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A CRITICAL STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PALESTINIAN MUSICAL CULTURE

By

KARL H HAUSMANN

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies in partial
Fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts,
The City University of New York

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APPROVAL

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
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for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PALESTINIAN MUSICAL CULTURE

By

Karl H Hausmann

Advisor: Anthony Alessandrini

This study is concerned with the field of musical culture and practice in Palestine, and the connotations of musical expression, whether as music or songs. It addresses the period extending from the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, through the first intifada of 1987 and then the era of the Oslo Accords until today.

This study deals with the artistic meanings and expressions associated with the music and singing that was produced in that period, assuming that it was created within the socio-political context in which it existed, specifically that music that was associated with the state of the Palestinian revolution and resistance against the Israeli occupation, through a general presentation of the most prominent of those experiences that had a huge impact and a critical reach. These experiences originated in the Oslo era and are concentrated in the city of Ramallah, with an extension of its activities in other areas of the West Bank, followed by its arrival - happening for the first time in contemporary Palestinian history - to the consolidation stage as artistic, academic, and professional music through specialized educational musical institutions, including the Al Kamandjâti Association, the Edward Said Institute, and the Barenboim-Said Foundation. I investigate the musical meanings and values that can be derived from the musical

practices of these institutions in terms of the musical practice itself in the light of contemporary Palestinian reality, with its complexities and political and social challenges.

This research concerns understanding aesthetic values within their social and political context. To that end, it reviews the methods, visions, and modalities these institutions operate within to capture the cultural meanings they are trying to adopt in the contemporary Palestinian context. To achieve this purpose, the study benefits from essential knowledge production in sociology, anthropology, and social history available today about Palestine, in addition to specialized studies in musicology research, ethnomusicology, and the field of arts and culture, which places it in the category of interdisciplinary studies.

In short, the study monitors musical practice and its artistic expressions from the eighties until now, during the “Oslo era,” and within the framework of significant social transformations that many of the Palestinians witnessed. The musical practice has been characterized by its transition from a state based on the representation of political reality in particular to an existing subject. In other words, the musical and lyrical expression has been linked and preoccupied with expressing the existing state of resistance in all its forms and carrying the group’s voice in its yearning to search for liberation, independence, and the establishment of its independent state. Therefore, the sincerity of expression, or the sincerity of “representation,” was a fundamental criterion in determining its musical value. Later, during a set of political, cultural, and social changes, a group of musicians went through their own experiences. Musical and lyrical tendencies emerged laden with expressive and artistic obsessions different from what existed, including transitioning from a state of “representing national aspirations” to a musical expression loaded with existential questions. Music entered the stage of “independence” and began to search for different ways of expressing and questioning the musical forms themselves and their methods

more than they represent them, which led to the submission of a large part of its values to its own artistic rules. This is what the study calls “the subject,” reflected in subsequent experiments, which began to emerge and spread in the early eighties and nineties. In the post-Oslo era, this musical independence, or the state of the “subject,” developed until it reached musical institutionalization, which is a current musical phase and is also linked to the social and cultural contexts that Palestine is experiencing today, which is what the second part of this thesis will address.

I claim that this shift in musical expression from the previous representational case, which relied on directness, to the subject case, did not lose its role in expressing political connotations, as the second case continued to carry political meanings no less than its predecessors in the representational case. It does not constitute separation or rupture with political expression. Instead, it reformulates the cultural category, especially concerning building the identity and the desired state, which constantly changes within various political and social variables.

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Introduction

In the last two decades, music, including its learning and practice, has attracted unprecedented interest among a middle class formed in the Ramallah region. This is evident in the great demand for learning music, especially among children. Effective institutions have been active in this field, have played a central role in meeting those needs, and even contributed to its creation. Music has had a remarkable presence, as we witnessed several years ago the birth of a Palestinian National Orchestra that plays compositions by Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn, in addition to Arab and Palestinian composers, affiliated with the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music. A few years ago, the Al Kamandjâti Association held a festival specializing in Baroque music and popular music, in addition to festivals dealing with Arabic music and its legacy.

Through this scene, a discussion arose about the relationship of art to politics and the endeavor to chart an independent possession of art and music as a professional act that produces its own literal and social rituals and thus plays a social and political role. This discussion has intensified in addressing the importance of culture and the roles it should be entrusted with. This is what the research will refer to and summarize in the third chapter, to clarify the meanings and purposes of the concept of “culture” in the Palestinian context, including artistic works and musical works. In this context, Palestinian society witnessed a remarkable development of the debate that arose in the previous era, especially the first intifada, where the beginnings of the formation of artistic and professional activities became clear the beginnings of the formation of artistic and professional activities, which were previously integrated into the project and the

political struggle. In the years of the first intifada, music and singing were closely linked to the agenda of political action and aimed to supplement the resistance to the Israeli occupation with a profound cultural and moral dimension, in addition to using traditional or folk music to express the existing situation in resisting the occupation, especially during the first intifada period that started in 1987. However, despite the direct emergence of the political dimension in these activities, they constitute the beginnings of the institutionalization of artistic work and musical expression as an artistic field with distinction. Therefore, it is helpful to return to it to trace the transformations that occurred later in the concept of musical practice and, thus, artistic expression in the Oslo era.

In the era that witnessed the emergence of the national authority in what is known as the Oslo era, music began to dissociate itself from the political “agenda” of the parties to reconnect with politics dialectically political. However, it has become part of a new social imagination of a changing societal system. It became governed by institutional visions. Moreover, the vision of the artistic institution has come to play a fundamental role in the artistic and musical classifications in terms of quality, and judging the seriousness or quality of artistic and musical works is subject to the closeness or distance of these works from the artistic and institutional visions.

It can be said that examining the field of musical practice also calls for entry into the field of musical modernity, whether in terms of the form, organization, or message of musical practice. Furthermore, if modernity historically, in the opinion of many thinkers, had “liberated” artists from the palaces of the feudal lords and their alms and brought them out into the public arena, then this was only a dialectical emancipation, in the sense that it required or was based on rearranging the relationship between art and politics or social power and not completely

amputating it. Thus, the problem becomes more complex today in the era of globalization. In other words, “independence or freedom” cannot be understood as art's free entry into the public sphere, without connections to the conditions of social, political, and economic reality, such as funding and monopoly, supply and demand, and new class formations within society, in addition to international and local political variables. In our current context, the institutionalization of the practice of music in the Palestinian reality is governed by several primary factors, such as foreign or local funding and the limited budgets of culture in a society that does not have its resources due to the existence of the occupation. That is, with a specific political-economic reality, in addition to exhausting a set of value and cultural shifts in Palestinian society since the Oslo Accords.

Search problem:

Over the past thirty years, music in Palestine has undergone fundamental transformations, the most important of which was the emergence of music as an independent artistic and professional field. Palestinian music passed through a period in which the political concern and the cause of national liberation from the Israeli occupation had a solid and dominant presence in the artistic work. This constituted the essential feature of musical expression.

The second phase took shape in the period after the Oslo agreement and the entry of Palestine into a group of central variables at all levels, mainly social, economic, and political, and was characterized by the entry of Palestine into the extensive network of globalized civil institutions, which was reflected in social formations and elites.¹ In this period, that is, after Oslo, the music sphere began to separate from what preceded it, as the value of music is no longer in being an expression that comes through its direct political connotations/representations,

¹ Rabie, Kareem. *Palestine is throwing a party and the whole world is invited: Capital and state building in the West Bank*. Duke University Press, 2021.

especially in the period of the first intifada, with the emphasis that this form did not disappear. Musicians began to take an interest in the musical work and explore new possibilities and methods that led directly at times and indirectly at other times, to move away from the methods of the music industry that were linked to production tools whose primary function was to attract the masses to specific ideas and ideological orientations. This does not mean abandoning what is considered a musical heritage, but rather how to see that heritage and reformulate it within a new reality based on the imposition of new questions.

Contemporary Palestinian awareness was exposed to the introduction of numerous sorts and genres of music, such as pop, rock, and rap. As a result, a set of artists formed who had musical experiences concerned with creative expression and its methods. Several musical educational institutes have also arisen, intending to teach two entire genres of music: Arabic music and Western classical music. These institutions have emerged as crucial and fundamental players in music culture, and their musical activity has had a substantial and visible influence on the development of professional artistic music. Besides, it spawned a new music scene in which we witness technically proficient players performing works by Beethoven, Abdel Wahab, and others.

The core research issue is structured in two significant directions. The first concerns the simplicity, presentation, and recording of the most significant musical experiences from the early 1970s until before Oslo. In doing so, the hope is better to understand these aesthetic encounters and their cultural ramifications. The second axis is centered on presenting, documenting, and debating the condition of musical “academization” by addressing three successful and significant musical educational institutions in the post-Oslo period to comprehend the musical ideals it tries to propagate. It is important to note that this method does not divorce music from its production

environment since this background is critical in comprehending the implications and meanings of the musical experience.

It is conceivable to raise a set of the following sub-questions:

1. What were the qualities of musical expression in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as during the first intifada?
2. What were the highlights of such encounters?
3. What are the most prominent educational institutes in the subject of Palestinian music today?
4. How do they function, and where did these educational institutions emerge?
5. What are the musical and cultural roots of these organizations' experiences?

Research methodology and hypotheses

The study monitors an essential part of the musical experience, especially within two periods. The first section is concerned with essential musical experiences, and the second section is concerned with institutional musical experiences. The contexts surrounding the production and practice of music had to be considered influential factors in the structure of musical discourses. Thus, the study will present, analyze and discuss an essential part of the musical experiences in the late seventies and early eighties until before the Oslo Accords as a fundamental stage of national liberation and state building.

It must be said that the musical experiences I intend to discuss, especially in the first period, do not represent all musical experiences. However, they were the most prominent in terms of spread, expression, and keeping pace with significant events in contemporary Palestinian history, such as the PLO's departure from Beirut and the beginning of the first

intifada. It is the period that the research covers, especially in the Palestinian territories that were occupied in 1967.

Then, the study deals with the forms of institutional musical practice in the post-Oslo phase as a construction phase that has its specificity regarding the penetration and entry of Palestine into the global and consumer capital network. Musical institutions at this stage were able to develop musical culture and raise it to new levels and challenges in terms of performance and expression. This study does not seek to assess the roles or functions of these institutions but is concerned with understanding the emerging musical implications through their musical practices. These and other questions require an angle of view that sees the movement of music on the horizon of broader transformations. Like other literary or artistic works, music is a cultural practice made by specific individuals under certain circumstances. One of the cultural critic Raymond William' definitions of the concept of culture in its "documentary" sense informs us here, as he says, "the whole of intellectual and creative effort in which human thinking and experience are documented, in diverse detail."²

In this concept, William stresses that culture arises in a community with established ties. As a result, cultural creation must be understood within its social and historical context rather than seeing cultural activities or products as floating and supra-historical entities. It does not get its worth and meaning from a world that is not determined by particular social, historical, or material circumstances. In other words, whether artistic or moral values, the resultant values are values in constant evolution and subject to current social circumstances.

As for musical expression, the research will use what the music researcher and cultural critic Christopher Small has proposed as a helpful model in the context of musical practice and

² Williams, Raymond. "2. The Analysis of Culture." *The long revolution*. Columbia University Press, 1961. 41-71.

expression, as Small calls his model “musicking.” Small’s vision of the meaning of music suggests not separating musical practice from the musical product. According to his definition, “music is not something abstract, but something that people practice, and this cultural practice occurs in a particular society, that is, it occurs in a place that has its existing relationships and in these relationships the meanings resulting from musical practice lie.”³

Small gives particular importance to where the music takes place and does not separate the musical product from the musical practice, which is a central hypothesis in this research. Otherwise, how is it possible to understand the specificity inherent in the performance of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony in Ramallah by a Palestinian orchestra as compared to its performance in Paris by a French orchestra, for example? Also, the experience that the musicians and arrangers go through while preparing for a show, or a piece of music, is an integral part of the musical practice and, therefore, an essential part of the meanings of the music itself.

The study will adopt the presentation and analysis route, presenting a collection of recorded facts, sources, and archive materials on musical practice. These materials are drawn from local newspapers and articles published on music in Palestine, in addition to orchestra brochures and websites of institutions involved in the music area. This repository is built on a collection of musical creations, either as recordings or as music, performances, and interviews posted on the Internet.

The second part of the study is about musical institutions, depending on a series of extensive discussions with actors and musicians working in the institutions and musical institutes that we aim to discuss. These gatherings attempted to familiarize participants with their musical

³ Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening*. Wesleyan University Press, 1998.

visions, creative obsessions, and methods for realizing their musical visions and the cultural tasks and obligations children in the current Palestinian society have for themselves.

The analysis is founded on a dialectical understanding within the framework of our presentation of this issue of transformation; that is, I do not take a negative or positive stance on musical expression transformations as much as I strive to convey them within their dynamics and context. I aim to crystallize a holistic perspective that deals with the phenomena as both a progress and a problem, or, as Karl Marx states in his definition of bourgeois culture, “that we conceive of this development as both a negative and a positive at the same time.”⁴ Thus, the analysis that I follow aims to situate the musical practice, or the artworks themselves, inside their chronological and spatial context, establishing one of art criticism, namely music criticism.

It must be acknowledged that this technique may encounter several obstacles. This research aims to avoid, as far as possible, popular analyses that reduce the aesthetic component to a set of existing societal circumstances and so end up with a set of sociocultural analyses that may reduce art to a social field that can only be described via the field of humanities.

