Classical Music and the Hebrew Song Repertoire

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The repertoire of Hebrew folk and popular songs has various links to the tradition of classical music, some of which we will examine here. These links include: occasional textual references, musical quotations, stylistic imitations, biographical relationships of Israeli art music composers to the folk or popular repertoire and vice versa, classical performances of Israeli songs, stylistic features shared with classical music (much more prominent in Israeli songs than in Anglo-American pop-rock music), and occasionally even quasi-classical artistic devices (not necessarily in songs whose style resembles classical music).

References to and Use of Classical Music in Hebrew Songs

Textual references to classical music appear in many Hebrew songs, especially those that are humoristic in style. Classical music generally serves as a stereotypic symbol of high art, whether it is being praised for being exemplary, or blamed for being arrogant.[1] Specific composers mentioned in song texts are usually interchangeable; specific works are hardly ever mentioned, and, when they are, the reference does not

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[1] For example, Beethoven's name is mentioned as a symbol of genius in *Ata Pele* [You are a Miracle] (Chava Alberstein, 1989); a hostile approach appears in *Be-Gova ha-'Einayim* [At Eye Level] (Uzi Chitman, 1995). I refer to the names of the composer or lyrics writer (according to context) and year of composition or release. I found many of these details in MOOMA's listings at http://www.mooma.com, or at ACUM [the Israeli ASCAP] site at http://www.acum.org. Details I was unable to figure out are missing in the article.

necessarily indicate any actual acquaintance with the classical repertoire.[2] Short musical excerpts from the classical repertoire reflect a similar stereotypic approach.[3]

Direct examples of classical music in Hebrew songs rarely preserve the artistic aspects for which the original was ranked as high art. Even when the general atmosphere of the songs is serious, they merely repeat simple diatonic folk-like melodies of themes with regular phrasing with no development, and lack the texture of the original. Classical melodies were frequently used in the early Hebrew song repertoire (until the 1940s), especially since the number of original Israeli melodies was small.[4] The original lyrics were rarely translated, but were normally replaced by simple texts, as in the children songs written by Levin Kipnis.[5] When songs that are

[2] The references to Bach, which are both relatively common and more specific, are the exceptions to the rule. Some songs attempt to imitate Bach's style (e.g. *Ani Ohevet Bach* [I Like Bach] Shmuel Rosen and Yaakov Hollander, ca. 1970). An example of a reference to a specific work that shows no knowledge of the work is "Beethoven's Ninth" played at the piano in *Hi Hityashva leyad Psanter* [She Sat at the Piano] Danny Sanderson, 1980); perhaps Sanderson did not know that the "Ninth" is a symphony.

[3] The most conspicuous example of quotations from excerpts of classical melodies appears in *Hedva ha-Qtana* [Little Ḥedva] (Haim Heffer and Meir Noy, 1958). This song includes quotations from the familiar beginning of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Mozart's Symphony No. 40. The Kibbutz members start to sing these melodies, but move immediately on to the shepherd's songs *Gozu Gez* [Shear a Shearing] (Emanuel Amiran) and *Be'er Basade* [A Well in the Field] (Emanuel Zamir). Thus, this song is deliberately making fun of the shallowness of the influence of high art over popular and folk art.

[4] Idelssohn already used this practice in 1912. See Jehoash Hirshberg, *Music in the Jewish Community of Palestine 1880-1948: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 13. According to Shahar, 14.4 percent of the Hebrew songs prior to 1950 were adapted to familiar foreign melodies. I have no way of knowing how many of these melodies belong to the classical tradition, but Shahar notes that "dozens of texts from the solo and chorus repertoire of European art music were translated into Hebrew, and attempts were made to introduce them into the community singing"—in most of the cases, at least, according to the original music. See Natan Shahar, "Ha-Shir ha-Eretz-Israeli 1920-1950: Me'afyenim Musiqaliyim ve-Sotzio-Musiqaliyim" [The Israeli Song 1920-1950: Musicological and Socio-Musical Aspects], Ph.D. Dissertation (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989), 32 and 180.

[5] A rare case of a true translation is *Shir Aviv* [Spring Song] (by Lea Goldberg), according to Heine's poem *Grüß* (set to music by Mendelssohn). Esther Ofarim even recorded this song with the original piano accompaniment. The most famous of Levin Kipnis's songs set to classical melodies are the Hanukah song *Hava Narima* [Let us Raise], set to the victory chorus from Handel's oratorio *Judas*

more complex were adopted, the Hebrew version often simplified their unique features. For example, Gretchaninov's song, *Mekhorati* [My Homeland], Op. 1, No. 4, has a pentatonic melody and an asymmetric meter (7/4), but the Hebrew version fills in the scale and regulates the meter.[6]

The use of classical music became less common later on, except for commercial jingles that favored classical melodies because they were in the public domain. Two complete CDs of Hebrew songs were devoted to classical melodies in the 1990s: *Olam Aħer* [Another World] (Sasi Keshet with combined instrumental-electronic accompaniment, 1990) and *Qlasi* [Classic] (Nurit Galron with Ra'anana Orchestra, 1995). The former album includes songs based on instrumental melodies to which lyrics had been written, as well as songs for which Hebrew lyrics had been written many years earlier (e.g. by Yehuda Sharet).. The theme song, *Olam Aħer*, is itself exceptional, since it is based on an entire movement—the slow movement of Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata, Op. 13 with lyrics by Ehud Manor. The song has a classical form (admittedly a simple one, a rondo a-b-a-c-a-coda), and includes modulations. A comparison of the new arrangement to the original clearly reveals how the artistic features were minimized. The piano duplicates the voice throughout, which impairs textural variety, but enables the instrumental movement to be sung even when it includes ornamentation and non-lyrical transitions. The arrangement also omits several elements of Beethoven's movement: register changes (which are

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Maccabeus; *Ha-Tziv'onim* [The Tulips] to Schubert's song *Die Forelle*, and *Ħidat ha-Praħim* [The Flowers' Riddle] set to Mozart's song *Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling* [Longing for the Spring] for which an additional Hebrew text was written, describing another season: *Yore Yaqar* [Dear First Rain] by Yosef Aħai.

