused to answer. Malka reassured her: “You have nothing to lose. Just try and sing what you hear, and if it is wrong we will help you fix it.” The student whispered the first tone and Malka encouraged her: “Yes! That is correct. Now which of the chord tones was that? And what’s the next tone?” Slowly, and full of hesitance the student completed the chord and Malka congratulated her: “You see?” She stepped back and addressed the entire class, “It is not really all that difficult, is it? You all seem to be more afraid of making a mistake than you are confident that you know what you are doing.” One student tried to argue that the assignment would be easier if they could approach the piano and look at the keyboard to reconstruct the chords. Malka was insistent: “You must all learn to have the keyboard imprinted in your memory!”

There is something characteristic in ultraorthodox women setting a standard of perfection. It may have to do with the fact that it’s our husbands who are doing the Holy work, so whatever it is we are doing, we better do it great.

My vision as a music director is that each student will remember at least one thing that I have taught or said in such a way that it impacts her entire life. I don’t really care what it is that she remembers, as long as it impacts her life; makes her a better person; makes her live a better life. I’m in the business of making people. I think it’s because all of the work that I have invested in building myself. I think what students need most is love. Not an explicit or motherly kind of love, but

something that transmits a sense of appreciation and a gift of content. I want to inspire them to fill their lives with content. I want them to understand that I believe in them, and I believe in their ability to live a full life.

When a student is irresponsible, I say forget the music. What good is a music education if you're just not responsible: if you missed a group practice or forgot to notify me that you weren't coming. I think all music teachers teach music for morals that go beyond music. It's like the Torah: there it's explicit. It says the Torah is like rain: it will fertilize whatever is already in the ground that it waters. So, in music too, it's about an education: educating the person, working on character and morals. Without the character and the morals, what good is the music?

I think I would teach the same way if I were anywhere, or teaching any kind of population. Within the ultraorthodox community, I am careful. I know more than what I let my students know. I lead a more open life than I'd allow them to pursue. When I teach, I sift the material for them—I know what to leave out. There are also things that I stay away from myself. I never listen to opera or church music, for example. I feel very clean when they ask me about such restrictions. Even if they ask about something I did listen to, I feel comfortable telling them that some things that I did once or in the past I will not do today.

Discussion

To hear and to know. As Malka teaches music, she is teaching valuable lessons in learning and in life: lessons that are uncommon, perhaps outright subversive in the ultraorthodox educational system. By relating music listening activities, and even ear-training exercises, to students' simple ability to trust their senses and their instincts, Malka encouraged students to acknowledge what they can hear and what they can know through their own ears. Although ultraorthodox education tends to focus on a strict ethic of one-way transmission of fixed knowledge and dictates from elders to students, Malka is developing a paradigm of intellectual independence that starts in the recognition of students' own ability to hear and to know.

Malka's teaching appeals to all of their senses of hearing, thinking, and feeling. Moving beyond trusting one's senses, Malka included articulation of emotion, and expression of opinion, as core elements in her music classroom. In doing so, Malka embraced values of ambiguity and personal interpretation that seem so foreign to the students she teaches that often confuses and even frightens them. Malka was aware of this confusion, and recognized the challenge that she has set out to accomplish, endlessly patient and urging students to trust themselves.

What fascinated me most about Malka was her deep personal commitment to ultraorthodoxy and her personal integrity, which excludes all sarcasm or cynicism towards her community. Her approach to education does not aim at challenging ultraorthodox norms so much as at investing in the future religious resilience of students who will grow up to be ultraorthodox women. Malka believes that the cultivation of

independent and even critical thought, alongside habits of quality pastimes and an attitude of life-long learning, are all key qualities to ensure students' future ability to function as ultraorthodox women.

A gateway to modernity. In content, Malka admitted that her community's ignorance of music opens up a space for an intellectual and cultural openness quite untypical of this sector. Malka's students were exposed to realms of general knowledge that otherwise would be forbidden for them. Although Malka maintained a high standard of censorship of all non-Jewish religious or promiscuous content, much historical and artistic knowledge still prevailed. The study of artistic developments from the Renaissance to the Post-Modern world, however censored, still exposed these students to core notions of humanistic philosophies about which they would otherwise be ignorant.

In a way, music education for Malka's students is a gateway to basic knowledge of modernity that may ease students' probable future encounters with the world beyond their self-segregated community. At the same time, it was evident that Malka's students were uneasy in their experience of this gateway, which may enact inner conflicts in them as they become more and more aware of it. Malka's own awareness emerged through the conversations of this study, revealing her own personal theory of balance that contains a healthy sense of unease as part of the educational process.

Yoni

Setting

The drive to the kibbutz takes me off the highway and onto the narrow country roads of northern Israel. Villages of different sorts decorate open fields sporadically:

kibbutzim and *moshavim*, small country settlements that differ in their social organizational orientation. As I drive past, it is hard to tell villages apart. Nowadays, some kibbutzim have large private homes like other villages. Many of the non-kibbutz villages have agricultural businesses.

Yoni's lessons take place in the kibbutz "House of Arts," known as the *Ulpana*. The building stands alone at the edge of the kibbutz, with a sign in Hebrew, English, and Arabic. The road leading to the building passes cowsheds and haystacks. Inside, the halls of the *Ulpana* are decorated by posters, mostly of Degas paintings. In the main lobby are vending machines offering soft drinks, snacks, and ice cream. Studio rooms for private instrumental lessons line the narrow hallways. The back room is a large dance studio, equipped with a wall-size mirror, wood-paneled floor, and dance bar.

The kibbutz high school music program is open to all adolescents in the local school district. A minibus van stopped outside and drops off a bunch of students—young girls and boys—carrying instrument cases. Most students were wearing shorts and school T-shirts. Some wore sandals and others, hiking boots. Before classes began, two students took out their guitars in the lobby and started playing *Blue Bossa*. Others sat nearby and chatted with each other; and others sat alone, texting on their cell phones.

Yoni's lessons took place in the small *Ulpana* library, dedicated to a local legendary piano teacher of the past. A small plaque commemorates the teacher as having been "a man; an educator; a teacher." An upright piano lines the back wall alongside a cupboard that hosts a computer, hooked up to a large screen. On the side is a portable whiteboard on wheels. The other walls of the library are lined with glass-enclosed

bookshelves, full of scores and music books.

Being a high school music director means thinking big. People look at you differently than they look at a teacher. You have to decide what you want the program to lead to. You are responsible for many things beyond the classroom; even a few social events that have become a core aspect of the program experience. I must maintain a relationship with the school principal. I contribute a lot to his school—including the national memorial ceremonies—and so he is always grateful. I need to keep a high profile. That's part of how some musical social events became part of my work. We started small, but now it's a tradition: the kids pull the evening together, including original compositions, and their parents and their teachers come and listen. This year the principal came too and it was a great honor.

Aside from teaching and organizing, I also have school logistics and policies that I must work through: forms I must fill; schedules I must coordinate; exams I must schedule. I don't like the logistics. What I do like are the field trips that we take. Last year we visited Rimon School of Music in Tel Aviv. Every year I choose one field trip. When we travel together there is a great interaction with the students: they're really young, talented intellectuals; a great bunch. Hanging out with them keeps me young. This is not to say that they don't drive me crazy sometimes in the classroom. Some of them frustrate me when they are kidding around too much. I feel like they are lowering the level for the whole program. But then I

remember my teacher, Igor, and I say to myself, they're just kids; let them have fun.

As music director I oversee a staff of music teachers. I like to know what's going on in everybody's classes. It's difficult because we all teach simultaneously. One of the hardest things I ever had to do as a music director was to fire a teacher. I think there is some mysterious X factor about being a good music teacher; it's not enough to be an excellent musician. In a high school music program, you have to be able to relate to teens and to their rebellion. It's hard work to build a balance between discipline and respect and pure fun. It took me time to build that.

High school music programs are about who the teachers are, not what curriculum is dictated. It's like when I pull together a gig—no matter how much time I spend on the written arrangement, what will make it great are the musicians that I choose to play with. A good music teacher has to be a great musical personality.

In the school context, I feel that I am different from other teachers. I feel like they feel that I am different. I don't really mix much with the other teachers. My status in the school is affected by my contributions to the school community—most obviously in the musical production of the national memorial ceremonies that are very central to kibbutz ethos. In preparing the ceremonies, I work closely with homeroom teachers. They choose the themes and I try and suggest the songs that best fit in. It's not always easy. Sometimes I ask the students to suggest songs.

The great thing about kibbutz ethos is that I get paid extra for all the work on the

ceremonies—all music teachers in Israel are envious of this. Also, there is total cooperation with other teachers, even when it means kids missing classes in order to rehearse.

Eat Your Hat!

As the 11th-grade students settled down in the library classroom, Yoni was writing up some chords in notation on the whiteboard. A younger-looking student entered without asking permission and handed Yoni a hat full of candy. Yoni laughed and explained: “I told the younger class last week that if they’re ready in time for the class performance I will eat my hat.” He laughs, “I was so sure they wouldn’t make it. But they did it! I truly should be eating my hat!”

After that, Yoni had to ask for quiet several times before he could begin the lesson. He inquired about missing students and then began. “Before we learn today I want to mention that we are going to organize a musical evening for this group: something totally informal; what do you think?” One student suggested a bonfire; another suggested a jam session; a third student insisted there must be food. Yoni responded, happy for the enthusiasm: “Great ideas! We’ll work on it. It’ll be fun. Anyone who has any other ideas can talk to me at recess,” and then quickly changed the subject: “Next up, we have a music-theory exam next week.” And the excitement was quenched.

I want to make it clear that the musical social evenings are all about the students.

They have to be responsible for everything. I won’t be disappointed if the professional standard isn’t perfect—as long as they are working together, and they

make it their own. I'm there to help with everything—but it's theirs.

Some of my students join the music program just for fun, even as they are pursuing advanced mathematics or biology. Others are not that good at anything so they come to music looking for something to excel in. There are also other students who already have decided to devote their lives to music, but they won't join the program; maybe the program is not enough for them. But I do get a few kids a year with serious musical backgrounds: some Classical musicians and some who are really serious about other styles too. I have to bridge the gap between students who know a lot of the basics and those who are total beginners.

The mix of different musical profiles becomes interesting when the students start working together, especially for the yearly social event. There you can see a Classically trained pianist suddenly accompanying a pop singer in her style, and all kinds of combinations.

“Curiosity, Sensitivity, and Questioning”

As Yoni described the upcoming theory examination, a student complained in protest: “How come we don't learn African music, yeah. How about African music theory? Huh? Why is it always Western? Is it because of the Ministry of Education?” Yoni remained typically calm and answered,

Well, this is what is commonly accepted, not only by our Ministry of Education, but almost anywhere in the world where you'd go to study music. There is surely

something to be learned from every kind of music. What helps us study Western music is that it is all notated. It is, I guess, a little rare that we have written music that is hundreds of years old. This makes it interesting.

Western Classical music is a good base that I think everyone should have. I love jazz, and spent many years learning, playing, and teaching jazz. I love everything about it: the stories, the music, the films, the history. But sometimes I wonder just how relevant jazz is to students today. What students need is to understand how the pop song they just heard on the radio relates to generations of past composers. This is both education and awareness—it has to do with the world that they live in. Education should encourage curiosity, sensitivity, and questioning.

When they hear a song on the radio, I want them to ask themselves why is it structured with a verse and a chorus? Understanding how song structures evolved from sonata form can help deepen this kind of questioning. It can raise their awareness of cultural conditioning, and help them rethink such structures. The kibbutz way of life teaches them to be a good, moral person, to be a productive contributor to society; but what else? How can they broaden their lives?

“It’s More About People Than About Music”

In music history, discussing the Romantic Period, Yoni played a musical excerpt on the computer and asked the students to identify the work. “The Fish and the Fisherman by Franz Schubert!” one student shouted in triumph. Yoni smiled: “Well, yes. It is about a fish: which fish?” “The Trout!” a girl from the back-row shouted out, and Yoni is

pleased. He asked them to continue and complete his sentence: “And this work is an example of...?” “A German lied!” shouted the same girl from the back row. Now Yoni realized that this girl is reading her notes from her open notebook. Still smiling, Yoni asked her to read everything she has written about the work, and to read in a loud, clear voice.