The temporal and geographical scope of the search:

This study deals specifically with music, musical practice, and musical experiences in the occupied territories in 1967. However, it sometimes expands because the influence of music as an artistic production and its spread can extend beyond a specific region. Therefore, it must be noted that the only experience the study deals with from outside the occupied territories of 1967 is the experience of the Al-Asheqeen Band. This is due to the importance of this experience in spreading and influencing other musical experiences in the occupied territories in 1967. In addition, the experience of the Al-Asheqeen Band has a special significance and is influential in

⁴ Sean Sayers (2020) Marx and Progress, *International Critical Thought*, 10:1, 18-33.

contemporary Palestinian awareness, especially in music. It represents a typical case concerning the music of the Palestinian revolution, as it accompanied and expressed a historical period of particular importance in the history of the Palestinian revolution, especially during the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Syria and Beirut. Al-Asheqeen is also an experiment on the subject of the transformation of musical expression and musical culture.

As for the temporal extensions of the study, it relates to the period between the 1970s up to the present moment, specifically after the era of the Oslo Accords, and therefore it deals with the features and fundamental changes in the musical culture in the last five decades of the history of the Palestinian people. As I indicated above, the study does not cover all musical experiences. However, it instead deals with the most prominent and critical musical experiences between the end of the seventies and the beginning of the Oslo period, then it addresses with the experience of musical institutionalization after Oslo.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

The research had to build on, or debate with, many writers and literature dealing with music in Palestine in general and the study area, with a review of the historical transformations that create and influence artistic expression. Therefore, reviewing the literature dealing with these social transformations was necessary. It must be noted that the available sources about music in Palestine are very scarce, and their term is mostly limited to the descriptive and documentary aspects. There is also an essential part of writings, studies, and critical theoretical productions about art and the sociology of art from Western philosophers, such as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's studies on art and the theories of Theodor Adorno, for example, that cannot be overlooked. It must be emphasized that this review of these essential sources aims for two things: first, to look at what is going on in other human fields, especially those that deal with art within societal contexts; second, a quick look at part of the writings that dealt with the transformations of Palestinian society in the Oslo era, such as the issue of the emergence of new elites and classes and the accompanying cognitive shifts. That is to preserve the image's general background and enhance understanding of what is happening on the cultural and artistic level in Palestinian society.

The book *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance Since 1900* by Muslih Kanā'inah is one of the few book-length contributions in English that deals with music and

musical practice in the West Bank, especially during the first Intifada and the Oslo period.⁵ The book contains several studies by Palestinian and foreign researchers who are musicians and have diverse musical experiences in Palestine and abroad. The research material focuses on the musical and cultural heritage and its transformations since the Nakba through the 1987 uprising, emerging musical interests, and questions of identity and resistance, in addition to presenting part of the experiences of singers and musicians such as Rim Banna and Issa Boulos. Also, the book discusses the relationship of traditional music with new musical interests, such as rap and hip-hop, during specific periods and the role of music in the cause of the Palestinian people as a form of expression and rejection of the Israeli occupation. My own research will later address Issa Boulos because of his importance in giving a general picture of the musical experiences in the seventies until the period of the first Intifada. Including essential musical experiences, testimonies of musicians from that period, and existing artistic expressions within the political and social context.

In 2014, musicologist Nili Belkind titled *Music in Conflict: Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Aesthetic Production*, ethnographic research that required her to collect information about a range of people, institutions, and platforms that deal with music in the West Bank and Palestinian communities inside Israel and their music production, particularly in the period that followed the Oslo Accords. The research addresses the musical discourse and the accompanying musical industry in order to reveal the resulting political identity.⁶

In other words, Belkind's research seeks to reveal the political discourse contained in the expression of music, mainly concerning building the state, the imbalance of power between the

⁵ Muşliḡ Kanā'inah, *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance Since 1900*. (Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁶ Belkind, Nili. *Music in conflict: Palestine, Israel and the politics of aesthetic production*. Routledge, 2021.

two parties, resistance to occupation, and coexistence. This research is significant, as it emphasizes the role of music in expressing the existing political discourse or discourses in the Oslo period. That is, when musical practice and musical production turn into a topic, it cannot become isolated from what is happening around it politically. On the contrary, it becomes part of them internally, from the structure of political discourse, social life, and so on. This perception that is consistent with my own thesis.

As for the meaning of academic musical practice and identity, the music researcher Carol Frierson Campbell published an article entitled “I Would Like to Learn That: Musical Practice, Identity and Resistance in a Palestinian Music Academy.”⁷ This research aimed to understand the values and meanings that musicians try to express through their musical participation and thus expose the concept of identity through their music practice. The researcher resided for some time in Palestine in 2016 to complete her research. She monitored the activities of an institution concerned with learning music and conducted some interviews with students and musicians participating in these activities. Her research aimed to understand the values and meanings that musicians try to express through their musical participation and thus expose the concept of identity through their musical practice.

In her research, Campbell relies on the model of music researcher Christopher Small, who emphasizes the lack of separation between the musical product, whether a musical piece or musical work, and the musical practice.⁸ This means preparing to display or record a musical work, including musical exercises and arrangers, where the exercises occur. All of this is part of

⁷ Frierson-Campbell, Carol, “‘I Want to Learn That’: Musicking, Identity, and Resistance in a Palestinian Music Academy.” (*Action, criticism, & theory for music education* 2016).

⁸ Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening*. (Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

the musical work. Namely, the musical work falls within a social reality, and in this reality lies a set of social relations based on the production of the musical meaning.

Campbell sought to reach in her research the musical meanings within these relationships by interviewing a large group of people within this circle, whether as musicians, arrangers, or administrators. What makes music a form of everyday resistance, she concludes, is not the politicization of music. On the contrary, it liberates music from any political “propaganda.” By emphasizing their “normality” as musicians searching for everyday life, these musicians and students can freely practice and enjoy music. That in itself is a form of resistance to the occupation.

This view is problematic as it implicitly assumes that the separation of music and politics through the artistic establishment underpins the music industry’s development. It must also be emphasized that researcher Campbell’s vision was based on challenging the American and Western media’s stereotypical vision towards the Palestinians. Therefore, she mainly writes for Western readers, and most of them are either music students or those interested in music.

Nevertheless, it may be the only research that deals with the concept of musical meaning and significance, which originates from within a contemporary musical educational institution. Ironically, it confirms my study’s central hypothesis, which creates an effort to “liberate” music, specifically in its institutional discourse, from any “political agenda” to become self-sufficient. In other words, music becomes an “independent” entity from previous “ideologies,” especially in the period of the first Intifada.

Campbell’s research confirms - for the American audience - in some way the “normality” of these young musicians. That is, she emphasizes their “emancipation” from previous ideological forms. What poses a problem, in my opinion, is the lack of questioning about this

“normalism.” This assumes without announcing that escaping from the previous “ideology” is a declaration and confirmation of entering into a contemporary ideology that is linked to the aforementioned transformations in Palestinian society, which is linked to a globalized neoliberal pattern.

On the theoretical level, there are significant contributions in this regard, the first of which lies in a study by the German sociologist Norbert Elias about Mozart and his music entitled *Portrait of a Genius*. In it, he emphasizes the existence of a complex and intertwined social network of power and its influences that Mozart was surrounded by. So, he had to primarily produce “delightful” music for the individuals who commissioned him to produce this music and to have a self-creation of what he wanted in his heart. This analysis of Elias has aroused the ire of music historians, as Mozart’s music is mainly treated, highlighting its “greatness” through the internal structures of this music and comparing it with the music composed before and after him. Thus, art historians often give importance to art by isolating it from its social environment, something that Norbert Elias opposed, and worked on the exact opposite through his research of Mozart’s music. This perspective emphasizes that art and its aesthetic value are always part of a broader circle of social life. It cannot be treated as a field wholly isolated from all kinds of social influences, whether apparent or not.⁹

In terms of sociology, Pierre Bourdieu’s book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* deals with how elite art became art and became for that elite alone. It established a barrier between those who can “taste art, decipher its code, and learn its meanings” and those who cannot.¹⁰ Those who have learned to appreciate the “high” fine arts are

⁹ Norbert Elias, *Portrait of a genius* (California: University of California Press, 1993). Pg. 10-27.

¹⁰ Bourdieu, Pierre, and Richard Nice. *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice, Harvard University Press, 1984. Pg. 2.

supposedly the only ones capable of appreciating them. The dividing line between them is education. Bourdieu analyzes the “both obvious and hidden” relationship, as he put it, between culture and education.¹¹ The educational system hides the class differences produced by social and economic conditions in exchange for the idea of merit and “natural talent,” so culture becomes an ideological function. “The fractions richest in culture capital do in fact tend to invest in their children’s education as well as in the cultural practices likely to maintain and increase their specific-rarity.”¹² The tendency to possess cultural wealth is the product of a general or specific education, tangential or inconsistent, that creates artistic ability in the form of mastering the tools of possessing this wealth and creates the cultural need by giving the means of satisfying it.¹³

Bourdieu confirms that choice, or cultural taste, is tightly linked to social status and stresses the close relationship between taste in art, cultural products, and social status. Also, to remember that culture is not what a person is, but rather what he has, or instead what he has become, and to remember that it is the social conditions that make aesthetic experience possible.¹⁴ In this sense, Bourdieu deals with the cultural heritage of individuals as “social acquisitions” or “cultural capital,” which not only enhances the class position of its owners and gives them “superiority” and distinction but also gives them the tools to reproduce that culture and thus the dominance and continuation of their symbolic power and social status.

Bourdieu looks at artistic and cultural activities at the level of individuals or institutions through their social uses. In this way, Bourdieu sees signs indicating the reinforcement, affirmation, and delineation of class differences and that the artwork is based on an existing

¹¹ Bourdieu, Pierre. Pg. 104.

¹² Bourdieu, Pierre. Pg. 120.

¹³ Bourdieu, Pierre. Pg. 122.

¹⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre. Pg. 287.

combined structure. There is great importance to the discussions that Bourdieu influenced in his studies and opinions, how to deal with art and the possibility of benefiting from them in the framework of analyzing artistic tastes and values through the entrance of sociology in the study of the Palestinian case and the context of the emergence of a globalized Palestinian elite and new lifestyles.

There are, of course, other essential and different approaches to art that pay attention to the importance of art as a tool in confronting domination, that is, the ability of art to deviate from its narrow social role in reproducing the class structure. We find this in Theodor Adorno, who believes that the task of art lies in criticizing the capitalist “instrumental mind,” by producing works of art that defy the logic of the cultural industry, which attempts to generalize tastes and produce similarity and replicate artistic products in a society based on commodity objectification.¹⁵ Based on this, works of art have a value derived from challenging the ordinary and the constant attempt to transcend it.

Despite their rich contribution in this direction, the theories of the sociology of art illuminated and expanded the horizon of vision for works of art but have created a fundamental problem that lies in “ignoring” the works of art in themselves. Thus, it has neglected the artistic value arising from the work of art in itself, and its unique aesthetics, both in terms of its composition and internal logic, sometimes requires specialization or the context of its history within a particular society. Perhaps the sociologist David Inglis’ necessary admission is an indication of this when he tries to broaden the ways of thinking about art by saying, “The value of a particular object (like a work of ‘art’) involves how it is perceived by members of a given

¹⁵ Adorno Theodor, *The Cultural Industry* (London & New York: Routledge 2020). Pg. 98-106.

society, and in turn this perception is determined by the characteristics of who produces or possesses the object.”¹⁶

I argue that these two perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Instead, it is possible to reconcile them, that is, to show the social role of art, without requiring the assumption that art is reduced to this dimension.

This is, we even find in sociology and aesthetics different visions of Bourdieu. For example, in her book *Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art*, Janet Wolff stresses the need to adopt approaches that are not based on reducing “aestheticism” to social analyses. In her vision, she emphasizes the privacy that aesthetic issues enjoy in dealing with them and insists that artworks are not reduced to social and political categories.¹⁷ It gives a set of examples related to aesthetic dimensions that are not subject to social analysis, such as the issue of technical mastery, especially in music. It is possible to listen to an opera with retro content in terms of narration but presenting and playing it involves innovation and mastery. Therefore, the social analysis will not seem convincing to those specialists in particular when sociology gives its value judgments from outside the musical context and refers them almost mechanically to structures and class structures only. While we know this danger and acknowledge the importance of what Wolff says, Bourdieu’s warning also offsets her warning against not reducing art to the social function and against assuming the purity of art from this dimension. This applies to my research here because I can benefit from both aspects of technical proficiency, especially in Palestinian music.

As for the social and economic transformations in Palestine, a broad interest in these issues has emerged in Palestine over the last twenty years. This is in light of the political

¹⁶ Inglis, David. "Thinking art sociologically." In *The sociology of art: Ways of seeing*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Pg.14.

¹⁷ Wolff, Janet. *Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art*. (Routledge, 2021). Pg. 27-47.

transformations in the post-Oslo period. A good amount of research and dissertations deal with these issues, which had to be seen to understand the existing transformations and the systematic treatments of these fundamental problems. I cannot present all of these studies, but we chose to present a few of them in this context, especially those that raise questions that may be related to what this research is trying to present. They are questions related to the qualitative aspects that can be considered when thinking about artistic and musical expression in our current context. Therefore, my review of it does not obligate me to adopt its methods or opinions but to broaden the angle of view by looking at what is happening cognitively in other fields that may help integrate vision.

In the basic features of society and concerning social variables, especially around the post-Oslo middle class and the awareness accompanying it, Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar's book entitled *The Emergence of the Globalized Palestinian Elite* analyzes the context of this "elite" after the Oslo agreement and focuses on reshaping knowledge and practice in light of the spread of civil sector organizations. Civil and non-governmental organizations have emerged that work in the fields of development, democracy, and human rights. They depend on external funding, which raises central questions regarding Western agendas and their impact on social and cultural formations. The authors point out: "the emergence of a new elite that has been structured by its increasing access to the scope of the aid operation. In general, it comprises activists from the newly urbanized middle class, which arose in the seventies and the eighties."¹⁸

The importance of this study stems from its investigation into the emerging meanings in the social formation that takes place in the existing social structures. It questions the conditions of production of this "elite":

¹⁸ Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar, *The Emergence of the Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations, and Local NGOs*. (Ramallah, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, 2006). Pg. 11

ومفهومنا للنخبة أوسع من ذلك، ويشتمل على الطريقة التي نشأت فيها تشكيلات اجتماعية جديدة مترافقة مع بروز المنظور المحوري الليبرالي الجديد (neo-liberal paradigm) الذي حول العلاقات بين الفرد والبنى الاجتماعية. وهذه التغيرات ليس لها فقط تأثيرات مباشرة على الفعل الجمعي، بل في كيفية اندماجها في ساقاة الدولة-المجتمع.

