Mizrahi Music, Piyyut and Israeli Identity
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Office Hours:
- Sde Boker on Thursdays, as well one other day of the week, the day and hours TBD
- The rest of the week in Jerusalem, by appointment, and with pleasure

Course Overview
Culture is a dynamic arena in which various artistic genres often reflect and articulate contrasting notions of communal and national identity. In this course we will examine what the rise of Israeli "Mizrahi" music during the 1970's – 90's, as well as the popular turn to piyyut at the beginning of the twentieth century, can teach us about Israeli identity, in general, and the Arab dimension of Jewish-Israeli identity, in particular.

Course requirements
- Active class participation
- End of semester writing assignment

Syllabus
Session 1, October 24th: General Introduction
As preparation for the opening session, and in order to begin thinking about the “Arab-in-the-Jew,” students will be asked to read the following texts:
- Almog Behar, “Umm Kulthum in the Men's Section.” Haaretz, 2009
- Albert Memmi, “Who is an Arab Jew?”
- Ronny Sommeck, “In Response to the Question: When Did Your Peace Begin?” (Poem)

Session 2: Establishing the Foundation - From Political Philosophy to Ethnomusicology
- J.J. Rousseau, “Essay on the Origin of Languages: In Which Melody and Musical Imitation are Treated”

Session 3: Setting the Stage - The New Jew
- Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, ed.’s, The Jew in the Modern World, pp. 453-456
- Anita Shapira, Israel: A History, pp. 133 -154

Session 4: Setting the Stage - The Great Immigration
- Shapira, Israel: A History, pp. 222- 247
- Colin Shindler, A History of Modern Israel, pp. 91-97
Session 5: The Songs of the Land of Israel and Israeli Rock

Session 6: The Rise of Mizrahi Music

Session 7: The King - Zohar Argov

Session 8: Loving Umm Kulthum - Zehava Ben

Session 9: Neither Here nor There - The Brothers Al-Kuwaiti

Session 10: Piyyut

Session 11: Mizrahi Music and Andalusian Piyyut Elaborated into High Art
- Edward Seroussi, Liner Notes to The New Jerusalem Orchestra's *Ahavat Olamim (Eternal Love)*
- Aryeh Tepper and Omer Avital, “Jazz, Piyyut and Jewish Identity.” *Jewish Ideas Daily*, Feb., 2012
Session 12, January 9th: The New Jew - the Vitality of the Arab-Jewish Dimension of Israeli Identity

- Concluding discussion

Please note that in addition to reading the assigned texts, students will be asked to listen to audio files and/or to view on-line links that will provided by the instructor.

Recommended Additional Reading

  - A pioneering work of literary criticism and history that was the first book in English to devote serious attention to the 'Arab-in-the-Jew'

  - A helpful, if partial, history of “the dynamics of change in Jewish Oriental Music in Israel.”

  - On the emergence of cultural plurality in Israel

  - A collection of scholarly essays on the Farhud, the 1941 pogrom in Baghdad

  - On the use of the term 'Mediterraneanism' (Hebr. Yam Tikhoniut) as a model for identity formation in Israel since the early 1980's.

  - A detailed and helpful examination of the social contexts and cultural meanings of music-making in the Arab world.

  - A series of autobiographical vignettes describing the coming-of-age of a young Jew in Baghdad, now a distinguished professor of Arabic literature at Tel Aviv University