“So, the fish in the song,” Yoni continued, “is not really just a fish. It’s a metaphor. Where would you take that?” One student suggested, “I think Schubert is saying something against man’s destruction of nature and natural resources.” This comment spurred discussion. Another student questioned his classmate’s interpretation: “Do you really think Schubert thought of that, or is that what you are thinking of? We live in a different world than Schubert lived in,” he insisted. The discussion continued: “I think this song is a song of social protest,” another student proposed. “Well,” responded another classmate, “there’s the song, and then there’s everything you want to think about the song, or relate it to in your mind.”

Yoni did not get involved but let the students talk among themselves until he stopped the discussion by asking them to listen to the final verse of the song. When the song ended, Yoni asked if anyone knew anything about Schubert: “Like, when was he born?” One student shouted out: “1300?” and Yoni could not hide his laughter.

“Alright—let’s see which of you is quickest to find out something about Schubert!”

While four students flipped through pages in their notebooks, another five students pulled out their smartphones to consult Google. The first to open Wikipedia read aloud: “Franz Schubert. 1797–1828. Over 600 musical works.”

Following these basic facts, again, Yoni opened a discussion: “Schubert is often identified with the myth of the suffering artist.” Students were quick to ask each other, “What does that mean?” and answer, giving examples of artists whose work became appreciated more after their death. “How about David Bowie,” one offered; another suggested the local Israeli writer–director Asi Dayan; other suggestions were thrown throughout the room: Israeli singer–songwriter Meir Ariel, and Israeli poet David Avidan.

When I teach theory, I am good at explaining things. I don’t work too hard to make it attractive or interesting, but students who want to understand, will. I am very systematic. When teaching music history, I try to make it interesting for me, so I try to acquaint myself with new repertoires every summer. I try to prepare: not lesson plans, but listening notes. I want to know what happens when in each piece so I can play examples.

I never really learned how to teach but I know that you have to find a way to make listening active. So sometimes it’s a worksheet, and other times it’s a class debate. I need to get them involved. I want them to leave the program with a curiosity and an openness to all music. I think that all the musical experiences in the program contribute to their personal development. It’s more about people than about music. As a teacher, my biggest asset is my ability to see people. This helps me recognize the music geeks alongside the metalheads, and to address all of the diverse musical personalities that are in my classroom. I think I can relate to all of

them and I know how to talk to all of them. Also, I don't scare easily, so I can deal with their rebellion.

Today's youth are growing up in a matrix of pressures. They have music, but also matriculation exams, driving lessons, hobbies, and a whole world of pressures. I don't think it's easy at all. Today's world is pulling kids out all the time; they hardly have time for themselves. Practicing music is the opposite of all these pressures: it requires quiet time for yourself. This is something they don't really have or know how to make.

“All About the ‘Why?’”

In music theory, Yoni was solving a voice-leading exercise with students on the whiteboard. Yoni called on a specific student to fill out each chord. As they approached the whiteboard, the students seemed hesitant and Yoni guided them with questions until they found the notes that comprised the chord: “Make sure you notice what inversion is indicated,” he warned a student. Yoni moved from the whiteboard to the piano and demonstrated the difference between a tonic chord and the first inversion of the tonic chord, commenting: “You see, it makes a difference.”

The chord progression called for a move from the IV chord to the V. Yoni warned the student to be careful but the student led all three voices in the same direction; a common mistake in traditional voice leading. The student saw Yoni's disappointment and admitted: “I got it wrong! All the voices are moving together and that is forbidden!” The student stressed the word “forbidden” in a solemn and dramatic tone, and Yoni laughed.

“Yes,” Yoni confirmed, “You made all possible mistakes here, but lucky for you, this is music class, so no mistake is too tragic.”

As the student sat back at his desk, he challenged his teacher: “So why is that considered a mistake anyways? I mean, Bach would never do it, so I can’t do it?” Yoni seemed grateful for this comment: “Actually,” he confided, “Bach made such mistakes on purpose all the time!” Yoni sat down at the piano and opened the big blue book of Bach chorales. “The line from the exercise is actually part of a chorale that Bach harmonized several times, each time in a different way. Let me play you two examples.” From Bach, Yoni moved smoothly to excerpts from Debussy, and then Deep Purple. “You see,” he explained, “all the greats composed in parallel fifths.” The students are amused but still pleaded, “So how come it’s okay for them but wrong for us, huh?”

I remember one of my mentors who used to teach with me here would bring her own values into the class discussion. I remember a month of heated debate about God. She is an extreme atheist, and she brought that discussion to class. I am less certain myself about God, and I don’t always bring such explicit values to the debate, but I do try to stir deep discussion. I like comparing history to the present. I’ll take historical terms like the *bourgeois* and try and understand what this means for us today. And these kids will have what to say. Or, take musical rules in strict counterpoint, or voice leading. I’ll teach them to avoid parallel fifths, and I’m really just waiting for them to ask, “But why?” or “Who said?” I enjoy their rebellion: I find it inspiring and a great space for learning.

In the end, I will set down the rules for what can or cannot be done in our classroom, not because I'm better than them; just because that's life. When you're in a high school music program, your voice leading must be correct for the matriculation exam: that's the bottom line. You don't have to understand or like it. Wherever you go in life, there will always be some bottom line. So, yes, I like to provoke them to rebel and to question, but I also want them to practice accepting external guidelines.

I don't see myself as an authority in terms of the transmission of wisdoms of the past. Transmission itself does not build my authority. I prefer to question with them. When I improvise on the piano, I'm full of parallel fifths, so yeah, it is a strange rule; let's talk about it. And if it's history, I can't teach just a bunch of facts. I like to find a story that connects one fact to another; that creates meaning; that can be debated. This is the only way that I know how to learn, so this is how I teach. It can't be about "yes" or "no" questions; it's all about the "why."

“We Can't *Know*; We Can Imagine”

In another music-history class on the Romantic period, this time Yoni decided to challenge the class:

Today I'm going to play you a German lied with a video made up of Romantic paintings. You won't understand the words, and there won't be subtitles—only pictures of paintings. I want you to listen and watch, and decide what is the story

that this lied is trying to tell. Listen to the piano, to the voice, to the style. Do you accept this challenge?

The students agreed and Yoni dimmed the lights and played the YouTube video. As it began, a student commented with a sigh: “It’s 4 minutes long.” Yoni echoed in a calm and reassuring voice: “Yes, it *is* 4 minutes long.”

When the music ended, two students offered ideas: “Someone is running away,” one suggested; “I heard a horse riding,” the other said. But Yoni insists, “I want to hear a story!” “How about Sleepy Hollow?” another student tried, and her classmate was quick to add: “He dies at the end, you know?” Yoni submitted: “Okay. You’re close enough now.” Yoni passed around a handout with the text of Schubert’s *Erlkonig* translated into Hebrew. Yoni chose three students to play the roles of father, son, and Erlkonig and asked them to perform a dramatic reading of the text for the class.

The three student readers sat on the blue rug on the floor in front of the rest of the class. Two of them removed their sandals and sat barefoot. When they read the words “ho!” and “alas!” whispered giggles rose from the back of the classroom in embarrassment. Twice, the students stumbled on difficult words, and Yoni helped.

As they read the last verse, one girl became uneasy and could not wait: “But what happened to the child?” she shouted out in worry before they finished. Yoni was quiet, immersed in his own copy of the text, and seemed amused by the eerie atmosphere he created in class. He responded to the girl’s worry when the text ends: “We will never know, will we? We cannot know all the answers, we can only imagine: isn’t it wonderful?” As an afterthought, Yoni commented, “You know, Schubert composed this

song when he was 17—when he was *your* age—imagine that!”

I am educating students to the world of music—a world that goes beyond words. Anyone who is exposed to this world of music will live a richer life. They will never forget to go beyond words. It’s almost like a secret order: people learning to see the world in a deeper way and who become committed to this quality of insight. It adds a heightened sensitivity to life and ensures you are your own persona and not just a dictate of social pressures. Music, above all other arts, is a direct train to the subconscious. Everyone is affected by music. I don’t really think it matters what music; rather, how you approach it.

What and how I teach can be transferred to any other context in the world: each place has its own backdrop, and everywhere I’d be asking, and what else? Most societies today don’t really encourage the arts as education. If you want to develop artistic inclination, you really have to fight for it. You will have to give up many other things. I know that 99% of my students will not go on to be musicians, and that’s not what I educate for. When the kibbutz culture started out, there was no food and hardly any water, but culture—art, and music—were plentiful; it was something the pioneers invested in. Today it is not obvious to many societies—including today’s kibbutzim—why they should invest in arts and music.

I tell my students they are not “pianists” or “guitarists,” they are “musicians.” Although I tend to be suspicious of big words, I want them to realize that once

they are committed to play, they are responsible: responsible for the arrangement, for the sound, for everything that goes beyond “just” playing. Beyond responsibility, I want them to develop an ideology of giving. If music is a gift given to man by God, we must use this gift to give to others, to give to the community.

I think that music educates toward complexity. If you are serious about music then nothing can be plain black or white. In a simple mysterious way, music works on the humane side of the spirit, all the places that people like to talk about in big words. I’m suspicious of big words like “peace” or “racism.” But music works on those spaces in a small but efficient way that goes way beyond empty slogans.

“You’ve Got to Play it; Play *With* it”

Between music history and music theory, Yoni gave the students a short break. It is 5:30 p.m. and these students have been studying since 8:00 a.m.. The music program for them is an additional afternoon/evening of learning that other high school majors do not require. As they left the library-classroom, two students joked about Yoni’s “essential need for coffee.” Yoni returned after recess with a full cup of coffee from the Arts House staff lounge. Students used the recess to buy drinks and snacks from the vending machine, and others opened their guitars and fumbled for chords to a new Israeli pop song they were trying to play.

After 20 minutes, most of the students returned. Two of them were sharing some

cookies, laughing about the low quality of the cookies: “At this hour of the day anything with sugar is helpful.” Yoni dragged the portable whiteboard into the center of the classroom, asking the students, “Who remembers what we did last week?” A girl from the back row replies, “We had fancy names for all kinds of chords, and last week I was really good at all that stuff.” Yoni smiled, stifling a laugh.

“Today we are going to continue building all types of seventh chords,” Yoni explained. “It is an exercise that you can complete in two stages. We will try a few on the blackboard before you solve some more in your notebooks.” At this point two more students returned from recess. Yoni addressed one of them: “You missed class last week. So, a seventh chord is a chord upon which we add an additional note.” Without holding up the rest of the class, Yoni struggled to give that student the very short version of what a seventh chord is, what types there are, and how to build them. The student sat down and listened to Yoni with a blank stare.

Yoni asked another student to try to explain how to turn a major chord into a seventh chord. When she replied, another classmate criticized her, claiming that “her explanation is no good!” Yoni asked, “What would be helpful for you in trying to understand?” and proceeded to draw the chords on the staves on the whiteboard. When Yoni completed his explanation, another student asked, “Can you explain that again? I didn’t get it.”

As the lesson continued, the whiteboard was filled with chords and chord symbols. Yoni used figured bass notation and colloquial pop-music chord symbols. After 15 minutes at the whiteboard, Yoni sat down at the piano: “Okay. I’m going to play a

diminished seventh chord on D. I'll start and you guys complete the chord." Yoni ended up playing and singing alone because the students were all too hesitant. When he completed the chord, Yoni asked, "So, how do we *feel* about this chord? Do we like him? Let's not answer that out loud, coz he's a bit sensitive." Everyone laughed.

Yoni demonstrated the difference between half-diminished and diminished chords on the piano. Facing the keyboard, his back was toward the students. Every so often, he turned his head and looked over his shoulders. At one point he commented, "I feel like I am talking to myself here. Are you guys with me? Have you got it? Are going to remember this?" No one replied and Yoni continued, enjoying playing around on the piano: "So, if the church organist is having a really bad day or feels like going wild—like, remember Quasimodo from the Hunchback movie?—he'll play something like this," Yoni joked and played an elaborate chord progression full of seventh chords, mostly diminished chords. When he finished, Yoni seemed amused with himself. He stood up and moved back into the center of the classroom, saying, "You've got to write it out and then play it, play *with* it."