Our concept of the elite is broader than that and includes the manner in which new social formations have arisen in conjunction with the emergence of the (neo-liberal paradigm) perspective that attempted the relations between the individual and social structures.

These changes have not only directed effects on collective action, but also on how they are integrated into the context of the state-society.¹⁹

Thus, the book systematically monitors the cognitive variables resulting from the association of the globalized elite with transnational relations through participation in networking and formulating agendas, which leads to interaction between the local and the global, leading through this to variation and entry of a set of new societal values:

لا يرتبط الفاعلين المحليين والبنى الاجتماعية بالحركة الداخلية للمجتمع، وإنما تتحول بعلاقتها مع الفضاء عبر القومية الجديدة وبالمفاوضات التي تجريها مع أجنادات عملية المساعدات. لذلك، تعتبر الفكرة الرئيسية لدراستنا أن هناك إعادة هيكلة للمعرفة والممارسة، في قطاع المنظمات الأهلية حالياً.

Local actors and social structures are not only linked to the internal movement of society but rather try to relate to the space through the new nationalism and even the negotiations it conducts with the agendas of the aid process. Therefore, the main idea of our study is that there is a restructuring of knowledge and practice and the formation of a new elite in the NGO sector now.²⁰

¹⁹ Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar. Pg. 11

²⁰ Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar. Pg. 10

Hanafi and Tabar's studies confirm that a fundamental shift has taken place in the form of political action, which has led to the emergence of a "civilian style" that emphasizes the professionalization and independence of fields from each other:

فما حدث منذ عقد ونصف هو تحول في نمط الفعل السياسي وشكل التعبئة للمنظمات، وذلك باتجاه نمط مدني للفعل، خالفاً بذلك ذاتيات جديدة وانعكاسية جديدة على المعايير الاجتماعية. وقد تبع هذا التحول عملية المهنة والمأسسة بعلاقتها مع ازدياد التعاون التنموي، حيث قامت المنظمات الأهلية الفلسطينية بنشاطات جديدة على شكل برامج تدريبية وتعليمية مدنية وبرامج توعية. ويرتبط هذا النوع من النشاطات بمفهوم من هو المستفيد، وكيف ينعكس على المعايير الاجتماعية والسياسية لهذه الفئة. نلاحظ، أيضاً، وجود معرفة جديدة من خلال الإحصائيات واستطلاعات الرأي التي تقوم بها مراكز البحوث التي أثرت بشكل مهم على السياسات وأضفت عليها شرعية أكثر مما عليه في الأشكال القديمة للفعل.

What happened a decade and a half ago is an attempt at the pattern of political action and the form of mobilization of organizations towards a civil pattern of action, thus creating new subjectivities and a new reflection on social norms. This transformation was followed by the process of professionalization and institutionalization in its relations with the increase in development cooperation, as the Palestinian civil organizations carried out new civic training, educational programs, and awareness programs. This type of activity is linked to the concept of who the beneficiary is and how it influences the social and political norms of the beneficiary group. We also note the existence of new knowledge through statistics, and opinion polls carried out by research centers that have significantly influenced policies and legitimized them more than in the old forms of the act.²¹

The previous paragraph describes, with some irony, what happened in the music education field and the institutions working in this field. Learning music began with seeking

²¹ Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar. Pg. 13

detachment from the political field. The programs or directions of struggle work as a comprehensive social act in which culture coincides with struggle, and they remain in direct and continuous adhesion. In this context, trends, activities, and academic programs showed interest and focus on the value of this music in and of itself. Its cultural and cognitive value lies in its separation from other fields, especially those linked to the “agenda” of political parties during the first Intifada in 1987. Thus, the institution has added a new normative value to the act of musical practice.

In an article by sociologist Lisa Taraki, entitled “The New Social Imaginary in Palestine after Oslo,” she refers to the social factors and transformations that took place during the Oslo phase. Especially the transformations of “class structure and the accompanying awareness of new social crystallization, lifestyles, and new ethics,”²² according to her definitions. As for Palestine, this happens in the context of deepening colonial control. The lack of structure of the post-colonial state in the Arab world came in light of the invasion of globalized neoliberal policies, the accompanying poverty and unemployment, and the absence of social services and health care. This affected the middle classes, which began to search for individual and family solutions. These attempts have led to the promotion of a culture of individualism and individual achievement.

Taraki considers that there is no homogeneous middle class; instead, she expresses to the idea of the middle class as an ideal and an aspiration. Thus, it is an incubator for this social imaginary, which daily discourse and specific individual and institutional practices reinforce:

²² Turki, Lisa “The New Social Imaginator After Oslo.” (Adidaat Magazine, Birzeit University, 2014). 26-27.

يمكن اعتبار هذه الطبقة، وبخاصة في الضفة الغربية، حاضنة لمتخيل اجتماعي خاص يتم تلمسه في حيثيات وتدفق الحياة اليومية باستمرار. فما يميز هذه المرحلة "ما بعد الاوسلوية" هو سيادة متخيل اجتماعي طبقي يقترب من ان يشكل أيديولوجيا الطبقة الوسطى، ويتمثل بالخطاب اليومي والممارسات الفردية والمؤسسات بعينها.

This class, especially in the West Bank, can be considered an incubator of a particular social imagination constantly felt in daily life's context and flow. What characterizes this "post-Oslawism" stage is the dominance of a class social imaginary that comes close to forming the ideology of the middle class and is represented by daily discourse and specific individual and institutional practices.²³

In her article, Taraki simulates Bourdieu's "social and cultural capital" concept. With the concept of "social imaginary," she raises an epistemological curiosity about the relationship between the connotations and contents of "artistic taste" resulting from the musical practice of the institutions to be discussed and this "new social imaginary." Despite realizing the limitations of the research and its inadequacy in answering this question, it requires research to address it in an adequate and in-depth manner. Despite the lack of sociological evidence that there is "complementary" and overlapping between them, that is, the resulting musical values, it is not based on denial and contradiction with the "social imaginary" resulting from the new social reality and may even nourish it.

Research importance

This research is of particular importance to those working in the field of music in light of the scarcity of research related to contemporary Palestinian music. Where this study aspires to provide an opportunity for self-reflection for individuals and institutions involved in this field and an attempt to explain their activities socially and culturally; in other words, the study seeks

²³ Turki, Lisa. Pg. 52

to bring the forms of musical practice out of its "narrow" musical space to its social and cultural location. Moreover, this allows a broader perspective to understand the privacy of expression in music in the contemporary Palestinian context, especially for musicians and those interested in the artistic field.

The research also hopes to add to the studies interested in the humanities. Social sciences suffer from an acute shortage of studies specialized in musical life in Palestine, especially if we exclude biographical studies that historically describe musical life in Palestine, such as Jerusalem Al-Jawhariya in the *Memoirs of Wasef Jawhariya* and the books of travelers and European visitors. Compared to the totality of contemporary studies related to other arts, such as literature and cinema, there is a need to establish contemporary studies related to music, especially from an analytical point of view.

CHAPTER 2

Music Representation of The Status Quo

Music is an expressive state of the Palestinian revolution, and the closer this expression is to the sentiments of the struggle and situation, the more accurate the representation. The title of this chapter refers to the sixties and seventies when it characterizes Palestinian musical production and expression of the committed national song, particularly as a state of representation. It must be noted that this state of representation later included the expression of the visions and positions of the Palestinian political leadership, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization in particular, especially at the height of its exit from Beirut. However, this representation was only sometimes intended at times.

In this chapter, I will present two essential experiences that shaped the representation of the discourse of the Palestinian revolution. They are the experience of the Al-Asheqeen band and the Palestinian Folklore (El-Funoun) band. The Al-Asheqeen band was established in Damascus in 1977, and through the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Cultural Department, it had the organization's support from the start. The Al-Asheqeen produced many musical works, including "Bi'umi eayniin," (With my own eyes), the album "Wallah lizareik fi aldaar" (I swear to God to plant you at home) in 1977, "Sarhan walmasura" (Sarhan and the pipe) in 1978, "Al-Qassam" (Qassam) in 1980, and the album "Alkalam almubah" (Permissible speech) in 1982. The Palestinian Folklore (El-Funoun) band was founded in 1979 at the initiative of some artists in the Al-Bireh region in Ramallah, which began as a band that presented popular Dabkeh and songs. It also had many musical productions such as "Lawhat falkuluria" (Folklore paintings) in 1982, "Wadi Al-Tuffah" (Apple Valle) in 1984, "Mashaal" in 1986, "Afrah filastinia" (Palestinian weddings) in 1987, and others. These two experiences used traditional material in

their songs and works. These two experiences used traditional material in their songs and works. Specifically, they drew on the rural heritage, as they enjoyed wide attention and spread in most Palestinian villages and cities, including the Palestinian diaspora.²⁴ In analyzing the different stages these two bands have gone through, I am trying to trace the kind of movement of Palestinian music as a presentation of traditional Palestinian music in the sixties and seventies to the eighties and nineties was politicized. It must be noted that El-Funoun's political orientation toward the Palestinian musical presentation differs from how Al-Asheqeen evolves partially because they come from different political bases.

These kinds of music and songs took the heritage of the traditional song as its first material and tried to form it to serve its expressive goals. Much research on the Palestinian song deals with the relationship of this song to the folk song's heritage;²⁵ I do not argue that there is no relationship between the two styles, as it does exist, but it is not a subject of his research; however, this comparison is an example of what is generally emphasized about the idea of "authenticity." As this relationship deepens, this is evidence of the "authenticity" of the national song, which confirms its specificity and deals with it as a product that expresses the authentic Palestinian spirit. Therefore, the usual conclusion is that authenticity belongs to a rural lifestyle that derives its identity from it.²⁶ This assumption came as part of the representation or expression of the national aspirations of the Palestinian national group as well, as there are several interpretations regarding the interest in the Fallāḥ heritage in Palestine.²⁷ Both Liza Darrag and Azmi Bishara agree that this emphasis on these peasant values expresses one of the challenges of the contemporary Palestinian national experience, of which the event of the Nakba

²⁴ Huleileh, Serene. *Fi Maemaean Alraqs*. Dar Al Adab, 2015. Pg. 45-89.

²⁵ Adila, Mutasim, *Manifestations of Love and Hate in the Palestinian Song* (Jerusalem: Al-Quds University, 2008).

²⁶ Sarhan, Nimer, *Our Folk Songs in the West Bank* (Amman: 1968). Pg. 7-47.

²⁷ Fallāḥ: a peasant or agricultural laborer in an Arab country.

and uprooting, the destruction of the Palestinian village, and the break with emerging modernity were a founding part.

Azmi Bishara, for example, in his article “Memory and History,” refers to this as follows:

غلب على الذاكرة الفلسطينية الجماعية طابع الفلكلور، الذي يحاصر التاريخ بدلاً من أن يحاصره التاريخ. كما غلب على الإيديولوجيا الفلسطينية يمينية كانت أم يسارية التشديد على نزعة الأصالة القروية Authenticity القروية. شيمة يعتز بها الفلسطينيون، وغالباً ما يختلط التشديد على الانتماء بالتباهي بالتخلف

The collective Palestinian memory is dominated by the character of folklore, which surrounds history instead of being surrounded by history. The Palestinian ideology, whether right-wing or left-wing, was dominated by an emphasis on rural authenticity. Ruralism is a trait that Palestinians cherish, and the emphasis on belonging is often mixed with boasting of backwardness.²⁸

Folklore and folkloric material has been adopted and used by the Palestinian leadership and the national movement. This culture has been employed as a factor of unity in a national political discourse based on melting the differences between urban and rural lifestyles. Many political parties and factions have held festivals to revive the Palestinian heritage and hosted folk dance and heritage bands. Associations and institutions have also responded to this discourse. Central institutions in the Ramallah area, such as the Ina'sh Al-Usra Association and the Folklore Center, have contributed to organizing annual festivals that deal with the Palestinian agricultural heritage in all its forms by invoking popular Dabkeh bands, songs, photography, and popular dishes. These institutions continue to care for this heritage by preserving, archiving, codifying,

²⁸ Bishara, Azmy, "On Memory and History", Al-Karmel Magazine, No. 50 (1997): 48.

and protecting it. This rural heritage formed the bridge of awareness between the Palestinian national movement and its political goals.