[6] In *Mekhorati* the Hebrew text is a true translation (Y[itzhak] Livni translated the original Russian text by Alexey Tolstoy). The song also appeared in print in German and French, and was even recorded in German by Lotte Lehman in 1936. In every language, one sings of a different homeland, but, since one refers to the homeland in the first person, the text may remain unchanged.

indeed problematic for a vocal performance), the rhythmic intensification by triplets in the last appearance of the theme, and melodic details (e.g. m. 38 becomes identical with m. 40). The final phrase replaces the first retransition (mm. 23-28), so that it does not eventually function as a coda. The parallelism becomes complete and simple. A short introduction is added: this procedure might be desirable for a vocal version, but the introduction in question is dull and merely serves to stabilize the key without any motivic relation to the movement itself.[7]

As well as explicit quotations, some songs quote lengthy extracts from classical tunes, almost to the extent of plagiarism. This is especially common in the songs of Nurit Hirsh. The most obvious example is the repetition of the theme of the third movement of Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata Op. 13 (the second movement of which we have already discussed above) in the song *Ha-Drekh el ha-Kfar* [The Road to the Village] (1986). The song, however, lacks subtle harmonic shadings, sophisticated textural combinations, melodic extensions, and points of climax passages, which enriched Beethoven's melody.[8]

Imitation of Classical Styles

Several original Hebrew songs intentionally imitate classical styles. The style of the classical period itself is quite rare; I am aware of only one song that is clearly based

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[7] A recent CD (2003) of a live recording of the counter-tenor singer David D'Or, graduate of the Jerusalem Academy for Music and Dance, includes Baroque arias in the original Italian along with Hebrew songs.

[8] Additional songs by Hirsh with concealed quotations of classical music include: *Peraḥ ha-lilakh* [The Lilac Flower] (1964), which, as the composer herself related several times in media interviews, is reminiscent of the main theme of Chopin's first concerto; and *Ba-Pardes leyad ha-Shoqet* [In the Garden, at the Drinking Trough], the chorus of which includes a long passage that is identical with an excerpt from the folk song on which Tchaikovsky's *Marche Slave* is based.

on this style, as the embodiment of pretended innocence: *Ani Mukhan* [I am ready] (to receive any punishment, just not to apologise) (Yo'el Lerner, 1980). Bach's style was more popular, at least in the late 1960s and early 1970s, e.g. the harpsichord accompaniment to *Dvash* [Honey] in the performance of Hedva and David (Yinon Ne'eman, 1966); *Shvua' ha-Aḥava* [The Week of Fraternity] (Alona Tur'el, early 1970s); *Ani Ohevet Bach* [I like Bach] (Yaakov Hollander, early 1970s); *Fuga Qtana* [A Little Fugue] (Nahum Heiman, 1969).[9] The popular foreign hit *Professor Bach* (Los Machucambos, 1963) may perhaps be regarded as an influence on these songs. A few external features suffice in order to invoke a Baroque flavor, but some of these features are inherently bound up in artistic sophistication. The aforementioned songs all include concealed polyphony based on separate melodic levels, and *Shvua' ha-Aḥava* even includes explicit polyphony and many appoggiaturas. However, polyphonic settings do not necessarily imply Baroque style. At least two songs were recorded in the form of a principal melody and a contrasting melody—and then both melodies simultaneously: the Brazilian song *Samba bi-Shnayim* [Samba in Two] [in Hebrew ca. 1980] and Danny Sanderson's song *Ze ha-Kol Bishvilekh* [It is all for You] (1990). Concealed polyphony also appears without a direct Baroque context, as in *Galgal 'Anaq* [Ferris Wheel] (Kobi Oshrat, 1979) and *Tzippor Metorefet* [Crazy Bird] (Nahum Heiman, 1986).

Imitations of the romantic style are more difficult to recognize, precisely because many Hebrew songs, especially in the style of *Shirei Eretz-Israel* [Songs of the Land of Israel, henceforth SLI] exhibit a style relatively close to that of the nineteenth

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[9] *Fuga Qtana* [A Little Fugue], according to the composer's testimony, was directly inspired by his listening to a Toccata and Fugue by Bach. See Nahum Heiman, *Hamishim Shnot Zemer ve-Sippur* [Fifty Years of Song and Stories] (Kfar Sava: Or-Tav, 1988), 122.

century.[10] Modern atonal music is foreign to the Hebrew folk or popular song, and its influence is only present in some dissonant arrangements.[11]

The "Lost Paradise" of the Mediterranean School

Until the early 1960s, there was a close relationship between much Israeli art music and Israeli popular music, and they shared the general characteristics of the Mediterranean School. Songs in that style already appear in the popular music of the late 1920s (e.g. *Shdemati* [My Earth], Yedidia Admon, 1927), before any true art music began in Israel. The orientalistic trend in SLI and Israeli art music should usually be regarded as two branches of one major cultural phenomenon, which share a number of specific musical features—such as modal writing and basing melodies mostly on steps. Although art music in the Mediterranean style also included modern and dissonant elements, and occasionally large forms, it generally had a folkloristic character, which made it easier for the Hebrew song to get closer to it. On the other hand, the old Mediterranean Hebrew song included artistic accomplishments such as the virtuoso piano playing of Nachum Nardi (in his accompaniments for Bracha

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[10] It is interesting to note that "Schubert, Schumann and Brahms" are cited as representatives of high culture (and the Finale of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto is quoted) in a song that is based on the blues style (*Day 'im ha-Bullshit* [*Enough with the Bullshit*], 'Eli Mohar and Yoni Rechter, 1995). Within the framework of this song, invoking the names of the romantic masters draws attention away from the style of the host song. In a song written by Nurit Hirsh, for example, the effect would have been quite different.
For a general survey of the *Shirei Eretz-Israel* genre, see Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49-70.

[11] See, for example, the dissonant introduction to *Tzippor Shniya* [A Second Bird] arranged by the song's composer Misha Segal (1972); the dissonant orchestration of *Biglalekh* [Because of You] in the performance of Arkady Dukhin, the song's composer (ca. 1997); and the pointilist (albeit not very dissonant) arrangement by Menachem Wiesenberg to the song *Neḥama* [Redemption] for the performance by Chava Alberstein (1983). Wiesenberg noted this influence in an internal lecture at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance.