Sometimes, kids join the program and then want to leave. When I was a kid I watched "Fame" on television, and in many ways, this is still the fantasy for some of them: to discover their talent and to be discovered. Then they start the program and it's all about Classical music history and theory, and it bores them. I think about 10 to 20% drop out between ninth and 10th grade. I try to warn them that music is about working hard and learning hard. They see kids on television on stage becoming stars. I try to explain that for every minute on stage, you need

dozens of hours of hard work and study. It's hard for them to imagine that.

One thing I'm not good at is keeping in touch with the parents. I meet parents and kids together to introduce the program before they decide to join. After that, I can send e-mails to parents, but they won't read them. They come to me when there is trouble, and of course they come to see their kids perform, but that's about it. I tell parents and kids to join the program for now: don't think about what you'll get out of it. My motto is that high school music is for your adolescence, not for your future. Other high school majors recruit students by promising them a future but I don't believe in that. I tell them that it may lead to a future, but mostly it's a fun way to spend 4 important years of your life.

Occasionally I can run into problematic parents. Like a really talented guitarist in the tenth grade: his parents think he is great and buy him expensive guitars and equipment. I tell them that he needs to learn more if he really wants to make a career out of it, but they don't think much of theory and notation and all that. His parents are so obsessed with his talent that they thought of moving to Tel Aviv so he can study in one of the big arts schools there. They don't understand that he'd never be accepted. They are living in a dream of the end result of stardom, but are not willing to commit to the process that gets you there.

My teacher, Igor, coined a phrase; he called it the village genius. That's just it: in the village you are the best, but out in the big world, you are nothing. One way to battle this misconception is through personal example, not just by me, but all of

my music staff. I try to bring in active musicians who have seen the real world beyond the kibbutz. I want students to see what their teachers can do—how they play, compose, improvise—and to understand what a professional standard is. At the same time, I do want to strengthen kids in what they're good at. I want them to know their worth, and then I want to help take them to the next level. I have a few really famous graduates who I take pride in. All of them went on to study in the United States.

Discussion

A big brother. The students in Yoni's program admired and adored their teacher; there can be no doubt. At times, Yoni seemed to interact with students like an elder brother. In teaching, Yoni encouraged building parallels with worlds of content that are close to students' own lives, be it social activism, movies, or pop culture at large. At the same time, Yoni was adamant about broadening students' perspectives and cultural references. Yoni's music lessons aspired to inspire development of rich inner worlds, but do so through exposure to cultural stories, content, and bodies of knowledge, rather than engaging in open-ended creativity.

In his devotion to exposing students to knowledge of the past, Yoni embodied a friendly but authoritative voice, of one who has been where they are now but has also experienced the world beyond. Yoni balanced his appreciation of adolescent fun with the cultivation of self-awareness, including the awareness of cultural situatedness. Yoni's music program balances a universalist approach, enculturating students to Western art, culture, and history; alongside the cultivation of community and nationalist sentiment

most evident in the deep investment music students have in community Memorial Day ceremonies.

Yoni seemed concerned with the burdens of growing up in today's world. In this sense, Yoni saw music education as a possibility to reclaim personal and social spaces and habits that are less obviously available to digital natives. The kibbutz music program engages students in their own free time, 2 afternoons a week, rather than during school hours. Yoni enjoyed the social interaction that his program facilitates, and sometimes embellished this aspect, as in the yearly music social evening that he encourages students to plan.

A scent of the big world. In interpreting cultural functions of Yoni's music teaching, it is interesting to recall his personal history. Having opted for combat service in the army rather than seeking a musical military position, Yoni was led by his generation's ethic of male machoism. Having left the kibbutz to study abroad, and then to try to "make it" in the big city, Yoni has now returned to embody the role of kibbutz music teacher; a role he never imagined taking on. In these aspects of his life story, Yoni models an interesting possibility for kibbutz youngsters to negotiate an affinity and a loyalty to the community of their youth without denying dreams of elsewhere.

Shira

Setting

Alongside a suburban residential area in the center of the country lies the national-religious girls' high school campus where Shira teaches. The campus is surrounded by a metal gate. As I approach I call out to a student who is walking on the

inside. Without questioning my identity, she calls back to me the four-digit code that opens the gate. I guess I look the part. A maze of long rectangular one-story buildings surrounds the larger two-story main building of the school. The campus includes dormitory facilities of bedroom complexes, a dining room, and a prayer hall alongside the main school building.

Between the matrix of buildings, narrowly paved cement paths alternate with patches of grass. In some corners of the campus, groups of students occupy large wooden swing-benches. Other students lie on the grass; some play guitar and sing. Others look immersed in study. Many girls wear jeans skirts and T-shirts; some walk barefoot, others wear sandals, but most feet are loaded with colorfully woven anklets.

Make-shift handwritten announcements about clothing and accessory sales, and other local events—some musical, some educational, and others unrelated—line the hallway of the main school building. The back corner of the hallway has been designed into a miniature study hall with bean bags, low benches, and bookcases of religious prayer books and study books, mostly of Hassidic orientation.

Music is taught in regular homeroom classrooms: long rectangular rooms lined with three rows of desks and a large blank whiteboard on the front wall. Most classrooms are decorated with colored mandalas that look like they were torn out of a big coloring book. Also, two or three small ensemble rooms on the second floor are much smaller than the classrooms, but otherwise similar.

Acoustics were not considered in the planning of this structure, and Shira confesses that other teachers often complain about the noise during music hours.

Observing Shira teach in these classrooms, I noted how much time and energy she wasted on drawing the five staff lines of notation again and again on the huge empty whiteboard. Sayings and pictures of famous modern and contemporary national-religious rabbis decorate the hallways and the teachers' lounge: Rabbi Neriyah, Rabbi Tzuckerman, Rabbi Kook and his words: "When the soul is a light, even the cloudiest of skies radiates a pleasant light." Throughout the day, a public-address (PA) system announces changes in schedules and other reminders and events.

Being Available for Students and Teachers 24/7

I think that being a high school music director is a big job—too big for me, really. All my life I was looking for a mentor. While my friends in college were studying Classical music, I was working on my own on pop and other genres. There was no one around to guide me. I was on my own with that. I didn't even know then that there was a whole world of theory specified for popular music.

My time at school is divided between actual teaching in the classroom and what I call "education": time I spend in conversations with students or organizing. There's a lot of technical sides to my job as director; it never ends, really, but also, just time I can sit and talk with students. This is so important that I got the principal to give me an official weekly school hour for this.

I think the girls need a role model like me to hang out around them and be available to talk. I text a lot with students. They know I'm available. Just now, a very talented student texted me asking to add piano lessons for her next year. She

wants to know what she has to do to get that. So, if I'm around in school, I'd text her—"let's talk about it"—and start a conversation. I don't have my own office yet. I am waiting for that but I manage around campus and in the music rooms. They know they can text me at midnight and get an answer. I'm here for them.

I oversee a staff of music teachers: private instrumental teachers, and ensemble teachers. I make a point of knowing what's going on with all the teachers, and of being available for them 24/7. I require all teachers to submit a yearly plan—even those who are more expert than me in their particular field: I want to know that they have a written plan. Organizing the music staff as a group is difficult because of the school structure, but it is something that I aim for. I take responsibility for standing up for all the music teachers when it comes to school policy and logistics. I want all my teachers to be employed with good terms.

As music director, I must work to lighten my load. I keep bringing in more staff members; as much as the school will allow me. As a team, I want us to know where every student is at and what the next step is for her. I think, in a way, I'm trying to build a staff full of musical mentors. As for myself, I prefer to work with the more serious girls. Those who are weaker in the basics or still not sure about music: I prefer to pass on to other staff members. I want to raise the level of professionalism; I must!

“A Process—Not a Battle”

Walking down the halls with Shira, we were stopped almost every step we took by students seeking Shira’s advice and attention. She listened and replied to each with a big smile on her face. As we entered the ensemble room, students awaited us. Shira made a point of lingering after the bell to allow students to enter and “to set up and plug in” before she arrived. “It’s about professionalism and independence,” she explained. “They must know how to set themselves up, and to be ready before I arrive!” Shira handed out sheet music to the seven girls seated around the room with their instruments: saxophone, flute, two on keyboard, guitar, bass, and drums. “You asked for something more challenging, so here it is!” Shira proclaimed. The students look at the music. “Shifting meters ... wow! This looks tough,” one responded. Shira recommended each of them work on this new piece with their individual instrumental teachers, promising to take time to hear each one of them the next week to decide if they could work on this piece together.

When I worked as a private teacher, mostly for religious girls, I noticed that more than technique or repertoire, the older girls just needed to talk with me. Maybe it’s because most religious children start music late—there are not enough local possibilities for music lessons in their towns or neighborhoods—many come from large families who don’t have the time or money to invest in private lessons for all their kids; music is not high in the radar or priority. So, they start in their teens and are full of questions.

In national-religious education, there is a competition of energies and resources. There is a clear priority to religiously oriented subjects and activities that take up most of the educational resources in this sector. There is a hierarchy between school subjects, but also what parents will choose to invest in. Religious studies and social cohesion come first. Many parents are paying very high tuitions for their religious schools, and adding music lessons to that is just too much. Parents ask me, “What will my daughter do with music?” It doesn’t matter to them just how talented their daughter may be. Something about intense socialization is characteristic of the educational goals and priorities of this sector. And music can seem a threat to this.

I still hear homeroom teachers in the teachers’ lounge saying things like music and arts are great, but first and foremost we are an institution of religious education. These teachers find it hard to support too many hours of practice that a serious music education involves. These teachers imagine that too much practice can distract the student from social goals like youth groups or volunteering that are high priority for national-religious communities. I often argue with these teachers, explaining just what it takes to be serious about music. When they answer that it may not be right for these girls, I feel discouraged. If its mediocrity that they want to perpetuate, count me out. If they want music just for fun, I can bring in a dozen other religious teachers who can do that; it’s not for me.

In school, we start the year with activities for the High Holidays, and there music

is a means, not an end. Then we have an obligation to the donors of the school: we have to do a social evening where people sit around tables and eat, and we play in the background. I can't stand this. It goes against everything I am trying to educate for. But we must do it for the donors. Some things I can't argue; and I think these are things I want to try and influence, not to change. The difference is in the way you do it—I don't fight things, but I like to offer alternatives, bring new ideas in through the backdoor. If they get it, great. If not, I'll keep being me and one day it'll impact. I see life as a process. What I'm not pleased with will become a process; not a battle.

Laughing at Mistakes

The ensemble room was never fully quiet and Shira never really requested silence. Occasionally, she would clap her hands and call for attention. Before the ensemble pulled together, students practiced individual riffs and rhythms. Shira moved between them, asking each student to play a line or a riff for her. Finally, after Shira had made several rounds and girls had drifted in and out of the room seeking additional music stands and microphones, finally they seemed ready to start. Shira stood in the corner of the room, clapped her hands, and now they were silent. The drummer counted out loud and the ensemble began to play together. Shira discreetly stood in the corner, smiling, keeping time by softly clapping her hands.

Only when someone played off beat did Shira move forward, making her presence clear and clapping as loud as she can. When the students saw Shira advance, they knew something was off and slowly they stopped. Everyone laughed. Shira, smiling

and laughing along at the mistake, took over the keyboard and demonstrated the guitar line that went wrong. So, they started and stopped again and again. Every time there was a mistake there was laughter. Shira demonstrated and corrected on the keyboard or by singing or clapping, but always smiling and laughing along. When they got something right, Shira's smile got even bigger and she complimented the group with a gracious, "Oh! There it is, THANK YOU!"