Nevertheless, this preoccupation with documentation and archiving is also transient, according to Bishara, from one of the crises of the contemporary national experience. The interest in what is rural, authentic, and famous in the field of music and song production in Palestine was accompanied by general trends among social researchers, history students, and literature writers toward documentation and “folklorization,” which represented part of the Palestinian national group’s reaction to uprooting on the one hand, and a kind of resistance to the erasure of the Palestinians from the Israeli historical narratives. Perhaps this preoccupation with proving “We were here,” intersects with a permanent resort to authenticity. The old not only represents a kind of resistance to the Zionist narrative but also expresses a state of alienation of the Palestinians from modern Israel. The Palestinian side rejects, keeps excluding it, and puts it at best on its sidelines, consuming its modernity without being an actor in it.²⁹

Furthermore, this unique position that authenticity relishes in the Palestinian national discourse expresses a kind of collective solidarity between what is urban and what is rural by melting differences, as mentioned above, then at the same time. In that case, it may be one of the non-national elements in terms of attending rural folklore. According to Bishara, on behalf of the absent Palestinian urban, which means the absence of a unified cultural center, the absence of the university, the national library, the national theater, the national publishing house, intellectuals’ cafes, the absence of an individual society, and the middle class formed around political

²⁹ Bishara, Azmi, "On Memory and History." 48.

aspirations and a national political project. The absence of the urban means the absence of civil society.³⁰

In the opinion of Palestinian poet, writer, and researcher Zakaria Muhammad, the interest in rural folklore results from distancing from it. It only constitutes a nostalgic return to it within the framework of the experience of modernity for the national group and its alienation from it. Especially in the sixties and seventies:

إن السبب المركزي الذي جعل عبادة الفلكلور تظهر في الستينيات وتزدهر في السبعينيات، يمكن في الحركة الواقعية، الاقتصادية، التي كانت تدفع الناس نحو الانقطاع عن عالم القرية والابتعاد عنه، بأشكال مختلفة. ذلك أن "الجماعة القومية لا تستعيد الفلكلور، الذي كان مخصصاً من قبل فقط لتمتع الأجانب، إلا حين تكون هذه الجماعة القومية قد انفصلت بصورة كافية عن ماضيها هي ذاتها، لكي تنظر من الخارج الى شكلها السابق، إلى عملية انسلاخها وتبديلها وتستطيع أن تستمتع بذلك."

The primary reason that made the devotees of folklore appear in the sixties and flourish in the seventies lies in the realistic, economic movement that pushed people to cut off from the village world and move away from it in various forms. This is because "the national group does not restore folklore, which was previously reserved only for the enjoyment of foreigners, except when this national group has sufficiently detached itself from its past to look from the outside at its previous form, at the process of its disintegration and change, and to enjoy that."³¹

In other words, Zakaria Muhammad says that this interest in heritage and folklore is only an essential part of the Palestinian modernity experience rather than a break from it. I tend to this

³⁰ Bishara, Azmi, "The Amputated Political Discourse and Other Studies," (Ramallah: The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy - Muwatin, 2002).

³¹ Muhammad, Zakaria, *On Palestinian Culture Issues*. Ramallah: (The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy - Citizen, 2002). Pg.36.

opinion, especially when we take experiences like El-Funoun and Al-ashiqeen Palestinian bands. The two bands' reliance on heritage material does not make them call for a nostalgic and imaginary rural past. Instead, it puts them in the process of artistic modernity that seeks to consolidate the Palestinian national community and its national liberation from occupation within the framework of building a modern state.

This calls for the museum concept, where there is a reinterpretation and a different understanding of what is considered art concerning its social function in that context. This part of the past has been “cut out” and presented and formulated to play a new role, with artistic value contributing to the Palestinian national self-definition and vision and presenting Palestinian wedding songs, for example, with the accompaniment of the dabkeh in a theatrical manner that cannot be understood within the framework of the invitation to live an experience from the past. It has been reformulated to suit the general political mood and the existing political discourse.

As researcher Syliva Alajaji points out:

The “authentic” Palestinian located in this public transcript—this “authentic” Self that is being returned to and kept alive—is often embodied in the notion of the Palestinian peasant, or fallāh. As Anthony Smith points out, peasants become “quasi-sacred objects of nationalist concern, since they carry many memories and myths (ballads, dances, crafts, customs, social organizations, tales, and dramas) which the nationalist intellectuals [draw] upon for the construction of their ethnic myth of descent.”³²

It must be recognized that this heritage vision was manufactured through the national movement, emerged through its discourse, and was based on formulating an imagined identity

³² Alajaji, Syliva. “Performing Self: Between Tradition and Modernity in the West Bank.” *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance since 1900*, edited by Moslih Kanaanah et al., Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 99–100.

that sees the “authenticity” of the Palestinian and folklore as a resistance project. Despite the controversy that may be raised, this cannot be classified outside the concept of modernity. Therefore, in this context, the artistic re-presentation of the peasant heritage, whether through singing or dancing, is both a restoration of it and a departure from it. The restoration of this heritage is also a documentation of it and an insistence on establishing the Palestinian narrative and the continuity of its identity and existence that is threatened by the existence of the occupation.

Based on Zakaria Muhammad’s proposition, Bishara finds a difference between restoring the past, which establishes the basis of the modern national imagination, and restoring folklore in the Palestinian case by evoking the difference between memory and history. However, one must be careful not to regard every restoration of folklore as a process of the modern national imagination. As restoring the past in modern national experiences is part of the separation from it and the rupture with it, the process of folklorization is not linked to history only, in the Palestinian case, but to daily memory. Rural memory only represents a partial modernist break with the past, especially if it expresses a daily production process of feeling the loss and the loss of the land.

Although places of memory express loss as a collective memory, “the rural memory that is practiced in seasons, appointments, joys and sorrows does not need monuments, museums, and other things to remember.”³³

"الذاكرة الريفية التي تمارس في المواسم والمواعيد والافراح والاتراح لا تحتاج للأنصبة والمتاحف وغير ذلك

للتذكر"

Bishara goes on to explain the difference:

³³ Bishara, Azmi, *Discourses on the Disabled Renaissance*, (Beirut: Riad Al-Ray, 2003). Pg. 206.

الذاكرة واقعة حية بينما التاريخ محالة لإنفاذها وذلك بتمثيل الماضي بالحاضر. الذاكرة مقدسة ومطلقة، بينما التاريخ علماني ونسبي. تتمسك الذاكرة بالأشياء المحسوسة والملموسة، بالأماكن والصور والمواضيع، اما التاريخ فيتفكر بالزمان وتدفعه، بالعلاقة بين الأشياء. وعندما يثبت مواعيد وأماكن يتم فيها استعادة الذاكرة واستحضارها، فما هذا الا لاعترافه بتقلب الزمان ولإدراكه المرعب ان تقلبه ليس دائري، وان له اتجاها هو الزوال الذي قد يجرف كل شيء. الذاكرة قائمة في ثبات المكان، أما التاريخ فيحاول ان يثبت شيئا ما تقلب الزمان.

Memory is a living fact, while history is an attempt to save it by representing the past with the present. Memory is sacred and absolute, while history is secular and relative.

Memory clings to tangible and intangible things, places, images, and topics, while history reflects on time and its flow and the relationship between things. Moreover, when he establishes dates and places in which memory is recovered and recalled. This is only due to his recognition of the volatility of time and his terrifying realization that it turns around me circularly and has a direction that is the demise that may sweep away everything.

Memory exists in the constancy of place, while history tries to prove something in the volatility of time.³⁴

The Al-Asheqeen and El-Funoun bands have performed hundreds of shows in Palestine, in the Arab world, and around the world. They took it upon themselves to represent the cultural identity threatened by the Palestinian people with the existence of the occupation by celebrating Palestinian folklore and heritage and re-enacting it through music and dance. In addition, these two experiences constituted a musical, artistic case and a model for representing the Palestinian political situation, establishing a set of aesthetic values that will be the subject of discussion and analysis.

³⁴ Bishara, Azmi, *Discourses on the Disabled Renaissance*. Pg. 207.

I also focus my attention on these two experiences since they are considered a precursor to an artistic stage that has implications later in the period of the first Intifada, specifically after Oslo, as the musical discourse will change even in their productions. Furthermore, a new phase will begin, the discourse of which will crystallize through “separation” from the “external” message, meaning that the connotations of this discourse will become based on the artistic and musical act, thus transforming “representation” into a “subject.”

What are the aesthetic characteristics of these two experiences? That is the question the following pages will answer. In addition, this chapter will present several critical musical experiences in the late period of the First Intifada. These experiences mainly influenced the establishment of an artistic, musical vision that focused on artistic elements, an attempt to escape the direct influence of the political discourse of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as those separations constituted the primary nucleus of musical experiences, based on artistic and musical dimensions in their contents - despite their remaining representing a different political reality - in addition to other factors that worked to develop this trend, specifically the existence of institutions concerned with teaching music and crystallizing their discourse on music in several forms. This will be the focus of the second section of this study.

I. The Palestinian Folklore (El-Funoun) Band:

The beginnings of the El-Funoun go back to the year 1979 when it arose from the interest of a group of young men in Palestinian folklore and its preservation and protection from loss and extinction. As stated in their definition of their beginnings:

El-Funoun was founded in 1979 by many enthusiastic, talented, committed men and women. Since the beginning, they have realized the importance of enhancing the connectedness of Palestinians wherever they are with their roots, culture, and

history. The Troupe played a crucial role in establishing the Popular Art Centre, a community organization committed to raising awareness about the arts.³⁵

From the beginning, the artistic vision of the arts revolved around traditional folklore, particularly the peasant heritage. This came in its introductory brochure in clear language: “El-Funoun has aimed at expressing the spirit of Arab-Palestinian folklore and contemporary culture through unique combinations of traditional and stylized dance and music.”³⁶

El-Funoun was not working in a comfortable or appropriate atmosphere. Its members, most of them were volunteers, were persecuted by the Israeli occupation. Many were arrested for their political activities, which negatively affected its production and the continuity of its performances.³⁷ During the first intifada, the Israeli occupation pursued Palestinian intellectuals and artists, tried to prevent and besiege their activities, and confiscated their artistic works, such as music tapes and other works.

This artistic vision confirms the connection of the Palestinian identity with its rural (Alfalahi) dimension. Most of its works revolve around refining and reproducing this rural (Alfalahi) heritage centrally linked to the relationship with the land and the social and spiritual life that revolves around it, primarily through the experience of Palestinian uprooting and the highly symbolic representations that the land carries in this colonial and settler context. It should be noted that there is a paradox in that the West Bank farmers did not experience uprooting from the Palestinian village. Instead, the experience remained limited to the camps close to the cities,

³⁵ (“The Beginnings | El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe”). www.el-funoun.org/content/beginnings.

³⁶ Introductory leaflet for the Palestinian Folklore Band.

³⁷ About the story of the al-Funun troupe, it is possible to refer to the book “*Fi Maemaeen Alraqs*” Page 141 By researcher and band member Serene Huleileh. It documents 36 years since the founding of the troupe, the various stages it went through, and the experiences it went through as a group. And as individuals through their presence in the band.

and the “Palestinian village” began to draw the features of the Palestinian identity as seen by the “preservation” activists and the political establishment.

El-Funoun emphasizes the concept of a “modern” vision. According to the arts, it is in a state of continuous transformation. From the band’s point of view, it is aware of its historical position at the heart of modernity. In other words, it reinvests all of these symbols to melt them into the process of liberation, which requires the construction of the national narrative.

El-Funoun went through several artistic stages from its inception until today. Its artistic visions underwent several transformations, especially in presenting and reproducing part of the Palestinian folklore, singing, and dancing. Part of this transformation resulted from changes in the general reality, especially the political and social one, in addition to the personal reality of the division.³⁸ It is possible to divide the stages that the El-Funoun went through into three major stages: the first is the band’s beginning, the second is considered the “golden era,” and the third stage is the career. The first stage is the beginning stage, in which the band produced its first work, “Lawhat Falkuluria,” (*Folklore paintings*) in 1982. The work was produced based on field research based of a compilation of the singing heritage of four Palestinian villages and presented in this work.³⁹ In “Wadi Al-Tuffah” (*Apple Valle*) in 1984, through which El-Funoun continued to highlight the character of the peasant heritage through folklore paintings that refer to peasant lifestyles, using the modernized folk dance, traditional singing, Mawwal, Zajal, and songs of social occasions in the life of “alfalihin.” There was also the rise of some enthusiastic songs, such as “Wadi Al-Tuffah” (*Apple Valle*) and “Talat Al-Barouda,” (*The gun came out*), which bear a character of resistance against the occupation.

³⁸ A large part of the band's members was persecuted and arrested by the Israeli occupation, and this led to interruptions and lack of continuity for long periods in the band's march. Huleileh, Serene. *Fi Maemaean Alraqs*. 2015. Pg. 162-167.

³⁹See Folkloric Scenes 1982 <http://www.el-funoun.org/content/folkloric-scenes-1982>

This stage was characterized by the fact that it wanted to convey what was happening “literally” in the Palestinian village to the theater, honestly and without “interference,” in search of the sincerity of representation. This is confirmed by Khaled Qatamesh, one of the band’s founders and its curator, in an interview with him about the circumstances, origins, and development of El-Funoun, and its artistic vision. He states: “At the beginning of the establishment, the arts used to draw from the heritage and transfer it to the theater without interfering with its artistic structure or subjecting it to artistic technical requirements.”⁴⁰

The second stage is the stage that El-Funoun considers its “golden era,” which began with the production of “Mish’al” in 1986, which is close to being a musical-inspired story during the Ottoman period.⁴¹ The artistic treatments and visions of the band differed at this stage, as dramatic elements emerged and musical arrangement by the Sabreen band, compared to previous works.⁴² Later, the band performed “Palestinian Weddings” in 1987 and “Marj Ibn Amer” in 1989. At this stage, it became clear that the artistic vision of the arts sees the practice of folklore heritage as a form of resistance. Moreover, what is meant by that is the re-enactment and employment of this heritage.