Zephira's songs) and orchestral arrangements (e.g. by Marc Lavry). The "swan song" of the stylistic continuity between art and folk music in the Mediterranean style appeared in the first two Israeli Song Festivals (1960-61).[12] These first festivals were held in collaboration with the Israeli Composers' League. The celebrated composer Paul Ben-Haim served as the Chair of the committee that selected the songs for the first festival. The committee asked composers to write songs suitable for community singing, advising them to keep the songs simple. Indeed, many of the participating composers in the first two festivals later became known as composers of art music: Tzvi Avni, Moshe Gassner, Shlomo Hoffman, Shlomo Yoffe, Ram Da-Oz and Ami Maayani. Yehezkel Braun (who did not take part in the festivals as a composer) also arranged songs (e.g. for the *'Arava Trio*) and even wrote some popular songs. His fugal song *Va-yimalet Qayin* [And Cain Fled], which is still performed by choirs (and has even been recorded by *Makhelat ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uḥad*) was performed by the popular *Gesher ha-Yarkon* trio (1963)—without artistic compromise. Oded Assaf described this song as a "singular amazing achievement, the last of its kind, which shows what the Hebrew song was able to achieve with the aid of art music, but never achieved again."[13]

Indeed, there have also been composers of art music who wrote light songs in a different style, but these were a minority.[14] It was also possible to combine the

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[12] The first two festivals thus not only initiated an institutional framework, but also constituted the end of a stylistic tradition.

[13] Oded Assaf, "Ha-Zemer ha-ʻIvri ve-ha-Musiqa ha-Omanutit: Mifgash Qatzar Lelo Hemshekh," [Hebrew Song and Art Music: A Short Meeting without Continuation] *Musica* 12 (1988): 6-11, esp. p. 11.

[14] For example, Verdina Shlonski composed *Tango Tel-Aviv*, Frank Pelleg wrote light songs for the program *Ve...* [and...] of *Lahaqat Batzal Yaroq* [Green Onion Group] (1960, e.g. *'Al ha-I ha-Boded* [On the Lonely Island]), and the aforementioned Yehezkel Braun also wrote popular light songs in a pronounced Western style (e.g. *Im Tihyi Sheli* [If You Will Be Mine], 1965). Interestingly enough, the folk songs written by Alexander Uriya Boskovich, one of the most notable representatives of the

Mediterranean style with light entertainment music, as in the exemplary song *Rumia ve-Yo'el* [Rumia and Yo'el] (Haim Alexander, 1957).

In retrospect, the Mediterranean style appears to be a "lost paradise" from which art and light Israeli music went in different directions. The Mediterranean style disappeared almost completely in Israeli art music after the mid-1960s, in favor of more modern styles that were more difficult to combine with light or folkloristic composition styles.[15] At that same time, light music was being increasingly influenced by American and British music, especially by the Beatles. Although the Beatles themselves incorporated classical elements, such as the string quartet accompaniment in *Eleanor Rigby*, their influence on Hebrew song created a gap between popular music and art music in the sense generally accepted in Israel. Although the direct quotations of classical music were not linked to the Mediterranean style, they did create a shared stylistic basis with art and folk popular music that was lost in later eras. This was mainly due to the abandonment of modal writing in favor of functional harmony in popular music on the one hand, and atonal composition in art music on the other.[16] Rock music, too, admittedly, incorporates styles with high artistic pretensions (especially progressive rock). In Israel, however, art composers seldom exploited the artistic development potential of rock music,[17]

Mediterranean school (*Dudu*; *Hashama'ta Eikh ba-Negev* [Did You Hear How in the Negev]), are not Mediterranean in style—although they cannot be said to be popular songs in the Western style either.

[15] By Tzvi Avni, the shift was rather abrupt, following his studies in the United States. By other composers, such as Ram Da-Oz, the shift was more gradual. Composers who did not write popular music, such as Menahem Avidom, have also undergone a similar stylistic change.

[16] For a thorough discussion of this point, see Assaf, "Hebrew Song and Art Music."

[17] A notable exception was No'am Sheriff, who collaborated with the "Churchills" band [1970], after having written popular tunes in more traditional styles: *Hinach Yafa Ra'ayati* [You are Beautiful, My Beloved] and several songs from the musical Y*erushalayim Sheli* [My Jerusalem] (1969), which he also arranged. The art composer Yossi Mar-Haim also composed the rock opera *Mami* (1987).

and this remained the work of popular composers with a classical background, such as Shlomo Gronich and Yoni Rechter.[18]

Classical Music in Late "Songs of the Land of Israel" [SLI]

After the decline of the Mediterranean School of Hebrew song (in the 1960s), the fundamental nature of SLI underwent essential change. While this term was earlier conceived in contrast to songs from the Diaspora, it later indicated a conservative style as opposed to rock and pop. Many, if not most, of the later SLI are precisely those whose features were previously linked to the Diaspora.[19] The later SLI form the main genre incorporating elements of classical music. The sources of this influence are not a living and dynamic style, but the most banal elements of past styles.

The most direct influence of classical music on Hebrew song may be found in harmonic progressions. Especially common in Hebrew song is the pattern of a harmonic sequence of descending fifths in minor keys. This progression—i-iv-VII-

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[18] Composers of folk or popular music who engaged also in the composition of art music had already appeared from the birth of Hebrew song. Most of the pre-State song composers had some formal training in music. See Shahar, "The Israeli Song 1920-1950," 166. Prominent composers were Yo'el Engel, Yitzhak Edel, Emanuel Amiran and, to a lesser degree, also David Zehavi. Dov Seltzer moved to symphonic composition only in the 1990s, after he more-or-less abandoned lighter composition. On Engel's extensive work in art music before immigrating to Israel, see Rita Flomenboim, "Ha-Askola ha-Le'umit shel ha-Musiqa ha-Yehudit-Omanutit: Joel Engel (1868-1927) and Michail Gnessin (1883-1957)" [The National School of Jewish Art Music: Joel Engel (1868-1927) and Michail Gnessin (1883-1957)], Ph.D. Dissertation (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 1996]. There are also composers in whose work the art and folk compositions are barely separable. Famous in this respect are the late Marc Lavry (he counts mainly as an art composer) and, since the 1960s, Shimon Cohen. The latter's approach to song arrangements is highly artistic, whereas his original orchestral work sounds like song arrangements.