After 45 minutes, the ensemble's time was over. Shira ensured each student knew what to work on with their instrumental teachers. The drummer looked distraught and Shira approached her, laying a reassuring hand on her shoulder and whispering in her ear. When the students left the room, Shira shared some details about the drummer: she was taking Ritalin medication, and drumming was just about the only productive thing about which this student was consistent in school. Shira expressed compassion, summarizing the ensemble's work, saying, "You know, the music may not be 100%, but I am sure it is worth it." As we made our way from the ensemble room downstairs to the teachers' lounge, the school PA system invited everyone to afternoon prayer, to be followed by lunch.

National-religious education wants to include everything, but music can't work in this way. When I think of all the religious musicians that I see around, I see mediocrity. When I do see real talent, it makes me want to scream: "Don't go to Yeshiva; devote yourself entirely to music, and be a model for our sector!" We don't have big enough role models. I hope that the next generation will get there.

Look at what the girls listen to in their spare time; listen to their ringtones and their playlists! I want to bring a revolution here too. The national-religious playlist is undergoing major changes nowadays. There are lots of religious or almost religious musicians, but most of them are playing simple riffs and rhythms. I want them to listen for complexity. I'm missing something more spiritual in these types of music. Pop music can be spiritual: it's happening more and more in Israel, but notice that most of that music is being made by secular artists: where are we?

Most of the students here start out imagining themselves in television music-reality shows; that's as far as they can imagine. Very few start out with an interest in musical knowledge and leading a musical life. Their parents don't know what to imagine. I once got a complaint from a student's father. She had chosen drums and percussion and her father insisted that drums are for boys. I guess in his imagination drums were rock music and wild, not suitable for a girl. Other parents are good about it; they see music as a good pastime for teenage years and imagine their daughters continuing to a religious college of education or something like that. I don't think any of the parents are dreaming of their daughters as professional musicians.

Making a Difference

Ensemble class continued and it was time to move to the next piece. Shira called everyone's attention and, for the first time since the lesson began, there was almost

silence. The students on guitar and keyboard continued to fumble around, even as they listened. “Let’s work on the new song from last week,” Shira suggested, and the students pulled out lead-sheet scores with chord progressions. “What we’ve got to do is pull together an arrangement,” Shira continued. “That means you need to think who’s going to take the intro? Who’s getting a solo? You have to pull it all together.” The relative silence was broken as the students begin to discuss. Shira was back in the corner, barely participating in the discussion. The tone of the keyboard players suggested a slow introduction and the flute player demonstrated a possible solo. Shira gave feedback, and suggested the guitar double the flute and asked them to try it and see what they thought. Shira suggested the flute try it again, one octave higher. Everyone agreed that “it works.” Students called out to each other, reminding each other of their parts and the progression of the arrangement as they played it through from beginning to end. Shira stood in the corner, smiling, nodding, with an occasional clap stressing the beat. Everyone seemed satisfied.

Among the ensembles in school, it was important for me to open a prayer song (piyut) ensemble. I think this music is important to all Jews, and especially for us. As a religious school we kind of must have some portion of so-called religious music. I will not allow simplistic arrangements, though. I take care to oversee all the arrangements for the ensembles, and for the prayer song ensemble specifically. I think all Jews should know some Jewish music, just like they know jazz or Classical music. As a religious school, I feel obligated to have some kind of religious music incorporated into every school concert. Maybe I do it to please

the parents.

When I think about success and satisfaction, I can say, for example, that my students asked to play Chick Corea, that means that I have made a difference. How would they have even heard of Chick Corea before? And now this is what they're playing at the end of the year concert. Their parents have never heard this music, but now this is what they're going to hear. My insistence on high-level and complex arrangements, even of the simplest music, sets a standard for them. I have no trouble insisting on standards with the students, but when I have to fight with other teachers, I get annoyed. I don't fit in with the other nonmusic teachers in the school. I know I must maintain communication to enable me to do my job, but I just don't relate to them. In general, I find it harder to relate to friends who are not musicians.

“Like Being a Mother”

As Shira got organized for music-theory class at her teacher's desk, a student sighed, “Still only a few dozen followers on my Instagram.” Shira looked up from her laptop. “And why are followers on Instagram so important to you?” she inquired in a critical tone. The student ignores her teacher's critique and answers proudly, “Because it's cool!” Shira insisted, “Don't answer me straight off. Take time to think about it. Think about why do we need Facebook and Instagram? Why do we want to be famous? Is it all about money?” Another student got involved in the discussion and asked Shira if she owns a “kosher” cellular phone: “You know, one of those that only has e-mail and

almost no Internet,” she explained. Shira replied that her phone is normal, but suggested, “maybe we can do a study of girls with ‘kosher’ phones and see if they practice more than girls with ‘normal’ phones.” Everyone laughed, and the lesson could begin.

Just as Shira began to teach, two more students wandered into class, looking surprised. “Has class begun?” they asked. Shira looks annoyed but calmly asked the students to go announce on the school PA that music theory has begun. A few more minutes into the lesson, somebody’s cell-phone rang. Shira could not hide her irritation: “Is someone having a baby?” she asked, and the students looked puzzled. “Well why else would your phone be on during class?” she reprimanded.

Being a music director is like being a mother. Students come to me with all of their dilemmas. I have built a staff of music teachers who are my partners and I often help connect students to their teachers. I try to bring in as many female role models as possible. I want the girls to feel free to express themselves also in voice, and so it’s best, religiously speaking, if it’s an all-female atmosphere. It’s very difficult to find enough and good enough female teachers, but I try.

In my high school music program, the social aspect is very prominent. The girls see the program as a type of social belonging. They have a WhatsApp group, and they arrange social evenings to jam together or just to hang out. I enjoy seeing them really serious about music, about making music their life. I lose patience very quickly with the girls who are just playing around and look at music as something marginal. My goal is to give them a life through music, full of music.

This school is structured in a way that doesn't really allow me to insist on the excellence that I want. To keep the school profitable, we need to accept almost anyone who applies. Girls don't always know what they're in for when they register for music, and very soon it backfires. I try to focus my attention on the girls who really want music: those who have it and those who want it.

Responsibility and Curiosity

Shira used some time from music history to talk about a musical social event that took place on campus the previous night. "The social evening was your responsibility, and it was a chance for you to bring music to the nonmusic majors in school," Shira began. "So, let's talk about responsibility, okay?" she continued. "What was each of you supposed to oversee, and what went wrong?" Shira collected students' responses on the whiteboard, making a list of responsibilities: choosing the repertoire, studying the repertoire, creating a PowerPoint to describe the history of each song, technical set-up, and performance. When the list was complete, one student asked what the word "repertoire" means, and Shira answered: "A list or grouping of songs or works."

Shira led a discussion, inviting girls to reflect on what went well and what they could have done better. "It's important to challenge ourselves to do it better next time," she explained, "and to do that we have to be honest about what went wrong." One student was quick to respond: "I don't think it was clear who was in charge of what." Others agreed that "it all ended up to be kind of a mess." "Responsibility!" Shira summarized, and closed the discussion.

Shira then asked the students how they felt about the tension between the performers and the audience: “Was it a sing-a-long or a performance?” she asked. “Some girls were too infatuated with being on stage,” one student suggested. “Yeah,” another student agreed: “The singers were giving too much of a show.” Shira tried to keep the class calm and avoid mutual blame. “Okay, so let’s just remember the difference between a performance and a social event, right? They differ in setting, in purpose, and in tone. And we, the musicians, must take responsibility for this too,” Shira concluded.

Moving back to class material, Shira projected her computer screen onto the whiteboard showing the ZemeReshet Israeli Folk Song website. “Today we’re going to hear a song that was composed in 1934! Imagine that!” she exclaimed. “As we listen, I will show you the handwritten score. Take a look at the score, and try to discover what mode this song is written in.” On the website, Shira played *Shir Ha Emek* (The Song of The Valley), by Nathan Alterman and Daniel Somborsky.

When the song ended, Shira points to the score and started singing note by note. “Have you guessed it?” she asked. “This song is absolutely Dorian!” she exclaimed in excitement. “How could *I* have known that?” a student challenged. “Let’s take it note by note,” Shira explained. “Are there any sharps or flats? What note does it start on, and what note does it end on? Now write down the notes that make up the scale of the song, and let’s sing that scale.”

Once the mode was established, Shira continued to explain about the website and the song’s history. “Back then almost every kibbutz had their own composer, and songs were composed for kibbutz events.” On a personal note, Shira then added, “My childhood

was full of these songs. And every song has several arrangements. My personal favorite here is Graziani's arrangement for the IDF orchestra from 1960." Shira played the 1960 track and asks the students to listen for "something strange and different that is going on in this arrangement," and called their attention to alterations in the melodic line.

Finally, Shira chose another recording from the website of a communal singing event from a kibbutz. "Isn't it glorious?" she asked, full of excitement. "This website is a treasure! You should all know it and play around with it in your spare time." Class ended and the school bell played another Israeli classic: *Po BiEretz Hemdat Avot* (Here in the Land of Our Fathers), and Shira noticed the relevance: "Go look up when *that* song was written!"

It took me a while to imagine myself as a music director: it seemed like such a big title. Today I define myself as a music educator because that is what I am doing as music director: I am educating in and through music. I don't agree with all of the dictates from the Ministry of Education, but I believe that it is possible to raise a new generation of musicians within these dictates. I see some of my graduates today and I know it is possible, and I am very proud of them. Sometimes I want to just forget about the matriculation exam and really teach. Just listen to pop songs from the 1970s and pop songs today and ask what has changed and why does it sound like that?

In my dreams, I reconstruct a new music program with no restrictions. I imagine a program full of highly motivated girls who all dream of becoming professional

musicians. Musical curiosity is the key to everything. I want to see students searching for alternate arrangements and performances and compare them, opening themselves up to more and more musical artists.

Being a musician is all about responsibility and accountability. I want to educate students to take account of everything that goes into a performance from A to Z. They need to know the technical details of the sound system, the equipment needed to make them sound best, and everything else that makes a performance great.

Music, *Torah*, and Life

Shira began another music-theory class. “We were working on types of chord triads that can be built on each note of a major scale. Some chords are consonant, and others are dissonant.” Shira played a recorded sequence of chords on her laptop. The classroom has no piano and Shira was too lazy to carry a heavy keyboard and amplifier from the second floor. During recess, Shira showed me the computer program she uses for theory and ear training and explained that for such lessons, sometimes the computer is enough. As the chords played out, a student protested, “But they sound pretty okay to me.” Shira explained,

Yes, but they demand a resolution, don't they? And that's what's great about dissonant chords. Imagine that everywhere you wanted to go you would just arrive. Dissonant chords are about the way to get there—the scenic route—it makes the whole journey more exciting.”

The student continued to challenge her teacher: “But why do the first and last chords in the progression need to be stable?” she asked. Shira answered,

They don’t absolutely *have* to be. It’s a matter of style. Think of the differences between music you hear in synagogue and music you hear in a jazz club—the style is different, the history is different, the context is different, so the chord progressions are different too.

Shira drew five lines for a musical staff on the whiteboard. Then she added the notes of the scale of C major. “Now look what happens when we pile up thirds on top of each note. Look at them, and then listen, and tell me which of them is major, minor, diminished, or augmented.” Shira completed the chords on the whiteboard and then played the sequence from a recording on her laptop. All but ignoring the assignment, one student asked, “We could pile thirds on top of each chord, couldn’t we?” Shira seemed pleased with the question, and warned, “Okay, so I’m going to explain a few things now that if you don’t understand, it’s okay—we’ll get to it next year. But because you asked—yes. We can build seventh chords, ninth chords, and even thirteenth chords.” Shira’s voice rose in excitement as she drew additional circles that became musical notes. “Then we can learn about chord substitutes, too. Some of you are already playing such combinations, so it’s great that you can see it here in theory class too.” Not everyone was as excited as Shira about this moment of advanced chords. “It’s all mathematics to me,” a student whispered in despair.