In other words, it was placed politically and reinterpreted within the experience and resistance of the occupation. Merely presenting the songs of “Palestinian weddings” in that period is an evocation of the place or a stimulus to activate the memory of the places. This was enough to inflame the masses who were saturated with the presence of the land and remind them

⁴⁰ See <http://www.el-funoun.org/content/نقاط-أساسية-تفيد-في-التعريف-بالعوامل-الأساسية-التي-ساهمت-في-استمرار-عمل-فرقة-الضنون-الشعبية>

⁴¹ See Mish’al 1986 <http://www.el-funoun.org/content/mish'al-1986>

⁴² The Sabreen Musical band was founded in Jerusalem in the early 1980s. The band is associated with Saeed Murad, the band's composer and songwriter, and Camelia Gibran, the band's lead singer. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the Sabreen Band has become an institution for artistic and musical production and development in Jerusalem. See <https://www.sabreen.org>

of their continuous uprooting from it. The land here means the land of the peasants, “Alfalihin,” around which their lives, values, and family lifestyles revolve. Therefore, “Shorabana” in “Marj Ibn Amer” represents the continuity of the farmers’ life and the ability to produce and survive, as water is a central element that the farmers cannot live without.⁴³ The presence of “Marj Ibn Amer” in the Palestinian memory has a remarkable impact as one of the most fertile lands of Palestine, the richest in water, and its high agricultural productivity. “Marj Ibn Amer” was colonized and exploited early in the twenties by the Jewish National Fund, expelling and displacing thousands to become an integral part of the memories of the beginnings of the Palestinian Nakba.

However, the El-Funoun band succeeded at that stage in making the “Fallahi” legacy a source of inspiration and an essential element in its struggle against colonialism and transforming this legacy into a national vision without carrying direct political slogans and without using big names or major revolutionary symbols. Despite the presence of songs with a direct revolutionary meaning, such as “Talat albarudati” (*The gun came out*) and the song “Mn mazrieati wamin tli,” (*From my farm and from my hill*), the El-Funoun Ensemble captured this charged public demand and built its artistic experience on it as a bridge between that awareness and the lived political reality. Therefore, evoking the songs and dances of the peasants over the stage becomes a symbol of resistance to colonialism and establishes a Palestinian national identity within the existing consciousness.

The third phase of the career of the El-Funoun began with the production of “Talla Wara Talla” (*Look after look*) in 1994, after the period of the First Intifada. It is noticeable that El-

⁴³ Shorabana is one of the songs of the arts group "Marj Ibn Amer". It is taken from a traditional song that the peasants perform in certain seasons to hasten the rain to water their crops, and for the sake of fertility. Some sources say that it is a very old custom and has legendary roots.

Funoun started towards a new line in its artistic visions, which formed part of the transformation of artistic and musical discourse. This is precisely what we will discuss in the subsequent chapters of this study.

In general, the arts began to develop their work within artistic and performance dimensions, so we notice a remarkable development in dance performance and the influence of various types of dances, such as ballet and contemporary dance. And the use of symbols such as keys in the work “Haifa, Beirut & Beyond” in 2003. And the use of modern music by authors such as Marcel Khalife and the Rahbani brothers. The musical use of traditional songs has also changed. In the album “Zareef” in 2006, we notice the entry of Western wind instruments such as the trombone and the band that perform traditional melodies, in addition to the use of contemporary techniques in music recording in the studio such as adding sound effects and cutting methods while recording the playing tracks.

El-Funoun has also become an institution with a group of artistic projects it supervises. The most prominent may be “Bara’m El Funun,” (*Arts buds*), which allows young people interested in various types of dances to join the band, giving a contemporary spirit to the band and increasing its openness to other types of dances and contemporary music. This is what we notice in the late works such as “Folklore and Hip-Hop” in 2004 and “6 Seconds in Ramallah” in 2011.

The Palestinian “heritage” in terms of peasant lifestyles is still the main inspiration for the band’s work. However, the artistic representation of this heritage is variable. The representation has become independent in the current stage because it has become an object. This appeared in the declaration of the artistic vision of the El-Funoun band in its latest introductory publication:

Developing and promoting contemporary Palestinian dance through reviving Palestinian folklore, and building on it by adding El-Funoun's unique dance style. This style is a product of El-Funoun's own social and artistic perception influenced by Arab and international dance experience.⁴⁴

Attention to the nature of artistic production has become a central question for the band, and "sincere representation" is no longer sufficient, which was evident through the band's contemporary works. The band realized that for continuity, it should focus on the artistic side and create contemporary works of art that simulate heritage and others that are not based on it.

Khaled Qatamesh, the band's caretaker, confirms this idea by saying:

في بداية التأسيس كانت الفنون تنهل من التراث وتقوم بنقله إلى المسرح دون تدخل في بنيته الفنية أو إخضاعه لمتطلبات تقنية فنية، وبعد التأسيس بعدة أعوام بدأت تتضح شخصية خاصة بالفرقة تبحث عن التميز في كل ما تقدمه على المسرح وبدأت يتردد في أحاديثنا مصطلح مدرسة الفنون أو رؤية الفنون اخذين منطق التوازن بين الأصالة والمعاصرة والاستناد إلى الفلكلور في بناء أعمالنا الفنية القادمة وبقي باب هذا المفهوم مفتوح في كال فترة مفصلية تمر بها الفرقة ليشكل الهادي للعمل القادم والجديد. وفي نفس الوقت اخذ أحد المفهومين " الأصالة والمعاصرة " يطغي على الآخر بحسب الرسالة والفكرة التي تريد الفرقة تحقيقها من العمل الجديد.

At the beginning of the establishment, El-Funoun used to draw from the heritage and transfer it to the theater without interfering with its artistic structure or subjecting it to artistic or technical requirements. The door of this concept remained open in every pivotal period the band went through to guide the next and new work. El-Funoun adopted the logic of balance between originality and contemporary and relied on folklore in constructing our upcoming works of art. At the same time, one of the two concepts,

⁴⁴ See El-funoun vision <http://el-funoun.org/content/our-vision>

“originality and modernity,” began to prevail over the other, according to the message and the idea that the band wanted to achieve from the new work.⁴⁵

This means and confirms the independent tendency of art. Through this independent tendency, it will be able to express the contemporary Palestinian identity more freely, which is in the process of formation. Despite the criticism it may bring. There is no doubt that artistic expression has matured at this stage and has begun to write its style that emphasizes the artistic value and its distance from “propaganda” or factional interests. It may be helpful to remember that these artistic transformations, despite the faith and sincerity of their proprietors, are also one of the results of the pre-Oslo political structure, which is considered a double-edged sword. This opened a new horizon for artistic expression but simultaneously subjected it to new conditions.

II. The Al-Asheqeen Band

Al-Asheqeen Band was founded in 1977 in Damascus by the late national leader Abdullah Al-Hourani - Abu Munif, head of the Cultural Department of the PLO and a member of the organization's Executive Committee. The Palestinian composer Hussein Nazik and the Palestinian writer and poet Ahmed Dahbour co-founded it, in addition to Ahmed Al-Jamal, who was responsible for managing it at the time. Since its inception, it has formed a distinct cultural situation in the history of the Palestinian people and embodied their struggle through various lyrical paintings that relied on their beginnings in the folklore song.⁴⁶

The al-Asheqeen band clung to the official Palestinian establishment, that is, to the Palestine Liberation Organization, according to a biographer of Al-Asheqeen.⁴⁷ The band was the

⁴⁵ See <http://www.el-funoun.org/content/-/نقاط-أساسية-تفيد-في-التعريف-بالعوامل-الأساسية-التي-ساهمت-في-استمرار-عمل-فرقة-الفنون-الشعبية>

⁴⁶ Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel. *For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016*. (Gaza, 2016). Pg. 30.

⁴⁷ Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel. *For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016*. Pg. 32.

artistic spokesperson for the PLO, which is proven by the band's experience in Syria and Lebanon, where the band performed in the presence of the organization's leaders most of the time and sang in harmony with their political positions, despite the band singing of the resistance and the importance of that in creating and stimulating this awareness. In the eyes of some, there may be nothing wrong with that. In the eyes of some, the Al-Ashqeen band has constantly stimulated the spirit of resistance in all its forms.

The playing the role of artistic spokesman for the Palestine Liberation Organizations. Heritage songs formed its musical material and the band employed them to stress the relationship with the land (the land of the village), the source of inspiration for the band. Similarly, this is what we notice specifically at the beginning of the band's work, such as the song "Wallah Lizareik B'bldar Ya Eud Allawz Al'akhdar," (*I swear to God to plant you in a home, oh green almond rod*) and presenting traditional melodies such as "Jafra" and "Ala Dalouna." However, the political events took place later, and Al-Asheqeen presented a direct political song, which reflects the organization's point of view in several political stages, such as the song "*Bear witness, O world, upon us and Beirut*" after the PLO left Beirut in 1982. The Al-Asheqeen Band documented, through its songs, key stations that passed in the history of the contemporary Palestinian revolution. In the album "Alkalam Almubah" (*Permissible speech*) in 1982, the band was transmitting the positions and the course of the battles the Palestinians were waging during the Lebanese Civil War. The song "Sour" conveyed what the Palestinian fedayeen "fighters" were doing in the city, and the song "Sabra and Shatila" documented that terrible massacre.

The Al-Asheqeen went through two major stages: the first stage was represented by the production of the songs of the Palestinian revolution, which were produced outside Palestine and

with the support of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is the period known as fedayeen “fighters” work, dominated by songs of arms and liberation.⁴⁸

The band performed most of its songs in concerts, including the famous Aden concert in 1982, which was held on the anniversary of the launch of the Palestinian revolution in Aden. The band also dealt with its work in the Palestinian revolution against British colonialism in 1936. The album “Sarhan walmasura” (*Sarhan and pipe*) in 1978 was sung by the poet Tawfiq Ziyad, and the band’s composer Hussein Nazek composed it. The Al-Asheqeen were inspired by the story of Sarhan al-Ali from Arabs al-Saqr, who blew up an oil pipeline in the 1936 revolution in Tal al-Harithiya in the Jenin area.⁴⁹ The band also reproduced and distributed the song “From Acre Prison,” written by the Palestinian poet Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Hamdan al-Barghouti, which is sometimes attributed to the poet Noah Ibrahim, on the anniversary of the execution of three fighters by British colonialism.⁵⁰ The popular Palestinian Dabkeh also accompanied almost all of the band’s performances. Its role also emphasized the Palestinian cultural identity, inspired by the heritage of the Palestinian village, and centered around the relationship with the land.

As for the first Intifada stage, Al-Asheqeen moved away from the earth’s centrality in the band songs, from the presence of weapons and the commando work in liberation, and focused on songs that directly simulate the Intifada of Stones. The band released the album “Children of Stones” in 1988 and “Singing Intifada” in 1989. The band sang for the martyrs of the Intifada, such as “Sabel Oyouno,” (*His eyes closed*) or “I am from Gaza.” Also, the band used the symbols

⁴⁸ It is possible to find out about the history, establishment and development of the Al-Asheqeen band in the book Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel “*For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016.*”

⁴⁹ Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel “*For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016.*” Pg. 38.

⁵⁰ Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel. *For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016.* Pg. 127.

of the revolution, such as the keffiyeh. There is no doubt that the songs of the Al-Asheqeen band have achieved great popularity, and they had great resonance, especially with the major faction in the PLO, the Fatah movement.⁵¹

The Al-Asheqeen relied on collective singing, singing voices of both sexes, and the chorus (collective singing). The solo singer took turns performing the melody, which is monophonic⁵² and primarily a form of musical position in classical Arabic music in the Levant.⁵³ Arabic rhythms were used, such as Masmoudi, Maqsum, and Wahda⁵⁴, these are the rhythms that the Arab ear used to hear and accompanied the Taqtuqa and the folk song.⁵⁵ Al-Asheqeen used the classical oriental Takht⁵⁶ instruments, the oud, the qanun, the percussion instruments, the flute, and later the “keyboard” or the “organ.” These instruments were used traditionally, that is, to serve the band’s main idea, which is the song or the word.

There is no doubt that Al-Asheqeen’s singing is rooted in the modernist experience of Arabic music as well, especially in Egypt. Sayed Darwish’s experience in composing and singing is considered a pioneering and avant-garde experience, not only from a technical point of view but also as the first modern musical experience in terms of employing lyrical and musical

⁵¹ Al-Hadi, Fadi Abdel “*For Palestine We Sing: Songs of the Palestinian Revolution, Al-Asheqeen, and Heritage 1977-2016.*” Pg. 56-58.

⁵² Monophony: Melodies with a single melodic line are called, and polyphonic melodies are called. Classical Arabic music is monophonic, that is, it has a single melodic line and is not polyphonic. In some contemporary musical experiments, the polyphony was used, such as the experience of the Rahbani brothers, Marcel Khalife and others.

⁵³ Walid Gholmieh defines the musical position in an interview as follows: musical position is a word used idiomatically for a group of musical sounds arranged in a particular order and subject to technical arithmetic exponents and fixed rules proceeding according to a unique musical system.

⁵⁴ Arabic music is distinguished by its rhythmic nature and has a variety of rhythmic weights. The rhythm is defined as periodic with a regular pulse, and there are many of these weights and their types, according to the region. The country has its rhythms, for example, and the Maghreb.

⁵⁵ Taqtuqa: Salim al-Hilu defines it in his book “*Theoretical Music*” as follows: “a light song that does not take great care to make it artistically perfect. The song (Taqtuqa) has a great impact on the moral and political guidance of the people because it is easy to memorize and sing, is very popular, and is beloved to all hearts.”. It is distinguished rhythmically by its lightness. Muhammad Abdel-Wahhab composed many of the “Taqtuqa,” and contributed to developing it. Today, “Taqtuqa” is the main style of contemporary Arabic music. It has become a particular style.

⁵⁶ Takht is the representative musical ensemble, the orchestra, of Middle Eastern music. Pg. 185.

heritage in political, social, and economic cases. He transferred the functions of music and singing in the palaces of the sultans and governors of the Ottoman legacy to public singing. Hence, his “simple” songs and melodies carried the expressions of the poor, economically, and politically marginalized classes. Songs such as “Shadi alhizami,” (*Tighten the belt*), “Al-Hilweh De,” (*This sweet*) “Zaruni,” (*Visit me*), “Al-Hashashin,” (*The junkies*), and “Quum Ya Masry” (*Get up Egyptian*) are among the taqatiq that constituted an important event in the history of Arabic singing—a decisive and fateful historical period in the history of Egypt, which sought political and national liberation from the clutches of British colonialism and, at the same time, experienced a knowledge renaissance that was reflected in cultural production at all levels. Later, Sayed Darwish’s experience was generalized, and the modern Egyptian state helped in that through its relations and its often-dominant influence over the cultural situation in the Arab world.

