

Workshop

**Beginnings and Legacies of Recording Technologies
in the Eastern Mediterranean**

4-5 April 2019

Forum Transregionale Studien (Wallotstr. 14, 14193 Berlin)

Thursday, April 4, 2019

10:00 - 10:30 *Introduction*

Music, Technology and Popular Culture: Towards an Interconnected Framework

Diana Abbani (EUME Fellow 2018/19) and Yektan Türkyilmaz (EUME Fellow 2017-20)

10:30 - 11:00 *Coffee break*

11:00 - 12:30 *Panel 1*

“Record Comes to the Orient”: The Beginnings

Chair: Sinem Adar (Einstein Research Fellow, Humboldt University of Berlin)

Risto Pekka Pennanen (University of Tampere): From Private Talking Machine Concerts to the Gramophone Plague: Phonographs and Gramophones in Habsburg Sarajevo, 1900–1918

The advent of the talking machine in Sarajevo around 1900 affected the local soundscapes, spaces of listening and social life in various manners. In the early stages, itinerants from other parts of Austria-Hungary organised concerts of phonograph and gramophone music for a fee. Subsequently, cafés and restaurants provided facilities to enjoy recorded music which sometimes resulted in conflicts among the clientele. After the gramophone had established itself, complaints about its disturbing effects became relatively common.

Yektan Türkyilmaz (EUME Fellow 2017-20): Armenians on Records: Music Production from Homeland to Diasporas

This presentation will explore the multi-directional journeys of Armenians in the recording history from the Ottoman Empire to the diasporas, particularly to the United States, in the first half of the 20th century, as musicians, producers and merchants. Drawing on the life stories and examples of commercial records in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere in the diasporas, it will illustrate the changing styles, content and language use in music production vis-a-vis place, trauma and audience/cultural dialogue throughout one of the most turbulent periods of Armenian history. The talk will specifically underscore the cultural, political and identitarian implications of the emergence of the recording technology on Armenian communities.

12:30 - 13:30 *Lunch break*

13:30 - 15:00 *Panel 2*

Creating Sound, Claiming Heritage

Chair: Yektan Türkyilmaz (EUME Fellow 2017-20)

Diana Abbani (EUME Fellow 2018/19): The Phonograph Era (1900-1940s): Preserving Beirut's Early Musical Heritage on Commercial Records

The early twentieth-century musical practice in Lebanon suffered a gradual silence since its independence in 1943. With the construction of a new collective identity and nationality while rejecting its Ottoman and then its colonial past, the Lebanese official music historiography created a local music narrative focusing on the "Lebanese aspects" of the music from the 1950s and 1960s in Lebanon. This narrative slowly erased the trace of local singers and music before the 1940s, limiting the entire local repertoire to the mountain folklore. The recent disclose of early recorded disks challenged this discourse and revealed a dynamic urban musical life in Beirut. Through the analyses of the sound archive from early twentieth century, this contribution aims to explore and examine the silences over early musical practices in the city.

Bashar Shammout (sound engineer, archivist): "Palestine's Auditory Heritage of Recorded Sound until 1948"

In the shadow of the rapidly expanding auditive and visual media in the early 20th century, Palestine, as a cross-point for art and music, played a leading cultural role in the entire Arab Middle East. It had its own local music and film industry and hosted the only two radio stations in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean. All this vivid cultural life ended overnight in 1948 when half of the Palestinians were forced to leave their homes as a result to the creation of the state of Israel. Shammout will put some light on the history of audio-visual art and music production business in Palestine until 1948 and explain the current attempts to relocate and collect this fragmented, yet rich, heritage and preserve it digitally for future generations.

15:00 - 15:30 *Coffee break*

15:30 - 17:00 *Panel 3*

Circulating Soundscapes: Listening Across Time and Space

Chair: Walid El Houry (researcher, journalist, filmmaker, Berlin / EUME Fellow 2013/14)

Clara Wenz (SOAS): Suspicion, Borders and Landscapes Lost to Conflict: My Journey with an Arab-Jewish Baidaphon Record

This paper traces Wenz' ethnographic journey with a record of an Arab-Jewish liturgical hymn that was issued by the Beirut-based record company Baidaphon in the early 1920s. Since discovering it in a music archive in Lebanon, Wenz travelled to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Istanbul and Berlin and played this record to a variety of different people, including Syrian musicians, Lebanese record specialists, as well as members of the Mizrakhi Jewish community in Israel. Within this context, the record not only became a tool to actualise memories of the historical landscape of cross-territorial exchange that it originally emerged from; it also provoked reactions that reflect the deep ideological and national divisions by which this landscape is marked by today. Whether the record's association with the "enemy" state of Israel, a

mysterious muting incident on Wenz' mobile phone, or the memory of a secret encounter between two musicians, the reactions the record elicited, Wenz argues, invite us to reconsider the semiotic potential that recorded, archived sound may have for contemporary public spheres in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mohammad Jabali (artist, author, illustrator, DJ, cultural activist): DJ Sound Dynamics: What is Played Where on What Sound Channel? And How Does this Reshape a Crowd?