Shira returned to the more basic class material: “Let’s talk about chord

inversions,” she suggested, and invited a student to the whiteboard. “Take the first chord here—C major. Now try and build this chord’s first inversion. The first inversion begins with the third of the original chord.” The student completed the chord on the whiteboard and Shira added chord titles above the notes: “C” and “C/E.” A student from the back row jumped up when she saw these titles: “Oh my God!” she exclaimed, “so that’s what it means! I mean, it’s in all my guitar books, that C/E symbol, but I never knew which chord I’m supposed to play there.” Shira was pleased and responded,

Yes. When I work as a piano accompanist, very often the musician will only send me a list of chord symbols. I have to work it out for myself. It’s a different art—working out chord progressions on guitar and on piano—but the basics of theory are all the same. On guitar it’s a matter of positioning, but for piano you need to know the basic rules of voice leading to get it right, to make it smooth.

Another student joined in, offering a Talmudic quotation as a summary of this point:

“Know where you have come from and know where you are going.”¹⁸ Everyone laughed and Shira seemed especially pleased. “Exactly!” she confirmed.

Music, for me, is a way of life. Nothing less. When I enter the classroom, my students know that I am a musician—that what I am teaching is my life. This makes all the difference. This is a big part of how I am educating them musically: by being me; by living music. This is the example I want to give them. Music is a

¹⁸ Translation of the *Mishnah* text, Pirkei Avot, 3:4.

great spiritual means. It is gift that God gave us, and we must not squander it. I tell my students that I teach music for life, not for strumming at bonfires. If it is a gift from God, we must learn to use it at our very best capacities. When I learn and teach music, I am fulfilling a personal calling, but also a social calling.

I think a career in music for religious men and women is a matter of calling. I think music is something spiritual and close to God, and so we should be the ones bringing music, in these terms, to the world. There is an aspect of Tikkun Olam in my perspective: I want other Jews to see us (religious) as human beings, and anything we do, we should do to the best quality.

For young religious girls, music is a gift of life, not only because of the spiritual aspect, but also as a quality time for themselves. They will finish high school, do 2 years of National Service, and then, most likely, get married and have children. I hope they can at least maintain the time for music and practice that they had in high school as an outlet for themselves. I want them to get married, to raise families, but I want them to know that giving to themselves is also giving to society. And if music is an inner part of you, you must not deny it.

I'm not saying that music is Torah, but I am saying that music can help Torah; that music can go along with Torah. Think about morning prayer, for example: why can't we start every school day with a piyut (prayer song) and really invest in the music of it? It could be a major part of our culture and our education, but it's not really there yet.

Discussion

Between the sacred and the mundane. Shira's music program exists on the threshold between the sacred and the mundane. Although many of Shira's concerns as a music educator address questions of professional standards, conversations with her revealed a deeply religious and social motive. Shira aspires to create a new musical standard and professional possibility for the women of her sector. Shira's hopes evoke a national-religious artistic quality that can compete with secular culture. This aspiration, for Shira, is no less than an act of Tikkun Olam: creating a public expression of Jewish faith for the benefit of the world, on the one hand, and representing national-religious Jews as high-quality uncompromising professionals, on the other.

In the exposure to cultural content in music class, Shira's students gain another ground on which to negotiate the sacred and the mundane; tradition and modernity. In many ways, national-religious education is about these kinds of negotiations, and the content of Shira's music lessons provides apt opportunity for furthering such considerations. Shira's insistence on professionalism is, in a way, an important social statement about the national-religious standard of living in both worlds: an attempt to prove that choosing duality is not a life of compromise and not at the expense of quality of either tradition or modernity.

Challenging the curriculum. Shira did not hesitate to challenge Ministry decrees, and seized every opportunity to incorporate what she saw as important in cultivating serious musicianship. In many ways, Shira was responding to her own music education, hoping to fill the gaps she experienced as a student. By doing so, she was

acting as a role model for students, proving that developing professional standards of musicianship is possible even if you are a religiously observant woman. In the development of her music program, Shira was making such possibilities more accessible to the next generation and available in community institutions.

Shira's commitment to students knows no limits: she encouraged students to contact her through social media and has a reputation for responding to students almost 24 hours a day. Shira acknowledged and embraced the social aspect of her role, and even struggled to receive school hours to devote to one-on-one discussions and mentoring of students. Enhancing the musical lives of students works to quicken and sharpen dilemmas that Shira was most happy to address.

Some Common Themes of Discussion

Functions of Repertoire

The three teachers in this study were teaching similar material and repertoires and using similar teaching methods. They were all teaching toward the same State matriculation examination. The interest of this study was in the ways these repertoires, materials, and teaching methods related to the socioreligious contexts in which each of them was working.

Malka's teaching was more dominated by Western-Classical materials and paradigms than Shira's and Yoni's, who showed influences of jazz and popular music and pedagogies. Malka attributed her reliance and adherence to the Western-Classical canon to her own education in music, which did not expose her to other types of music. Shira's account of her own formal music education was similar to Malka's in the

centrality and exclusively Western-Classical approach. Nevertheless, Shira chose to move beyond the limits of her formal education, discovering the world of pop-music pedagogies with which she identifies.

At least on some level, Malka's insistence on Western canon approaches and materials has to do with her social setting. Ultraorthodox communities are suspicious of modernity and of anything related to modern and postmodern culture. In music, the Western canon represents a stylistic conservatism that suits ultraorthodox refinement. It is ironic, however, in seeking to avoid modernity, many ultraorthodox musicians have developed a blind adherence to the Western canon in music, without considering Judaism's own traditional abstinence from non-Jewish culture. Although Malka is explicit about avoiding music of other religions (Christian or pagan), and music that relates to immodest content, she has a general ignorance of underlying histories and associations of music in favor of a generalizing axiom that if it is so-called "classical music" it is okay.

This generalization contrasts with Shira's insistence on incorporating Jewish materials in her ensembles, and sometimes also in music-history lessons. The strict religiosity of ultraorthodox Judaism demands a separation between music as a liturgy and music as music. It is more characteristic of the national-religious sector to seek overlaps and combinations, leading to a prominence of Jewish music in national-religious music education more than in the ultraorthodox setting. The national-religious tendency to combine the mundane with the spiritual results in the embracement of personal spiritual expressions that can associate with almost any musical style or genre.

Educational Implications

Another aspect of Malka's adherence to the Western canon in music is the notion of perseverance. Western pedagogical traditions entail an ethos of hard work, attention to details, and long-term goals: morals that resonate with ultraorthodox paradigms of education. Shira shared Malka's desire to educate toward such morals. For Shira, however, these morals embody the work ethic of serious musicians that she hopes to raise, and not just general human morals she hopes to cultivate.

It is interesting to note that for both Malka's and Shira's students, the content studied in music history often functions as exposure to modernity, modern culture, and general history that is not taught elsewhere in their schooling. In this sense, music education opens realms of thought and exposure that ultraorthodox and national-religious adolescents otherwise may not encounter. Malka attributes this aspect of music education to contributing to a possibility of social mobility for students.

Fun, Self, and Spirit

For Yoni's students, in contrast, music-history content ties to general history and general knowledge attained in secular education. Yoni does his best to relate music history to contemporary culture and discourse, building on students' existing fields of reference. Yoni seemed less concerned with educating students in morals or even musicianship, admitting that high school music should be "fun." For Yoni's students, the goal of self-realization seems central to this notion of "fun." Yoni also interpreted music education in adolescence as a possibility to reclaim time and space of which today's youth have less.

Notwithstanding fun, Malka and Shira seem to have much more at stake than Yoni. Although all three teachers were aware of the contribution of music education to the building of self in adolescence, the implications differed for each of them. For Yoni's students, music is one out of many other possible and available outlets for self-exploration. The prominence of jazz and popular ensembles in Yoni's program suit the double goal of self-realization and communal socializing, typical of secular adolescent culture.

Malka's students, in contrast, are not encouraged anywhere else in their education to think about self as they are in Malka's music classes. Malka expressed a hope that students would cultivate a deep sense of self, because she believes this is a key factor of resilience in the life of an ultraorthodox woman. In explicitly encouraging this, Malka is somewhat of an outlier in her community.

For Shira's students, choosing music often means marginalizing social and community involvement expected of national-religious youth. Alongside the somewhat subversive cultivation of self, Shira's music education aims at a communal goal of creating a national-religious culture that can compete with and complement mainstream Israeli culture.

PART FOUR: FINAL CONVERSATION, INTERPRETATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

“We’re not Different—We’re Here”: Final Trio

One of the aims of this study was to experiment with intrareligious collegial dialogue among Jewish Israeli music teachers. The first step was getting three different socioreligiously affiliated teachers to devote themselves to the research process. By participating in an ongoing dialogue with me, they opened their practice to cultural and intrareligious considerations. Taking the goal of creating a dialogue one step further, I suggested, from the start, that participants should also meet each other. My research design thus included one focus-group session where I hoped to facilitate a three-way dialogue among the participants. The focus-group protocol included three main themes: (a) mutual introduction and descriptions of practice settings and attributes; (b) challenges of Israeli music education; and (c) prospects for further intrareligious dialogue and collaboration.

Summer 2016

Finding a time when all three teachers were available to meet and engage in a focus-group discussion was possible only during summer vacation. Jewish tradition dictates limitations on recreational activity during the nine days leading up to the Fast of Tish’a B’Av that commemorates the destruction of the Jewish Temples. Shira and Malka observe these restrictions and this opened up an opportunity to meet during a week in the summer with no teaching responsibilities and summer recreation on hold.

As I drove toward our scheduled meeting, the radio broadcast was devoted to a

historical discussion of this time of year. “It is not *just* about the physical destruction of two historic Temples,” claimed acclaimed Jewish secular journalist Rino Tzror. “It is a time to contemplate the social ethos of hate that is unfortunately very much a part of our present, and not only of our past.” Tzror, who devoted much of his journalism to the study of socioreligious sectors in contemporary Israel, noted a parallel between the sectarian division of contemporary Israel and that of Jewish life in 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed the Second Jewish Temple. As I listened to his radio program, I was grateful for the symbolic timing of this focus group, aiming to create an intrareligious dialogue between another three teachers and me from three very different Jewish Israeli religious sectors.

“Professionally Speaking, We’re all the Same”

Our meeting took place in Tel Aviv on the campus of Levinsky College of Education, where each of us had studied at some point in our professional training or development. We sat together in a classroom, around a table filled with refreshments. Over the years, Levinsky Campus has become the unofficial meeting place for music teachers, where the Ministry of Education holds its yearly Music Inspectorate Conferences. The last Conference was only two weeks ago and Shira, Malka, and Yoni were all there. Yoni noted,

When you think of it, we *do* meet each other professionally, at least once a year, but not in a way that ever inspired me to approach either of you personally, find out more about you or your programs, or *get to know* you or anything.

Shira agreed:

The Inspectorate Conferences focus us all on what the Ministry officials choose to present to us each year. If we feel any kind of affinity it is about us all being in the same boat, facing the same new dictates and decrees. ... It never occurred to me, for example, to approach Malka and say something like: “Wow! An ultraorthodox high school music program—how does *that* work?”

We all laughed.

Malka added,

Professionally speaking, we’re all the same. When we meet in such a professional forum we are all representing the same work: being high school music program directors. We all share the same curriculum and teach for the same matriculation exam. I don’t think any of us are busy thinking about our cultural contexts or specificity; it’s not something we give much thought to on a conscious level.

Musical Backgrounds

Shira and Yoni both introduced themselves as instrumentalists who suddenly found themselves teaching high school music, and finally ended up no less than as high school music program directors. Although neither of them had imagined themselves in this role, Malka described herself as having been born for this job. For Malka, the challenge was not envisioning herself as a high school music director, but in finding—or establishing—such a program in the ultraorthodox community.

Yoni was first to describe the basic structure of his program. “The kids in my program actually come from three different schools in the region. We meet once a week, in the afternoon at the regional music center.” As Yoni described the structure of his regional afternoon music program, Malka took interest in the details:

You see, there are no music programs in the ultraorthodox high schools. But we teach everything (music theory and music history and performance) at the ultraorthodox conservatory. So, I wonder why girls studying at the conservatory cannot take the matriculation exam.

Yoni encouraged Malka:

It could work. There is a precedence! Actually, the program that I now run was one of the first in the country. It was established years ago before anyone even knew what a high school music program was. When I took the position, I came into something very structured.