Also, from a technical and cultural point of view, establishing the Al-Asheqeen in Damascus in 1977 provided a greater cultural openness to the Arab world and its artistic productions, which was at a historical stage with an Arab and international specificity, where the leftist tide had a political presence and critical intellectual contributions to contemporary Arab thought.

As in the experience of the famous arts troupe, Al-Asheqeen did not copy the Palestinian heritage but instead employed it. It was performing a musical, artistic, and visual reformulation of melodic folklore material according to the requirements of the show and the audience. This is confirmed by Hussein Nazek, the band’s leading composer, in an interview with the composer and researcher Issa Boulos.⁵⁷ In that interview, Nazek indicates that modifications of rhythms

⁵⁷ Boulos, Issa. *Negotiating the elements: Palestinian freedom songs from 1967 to 1987.* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013). Pg. 60.

and musical position were chosen in proportion to the collective sense and taste to be palatable to the ears of the listeners. In other words, the heritage here is a collective imagination that can be employed politically through art.⁵⁸ Only a collective imagination can be employed politically in the heritage here through art.

The band's productions were interrupted for about 17 years, only to return in 2010. It was announced that the band would be transformed into a national institution.⁵⁹ The "new version" of the songs of the Al-Asheqeen band has chosen two destinations; the first is Al-Asheqeen acceptance that band songs are political propaganda for the Palestinian Authority and its program. The second direction is the band's acceptance to remain artistic in national nostalgia for a specific period. What gave the band great importance in the past was its involvement and ability to present songs that touched the collective conscience and sense at the time; it is a capacity that seems non-existent today, in light of the political project that Al-Asheqeen's new songs serve. This happened in Palestine, where the Al-Asheqeen band entered for the first time that year, and they performed concerts for the first time inside Palestine in the city of Ramallah and the town of Abu Dis.⁶⁰

In the last stage, as one of the features of the post-Oslo political transformation, the Al-Asheqeen turns into an institution attached to the political institution. Here, the problem of representation floats to the surface and becomes apparent at this stage. In the past, the band's

⁵⁸ Boulos gives an example of this in the song "Wallah la-Azra"ak bi-al-Dār" (I vow to plant almonds in the home) was one of the songs that was based on folk material. It is referenced in Yusra Arnita's 1968 *Al-funūn al-sha"bīyyah fī Falas.tīn* (Traditional arts in Palestine), and appears in the book in maqām bayāt, and in 5/4 meter, whereas in Al-Ashiqeen's version it is changed to the more Western-friendly maqām h. ijāz and in 4/4 meter. Both of these changes drastically altered the interpretation of the piece, adopting a more cosmopolitan/ urban melodic and rhythmic framework. Pg. 60.

⁵⁹ See: Donia Al-Watan Electronic Newspaper "Al-Asheqeen to a National Institution." <https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2010/11/21/158816.html>

⁶⁰ See "Al-Asheqeen Band Concert Inside the Palestinian Territories." *YouTube*, 13 Nov. 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=30bML4aniX8.

songs were identified with the existing political and revolutionary situation they represented and in the pure form of El-Funoun's band, which had previously resolved this contradiction by turning representation into a self-contained subject through the "independence" of the artistic and musical message.

What should be noted in this comparison, and taken into account, is that the "Songs of Al-Asheqeen Band" was producing its songs and music abroad, which means that it was not living under occupation, and its daily threat. Moreover, Al-Asheqeen Band was directly or indirectly expressing the positions of the Palestine Liberation Organization. While the El-Funoun band and other local bands produced their songs under the occupation in simple and unique ways at the beginning, they used to see an indirect expression that carried high symbolism as one of the means to avoid the oppression and violence of the occupation.

Al-Asheqeen insisted on adhering to the official Palestinian position, which might put it in the "factional song" category or a state of nostalgia for the seventies. Today, this discourse of representation is no longer convincing due to the change in political reality. The band's songs are transformed into an organization based on "protecting" its legacy. This role can only be played through some of the band's new songs that call for reconciliation between Palestinians.

Consequently, these two experiences (El-Funoun and Al-Asheqeen) constituted two models regarding transformation in their musical expression. This transformation was linked to the post-Oslo era and its political, economic, and social consequences. Art had to "adapt" to a new phase, and thus its development and continuity, or it would perish and remain in memory, representing a historical phase. Alternatively, the Oslo phase pushed in this direction. The growth of cultural institutions since the Oslo Accords, specifically in the result of the second intifada,

has catalyzed a major institutionalized mobilization of the arts within the struggle over identity, and representation.

Abstracts and Conclusions

This chapter contrasts two significant musical experiences, namely, the El-Funoun band and the Al-Asheqeen band, in that they carry categories, connotations, and values in contact with the history of the national movement and the history of the Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation. Thus, it is essential to the experience of contemporary Palestinian modernity and its cultural categories.

The chapter also dealt with different periods of the history of the two bands, from their beginnings and passing through different periods. They may be intermittent, but this aimed to understand the artistic values and transformations these two experiences underwent. These artistic transformations were accompanied by the primary stages of the Palestinian resistance movement and its leaders, whether inside the occupied territories or abroad. The musical production of these two experiences is distinguished, despite the specificity of each experience in its endeavor to be “sincere” in its carrying of liberation statements, in carrying symbols and direct connotations in expressing the state of rejection of the occupation, and the state of resistance and striving towards freedom and the building of an independent state.

We have noticed through the discussion in this chapter that the heritage of the Palestinian village constituted the first material that was employed in the production of the songs of the two bands, and the form of this employment the heritage of the Palestinian village changed in different periods of the history of the two bands. We must recognize the political and historical role played by the Palestinian leadership in deepening and consolidating the importance of the Palestinian village’s heritage and lifestyle. In a previous discussion, I showed that this

connection does not come within the framework of glorification or a call for the necessity to restore those lifestyles as modes of salvation. Instead, it is within a framework that calls for liberation and the employment of those values and their symbols in the experience of Palestinian modernity from the point of view of the historical leadership of the Palestinian people.

In this context, the use of this heritage, especially in the first experiences of the two bands, remains hidden within it for this existing harmony, even if it was not intended between the major categories of those musical experiences and between the existing political leadership. Presenting the heritage and employing it, albeit in different and varied forms, remains to preserve the originally formed consciousness. The heritage carries within it a modernist vision, and at the same time, it does not question the foundations on which this vision was built.

We have seen a shift in the artistic vision of the El-Funoun and Al-Asheqeen with the beginning of the first intifada. Their artistic productions were evident in approaching the current state of the intifada, identifying with it, and drawing inspiration from it as a significant event in the history of the struggle with the occupation. This is despite the interruptions in the musical production that accompanied the El-Funoun, as it is directly living in a state of threat from the occupation for every musical production that glorifies the existing state of resistance.

We might conclude that the Oslo Accords led to a new phase of artistic visions, such as El-Funoun and Al-Asheqeen, which were more preoccupied with existential questions, tools, and artistic formulas. These works remain in the memory as part of making the Palestinian cultural identity, but the debate remains about identity-making and the Oslo phase's political economy. The artistic perceptions of the two bands were related to traditional and rural, and the path and history of artistic production referred to the previous theoretical debate. This was evident in the goals that these bands set for themselves. The return to heritage may be an expression of modern

national aspirations, as the process of folklorization is a process of forgetting simultaneously. But at the same time, this return to the past and heritage was an expression of a political will pursued by the PLO, and later the Palestinian Authority, that made restoring the past a hostage to the dynamics of aspiration to the state rather than to identity, or turned folklore into a truncated past of national aspirations.

CHAPTER 3

The Political Song of the 1987 Intifada

It is worth mentioning, for the sake of methodological framing, that this chapter does not come within the framework of an attempt at the artistic history of music and singing produced in different periods of the first intifada. It is not an archival work - despite the importance of that - but rather a cultural reading, belonging to the spirit of the cultural studies approach described in the theoretical introduction to this thesis and an overview of the most prominent musical and lyrical experiences that emerged during the first intifada period. This impacted shaping contemporary Palestinian political awareness, which, in turn, contributed to creating the nucleus of musical practice in its literary, artistic, and later elaborate forms, known as committed singing or committed music in that period. In other words, this chapter presents an essential part of these musical experiences. It looks at their aesthetic foundations from the technical and musical points of view as a kind of artistic practice with cultural dimensions. This aims to understand how the musical experience was employed and the social values it carried between 1987-1992.

The first Intifada in 1987 constituted a qualitative revolutionary state. After the Palestine Liberation Organization and its apparatus left Beirut after its invasion by the Israeli occupation and settled in Tunisia, the Palestinian people entered a new phase of daily resistance characterized as popular and unarmed. So, the Palestinians took the stone as a weapon in the face of all the occupation's weapons. This image inspired millions worldwide, and this uprising was called the Uprising of Stones. Local leadership was formed for this uprising, secretly operating because it was under direct threat of arrest by the occupation. It was known as the Unified National Command, which initiated the issuance of the Intifada statements and called it "The

Intifada Call;”⁶¹ this was a direct communication between the rising masses and the unified leadership. These statements, issued once a month, contain a program of struggle and mobilization based on giving motivational guidelines and instructions about the course of the uprising and the steps that will be taken for its continuation, such as announcing days of general strikes, mass marches, boycotts of Israeli goods, and the militant roles of social groups such as students, farmers, and merchants.

At this stage, the revolutionary event moved inside the occupied Palestinian territories. This model of struggle took a mass direction that was not based on carrying arms but on the participation of people of all segments, regardless of their class, party, or social positions, which established a less centralized and less bureaucratic model than that of the Palestine Liberation Organization.⁶²

When we talk about music during the first Palestinian Intifada 1987-1992, whether as pure music or as a singing practice, we are talking about that music that shaped the conscience of an entire Palestinian generation; those songs spread during the period of the uprising of stones and contributed to building national and political awareness. Anecdotal evidence suggests that even having cassettes of these songs could have been grounds for arrest by the occupation, and people often hid them. This music and songs carried expressions of direct daily resistance, such as the political slogans used, and everyday vocabulary, such as the stone, the flag, the Molotov cocktail, the slingshot, and the barricade. It is possible to say that this singing, and this music, primarily produced during the first period of the 1987 uprising, which was a continuation of a previous artistic approach, carried the concern of direct expression and found in it a means of

⁶¹ See Statements of the First Intifada (1987 Intifada of Stones). https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3973

⁶² By reviewing the statements of the first Intifada, it is noticeable that they address mixed groups of the Palestinian people. Statement No. 5 addresses the category of merchants and urges them to adhere to the general strike and not to raise prices and monitor them.

daily resistance. It was not a different medium from what was in place and did not claim its artistic “independence.” On the contrary, it saw a complementary voice to the political and militant roles of the Palestinian parties affiliated under the banner of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Describing this music as a state of representation between the subject and the object, between the rising self and the existing state of struggle state, it was distinguished by its directness in expressing that revolutionary state and the current struggle. This is one of the most critical factors that helped its spread, and which gave it particular importance. This music was known for its adherence to the state of struggle and was sometimes accused of being “ideological.”

I. The Straightforward Political Song of the 1987 Uprising:

Most of the musical productions during the first Intifada imitated the model of the traditional song in terms of performance, such as melodic sentences, rhythmic and poetic forms such as “Da’louna” and “Ataaba,”⁶³ and they reflected the political discourse based on resistance to occupation and on liberation. In its glory, it focused on the collective spirit at work and the relationship with the land and was fluent in the discourse of heroism and sacrifice for the sake of the community. These traditional formulas have been used, and words simulate the direct political reality, precisely the reality of the Intifada. For example, in the song “Atalae yala ealayhim atalae” (*Come out, let us go, at them, come out*) by the Al-Asheqeen band, we can see that the song reflects traditional songs in terms of performance and reflects the political discourse founded on resistance to occupation.⁶⁴

⁶³ The Ataaba is a traditional Arabic musical form sung at weddings, festivals, and other occasions that is popular throughout the Middle East.

⁶⁴ “أغنية/ اطلع يلا عليهم اطلع.” *YouTube*, 22 Sept. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnNIHP0Pwcl.

The inherited Palestinian folk singing, which is based for the most part on the imagination of villagers, constituted the primary material for these songs and music. It employed the symbols of peasant lifestyles as an essential element in formulating the Palestinian identity to establish its threatened existence and strengthen the current struggle. However, this effect had a different weight in all the experiments. It was one of many expressive forms, especially in the later experiments, such as the experience of Sabreen (*patient*) and the Alrahaalat (*travelers*) bands.