[19] Oriental song made its breakthrough in the last generation after the upsurge of pop and rock in Hebrew song, and after the contrast between SLI and "modern" songs had been established. On the negation of the Diaspora as an important force in early Hebrew song, see Yosef Goldenberg, "Hishtaqfuta shel Shlilat ha-Gola ba-Zemer ha-'Ivri" ['Negation of the Diaspora' in Hebrew Song], *Cathedra* 111 (2004): 129-148.

III-vi-ii(dim)-V-i—is grounded in the seventeenth century, e.g. in the music of Lully; a typical example appears in Handel's Passacaglia in G minor.[20] The progression appears in a large number of Hebrew songs. Ilana Ivtzan compared ten of these: Nahum Heiman's melodies *Kefel* [Duplication] (1968); *Fuga Qtana* (A Little Fugue, 1969); *Nevel mi-Zahav* [A Golden Harp] (1969) and *Hatiqqah et Yadi?* [Shall You Take My Hand?] (1982), as well as *Beit ha-'Arava* [House in the Prairie] (Shmulik Kraus, 1967); *'Ose Shalom* [Maker of Peace] (Nurit Hirsh, 1970); *Sason vi-Yeqar* [Joy and Honor] (Nurit Hirsh, mid-1970s); *Shiro shel Tzanḥan* [A Paratrooper's Song] (Yair Rosenblum, 1968); *Be-Shadmot Beit-Leḥem* [In the Fields of Bethlehem] (Hanina Krachevsky, before 1926); *Ani Gitara* [I am a Guitar] (Naomi Shemer, 1993); *Ho, Marganit* [Oh, Pimpernel] (Dov Seltzer, 1980).[21] (Example 1)

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[20] See Lully's Courante in E Minor, printed in the collection *French Piano Music: An Anthology*, ed. Isidor Phillipp (New York: Dover, [1906] 1977). Handel's Passacaglia appears in Suite No. 7 of Series 1 of keyboard suites. For further examples and an explanation of the harmonic progression, its contexts and implications, see Edward Aldwell and Carl Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989; 2nd edn.), 250-253. In minor, the diatonic supertonic is a diminished triad that does not usually appear in root position. Handel brings it in first inversion, whereas Lully alters it into a minor triad (raised fifth in relation to the diatonic tone). When the second tone in the scale does not actually appear in the melody, the IV degree can substitute for the II degree.

[21] Ilana Ivtzan, "Me'afyenim Musiqaliyim Yiḥudiyim bi-Yetzirato shel Sasha Argov" [Unique Musical Characteristics in the Songs of Sasha Argov,] Ph.D. Dissertation (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2003), 211. Ivtzan does not give dates for the songs. Her example includes several errors in melodic transcription and in harmonic indication. In some songs in her example, the harmonic progression is shorter and does not return to the tonic. In Shmulik Kraus's song Beit ha-'Arava, the strophes are based on a descending fifths pattern, and the chorus is also based on a very similar pattern. The sections of the song differ, however, in respect to the location of the pattern in relation to the hypermeter of 8-measure groups. This feature is an important artistic device that creates a balance of variety and unity in this song.

Example 1

i   iv   VII   III   vi   ii dim.   V   i

Since the songs are monophonic, the identification of the progression has to be based on a combination of the harmonic implications of the melody, the notated chords in songbooks, and the actual harmonization in recorded performances.

Discrepancies often exist between notated and recorded harmonizations, or among various recordings. However, most of the melodies fit either the complete descending fifths progression or some variant of it.

Most of the songs in Ivtzan's sample are usually labeled as SLI (the quasi-hasidic *'Ose Shalom* is an exception), and, indeed, the progression is particularly common in that genre.[22] However, the progression or close variants of it also exist in songs that are usually labeled Mediterranean-Oriental,[23] and can even be found as the basis of the strophes in *Shir la-Shalom* [A Song for Peace] (Yair Rosenblum, 1969-70), a revolutionary song (for its epoch), in which the musical style was blues-oriented.

The historical distribution of the songs selected in Ivtzan's sample truly represents the high point of the use of this progression in the late 1960s. In fact, this progression was quite rare in older SLI. The deliberate avoidance of functional harmony in favor of orientalism by some song composers of the older generation (e.g. Emanuel Amiran and Emanuel Zamir) provides a partial explanation only, since the repertoire of the old SLI also includes entirely harmonic songs, such as *Zemer*

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[22] The complete descending fifths progression also appears in the following songs (all of them SLI, apart from a few children's songs): *Tzrif Yashan* [An Old Hut] (Yohanan Zarai, 1964); *'Im Redet Yom* [As the Day Ends] (Yohanan Zarai, 1968); *Shir ba-Ḥamisha Aqordim* [A Song in Five Chords] (Nahum Heiman, late 1960s); *Ein Li Yoter Ma Lomar* [I Have Nothing More to Say] (Effi Netzer, 1968); *Naḥal ha-Taninim* [Taninim River] [Nahum Heiman, 1969); *'Od Lo Ahavti Day* [I Did Not Love Enough] (Naomi Shemer, 1977); *Aval At* [But You] (Oded Lerer, late 1970s); *Shimri Li 'al ha-Mangina* [Save the Melody for Me] (Dov Seltzer, 1979); *Shir 'al Neḥalim* [Song about Rivers] (Nurit Hirsh, 1983); *Kshe-Tashuv* [When You Are Back] (Tali Eshkoli, 1985); *Elef Neshiqot* [A Thousand Kisses] (Tzvika Pik, 1986); *Ani Roqed 'im Ima* [I Dance with Mummy] (Nurit Hirsh, 1992); and *Ha-Dror ve-ha-Drora* [The He-Sparrow and She-Sparrow] (Nurit Hirsh, 1993). Close variants of the progression appear, for example, in the songs *Beiti el mul Golan* [My Home is in Front of the Golan] (Haim Barkani, 1962); *Yaqinton Kaḥol* [A Blue Hyacinth] [Dafna Eilat, 1973]; *'Od Yihye Tov be-Eretz Israel* [It will be Good in the Land of Israel] (Shaike Paikov, 1981); *Ein Davar* [Never Mind] (Nurit Hirsh, 1982).