Shira was jealous. She smiled at Malka:

At least your girls are learning everything. I have quite an opposite problem: I have a high school music program, and for about a decade now, more and more such programs have been opening in national-religious schools—even a few in the boys’ schools—but most of the girls who enroll in my program come with very little previous musical knowledge and experience. Most of the girls in my program take their very first steps in music in the ninth grade! Many of the

national-religious towns and neighborhoods don't have conservatories, and, anyways, for many of the parents, music lessons are just not a priority. But over the years we have proven that they can get very far in 4 years. Some of them are very talented.

Malka sympathized with Shira, and clarified,

The irony of my story is that the girls who study in the conservatory have no official program and can't take the matriculation exam. But the high school program that I run from *within* one of the ultraorthodox high schools is full of girls like yours, with a similar history: no early background in music. They start from scratch in the ninth grade. I agree that a lot can be accomplished in 4 years, and that's how I work too.

“All About Marketing”

When I asked about the biggest challenge for a high school music director, the participants voiced absolute agreement, first by Yoni:

The biggest challenge is to exist, to survive. This means having enough students enroll each year. And to reach this goal, as director, I have to do a lot of PR; I have to make noise: make myself known and heard in the school. One way to get this done is to hold regular concerts and other public music events, and most importantly play a key role in all school ceremonies. It's all about marketing, but luckily for us, we don't have to work hard to come up with a slogan; we just have

to find the spaces to let the music speak for itself.

Shira echoed:

Let the music speak, and then it gets amazing! Seeing other teachers listen and applaud. Teachers see students that they think are difficult and troublemakers; they see them on stage and realize that they, too, are talented. And then having music in the school makes sense.

Malka joined in, nodding her agreement:

Most of the teachers and the principals don't really understand what music is; what music can do. We are constantly in a position where we have to explain and justify. But in the end, music is something you have to want. If you don't want it, then it won't happen. Why do we have to work so hard to try and explain?

“Music is an Expensive Business”

Responding to Shira and Yoni's recurring suspicion that music is not a real priority in ultraorthodox society, Malka insisted that those who can play an instrument are highly admired in her community. Malka explains,

The problem is that in our communities, we believe in big families. With six, seven, eight, or 10 children, who can afford music lessons? For as long as it was possible, the high school where I work subsidized private instrument lessons for all the music majors. We knew that getting parents to pay would be too difficult.

Nowadays that's what happens because there's no more money for subsidizing, and it is indeed difficult to get parents to pay.

Now Shira became sympathetic:

It is *so* difficult to get parents to pay! Parents at our high school already pay 1500 NIS a month because we are a dormitory. So, when I ask them to add 100 NIS a week for an instrument lesson they flip out! So, I tell parents, music is an expensive business. I want them to know that from the start.

Malka nodded:

Actually, music sounds exclusive and expensive—I think that's what draws the girls into the program to begin with. They may know nothing: they can't recognize or name instruments and have *no* idea what Classical music is or means, but music sounds attractive. But parents are one thing and school administration quite another. Once the school realized how expensive we actually are, they thought of shutting us down!

Shira laughed:

That's one thing I enjoy about the high school where I am now. For me, the choice to become a music director depended on me finding a school that actually wants music—that believes in music.

Malka sighed, "If it weren't for the matriculation exam, they would have closed us."

Repertoires, Ensembles, and Assessment

Malka took pride in the Classical repertoires performed in her music program.

Some years we have a full chamber orchestra. We even played pieces like Mozart symphonic minuets! Today the repertoire is more diverse, but this may be because the level is dropping. We have less hours, the level is lower, so the repertoire becomes more diverse. But also because we try to stress the *experience* of playing music together.

Yoni and Shira almost prefer popular music to Classical repertoires, and stress the social aspect of small student ensembles. As Yoni described,

Each student has some kind of ensemble. Sometimes it doesn't work and one or two students spend a full year without an ensemble. We try to fit them into existing ensembles at the local music center. But in the 10th grade, I do have a class ensemble; that is, I turn the class into an ensemble. This is the most troublesome because it is not planned: whatever instruments they play and whatever level they are, I have to work it out. Sometimes I will exempt a student that sings in a choir or plays in a different ensemble. But working as a class as an ensemble has a special effect too, when it works. ... At the end of the year they get a formal grade for this ensemble. The grade is based on responsibility, participation, and not exactly on their musicianship. The social aspect of it is very dominant.

Gender

Malka and Shira teach in all-girls schools and Yoni was curious about how all-girl ensembles sound. Shira shared,

Because many of the students are starting from scratch, I have the liberty of offering them band instruments so I can try and balance the ensembles with enough bass players and drummers in each class. Of course, it doesn't always work, but yes, it is nice to see all-girl bands breaking some stereotypes about so-called "male" instruments.

Malka's program is more Classically oriented, with chamber duets and trios alongside a makeshift orchestra, and choir:

The girls I teach are aimed early on for teaching. In the structure of the ultraorthodox girls' high school, all the majors have to be explicitly linked to a future income. Music, for us, equals teaching. That's how it's framed, and it is something that the school takes pride in: that they have a track for music education. Music is not a mainstream interest in the ultraorthodox community. Maybe for some of the richer families it is built in, but for the lower socioeconomic communities, it is not something anyone invests in.

Shira questioned this: "So, in your communities music is looked down upon?" Malka replied: "No. On the contrary: music belongs to the higher levels in society; it is looked up to." Shira persisted: "For boys and girls?" Malka hesitated:

Well ... for boys and men it is a question of talent: those who are talented can find an outlet either in the synagogue or in wedding ensembles, for example. For girls and women, it is about talent but also about formal study. Those who can afford it will send their girls to study. And, generally speaking, if you can play an instrument people will be impressed.

Boys, after about age 8, just don't have the time for such formal study. The structure of their schooling doesn't allow such time. My own sons all studied music. One of them even took voice lessons: he insisted and I arranged it for him. But this is because they are my sons and they are exposed to everything that I do and to how I live. I would like to think that any boy or man who would like to study music can find a way to do so, but it is just not something that commonly happens or is structured into our community.

Shira seemed proud to share:

National-religious communities have come a long way since that kind of denial of formal music education for boys. Today, it is in some ways easier for our men to pursue music as a profession than it is for our women. Men have more opportunities to succeed either as wedding musicians or in other jobs that are traditionally possible for men but not for women.

“Religious considerations aside,” Yoni interjected, “in many ways the music industry is easier for men than for women. I see this in my own graduates. I don't think

it's so absolute, but it seems to be at least somewhat true.”

“What’s in it for Me?”

Malka continued:

The girls in my program chose music as a future source of income. They are educated to be the main providers so that their husbands can pursue lives of Holy study. So, music, like any other school major, is about future possibilities of income.

Shira was skeptical:

What income? I mean, the girls that *I* teach always ask me: “what’s in for me?” They enjoy studying music now, but cannot imagine what they will be able to *do* with music later in life. And this troubles them: them and their parents. And rightfully so. I know many very talented musicians in this country who have to work at other jobs in order to make ends meet. So, for the students in my school, choosing music is almost an irresponsible choice—an act of teenage rebellion—a choice for fun and fulfillment in the present, but no security for the future.

Yoni identified with this description and interpreted,

High school music is all about a fun way to get through your teens. This is how it is in Israel since we have thrown all of our ideologies away. We are a society where only money and finances count now: no more old kibbutz ideologies. And in the world of money and finances, music doesn’t stand a chance. The other side

of it is the amount of effort you need to invest in becoming a musician. Everyone wants to play an instrument. Kids see musicians on stage and want to be just like them. But when you start teaching them theory, or talk about practicing, they lose patience. Today kids want everything instant; no effort.

Malka interrupted:

This is another point where ultraorthodox culture becomes a positive factor. We have a notion of perseverance as an educational value. Usually we refer to Holy study, but, when I think of it, some ultraorthodox parents push their children to study music as a way to develop their sense of perseverance that they can then transfer to Holy realms of worship. For young girls in our community, investing in music means developing character, because it is something that demands time, practice, and, well ... perseverance. I would imagine that this approach exists in other religious communities.

Shira laughed: “You’ve got to be kidding! I would love to meet a national-religious parent who would tell me that they chose music to develop their daughter’s sense of perseverance! Never heard that one!” Malka responded:

Well then I suppose it *is* characteristic of an ultraorthodox kind of female perfectionism. I know it’s stereotypical, but there is something about ultraorthodox women and a kind of ethos of perfection: women who must take care of everything, and all to a very high standard.

Yoni was curious: “But just what can an ultraorthodox woman *do* with music, besides develop her character? I know she can teach, but can she perform? Professionally?” Malka sighed:

This is a sensitive point for me. For myself, when I stopped playing, I stopped teaching instrumental lessons. And part of this is because I don’t really have a place to play or perform. There is one community string orchestra, but it’s not that great. Women can perform for women, and there are more and more stages and platforms for this within our community. Most ultraorthodox women will not look beyond the community: looking to perform elsewhere means leaving the community and being exposed. It just doesn’t happen.

Shira jumped in:

Now this is where *we* differ: for women in your community it’s an absolute; black or white. National-religious women always live on the borderlines, in constant debate. Ultraorthodox live in complete and total sexual segregation; we shift between mixed settings and segregated settings. For us, everything is less clear, less total. So, I have had students who went on to study and to perform in secular settings. It’s hard for me to say if I’m for or against this. When it happens, I try to talk it through with the student, to make sure she knows what she’s in for, and most of all, to try and make sure that she has some sense of an inner compass to guide her. I make a point of having at least one well known active female religious musician on my staff. I want students to have a role model of someone

who “made it” in the secular general world but kept to her own ideals.

Our community in its essence lives in constant conflict. By trying to idealize both what is sacred and what is mundane, we try to make two worlds into one; it doesn't always work. In fact, it's sometimes the exact opposite of what you described as ultraorthodox female perfectionism. You say women must do it all, and everything to the highest standard. We are in constant debate between conflicting values and I think this leads us very often to a standard of mediocrity. I try to fight this in my school and my community by forcing girls to choose: if you choose music, be committed to excellence. But this is a struggle. The word “commitment” is reserved for greater goals, like contributing to *Am Yisrael*.¹⁹

Tel Aviv Dreaming

Yoni was outnumbered: the rest of us were women. Yoni was not only the only man in the room, but also the only secularly affiliated Jew among us. Yoni admitted,

I suppose in reality this places me in a position of privilege. In Israeli society I guess I am what is considered “neutral,” “default,” or “normal” ... or at least “mainstream majority.” Maybe this is why I teach such a diverse mix of students: when you are the mainstream, you can afford to integrate a few minorities within your system. In my classes, you can find kids from different religious backgrounds, so you actually have secular kids playing alongside religious,

¹⁹ The People of Israel.

alongside a few Arab students who also study in our school. This is one of the strengths of our institution. You drive around here, you pass a big city, some kibbutzim, and other small towns, so you have city kids, country kids, and a diverse socioeconomic mix.

But in a way, they are all dreaming of Tel Aviv—the ultimate Israeli success story. They grow up in the geographical periphery and imagine themselves leaving home, doing army service, and then moving to Tel Aviv. And some of that is also about the music, because to succeed in music in Israel you have to succeed in Tel Aviv. For many of them, music is about identity; it's about personal expression. So, when it comes to the details, or to what you called perseverance, they get cynical and some of them just quit. They find it hard to invest in anything they don't intimately “connect” to. It's also about growing up in the periphery; being the village genius: you look around and see you're the best so you think that you're the best in the world.

“We're Not Really Different, We're Just Here”

As our time together was almost up, Shira challenged the group: “What it really all should be about is getting *our* students to meet each other and to talk.” Malka was quick to decline: “For me, that can never happen.” Yoni seemed shocked:

Really? Why? And what does that say about our society? It reminds me of when I worked in a very small music program in a religious village up north: the program was so small that the Ministry was going to shut them down. So, I suggested to

the principal that we unify two small music programs from two neighboring religious villages, and that way neither of them would be shut down. But it couldn't happen. I insisted to the principal, both villages are religious! But he said that the other side wasn't "religious enough." I didn't get it then, but now I'm hearing it again: one religious sector can't mix with another religious or secular sector.