The Palestinian political song at this stage underwent a fundamental transformation in light of the Intifada, as it became involved in the revolutionary action, carrying its vocabulary and hopes, participating in it, and contributing to its organization and mobilization. The political song is no longer a missionary song about the revolution or as well as it used to be. These songs were produced by activists involved in this uprising and the Palestinian political factions in the Unified National Command and the Liberation Organization. The discourse of these songs is characterized by the fact that it simulates the existing situation and is based on a tangible reality that these activists live in their daily lives, in which the production of songs has become an integral part of the act of popular resistance. This act was entirely consistent with that state of struggle. In other words, the political song at that stage directly expresses what is happening daily, using its available vocabulary and tools.⁶⁵ It may be impossible to look at these songs in isolation from the state of the uprising at that time. For example, in the song “Tala silahi min jirahi ya thawratana tula silahi” (*My weapon came out of my wounds, our revolution, my weapon*

⁶⁵ See Palestinian Diaries | the Revolutionary Song... A Reflection of the Reality of a People” www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nXyzW-OWGM.

came out), we can see that the song expresses what is happening day-to-day in the Palestinian lives and utilizing its available vocabulary and tools.⁶⁶

Most of these songs were produced within simple and modest capabilities. This was evident through the words of the songs that reflected the vocabulary of the uprising, such as stone, strike, Molotov cocktails, slingshot, national unity, barricade, and banners. Most musicians who participated in these songs as singers, musicians, or authors were part-timers. They produced these songs voluntarily because they believed in the importance of their militant, motivational, and mobilizing role in this uprising. Since these songs were distinguished by their direct political and militant messages, their proprietors were subject to prosecution, and their tapes were threatened with confiscation by the Israeli occupation.⁶⁷

The local bands that produced the songs of the Intifada multiplied in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and expressed the political controversy found in the programs of the Palestinian political parties and factions involved in the act of the Intifada. Although they all participated in expressing the status quo, each group represented a political faction, directly or indirectly.⁶⁸ As previously mentioned, the songs of Al-Asheqeen were in constant harmony with the organization's primary current, which was demonstrated by its performances, which the leaders of the PLO were keen to attend and follow.

The Jafra Band also expressed the positions of the Palestinian Communist Party at the time (the People's Party today). In its song "Dawla" (*State*), which reflected the party's positions on the declaration of a Palestinian state by the Palestinian National Council in Algeria in 1988, it

⁶⁶ "أناشيد الثورة الفلسطينية القديمة ... ظل سلاحي من جراحي" *YouTube*, 27 Nov. 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWGual-WRSE.

⁶⁷ See "Tales from the Intifada of Stones - 1" www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkOSBX7VSWQ

⁶⁸ See "The Dialectic of Center and Margin: Political Song in Palestine and Nostalgia for Paradise Lost." https://hadfnews.ps/post/32122?fbclid=IwAR0aHh0YPK0t3WurC_-8UcRpngaBNH7GQM65PWKatFkQ5YoS37c6hBggVxl

considered that “the popular uprising that was made decided the state.” As it was stated in that song, the uprising is moving toward the “international conference” in the song “Nizlu sabaya washban” (*Let’s Go Girls and Boys*). There is an emphasis on the uprising’s popularity or “peacefulness” through “Nzlu ma maeahum rasantun” (*they go down with no bullets*) in the same song. As for the “Sharar” (*sparks*) album, some part of the songs aligned with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine’s perspective, which emphasizes the role of the unified national leadership and that “the voice of the intifada is louder than the occupation” and contains an international reference in “derive strength from Che Guevara.” Other bands reflected the positions of the Democratic Front, such as the Ashbal Alhuriyati (*Cubs of Freedom*) band.⁶⁹ Although these songs express the agendas of the political parties, their focus remained linked to being part of the existing situation represented in expressing the uprising with its diary, vocabulary, and means. This is confirmed by Tha’r Al-Barghouti, the lead singer of the Jafra band, stating that, the patriotic song was a tactical motivator and instigator for the Palestinians’ resistance to the occupation. It played a role in uniting the protesters’ efforts to resist the tyrant. The songs were permanently transformed into chants in the daily demonstrations; it was the spirit of the uprising.⁷⁰

Most of these songs relied on part of the rural Palestinian heritage, melodically and rhythmically, the popular Zajal and wedding songs.⁷¹ These songs changed the lyrics of traditional songs to words taken from the reality of the revolutionary situation of the uprising while maintaining the same rhythmic weights sometimes, with slight changes in the melodies.

⁶⁹ See “The Dialectic of Center and Margin: Political Song in Palestine and Nostalgia for Paradise Lost.”

⁷⁰ See Al-Nubani, Yamen. “Tha’er Al-Barghouti.. The Flames of the Revolutionary Song in the Uprising of Stones. 2015, www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=nXnfnUa669004315254anXnfnU.

⁷¹ Zajal (Arabic: زجل) is a traditional form of oral strophic poetry declaimed in a colloquial dialect.

For example, the Jafra band's song "Wayli mahalaaha albint alriyfiat" (*Oh, my lord, she is beautiful the rural girl*), as the songs goes:

My heart loves the rural girl, and my heart loves her.

Oh, my lord, she is beautiful on the water spring. Oh, my lord, she is beautiful.

All night your drawing meets me every night.

In my hands, I saw the bright roses in my hands.

Your luck threw me, Bo Al-Jadela (long hair), your luck threw me.

It hurts and heals your eyelashes, boy, it hurts and heals.

Oh, my country, breeze and refresh me. Oh, my country.

My soul and my heart are at home, my soul and my heart.⁷²

It is possible to notice its weight by the heritage of popular singing through those songs and the singer's performance. It should be mentioned that dealing with this legacy was done without necessarily studying it since most of these performers were not necessarily music students or in-depth in musical practice. Therefore, the musical heritage was dealt with spontaneously and in proportion to the accompaniment of the Dabkeh dance, necessitating simplifying the rhythmic solution to suit it and to serve the Palestinian cause and the public interest. These songs were influenced by a generation of poets known at the time for their national pride and history, which was linked to the resistance to the occupation, such as Rajeh Al-Salfiti. He performed in many concerts, events, and festivals. His poems, especially during the first Intifada, were linked to the existing state of resistance and directly motivated it, making him vulnerable to arrest and the confiscation of his tapes by the Israeli occupation.⁷³

⁷² "فرقة جفرا للفنون الشعبية." *YouTube*, 14 May 2010, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIIQVLAKB5s.

⁷³ Nubani, Yamen. *Rajeh Al-Salfiti.. The Voice of the First Intifada and Its Founders*. 2 Apr. 2017, https://wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=Sj89H2a763879813059aSj89H2

Traditional musical instruments and Arabic musical instruments, such as the Oud and percussion instruments, were sometimes used in these songs. However, the roles assigned to these instruments went beyond the lyrical and rhythmic accompaniment. Nevertheless, despite the simplicity of the music in those songs and their exposure to criticism, for example to be later seen as factional songs, significantly since they were associated with a historical stage that many considered a crucial stage in the history of the contemporary Palestinian revolution.⁷⁴ Therefore, dealing with it as music of lower quality from a technical point of view is an attempt to isolate it from the context of its production. This conceals more than it reveals about the conditions of its production. There may still be a need to study and review it in the context of the state of resistance and the methods of expressing it lyrically and musically, moreover, without issuing ready judgments on it, whether by maximizing or minimizing its value. Additionally, as this music came to the ears of listeners in a particular moment; the political content might have been more important than the aesthetic value.

II. From the Time of the Intifada

The songs that emerged spontaneously at the beginning of the first Intifada were not the only musical form, as there were musical experiences less affected by traditional formulas and models. These have had a more significant musical influence due to the musical experiences in the Arab world and the legacy of Arab music, in addition to international music styles such as jazz and blues.

⁷⁴ See “Palestinian Diaries | the Revolutionary Song... A Reflection of the Reality of a People”) www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nXyzW-OWGM.

One of the first such voices from the city of Jerusalem was that of Mustafa El-Kurd;⁷⁵ the experience of the Kurds was of particular importance, as it was open to the musical legacy of the “Arab leftist” musical and lyrical heritage, which was known as “committed” singing. The influence of Marcel Khalifa and Semih Choucair’s experience was evident in his singing and performance from a musical point of view. This is also related to that historical stage with the Arab leftist tide. This experience belongs melodically to Arab music more generally rather than being based on the heritage of Palestinian singing. His songs focused on the marginalized and popular classes, such as workers and peasants, in addition to glorifying the Palestinian cause, especially in its human dimension, rather than factionalism. This was a qualitative addition at the level of musical and artistic expression; it symbolically expressed the existing state of resistance.⁷⁶ One of his prime examples is his song “Kalimat bayn alasilah walthawra” (*Words between reform and revolution*), where he says:

The day my words were soil.

I was a friend of Ear.

The day my words were angry.

You are a friend of earthquakes.

One day my words were a stone.

I was friends with the tables.

One day my words were a revolution.

You are a friend of earthquakes.

⁷⁵ A Palestinian singer, composer, writer, and Oud player from Jerusalem was arrested by the Israeli occupation in 1976 and then exiled. He went to Jordan, Lebanon, and then Germany. He returned to Jerusalem in 1985 to complete his artistic, musical, and theatrical productions.

⁷⁶ See “Mustapha Al Kurd (مصطفى الكرد) Et La Troupe Al Balaline - الأرض وطني Terre De Ma Patrie (1976).”, www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxL8KfdwCpo.

The day my words were kind.
I was an optimistic friend.
When my words became honey.
Flies covered my lips.⁷⁷

This stage is critical as musical expression begins to search for its model. However, he continued to express what was happening in Palestine regarding occupation. Nevertheless, Al-Kurd seemed more existential in his presentation, wondering about the experience of the Palestinian living in this occupation's reality in expressive ways with a broader horizon and belonging to a more recent experience related to daily life in Palestinian cities such as Jerusalem, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. This led to moving away from the traditional model or working to re-employ it artistically. The Sabreen band may have opened the doors in this artistic direction.

The Sabreen band appeared in 1980 in Jerusalem at the initiative of the musician, composer, pianist, and oud player Saeed Murad. Since its appearance, it has formed a qualitative situation that differs from what is prevalent in music. The band's songs spread quickly over a short period, especially among university students and among part of the educated elite. Sabreen used the words of contemporary Palestinian and Arab poets, such as Mahmoud Darwish, Semih al-Qasim, Hussein al-Barghouti, Sayed Hijab, and Talal Haidar.⁷⁸

The Sabreen band produced four music albums between 1984-2000, one of them during the Intifada, titled "Mut alnabi" (*Death of the Prophet*). Another was released a few years before the uprising, "Dukhan albarakin" (*Smoke of Volcanoes*) in 1984, and then the band stopped producing for seven years before releasing "Jay alhamam" (*pigeons are coming*) in 1994 and then the album "Ealaa fin" (*On where*) in 2000.

⁷⁷ "Mustapha El Kurd / كلمات / الكرد / مصطفى." YouTube, 29 Mar. 2008, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilfiQ4ACNv0.

⁷⁸ See (<https://www.sabreen.org/sabreen-band>).

Sabreen did not use traditional forms in the traditional ways that were prevalent, despite her influence on the Palestinian Zajal, and this seems evident in the song “Ya Halali Ya Mali” (*My Riches are Rightfully Mine*), for example, which uses words of the poet Hussein Al-Barghouti:

Oh, my halal or my money.
Baalbek⁷⁹ night in two doors.
A door leading to the morning.
And a door leads to two eyes.
An eye leads to love.
And an eye for two doors.
A door leading to oblivion.
And the door leads to two jails.
Dungeon, free and guards.
Oh, my halal or my money.⁸⁰

Sabreen did not use traditional forms in the traditional ways that were prevalent. Even though the Palestinian Zajal influenced them, as evident in the song “Ya Halali Ya Mali,” the song’s musical and lyrical treatment did not come in the traditional form but was based on unconventional lyrical and melodic patterns in form and rhythm. Sabreen was influenced by the legacy of classical Levantine and Egyptian music and also by influenced international music such as jazz and blues.

It was clear that Sabreen had a tremendous artistic obsession, as confirmed Camelia Jubran, the lead singer, who joined it in 1982, and whose voice had a unique imprint through Sabreen’s experience:

⁷⁹ Baalbek City in Lebanon.

⁸⁰ “Sabreen - Ya Halali يا حلالى.” *YouTube*, 17 Mar. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFsaBVfCvVU.

وجودي ساهم في تطوير أسلوب صابرين الموسيقي وإعادة النظر في الآلات والألحان. الفرقة تجنبت منذ البداية الأغنية السياسية المباشرة، بحثنا أولاً عن البعد الإنساني بينما الهاجس الفني كان دائماً الأساس. نحن نبحث عن شيء لا نعرفه، قد نجده، وقد يجد قبولاً. ربما تتم خض هذه الرحلة عن أسلوب ممّيز في الموسيقى العربية، وربما يظل عملنا مجرد نموذج للبحث .

My presence contributed to the development of Sabreen's musical style and the reconsideration of instruments and melodies. The band avoided the direct political song from the beginning, and we searched first for the human dimension, while artistic obsession was always the basis. We are looking for something that we do not know that we may find, and that may find acceptance. This journey may result in a distinctive style in Arabic music, and our work will remain a research model.⁸¹

Camellia Gibran's expressions summarize an essential shift, which marks the beginning of a transformation of a new musical and lyrical production style in Palestine. On the musical level, Sabreen presented an advanced model at that time in terms of music. For example, we notice the introduction of Western instruments, such as the guitar and double bass, in Sabreen's music, which play the role of rhythmic accompaniment to singing. In addition to unusual rhythmic forms in traditional styles, it complements an expressive lyrical and melodic style that approaches free singing styles such as jazz. Although the Egyptian and Levantine lyrical heritage influenced the singing, it departs from the classic Arabic style in these styles except in rare cases. It is closer to the Taqtuqa in terms of lyrical form. Also, when listening to all of Sabreen's musical productions, it is possible to notice the change in styles and their development from one

⁸¹ Al-Husseini, Basma, "Al Gibran: A lot of music is not facilitated by the homeland." (Journal of Palestinian Studies, Birzeit University 2001). Pg. 85.

album to another. Especially in the last album, “A’la Feen” (*To where*), where there is a qualitative development in the playing and musical arrangement of Western musical instruments such as the double bass and cello, in addition to changing melodic phrases that require capabilities of quality musicians.