Beyond the fetishism of old records, music recordings nowadays are transmitted to various publics in multiple channels. Youtube, Soundcloud and other internet amateur uploads (mostly done in infringement of copyrights) are probably the most dominant factor in the rediscovery of old Arabic music recordings in the Arab world today, hand in hand with being the main source for discovering new music acts. While on the same time the search for new grooves and cheap copyrights drives small scaled Western based labels to find old, forgotten, marginalized and expired music copyrights in the Orient to reprint in a never ceasing to bloom Western record market. This creates a very interesting circle of who owns the knowledge about music, who distributes it where, and who ends up owning copyrights and having the ability to print it in high quality sound. While during this process Oriental music gets surprising influx of new listeners. The talk will focus on the dynamics between the music track, the channel and space of listening, and the shaping and reshaping of the target audience in the contemporary Oriental music scene.

18:00 *Dinner at Restaurant Capone Berlin (Kurfürstendamm 202, 10719 Berlin)*

Friday April 5, 2019

10:00 - 10:30 *Morning coffee*

10:30 - 12:00 *Panel 4*

Musical Transformations Beyond the Mediterranean

Chair: Katja Jana (University of Göttingen)

Cecilia Maas (Freie Universität Berlin): Between the Cult of the Living Room and the Songs of the Carnival: Sound Recording in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, 1890-1930

This contribution analyzes the reception and appropriation of recording technologies in Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Maas looks at the use of the phonograph and gramophone and analyzes how they contributed to define private and public spaces in Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Santiago. She observes how the repertoire of the emerging recording industry created a link between entertainment at home and the music of popular celebrations and national holidays.

Elmir Mirzoev (composer, musicologist / EUME Fellow 2019-21): Gramophone Records of the Early 20th Century in Azerbaijan and Its Impact on the Art of Music

Sound recording came to Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century, mainly to the metropolis of Baku, transformed under the influence of the industrial revolution.

Soon, gramophone recording influenced various spheres of life – from culture to gender. Azerbaijani musicians, who recorded themselves on gramophone plates, were forced to reckon with the requirements of the new invention and, accordingly, with the changed format of the mugham performance – traditional Oriental music. Some famous musicians, such as the tar player Məşədi Zeynal, considered this innovation as a threat to their uniqueness.

[presentation in Russian, English translation by Botakoz Kassymbekova (Forum Transregionale Studien / Technische Universität Berlin)]

12:00 - 12:30 *Coffee break*

12:30 - 13:30 *Roundtable Discussion*

Chair: Georges Khalil (EUME / Forum Transregionale Studien)

13:30 – 14:30 *Lunch*

Participants

Diana Abbani received her PhD in Arabic Studies from Sorbonne University with a dissertation entitled “Music and Society in Beirut during the Nahḍa Period”. She holds an MA in History from Sorbonne University and an MA in Political Science from Saint Denis University, Paris. Her work focuses mainly on the social and cultural in life in the Levant, particularly on Beirut, at the turn of the 20th century. In her dissertation, she draws a social and cultural history of Beirut’s musical scene in the first quarter of the twentieth century. She offers a historical rethinking of the cultural and musical history of Beirut by looking at the relation between music, technology and society through the analysis of a set of primary sources. During the academic year 2018/19, Diana is a EUME Fellow and associated with the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies at Freie Universität Berlin.

Sinem Adar has received her PhD degree in Sociology from Brown University and MSc degree in Development Studies from the London School of Economics. Adar’s research examines struggles over the parameters of inclusion into and exclusion from the political community, and how these struggles shape and are shaped by identification processes.

Walid El Hour is a researcher, journalist, and filmmaker based between Berlin and Beirut. He is lead editor of *openDemocracy’s* North Africa West Asia (NAWA), managing editor of *Jeem.me*, and a lecturer at Bard College Berlin. He completed his PhD in Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam in 2012 exploring the transformation of Hezbollah’s media strategies and the articulation of the notion of “resistance” as a political identity in Lebanon. He studied filmmaking at Saint Joseph University in Beirut, and holds an MA in Journalism from the Lebanese University and the Paris II University, as well as an MA in Film Studies from the University of Amsterdam. He has taught media studies and political communication at the American University of Beirut (2013) and the University of Balamand in Lebanon (2009) before moving to Berlin in 2013 as a postdoctoral EUME fellow at Forum Transregionale Studien and later at the Institute for Cultural Inquiry. His work deals with protest movements, the politics of failure, and the new geographies of war and protest in the Middle East.