Malka felt the need to explain herself:

As a mother, I insist that my son have no friends that own smartphones. It's a matter of values, and yes, we cherish the value of segregation. This is what protects us as a community. As an educator, I cannot encourage students to meet peers from other sectors. If it happens on their own time, preferably after they are graduated and hopefully married—then let them do as they please, but I cannot be accountable.

Yoni responded: "All this talk of segregation is strange to me. I am used to talk of meeting and interacting. I can't imagine anything other than that." Malka challenged Yoni: "But meeting and interacting that you know has to be on your terms, no? Your *secular* terms?" Yoni agreed: "Yes. A religious girl who chooses to study in my class has no choice but to fit in. And yes: anyone or a community with too much religious idealism would never last in our context. It's true." Yoni paused, and then continued, facing Malka:

I wish my son didn't have a smartphone. But he does. I have some envy for your orderly way of life. Every question has a clear answer. I live in a wilderness: I have to make my own way; nothing is certain. But I think I prefer it that way.

Shira was disappointed:

“This is sad to me that such a meeting could never happen. I want to believe in the power of *Am Yisrael*, as a nation, as *together*. How is this nation ever to come together if that is how it is! We sit here and listen to each other. And here we are thinking, well Malka isn't *just* an ultraorthodox woman: she's *different*! I bet Yoni thinks the same about me—I'm not what he imagined as a national-religious woman—I must be *different*. But that's just it: we're not really different, we're just here. Once we meet each other, stereotypes are both confirmed and broken, and it's not because each of us is so special or unique; it's just because we are human, and we are here, willing to talk and to meet.

Conclusions and Implications

Directions for Change: Final Thoughts About Malka, Shira, and Yoni

Malka, Shira, and Yoni found it easy and satisfying to engage in collegial conversation, and expressed a desire for more opportunities for collegial interaction. Professionally speaking, they shared the same concerns, and they admitted that the Israeli educational system offers few outlets for collegial debates and encounters for music teachers. Had the purpose of this study not explicitly confronted them with the challenge of intrareligious dialogue and focus on socioreligious aspects of their work, they may

have ignored their cultural differences in favor of discussing more basic issues of content and pedagogical structure.

Between them is an unspoken agreement on the importance of music education, which previously left questions of cultural specificity and socioreligious compatibility with musical content and pedagogies unaddressed. The interactions of this study had them explicitly engaged in thought about the cultural ramifications of their work in relation to the specific socioreligious norms of their given community context. Recognition of the cultural contexts where music education is taking place can inspire creativity as to possible content and pedagogies that can enhance underlying social goals.

Some directions for change may emanate, for example, in Malka's further contemplation of the functions of music in ultraorthodox women's postschool lives and the cultural meanings underlying Western-Classical music that may subliminally contradict the morals she is trying to instill. Similarly, if Shira makes more explicit her vision of cultivating a certain quality of national-religious culture as an expression of and contribution to the cultural resilience of the Jewish people, her curriculum may be impacted, and she may receive more support from community institutions and leaders. Yoni, for example, may find or develop new and exciting outlets for student expression and self-exploration if he recognizes these as an explicit goal of his program. Reconsidering his own youth and adulthood, Yoni can further consider his role in helping today's kibbutz youth negotiate tensions between the personal and the communal, and between continuing kibbutz tradition and pursuing the supermodernity of the big city.

Reconsidering Curriculum, Policy, and Practice

Establishing a discourse of diversity. This study traced how constructs of Israeli Jewishness emerge through the practices of three music educators from different socioreligious sectors. Israeli public education is structured through historical categories of socioreligious divisions, which creates a situation where there is little opportunity for interaction between social categories. In light of the conflictual sectarianism that characterizes contemporary Israeli society, approaches that can contribute toward the objective of social cohesion are of utmost importance. The challenge of cohesion is, however, complicated by the commitment to diversity, which is deemed no less important.

To this end, several government and nongovernment organizations have been active in facilitating intrareligious dialogue. The Gesher Foundation,²⁰ for example, was established more than 40 years ago in an effort to engage school students from different socioreligious communities in joint social activities. Gesher's current slogan, "be different—be together" advocates diversity based on mutual knowledge of each other and on coexistence. Although originally aimed at the Israeli education system, Gesher has expanded its reach to span military, cultural, and leadership programs, and currently sponsors a yearly National Day of Solidarity for the general public.

A more recent establishment is President Rivlin's Israeli Hope Initiative,²¹ which has been active and growing over the past two years. Israeli Hope includes enterprises in

²⁰ <http://www.gesher.co.il/>

²¹ <https://www.israeli-hope.gov.il/>

education, sports, culture, academia, media, leadership, and the job market. The main purpose of these programs is to build mutually beneficial partnerships between representatives and organizations from diverse sectors of Israeli society. This initiative is a top priority in the presidential milieu and receives much attention from the Israeli media.

Gesher and Israeli Hope are two examples of strategic organizations that are acting on what they have diagnosed as most crucial to the future of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Many other such efforts exist, the multiplicity of which can be exemplified in the current existence of 37 nongovernmental organizations' leadership programs aimed at the integration of ultraorthodox men and women in Israeli society. Efforts specifically targeting other sectors are slightly less in number, but still superfluous. Although the impact of these efforts on public discourse cannot be denied, much work lies ahead.

Although it is hard to argue with such initiatives when and where they take place, Israeli media and Israeli internal politics still depict an ongoing, perhaps unsolvable battle, between socioreligious sectors. As I write these words, I cannot remember a single day throughout the fall months of 2017 when intrareligious-oriented battles were not reported on the daily news, be it claims of religious coercion in schools, the fight for public transportation and commerce on Saturdays, or the rights for egalitarian prayer spaces at the Western Wall. It is easier to attend solidarity rallies or intrareligious dialogue seminars than it is to commit to social and political agreements where religious compromise is necessary.

A prime example of the remaining gap between dialogical efforts and legislation can be found in the story of the Gavison–Medan Covenant,²² which set out to challenge the historic status quo of secular–religious tensions in Israel. To this end, Professor Gavison and Rabbi Medan adopted a one-on-one approach, two representatives of respective opposite poles meeting alone, aiming to work through conflicts in designing Israel’s public spaces toward a long-term compromise that could be satisfactory for secular and religious populations. The Covenant never tried to boast a single definition of Israeli Jewishness, but did claim that national resilience demands legislation that can be acceptable to all sides. The failure of the Israeli government—and of Israeli society at large—to embrace this Covenant speaks to the complexity of turning discourse into action. Most specifically, it exemplifies the difficulties of a politics deeply grounded in religious considerations: in many ways it is impossible to compromise when God is part of the equation.

Reconsidering common-core policy. In Israeli education, no doubt, more attention given to overt and implicit cultural implications of policies and practices is crucial in establishing an ethic of socially coherent and responsible education. Acknowledging the different meanings attributed to similar content and methods when applied in diverse settings is an important starting point in establishing a discourse of diversity. Such a discourse cannot be detached from other realms of Israeli politics, and should echo the existential tensions outlined above between investment in cultural diversity and the cultivation of a cohesive social fabric.

²² <https://gavison-medan.co.il/>

In music education, exposing cultural implications can act as a starting point to reconsider the common-core aspect of Israel's national music curriculum. This can begin by questioning the meanings that emerge from the Western-Classical-oriented curriculum when applied in various socioreligious settings. To date, the Israel National Music Inspectorate has invested in the development of supplementary electives that expand the historical and cultural boundaries of core materials to include modules on jazz and popular music. These electives should be considered as they are enacted in different contexts.

Alternative repertoires and pedagogies can be considered as they emerge in specific practices. One such example is the *Shirim V'Shorashim* (Songs and Roots) project²³ that began in a few elementary schools, and now boasts three text books with CDs and endorsement by many local music supervisors around the country. Focusing on the musical heritages of the Jewish diaspora, the Songs and Roots program offers interdisciplinary multicultural exposure. Indicative of the complexities of Israeli society, it is no surprise that some secular schools have recently implicated this program as a tacit form of religious coercion because of its focus on Jewish liturgy.

Other instances and frameworks of alternatives toward a more diverse Israeli music education can be explored in individual initiatives of high school music directors. Of the 130 high school music programs in Israel, 16 have appealed to the Ministry of Education's Unique Programs Department,²⁴ allowing them to deviate from the national

²³ http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/Units/Mazkirut_Pedagogit/Music/Tochnyot/

²⁴ <http://edu.gov.il/mazhap/Development/unique-programs/plans-developed/Pages/programs%20developed.aspx>

curriculum, and to pursue their own specialized curriculums and alternative matriculation examinations. No other existing school subject has a record of so many applications for approval of unique programs. In fact, most of the department's work is in creating platforms for new subjects or matriculation tracks for subjects that previously were not included in official Ministry examinations. The multitude of appeals in music reveals the sense of restraint that the national music curriculum exacts on many high school music directors.

In consideration of these deviations, policymakers can debate if and how the notion of a common core in music is creating a professional or cultural common ground for students in all socioreligious sectors. Further research can explore the ways the existing common core facilitates future musical pursuits of students in varying social sectors, assessing the relevance of the core aspect of the curriculum in relation to diverse culturally specific settings. Critical awareness of the ways cultural implications impact implementation of the curriculum can raise questions about the justification for the common-core approach, or suggest alternative approaches to cultivating a national sense of unity.

Collegial dialogue and teacher–researcher collaborations. Other realms of future research can continue to explore the ways teachers working in different socioreligious sectors interpret the national curriculum, adapting it or denying it. Field-based evidence on the ways Israeli teachers negotiate policy dictates in their situated practices can open spaces for teacher creativity and initiative, and promote the advancement of more culturally responsive practices. Creating a collegial dialogue

between music teachers from different socioreligious communities throughout Israel can inspire further thought about possible alternatives to the Western-Classical Core Curriculum from a sociocultural point of view. Teachers can share ideas for alternative repertoires and pedagogies from their own musical worlds, and from the music of their communities, and experiment with diverse contents and methods in their classrooms.

Researchers can join teachers in exploring culturally grounded perspectives, providing insight into assumed norms and habits, and expanding respective understandings of cultural assumptions that underlie individual practices. The design of this study can act as a possible structure for such collaborations, which teachers and researchers alike can pursue.

Social justice. The lens of social justice can provide a means to further address policy, curriculum, and practice, acknowledging the potential contribution of Israeli music educators to social change. Policy and music-teacher education in Israel promote a Western-Classical approach that does not encourage teachers to address culturally specific musical needs that may be central to the communities in which they work. Israeli music educators learn to provide a standard of musical knowledge and transmission that does not consider sociocultural contexts. Without giving it too much thought, many music educators reenact the same Western-Classical content and pedagogies they encountered in their own schooling or teacher training, no matter the socioreligious sector they belong to or teach in. Ethically speaking, this automatized, uniform approach can implicate teachers in acts of injustice, such as the denial or hierarchization of other musical ways of knowing.

Raising teachers' awareness of the cultural implications of their work can help them identify potential moments of injustice. Such awareness can open spaces for contemplating cultural constructs of assumed knowledge, and empower teachers to challenge these constructs by recognizing culturally specific conceptualizations and practices that characterize the socioreligious setting of their work. Such action begins even in a simple acknowledgement of Gaztambide-Fernández's (2011) assertion that "the lives of all students are already filled with meaningful musical practices" (p. 32), and continues in the recognition of all such musics as legitimate constructs of knowledge.

In this sense, I support Talbot's (2013) recommendation to use our own personal histories as a resource in reconsidering musical norms of repertoire, pedagogy, and participation in music classrooms. In applying Talbot's suggestions to this current study, and engaging music educators in nexus-analysis work, my aims resonate with Fitzpatrick's (2012) description of taking "the first step towards nurturing social justice in our schools and communities" by "empowering students to recognize that their own cultural identities are valid, acknowledged, and respected in our classroom" (p. 54).