[23] For example, *Ahava Kena* [True Love] (Yokhi Erez, 1995); *Yafa Sheli* [My Beauty] (Tamir Kalisky, 1998) and *At Menatzaḥat* [You Win] (2004).

ha-Plugot [Troops' Song] (Dani'el Sambursky, 1937) and many songs by David Zehavi and Mordecai Zeira. The only song from the pioneering generation in Ivtzan's sample, *Be-Shadmot Beit-Leħem*, does not complete the diatonic fifths circle. Older folk songs known to the Hebrew community living in Palestine before the establishment of the State of Israel only infrequently include close variants of the diatonic descending fifths progression, e.g. in the folk tune *Galei Yam* [Sea Waves] and in the Russian song *Stav Ma'afil* [Darkening Autumn] or *Stav Ma'afir* [Greying Autumn] (both versions exist). The progression became more common in the Hebrew song repertoire in the early 1960s, sometimes in the variant that opens with V/iv, e.g. in Shimon Israeli's melodies *Stam Yom shel Ħol* [Just an Ordinary Weekday][24] and *Ħatzot* [Midnight], *Otzar ha-Yarden* [The Jordan's Treasure] (Benni Berman, 1960) and *Ha-Ish ve-ha-Gitara* [The Man and the Guitar] (Yosef Hadar, ca. 1960). As previously stated, the progression was most widely used in the Hebrew songs of the late 1960s. It was still common in SLI of the 1970s, but in the 1980s and '90s its use became less frequent. Hence, the findings reveal a musical change in SLI in the 1960s. It is possible to regard such a simplistic progression as a compositional decline. Indeed, the progression hardly ever appears in the songs of the great composers Moshe Wilensky and Alexander (Sasha) Argov.[25] The proliferation of the pattern in the 1960s might point to the French chanson as a possible source. The progression appears, for example, in famous chansons such as Joseph Kosma's *Les*

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[24] In *Stam Yom shel Ħol* [Just an Ordinary Weekday], the descending fifth progression is very quick, and therefore does not sound like an independent musical sentence. Another quick descending fifth progression appears in *Bizkhutam* [Thanks to Them] (Moni Amarilio, 1975).

[25] In the songs of Moshe Wilensky I have found only one instance of the progression, in *Shnei Saqei Shena* [Two Sleeping Bags] (1966). In another song of his, *Ħag Li* [I have a Holiday] (1974), an identical surface progression has a different structural meaning. Sasha Argov's song *Kshe-Or Doleq* [When a Light is On] includes a complex descending fifth progression, that supports ninth-chords. See Ivtzan, "Argov," 209-212.

Feuilles mortes [Autumn Leaves] and Georges Brassens' *Chanson pour l'Auvergnat,* which also became known in Hebrew.[26] If this hypothesis is correct, it seems that the indirect influence of the French chanson on the Hebrew song repertoire increased at a time when its direct influence had already decreased.

Along with the descending fifths progression, additional harmonic patterns of classical origin appeared. One particular Baroque pattern, known as *La Follia* schema, served as a theme for variations, for example in Corelli's Violin Sonata Op. 5, No. 12: i-V-i-V/III-III-V/III-i-V. Since this progression moves to the relative major, one might expect to find examples in Russian songs known in Hebrew.[27] In fact, I found it in two original Hebrew songs, one of which is slightly related to the Russian tradition—*Shir ha-Shuq* [The Market Song] (Naomi Shemer, 1960).The second example usually counts as a fusion of rock and oriental styles—*Zmanim Qtanim* [Little Times] (Kobi Oz, 1995).[28] The first example compares the original

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[26] The song has two Hebrew versions, *Kama Efshar Lashevet* [How Much Can One Sit], with a parodistic text unrelated to the original French (Yossi Gamzu, mid-1960s), and Le-Ish Ḥasdi [To the Man Who Made Grace with Me] (Naomi Shemer, 1969), a free translation. Of course, the song might have provided inspiration even before the Hebrew versions were written. Another foreign song with a complete diatonic progression of descending fifths was adapted into Hebrew in the late 1970s: *Ha-Mangina Nish'eret* [The Melody Remains] by the Brazilian composer Ariel Ramirez.

[27] Motion from a minor key into its relative major is very common in Russian folk songs, including songs that were adapted into Hebrew. Occasionally, it is even unclear which of the relative keys is the main one. This situation happens in *Ma Ichpat* [What Does it Matter] and *Hayta Tze'ira ba-Kineret* [There was a Young Lady by the Kinneret].

[28] The existence of Western harmonic clichés in oriental songs could be regarded as a negative feature. For example, Hanoch Ron attacked the oriental song repertoire: "What an Irony: the most banal Western harmonic patterns may be found in the Oriental song repertoire, which fights against them." See Hanoch Ron, "Ha-Zemer ha-Israeli—be-Ḥipus Matmid Aḥar ha-Zehut ha-Musiqalit," [Israeli Song—In Eternal Search after Musical Identity] in *Hakol Zahav* [Everything is Gold], eds. Yossi Mar-Haim and Yair Stavi (Maariv: Tel Aviv, 1993), 21-24, esp. p. 24. The article was written in 1992. Ben-Porat revealed similar clichés in texts of Oriental songs, in descriptions of autumn, a topic often found in the European sources. See Ziva Ben-Porat, "'Stav Ma'afir' and 'Loven he-Ḥatzav'," [Greying Autumn and the Whiteness of the Squill] in *Liriqa ve-Lahit* [Lyric Poetry and the Lyrics of Pop], ed. Ziva Ben-Porat (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1989), 168-231, esp. p. 181.