Born in Taybeh in 1979, **Muhammad Jabali** is a Palestinian artist, author, illustrator, DJ and cultural activist who earns his living through search engine optimization of websites. His works move between art and activism. He taught at the Department of Photography and Fine Arts at the Bezalel Academy for Art and Design in Jerusalem. In addition to other exhibitions and art events in recent years, he exhibited his works at the opening of the gallery season 2012 in Tel Aviv, participated in the musical program of Qalandia 2014 in Haifa and exhibited at Qalandia 2016 in the Beir Zeit University Museum. He previously worked at the Saraya Arabic Theater and the AnnaLoulou Bar in Jaffa, as well as managing the The Jaffa Project. His most recent scholarly essay appeared in *The Mount, The Dome* and *The Gaze* (Tel Aviv 2017). Muhammad Jabali currently lives in Berlin.

Katja Jana received her PhD in 2016 from the Department of History of Georg-August-University Göttingen. In her dissertation, “Loyal and Elegant Subjects of the Sublime State: Headgear and the Multiple Dimensions of Modernizing/-ed Ottoman Identity”, she analyzes the politics of dress in the late Ottoman Empire in its global context. She is an editorial board member of the academic journal *WerkstattGeschichte* and is currently preparing an issue on ‘*Lied und Leid*’: *Musical Histories of Suffering, Defiance and Healing*.

Botakoz Kassymbekova received her PhD from the Humboldt University in Berlin. Her first book *Despite Cultures: Early Soviet Rule in Tajikistan* was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in

2016. She is a Project Development and Initiatives coordinator at the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin and teaches at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the Technical University Berlin.

Georges Khalil is the Academic Coordinator of the Forum Transregionale Studien. He is also responsible for the research program EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST—THE MIDDLE EAST IN EUROPE (EUME). He was the Coordinator of the Working Group “Modernity and Islam” (AKMI) at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin from 1998-2006. Georges Khalil studied History, Political Science and Islamic Studies in Hamburg and Cairo, and European Studies at the Europa-Kolleg Hamburg. He was a fellow of the College for International Affairs, Robert Bosch Foundation. He is co-editor of *Di/Visions: Kultur und Politik des Nahen Ostens* (2009), *Islamic Art and the Museum. Approaches to Art and Archeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* (2012) and *Commitment and Beyond: Reflections on/of the Political in Arabic Literature since the 1940s* (2015).

Cecilia Maas is a PhD candidate at the Freie Universität Berlin and a fellow at the Graduate School Global Intellectual History. She holds a degree in History from the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

Elmir Mirzoev is an Azerbaijani composer of orchestral, chamber and vocal pieces performed in Europe, CIS countries, Turkey, the USA, Mexico, the Far East and Japan. He is active in the promotion of new music and organizer of contemporary music festivals in Azerbaijan. He studied at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory (now the Baku Music Academy) where he has been teaching since 1998 in the composition department. From 1995 to 2005, he was the artistic director of the Initiative Center of Contemporary Music – Ensemble SoNoR. Since 2013, he is head of the cultural department of Meydan TV in Berlin. He is working on his dissertation on “Totalitarianism and Avant-garde in the Focus of European Art of the 20th Century”. From 2019 to 2021, he is a EUME Fellow affiliated with the Department of Slavic and Hungarian Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

Risto Pekka Pennanen (PhD on Ethnomusicology in 1999, University of Tampere) has published extensively on music in the Balkans, especially the Ottoman Empire, Greece, Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and on the interrelationship of music, politics and power, soundscape, discography, and the canons of music history and folk music research in the peninsula. His current research projects are named *Music, Musicians, Soundscape and Colonial Policies in Habsburg Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1878–1918* and *Control and Tax: The Licensing and Taxing Systems of Music and Musicians in late Habsburg Prague, 1894–1918*.

Bashar Shammout is a Palestinian sound engineer who lives in Germany and works in the field of audio-visual archiving and digital preservation. He is also specialized in the field of auditive and visual history and heritage of Palestine. He contributed to the establishment of the Media Institute at Birzeit University and has given several seminars and courses in the field of audio and sound in the Middle East.

Yektan Türkyilmaz received his PhD from Duke University Department of Cultural Anthropology. He taught courses at University of Cyprus, Sabancı, Bilgi, Duke California State Universities addressing the debates around the notions of collective violence, memory making and reconciliation, and politics of music. He is working on his book manuscript based on his dissertation, *Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915*, that addresses the conflict in Eastern Anatolia in the early 20th century and the memory politics around it. He has been a 2014/15 EUME Fellow and returned as a EUME Fellow for the academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19 and will be associated with the Freie Universität Berlin, Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut, Arbeitsbereich Neuere Geschichte (Prof. Dr. Oliver Janz).

Clara Wenz is a fourth year PhD student and senior teaching fellow at the Music Department of the School of Arts at SOAS, University of London. She holds a BA in Philosophy (Munich) and a MA in Middle Eastern Studies (SOAS). Her thesis investigates the musical and sonic “afterlife” of the Syrian city of Aleppo and draws on fieldwork undertaken among Aleppian diasporic and refugee communities in Berlin, Beirut, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Istanbul. In her new research project, she aims to chronicle the present and past lives of an Arab-Jewish musical record from the 1920s.