By developing a deeper understanding of what it means to be musical in the community in which their practice is situated, teachers can avoid the danger of undermining musical traditions that exist beyond the classroom. Bringing such musical moments into the classroom can be an important act of inclusion and affirmation that redeems school music from its imperialistic implications of enculturating all sectors into the Western-Classical hegemony. Furthermore, such actions nourish the richness of the profession in securing a future of music education that is culturally relevant and ever-

evolving, confirming Drummond's (2005) proposition that "The impact of cultural diversity in music education ... may be one in which the main benefit is to musicians and music itself" (p. 8).

Segregation as opportunity. Specifically in contemporary intrareligious and interreligious tensions pervading Israeli society, it is crucial to rethink the consequences of educational structures of socioreligious segregation. President Rivlin and the Israeli Hope Initiative are acting against the dangers of segregation as encouraging mutual suspicion, a lack of mutual knowledge, and denying actual contact between members of different sectors – factors that instigate a pathology of hate and fear. The extremity of these potential dangers evident in on-going battles between conflicting Jewish sectors is no less salient in Israeli politics and public debate than socio-political tensions between Jewish and Arab populations.

Nevertheless, while often thus addressed as a problem that needs to be solved, the reality of segregation can also act as an opportunity to create culturally specific safe spaces in which educators can cater to the musical needs of their given contexts. Gay (2010) expressed common desire for "safe places" in which to proceed with "talk about race" (p. 145). The present study has unfolded intrareligious tensions typical of Israeli society, exposing just how intricate and charged they are, and even comparable to U.S. contexts and discourses of race. Gay further indicated that "genuine efforts to resist ... cannot proceed until environments of safety, security, and comfort have been constituted" (2010, p. 145).

Current Israeli media often debates norms of segregation, sometimes advocating

integration in the name of equality. Equality, however, must be distinguished from equal opportunity. In August 2017, the ultraorthodox newspaper *Kikar HaShabbat*, for example, argued in favor of ultraorthodox self-segregation in academic institutions, postulating that separation in this context is the only means that can ever bring about equality.²⁵ Suspicion of such claims exist, however, on both sides of the story – ultraorthodox worries that segregated programs will perpetuate patterns of marginalization, alongside secular concerns that separate programs will lead to the compromise of academic standards.

Despite these pervading complexities, I acknowledge the possible benefits of engaging socioreligiously segregated educational contexts in personal and group exploration. Segregated classrooms can act as a “safe place,” and teachers can work to establish a sense of “safety, security, and comfort” (Gay, 2010, p. 145). Furthermore, in my experience, and as expressed by Malka in the final collegial dialogue of this study, cultural limitations exist that sometimes make action in a segregated setting the only such action possible for given participants. Ultraorthodox women, for example, will never conceive of singing as an act that can take place in a mixed setting. Besides the reality of such limitations, I deem work within segregated contexts as an important contribution to social coherence and social resilience in developing each sector’s own sense of musical heritage and legacy. Then work can continue in acts of inter-sectorial sharing as an investment in broader terms of social cohesion.

Culturally specific music education that balances internal community needs with

²⁵ <https://kikar.co.il/244135.html>

intercommunity sharing can serve as an example of social activism that works to affirm cultural and religious diversity as a source of social vitality. In this sense, Israeli music educators can join in efforts to contribute to the complex matrix of socioreligious tensions, explicitly addressing the challenge of affirming diversity, while exploring possibilities of cohesion that do not undermine such affirmations. Such a professional standard can turn the field of music education into a social laboratory committed to experimenting with balances of diversity, inclusion, sharing, and cohesion: the core challenges of Israeli society and of all other multicultural societies.

Encouraging social activism as a framework for experimentation entails a recognition of the limits of such work. Although no doubt arises about the possible contribution of such explorations to educational and social discourse, I am hesitant to make an overall claim that music educators can or should be agents of overall social change. In this sense, this current study speaks to the value of microactions and small internal moments of recognition as the main constituents of creating a more culturally informed music education.

On intrareligious and interreligious levels, Israelis are doing much work in using music as a field of engagement. Brinner's (2009) ethnographic account of interreligious musical efforts between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians exemplifies the complexities of creating a discourse of hope in documenting and analyzing specific actions spanning from coexistence to cooperation. Brinner's work exposes the intricacies of micro attempts at *interreligious* interaction in a way that I hope my own work speaks of *intrareligious* efforts. Indeed, my study unveils Jewish intrareligious tensions as perhaps no less

complex, and therefore similarly demanding a multitude of approaches developed through experimentation in microactions, rather than a call for one frame of action or a grandiose but meaningless overall call for change.

Intrareligious Dialogue

One such beautiful moment of microengagement took place in the focus-group session of this study, which was designed to facilitate intrareligious dialogue characterized by professional affinity, mutual curiosity, and respect. This interaction was not to be assumed in the context of daily intrareligious and interreligious social battles that pervade Israeli society, and represented a practical accomplishment that can be credited to this study: a study that, from its inception, set out to impact the field in which it took place rather than just describe it. Bringing together representatives of different socioreligious communities on the basis of professional collegial dialogue focused the discussion on professional experiences that resonated and created instant affinity. The professional context acted as an excuse for people to interact who would otherwise not meet each other. This aspect of the study can act as a model for future intrareligious gatherings, using professional affinity as an opening for furthering dialogue and interaction.

In the Jewish Israeli context, it is important to acknowledge that my use of the term "intrareligious" implies the vast spectrum of social categories used to describe Jewish Israelis of various cultural affiliations. Within this context, secular and even atheist categories function as religious denominations in that they exist upon the nuanced secular-religious scale of Israeli Judaism. Dialogue between religious and non-religious

Jews, in this sense, *is* a form of intrareligious dialogue, even if religion per se is not the main focus neither of self-definition nor of the dialogue. What I aim to convey here are the intricacies and importance of intercultural interaction between Israeli Jews of different social categories.

The dialogue that took place in this study between the three participants included a discussion of some of the limitations of such efforts: although these three teachers had no problem meeting each other, their students, for example, could never interact or meet on a formal basis. The price of institutionalized socioreligious segregation emerged as a reality that good will or personal initiative alone cannot overcome. Nevertheless, the key to understanding possible roles and actions of (music) educators in the face of this reality lies in the acknowledgment of structural and cultural limitations. Cultural knowledge and awareness of such limitations can contribute to the design of further zones of possibility, and the cultivation of new opportunities for such encounters to take place, in the realm of music education and beyond.

Coming together to understand cultural constraints, and to design zones of possible engagement that consider these constraints, are important aspects of social responsibility of educating in a conflictual multicultural context. The findings from this study reveal patterns of constructing and deconstructing stereotypes and formal social structures that are at work in acts of culturally diverse encounters. As participants explained themselves to others, they formulated personalized interpretations of the social categories in which they maneuver. In many ways, they constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed their own social identities through conversation.

Interaction with social “others” stimulated self-reflection in ways that may promote newfound senses of social coherence in relation to the respective sectors in which each participant lives, and in their sector’s relationship with broader Israeli society. Such sociocultural knowledge of oneself and others is a crucial asset in conflictual multicultural societies. Future studies can build on the methodologies of this research in creating new opportunities for intracultural and intercultural conversation, and in using the potential of music as a basis for conversation and interaction.

Building micromoments of engagement and dialogue may be one of the strongest ways to impact society’s future. Between large and even grandiose motions of bridge building, and an accumulation of tiny specific moments of interaction, one can only hope that something of the intensity of conflict will budge. Whether and how much faith one invests in movements toward social change, music educators should consider the social responsibilities their work entails. The findings from this study reinforce two kinds of efforts in the cultivation of a professional ethic of music education: the awareness of cultural implications of situated and socioreligiously segregated sites of practice, and the commitment to intrareligious dialogue and intercultural sharing as a pathway to cultural knowledge of oneself and others, and understanding relationships among oneself, community, and society at large.

Implications for Further Research

This study set out to explore sociological underpinnings of three unique landscapes of music teaching and learning. Findings unveiled three living characters that exemplify the intricacy of Jewish Israeli identities in action. The combination of personal

portraits, classroom scenes, and interpretations, alongside intrareligious dialogue, revealed ways cultural implications separate and bind musical professionals from different socioreligious sectors. It is my hope that the findings from this study inspire further explorations into cultural studies of diverse sites of music education.

Like Barrett (2011), I take interest in this line of research in hopes that “A cultural psychology of music education might assist us in identifying the characteristic features of an enabling culture of music learning” (p. 5). Such discoveries seem to me crucial in imagining and reimagining possible futures of our profession. In Israel, and in other multicultural contexts, I suggest the constituent of social responsibility as crucial in establishing the social role and the relevance of music education as part of this future vision. Israeli music educators especially can consider this notion of social responsibility in reflecting on local past traditions from the 1950s and 1960s. Reminding ourselves of the instrumental role musicians and music educators played in the cultivation of the Israeli nation can help us commit to a revised conceptualization of possible social impacts of our work.

Local and international researchers in music education and ethnomusicology can use the emergent characters of this study as a gateway into further engagements with socioreligiously situated practices. In this sense, this study contributes an insider’s perspective, unfolding the complexities and intricacies of Jewish Israeli constructs of identity in a way that has not previously been accessible to international readers. This work can act as a resource to trace specific embodiments of Jewish Israeli intrareligious tensions and some of their musical and educational contexts.

Expanding and replicating this study to include other music educators from the same three subcategories of Israeli Judaism and other socioreligious communities could be a first step in pursuing further understanding of the rich diversity at hand. Further study of larger contexts of Israeli society can extend toward categories and subcategories of other religious minorities around the country. Researchers may take interest in moving beyond formal music education by including the study of other informal musical practices across a variety of socioreligious settings. Such efforts could work toward the compilation of a broad intrareligious and interreligious mosaic representation of the diversity of cultural manifestations of music and music education in Israel.

Sociologists will find the structure and content of this line of study useful in establishing a variety of possible angles for further study of Jewish Israeli intrareligious tensions in negotiating between the personal and the structural aspects of related social phenomenon. The interpretation of music educators as social agents, and the exposure of cultural underpinnings of practices of music education, affirm the potential insight to be gained from exploring diverse contexts of music teaching and learning.

Musical aspects reveal much about society, and sociological insights provoke thought about musical considerations. This duality is fertile ground for further research that can address a wide array of concerns raised by multicultural social constructs, such as patterns of cultural sustainability and change, cultural contact versus segregation, and personal and community resilience.

Conclusions: Making Sense of Confusing Realities

Although it is difficult to generalize conclusions relevant to Israeli society as applying to other international contexts, in an age of globalism and massive migration, more and more nation states are evolving into complex multicultural demographics. Countries are facing challenges of multiculturalism evident in almost endless sociological categories and subcategories of divide. Critical cultural analysis of educational practices in such contexts should be part of an overall ethical commitment of all such countries in inspiring a commitment to cultural self-knowledge and knowledge of “others.”

Music educators who choose to commit themselves to such explorations will benefit from revealing tacit tensions that constitute their practices and enhance the legitimacy and importance of context-based teacher initiative, personal agency, and pedagogical creativity. Documentation of such practices, and intercultural sharing, can further inform international discourse of music-education policy. Insight into manifestations of cultural implications and their function in policy realization can promote understanding of the role of music and music educators in processes of cultural evolution and sustainability. Such insight can constitute a new resource of creativity and culturally informed adaptability relevant to national and international contexts of multicultural music education.

The world that we live in is in a constant flux of change. Music and education are two vital human resources, which have been utilized for centuries for the purpose of making sense of personal and social realities. Societies facing challenges of multiculturalism and diversity are particularly prone to constituting confusing social

situations. My study exemplifies some of the ways music education can be conceived as a potent site for exploration of such complexities. In my work, I strived to embrace moments of contradiction and confusion, rendering them meaningful assets in the promotion of culturally informed practices of music education, and in contemplating further cultural and social implications of our work.

The findings from this study revealed possible benefits of such processes in facilitating reconsiderations of underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values in who we are, how we define ourselves, what music is, and how it can be taught. Most importantly I have presented living examples of how these aspects relate to one another. Further exploration of such interrelationships in diverse sites of music education can be instrumental in expanding the future possibilities and social responsibilities of our profession.

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