with the two Hebrew songs. It is quite amusing to insert the songs within a performance of the Corelli variations. (Example 2)

Example 2

The particular harmonic progressions are merely individual examples of directional functional harmony, which is particularly evident in many late SLI. The stereotypic assertion that "the harmonic language [of popular music] is that of classical European tonality, only more simple-minded" (as Winkler presents conventional wisdom),[29] is more suited to late SLI than to Anglo-American pop and rock. In the latter, functional harmony was already weakened at a relatively early stage, due to the influence of the low directionality of the blues progression. Only a few "Oldies," most of them in folk style like *Green Fields*, are highly directional. By contrast, several elements of the harmony of the Beatles' songs differ from those of the classic-romantic tradition: weak harmonic progressions (i.e. "harmonic regressions"); lack of resolution for leading tones; plagal cadences; non-tonic

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[29] Peter K. Winkler, "Toward a Theory of Popular Harmony," *In Theory Only* 4/2 (1978): 3-26, esp. p. 3.

openings and untight rhythmic structures.[30] In late SLI the harmonic progressions are strong, the leading tones resolve properly, the cadences are authentic, the openings are in the tonic and the rhythmic structures are tight—exactly as in stereotypic classical music. The musical idiom of late SLI is, like that of the French chansons, quite close to the classical-romantic tradition. These songs represent popular music in sociological respects, but musically they have little in common with the mainstream of Western popular music.[31]

Maintaining harmonic conventions could be regarded as "imitation based on simplistic and shallow exploitation of an exemplary model," as Dan Miron once criticized Naomi Shemer.[32] The phenomenon is not unique to Shemer (as Miron concludes) but is quite common to a whole generation of SLI composers, including Nurit Hirsh, Nahum Heiman and Effi Netzer. It is all the more fascinating that each of these composers has a personal style—even in simple songs based on the most elementary harmonic progressions.

The presence of traditional harmonic patterns does not necessarily prove the direct influence of classical music.[33] Functional harmony appears in additional

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[30] Naphtali Wagner finds all these features in the assertive song *She Loves You*. See Naphtali Wagner, *Ha-Beatles: Sheva' ha-Shanim ha-Tovot* [The Beatles: The Seven Good Years] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), 17.

[31] Imagine, for example, an article about SLI submitted to the periodical *Popular Music*. A socio-musicological article might well be accepted, but an analytical article will certainly be considered irrelevant (despite the fact that this periodical includes analytical articles) due to its over-resemblance to the classical tradition. On the status of SLI as popular music, see also Regev and Seroussi, *Popular Music and National Culture*, 55-56.

[32] Dan Miron, "Zmirot me-Eretz Lahadam: Meqoma shel Naomi Shemer be-Ḥayeinu" [Songs from the Land of "Nothing-of-the-Kind:" The Place of Naomi Shemer in Our Lives], in *Im Lo Tihye Yerushalayim...* [If There is No Jerusalem] (Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1987), 175-206. The article was written in 1984.

[33] In numerous interviews with song composers and singers heard mainly on Reshet Gimmel [the third radio station of the Israeli Broadcasting Authority], the only ones I recall who mentioned classical music as a source of influence were Shlomo Gronich, Yoni Rechter and Alona Dani'el. In thirteen

repertoires that influenced SLI: Yiddish songs, Russian romances and the French chansons mentioned earlier. In the Russian repertoire, it is even difficult to distinguish art songs from popular ones. Certain original Israeli songs are essentially local specimens of the Russian romance (e.g. Mordecai Zeira's *Shalekhet* [Fall of Leaves] from the 1930s, a song often performed in a classical manner), or of the French chanson (e.g. *Gan ha-Shiqmim* [The Sycamore Garden] [Yohanan Zarai, 1955]).

Along with harmonic idioms, there are additional factors that bring Israeli songs closer to classical music than to Anglo-American pop and rock. One factor is the rhythm. Jazz-like syncopations very rarely appear in SLI or in Mediterranean songs. Inserting swing is often sufficient to provide Israeli songs with a Western feeling.[34] It was felt that the early 1980s' pop group, *Madness*, whose songs lack such syncopations, had some relationship to Israeli songs. It was considered to be a clear source of influence on the Israeli rock band *Mashina*, which, by that time, was considered "very Israeli" (as opposed to groups like *Tamuz* or *Shamayim*, whose connection to the Israeli tradition was rather weak). The classical rhythm is also evident in the ability of the Israeli song repertoire to adopt classical tunes without drastic transformation. For sake of comparison, the American adaptation of Beethoven's *Für Elise* as *Passion Flower* (The Fraternity Brothers, 1958) distorted the original by introducing a fixed dancing rhythm.

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interviews Hana Adoni carried out with Israeli popular musicians, classical music is scarcely mentioned as a source of influence: "Patterns of Interaction between Local and Foreign Popular Music in Israel," in *Studies in Socio-Musical Sciences*, ed. Joachim Braun and Uri Sharvit (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998), 151-158.

[34] For example, Eldad Shrim's arrangement (1973) of Shalom Postolsky's song *Quma Eħa* [Wake Up, Brother] distorts the syncopated hora rhythm into a jazz syncope.

Another factor is the instrumental accompaniment. In America, even old hits that were relatively close to the classical tradition (e.g. Frank Sinatra's songs) often had an accompanying group that included saxophones or sometimes an entire band. By contrast, in the 1960s' Hebrew classical song recordings, the typical sound is that of the symphonic orchestra with no additional instruments.[35] For example, the orchestra of the Israeli Song Festival was originally a symphonic orchestra; additional instruments, such as an electric guitar, were added only toward the 1970s. The "entertainment orchestra of the broadcasting authority" was in fact a symphonic orchestra, and it performed masterful song arrangements, e.g. by Moshe Wilensky, Shimon Cohen, Hanan Winternitz and Yosef Hadar. These musical arrangements, within the limits of popular music, exploited the full potential of the classical symphony orchestra. In later years, there were a few live orchestral performances of Hebrew songs, some of which were released on commercial recordings, usually accompanying popular singers such as Yehudit Ravitz (with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra) or Bo'az Shar'abi (1998, with the Ra'anana Symphonette Orchestra). The Ḥaifa Symphony Orchestra has recently performed a complete program of arrangements of up-to-date hits by the art composer Oded Zehavi.

The genre of orchestral performance of popular songs also exists in England and the United States. For example, the London Symphony Orchestra recorded arrangements of the Pink Floyd's progressive rock album *The Dark Side of the Moon*. The Israeli phenomenon is, nevertheless, essentially different from its British counterpart. Transforming a progressive rock song into the orchestral medium

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[35] In older SLI orientalist arrangements, as in Emanuel Zamir's group, classical instruments were not used. In the early 1950s, orchestral accompaniment was more characteristic of the popular dance repertoire, e.g. *Al Tishkeḥini* [Don't Forget Me].

requires a total transformation, whereas an orchestral performance of SLI demands only minor changes, if any at all. For example, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra recorded Oded Lehrer's song *Sliħot* [Pardons] in the original orchestral version that accompanied its first performance at the 1977 Israeli Song Festival. Even Oded Zehavi's arrangements of up-to-date hits mentioned earlier are nowhere near as radical as orchestrations of Pink Floyd songs. Very occasionally, the orchestrated version is modern and dissonant—for example, in Arkady Dukhin's recording of his own song *Biglalekh* [Because of You], which was previously performed by Arik Einstein without an orchestra (1995). In such cases, rather than tempering the song, the orchestration makes the song more forceful.

Classical instruments play a major role in Hebrew song performances, even in the absence of full orchestras. A small number of musical arrangers with a classical education, such as Gil Aldema and Rafi Kadishson, have been responsible for numerous song programs on state radio or television, which included many arrangements for chamber ensembles of classical instruments and for piano. Moshe Wilenski, Alexander (Sasha) Argov and Naomi Shemer, the most celebrated writers of SLI for many years, wrote their songs with piano accompaniment (Wilenski has often also written down an orchestral version). Even Effi Netzer, who created monophonic tunes with chord indication, worked at the piano. The working style of rock groups, who improvise their music during live performances or in the recording studio, has penetrated the Israeli scene since the 1970s, but not in typical SLI.

Appreciation of Classical Music and of Shirei Eretz-Israel

Since the actual presence of classical music in Hebrew songs is limited to external elements, which are hardly responsible for the high quality of classical music, the status of those manifestations of classical music as art music is challenged. Perhaps the term "art music" can indicate the classical music tradition without the positive evaluation embodied in the definition.[36] This is a very sensitive issue: if "art music" is nothing more than a specific tradition, its preference might reflect an arbitrary, perhaps even racial, bias.[37] The evaluation of styles also has practical consequences in the distribution of the state budget. Even if we accept the principle that the state should give money for artistic purposes but not for entertainment (as Menachem Zur proposed), it is difficult to apply the principal distinction (as Zur himself admits).[38] We may seriously question the pre-eminence of "art music" above other kinds of music if it is identified with the harmonic clichés inherited from classical music by Hebrew song .

SLI often enjoy a high reputation. This might be explained by the generally higher linguistic level of their texts, conforming to the high socioeconomic level of members of *Havurot zemer* (singing groups)[39] or of participants in *Shira be-Tzibbur* (community singing). But what about actual musical characteristics? In one essay, in

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[36] For example, Palisca excludes from the domain of "art music" [quotes in the original] "popular music and jazz" although they "have been quite artful." See Claude Palisca, preface to Donald J. Grout and Claude Palisca, *History of Western Music* (New York: Norton: 1988; 4th edn.), ix.

[37] The people of *'AZIT-'Amutat Zemer Yam-Tikhoni* [Association for Mediterranean Music] often claim such arguments. A less angry voice hints at this debate in Oded Sappir and Yehuda Badihi's song *Al Ta'am ve-'al Rea*h [There Is No Disputing About Tastes] from the second festival of Oriental songs (1971).

[38] Menachem Zur, "Art & Entertainment," lecture at the ISCM meeting in Luxemburg (2000), available at: http://www.musica-ukrainica.odessa.ua/d-2-ISCM.html (access 12/5/2003).

[39] Natan Shahar, "Havurot Hazemer in Israel: A Unique Sociomusicological Phenomenon," in *Musical Performance* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers), Vol. 1, Part 2, 15-33, esp. pp. 30-31.

an analogy to the relationship between canonic poetry and popular lyrics, Gluzman describes old SLI as the canonic model from which later songs (e.g. by Matti Caspi) digressed in the 1970s.[40] Such an analogy is misleading, since SLI were folk or popular music, but never truly canonic art songs. To be more precise, SLI are full of epigonic imitations of the canonic model of classical-romantic art music—with the regular text rhyming and harmonic progressions of tonal music.[41] The "canonic" model Gluzman presents is, in fact, that of steps-based melodies, based on cantillation accents according to the Shmu'eli's system.[42] Gluzman observes both the model itself and its epigonic imitations in harmonic songs written by Naomi Shemer and Effi Netzer.[43]

The esthetic preference of SLI seems to reflect conventional values as opposed to the wildness of rock music. Within that set of values, as in the old Greek doctrine of ethos, high value is attached to specific kinds of music rather than to general principles that might be applied in various styles. Indeed, musical characteristics can express resistance to the establishment—recall the loud distortions of the American and Israeli anthems respectively at the Woodstock Festival and in the election propaganda of the "Green Leaf" party, which endorses legalization of drugs. (The opposite, defense of the establishment, is also possible). However, the mere usage of

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[40] Yehudit Gluzman, "Ḥamishim Shnot Shir" [Fifty Years of Songs], in *Liriqa ve-Lahit*, 99-109.

[41] On the (textual) "epigonic character of the Hebrew pop lyrics," see Ziva Ben-Porat, "Ha-Pizmon Ki-V'aya u-kh-Mussa be-Ḥeker ha-Sifrut" [The Popular Song as a Problem and as a Subject in Literature Research] in *Liriqa ve-Lahit*, 9-23, esp. p. 9.

[42] Hertzel Shmu'eli, *Ha-Zemer ha-Israeli* [The Israeli Song] (Tel Aviv: Ha-Merkaz le-Tarbut u-le-Ḥinukh, 1971).

[43] Stepwise, melodic patterns were evaluated positively—in part due to their difference from Western patterns. See for example Menashe Ravina, *Ha-Shirim La-'Am be-Eretz Israel* [Folk Songs in the Land of Israel] (Tel Aviv: Ha-Mosad le-Musiqa la-'Am—Ha-Merkaz le-Tarbut, 1943). See discussion by Yosef Goldenberg, "Negation of the Diaspora": 131-136.

traditional harmonic progressions does not guarantee the endorsement of the mainstream approach. For example, despite their harsh anti-establishment texts, the chansons of Georges Brassens have harmonic functional music.[44]

The conventional approach is evident, for example, in words of praise in favor of *Qol ha-Musiqa* (the classical music radio station) spoken on air by politicians such as Dan Meridor and Avraham Burg on the station's tenth anniversary (1993). However, this is not the usual approach among supporters of classical music. Astrith Baltsan aptly named a series of explained concerts "Classical Music—Hear and Fall Asleep or Listen and Wake Up?" Especially opposed to the conventional position is the avant-garde approach of supporters of modern music, even in their appreciation of traditional art music. This approach is evident in Adorno's writings and in Schoenberg's famous article "Brahms the Progressive."[45] The supporters of SLI belong to the (metaphorically) conservative party, not the progressive one.

In this respect, the relationship between classical and popular music was turned upside-down in the last generation. Most popular music was conformist and sentimental in the 1950s, the peak years of the Darmstadt festivals. In that atmosphere, the avant-garde experiments must have sounded much harsher than in the rap age, when indefinite pitch is ubiquitous also in popular music!

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[44] Occasionally, negative values are attributed to the "first practice" songs with traditional harmony. Emblematic is *Kshe-At Omeret Lo* [When You Say No] (Dan Almagor, 1963), which seemingly encourages sexual harassment. When this song is quoted within the rap song *Af Eḥad* [Nobody] of the *Dag-Naḥash* [Eel] group (2001), the relationship between violence vs. conservative behavior and musical expression turns upside-down.

[45] Arnold Schoenberg, "Brahms the Progressive," in *Style and Idea* (London: William and Norgate, 1951), 52-101.

Classical Artistic Devices in Hebrew Song

If a high evaluation of classical music is justified by abstract aspects of artistic quality rather than by specific patterns (that run the risk of becoming mere clichés), the dispute between conservative and progressive approaches may be replaced by seeking artistic devices that might enrich the auditory experience. Classical artistic devices appear in various Hebrew songs (not necessarily in a general idiom related to classical music, and not necessarily in songs with an artistic reputation): motivic relations, avoidance of exact repetitions, irregularity within musical phrases and in overall form, etc. This issue deserves a special study; in the present article, there is room for a single example.

In response to the words of theorist William Rothstein, I was motivated to seek interesting irregularities in the phrase structure of Hebrew songs: "Think of a popular song, any popular song—from operetta to the latest rock hit to 'America is Beautiful.' Think of how the song goes, and, particularly, how its melody is shaped. Focus on how the tune repeatedly comes to rest, or where it 'breathes.' In all likelihood, what you are hearing in your mind's ear (unless you have chosen a very unusual song) is a regular and predictable series of melodic statements or *phrases*."[46]

The tune *Brosh* [Cypress] by Ariel Zilber (1976) is usually considered to be a simple pop song, but, according to Rothstein's criterion, it is "very unusual" indeed (see Example 3).

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[46] William N. Rothstein, *Phrase Rhythm in Tonal Music* (New York: Schirmer, 1989), vii.

Annotated Rhythmic Transcription of
Brosh by Ariel Zilber (1976)

The instrumental introduction stabilizes a grouping of four beats (or measures, depending on notation), but the length of the phrases in the tune itself varies: three, four, five or six beats. The source of the deviation is found in the opening motif. This is an elongated upbeat, which lasts almost two beats, beginning just after the initiation of the fourth (rather than the third) beat, thus creating a group of five beats.

In the second line, the opening motif is further elongated into three beats due to an internal sequence, but its function as an upbeat is challenged. The chorus is more square, except for its third line, which sounds either like one expanded line or like two compressed ones. The chorus ends with the opening motif, shifted one beat back into the expected location in a regular meter. The free prosody of Ehud Manor's text contributes to the shaping of the irregular tune, but does not demand it.[47]

The presence of classical artistic devices in popular songs is not the usual criterion for the evaluation of popular styles: "Rock esthetics" usually focuses on such elements of "sound" richness;[48] in Oriental music other features are more important, such as a sensitive performance of *Mawāls*. Auditory strategies associated with classical music open new paths for enriching the listening to many Hebrew songs. The general public who listens to Hebrew songs, however, will continue to regard classical music as a symbol of high culture, and will remain acquainted with only a few of its simple manifestations.

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[47] For sake of comparison, Yoni Rechter's melody to the irregular text *Ha-Yalda Hakhi Yafa ba-Gan* [The Most Beautiful Girl in the Kindergarten] (Yonatan Geffen, 1979) is based on regular four-measure groups. An irregular phrase structure also appears in the great Oriental hit *Qashe Li* [It's Hard For Me] (Dani Shushan, 1993). This song includes a six-measure unit as an expansion of an asymmetrical five-measure unit. Symmetrical groupings as deviations from asymmetrical structures seem to be rare. Schachter has presented an eight-measure phrase as an expansion of six measures in Scarlatti's Keyboard Sonata K. 78 (l. 75). See Carl Schachter, "Rhythm and Linear Analysis: Aspects of Meter," in *The Music Forum*, Vol. 6, Part 1, ed. Felix Salzer & Carl E. Schachter (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 1-59, esp. pp. 46-49.

[48] Motti Regev, "The Rock Aesthetic and Israeli Popular Music," in *Studies in Socio-Musical Sciences*, ed. Joachim Braun and Uri Sharvit (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1998), 159-162, esp. p. 159.