Sabreen’s contribution was distinguished because it did not copy or produce music and singing that simulates experience, including nostalgia for a rural heritage to confirm the legitimacy of a contemporary Palestinian identity inspired by that vision. The band’s songs did not talk about the farmers’ harvest seasons nor about the heroism of those who left their villages and loved ones to join the resistance in the cities. Instead, it was preoccupied with existential concerns that simulate reality with all its complexities, from the existence of the occupation to the question of a person’s existence under it.⁸²

It seems clear that the Sabreen band began a shift in the musical discourse through the music produced in Palestine. Its features were crystallized by balancing the musical and artistic project and its social and political statements. This lies in moving away from the direct political slogan and focusing on the artistic and musical dimension of melodies, playing, and words. In addition, in chapter two, I have shown that this discourse of manifestation is no longer convincing due to the change in political reality. This does not necessarily contradict music’s social, political, and human content about freedom, independence, and resistance. What Sabreen proposed through this transformation is a rethinking of what these concepts mean to Palestinians. In other words, it did not repeat political, partisan, or heritage sayings that were reformulated through the central historical and political experience of the Palestine Liberation Organization and worked on the “independence” of musical, artistic expression, or the musical practice itself,

⁸² See “Sabreen - the Doves Are Coming الجاي الحمام.” *YouTube*, 19 Mar. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_Z-tApkFfl.

in isolation from its meanings. That is, developing musical expression as a search tool for unprepared political meanings. This led to the development of artistic and musical discourse for its own sake and opened it to different political horizons.

Sabreen was not the only experience in this context, as other musical experiences emerged with a musical, artistic obsession, such as the experience of the Al-rahaalah (The Traveler) band, which composer and singer Jamil Al-Sayeh founded in 1984 with a group of musicians who went through their own musical experiences later, such as composer Issa Boulos, and musician Mohsen Sobhi.⁸³ In 1989, they released a single, titled “Rasef al-Madina” (City Sidewalk). However, many of this album’s songs were produced before the Intifada.⁸⁴

The Alrahaala (The Traveler) band moved away from direct political expression,⁸⁵ although it raised the Palestinian cause. The band’s experience was an attempt to establish artistic music with its own identity within the framework of its focus on musical expression and its development, which means, as in other experiments, “liberating” music and singing from direct political domination and for music not to remain hostage to partisan and factional events. As we have seen in the discussion of these two musical forms, the song moves away from being a political slogan in its direct sense. It takes on a symbolic and expressive dimension through which it opens a new horizon by focusing on artistic material or developing musical technical tools, opening the door wide for new musical experiences.

III. Artistic Music or Political Music.

⁸³ Dabbah, Ashraf. “An Interview With Issa Boulos.” *Ma’azef*, 12 Mar. 2021, <https://ma3azef.com/مقابلة-عيسى-بولص/>

⁸⁴ “City Sidewalk.” *YouTube*, 1988, www.youtube.com/watch?v=oB2Marcgr8U.

⁸⁵ What is meant is the Egyptian and Levantine musical legacy from the era of the Renaissance until the seventies and eighties of the last century, which was developed and established by a group of Arab authors and musicians such as Sayyid Darwish, Muhammad Abdel Wahhab, the Rahbanian experience, and others.

My title does not propose a conceptual separation between art and politics. Instead, it attempts to understand and capture the artistic meaning in moving from the direct political expression in the music of the current struggle to a musical practice that attaches the most significant importance to artistic and musical expression. In other words, the transition of representation to become a subject.

The musical structure and its impact on modern and progressive Arab musical experiences, such as the experience of Marcel Khalife, Samih Choucair, Ahmed Kaabour, and Sheikh Imam, in addition to being influenced by the currents of Western classical music, rock music, blues, and jazz. Later, the musical production moved towards indirectness. Contemporary poetry was used with all its symbolism and search for broader expressive horizons that reach the limit of experimentation, and the use of civil spoken language, as in the songs of Mustafa Al-Kurd and Sabreen. It was called “committed” music to justice, freedom, and resistance to colonialism. This type of music began to search for new expressions and stylistic patterns in terms of introducing Western instruments and contemporary singing styles more related to musical currents, such as classical Arabic music.

These experiences differed by presenting political issues in a broader sense. Despite the inspiration and sometimes re-employment of heritage, they did not reproduce traditional songs. They also raised social issues considered secondary to the central political issue and the primary concern of political parties: the independence project, and the establishment of the Palestinian state and political liberation.

It must be noted at the outset that studies dealing with such a subject are almost nonexistent in contemporary art and music studies. Issa Boulos’ study may be the only study that addresses this trend of a group of musicians who established the existence of music that tries to

separate from the direct political song by focusing on the artistic and musical dimensions. Boulos' study confirms that there are musical experiences that established what was called "committed music," which was inspired by musical experiences such as the experience of Marcel Khalife: "It encouraged many young artists to focus on becoming better musicians and maintaining high artistic standards in their works, and to pursue an alternative route to artistic expression."⁸⁶ Boulos confirms in his study, especially between the 1960s and 1980s, that a group of Palestinian musicians existed. Despite their being a minority, they aspired and sought to produce different music with modern musical directions and visions that were different from what was prevalent and open to international musical currents in addition to the music of the Arab cities of that period, which contained words that were widely circulated among cities.

It is worth mentioning that the period of the sixties and seventies witnessed musical activity in Palestine, and musicians were playing Western instruments, such as the guitar and the piano, as well as Eastern instruments, which is confirmed by Boulos's study. However, there are no studies or historical archives related to that period through which we can learn more about the nature and conditions of producing that music and its contexts. What remains of those experiences are the individuals who went through them. Boulos, in his study, also refers to some of those bands at that time. He interviewed one of its members, Emile Ashrawi, a member of the Tigers Five band founded in the sixties. He touched on its playing rock and jazz music, later changing the band's name to Al Baraem, until it was discontinued in the 1980s.

The Al-Baraem band tried to present non-traditional music using Western musical instruments. However, as Ashrawi mentioned in the interview, some PLO factions (Fatah)⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Boulos, Issa. "*Negotiating the elements: Palestinian freedom songs from 1967 to 1987.*" (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013). Pg. 59.

⁸⁷ Fatah are often contrasted to more religious orientated factions like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). All, however, represent a predominant Muslim population.

criticized and attacked it for presenting music with a “Western” tendency.⁸⁸ It seems that this did not receive an adequate response or appreciation, especially at a historical stage when the PLO was not only a political reference but cultural and artistic as well, as it had an infrastructure that enabled the PLO to produce a variety of works of art. Al-Baraem tried to raise social issues and use artistic expressions that were not prevalent.

It seems that the Palestine Liberation Organization was practicing artistic hegemony. It was trying to impose its cultural and artistic visions represented in the revival and reproduction of rural culture. That is, celebrating rural lifestyles and linking them to the national discourse and the Palestinian identity. The experience of Al-Asheqeen may be the best example of this trend. Faisal Daraj criticizes and summarizes this view as follows:

اتكاء على ما سبق، فإن منظمة التحرير الفلسطينية، في ممارستها السياسية والثقافية، لم تطور ما هو حديث في الحياة السياسية والاجتماعية للشعب الفلسطيني، بل عاقت وهمشت وحاصرت كل ما هو حديث. وعبرت عن مواجهتها للحدثة في احتضان المثقف الريفي وترييف المثقف الحديث.

Relying on the preceding, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its political and cultural practices, did not develop what is modern in the political and social life of the Palestinian people but rather obstructed, marginalized, and besieged everything modern. The PLO expressed its confrontation with modernity by embracing the rural intellectual and ruralization of the modern intellectual.⁸⁹

It seemed clear that several musicians wanted to express their rejection of this unilateral “politicization” in music, that is, the tendency to make music and singing an expression of the collective voice as seen by the organization. The problem arises here in reducing music to an

⁸⁸ Boulos, Issa. "Negotiating the elements: Palestinian freedom songs from 1967 to 1987." Pg.58.

⁸⁹ Faisal Darraj, *The Misery of Culture in the Palestinian Institution* (Beirut: Dar Al-Adab, 1996) Pg. 48.

organizational or mobilization tool, if not a promotional one, for a specific vision, the results of which were demonstrated through music in which the political content is based at the expense of the artistic side. As a result, musicians are exempt from searching within the music, and the obsession with the external expression of that vision remains the dominant element. In other words, a musician must identify in his music with that vision, regardless of his position or artistic vision outside this framework. This is what Omar Al-Barghouti intensified, in an interview with him, when he said: “the inner laws of music must be considered as meaningful; otherwise the humanness of the Palestinians will be corrupted.”⁹⁰

Conclusions

The focus of this discussion was of particular importance, as it lays the foundation for a “free” musical expression that escapes from the political and cultural vision of the PLO and its main factions and reveals a hidden struggle between two visions. It led several musicians to focus on artistic music; its meanings come through its structures and its musical language, and not through it being a cultural and artistic mouthpiece for anyone or subject to the stereotypical vision that it presented. The musical experiences initiated by Al-Baraem and complemented by other experiences, such as those of Mustafa Al-Kurd, Sabreen, and Al-Rahal, are nothing but the beginning and consecration of this separation.

The study of music in an academic setting was very limited in Palestine at that time. A group of musicians worked on artistic emancipation and liberation from the prevailing political and social horizon by intensifying their focus on the artistic side, which was not a social or political priority at the time. This constituted a significant challenge in the eyes of the musical

⁹⁰ Thorsén, Stig-Magnus. “Palestinian Music: Between Artistry and Political Resistance.” *Palestinian Music and Song: Expression and Resistance since 1900*, edited by Stig-Magnus Thorsén et al., Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 157.

elite, especially those familiar with other experiences, whether through the musical or academic study available to them outside Palestine. They were considered a numerical minority until the 1980s, and many were active in left-wing parties or had left-wing and progressive tendencies. This contributed to their knowledge and adoption of projects with modern and avant-garde orientations at the time.

This focus on artistic dimensions constituted an opportunity for artistic expression and opened a discussion about the means and methods that began to pay more attention to them. Moreover, this required a qualitative performance and musicians with experience and study to present works whose message is not based at the expense of the artistic component. A group of musicians began to search for platforms and opportunities to express themselves musically. Their continued presence and living under occupation constituted a fundamental axis in their music and existential questions in addition to their questions.

However, their search for new musical expressions and their use of them through their works, deviating from the overall vision at the time, is the basis for a different musical discourse that arose in the Oslo era. The opportunities for communication with the outside world contributed to the beginning of various theatres, institutions, artistic and cultural interests, and relative economic growth that promoted the existence and emergence of new classes and accompanying social fantasies.

This musical field has been crystallized and established within specific political conditions. Therefore, the conditions of its production and methods of practice are linked to this context, which will be addressed through the musical manifestations and practices of the three largest musical institutions based in the city of Ramallah, which we will suffice with—presented and described in the coming chapters. In other word, the orientation and transformation of

musical expression and its “independence” create new connotations and meanings within a new reality.

So, this separation and detachment carry within it dialectics and contradictions. As soon as artistic expression celebrates the freedom of separation from the direct political and “ideological” form, only to find itself hostage to a new “ideology.” A set of facts and transformations determines this “ideology” by entering Palestinian society into a network of well-known civil associations and endeavors imposed by the Palestinian Authority’s choices regarding not politicizing the entire cultural field.

Finally, what must be emphasized through the experiences such as the experience of Sabreen, Mustafa Al-Kurd, and Alrahaala, is that it does not break the relationship between music and politics. It may be correct to say the opposite entirely. These late experiences, on the cusp of Oslo, began to raise new questions that do not see the political song as a slogan attached to a political faction or political organization.

CHAPTER 4

Musical Institutions

I. The Concept of Post-Oslo Culture

The Oslo Accords brought about fundamental changes and transformations in Palestinian society. These changes did not happen in one night, meaning that the agreement was not necessarily a “dramatic” event that caused a historical rift in the Palestinian time. Instead, the Oslo Accords was a continuation of a process of Palestinian political and struggle action that is embodied in the history of the political practice of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people.

The Oslo agreement initially changed geography and imposed a geographic system naming the Palestinian lands (“A,” “B,” and “C”). This resulted in displacements and disruptions in populated areas such as cities, villages, and camps.⁹¹ This necessarily led to rearranging the importance of these regions according to a new “geopolitics,” which will play a functional role in defining cities and villages and linking them to a single authority capable of playing an economic and political role according to the new arrangements. This new arrangement will guarantee and control the continuity of these “arrangements,” which are the condition for their existence and guarantee their survival. The adoption of the city of Ramallah as a center for the Palestinian Authority represented a fundamental shift in the contemporary history of the city, making it a political center for Palestinian decision-making and introducing the city into a new urban phase to play the role of the political and administrative capital. Consequently, a significant development followed in its basic infrastructure, services, and facilities. Ramallah has become a

⁹¹ See: Hilal, Jamil, “The Palestinian Middle Class: An Examination of the Chaos of Identity and Cultural Reference.” (Ramallah: The Palestinian Institution to Study Democracy - Citizen, 2006). Pg. 47.

center that attracts many new residents, job seekers from different regions, authority employees, academics, and merchants. New residential neighborhoods such as Umm Al Sharayet and Al Masyoun have emerged, and a new middle class has emerged.⁹² Many non-governmental organizations and diplomatic bodies established offices and branches in Ramallah. All of this entailed remarkable urban and population activity. This economic movement led to the emergence of Ramallah and its growing role as the administrative capital of the Palestinian Authority. A consumerist and globalized lifestyle emerged in Ramallah, similar to some Arab and international cities that preceded them, such as Amman, Beirut, and Cairo. Cultural centers, theatres, cinemas, and art galleries were opened. A nightlife bustling with young people appeared in restaurants, cafes, and pubs.

During that period, there was talk about the importance of culture and cultural work - especially among the educated elites - and about the role of culture in Palestinian awareness and in strengthening national identity, and playing a central, civilizing, and educational role, with a political dimension in the Palestinian cause, and in building the nascent or intended Palestinian state. Talking about culture in this context also includes all kinds of arts. For example, the researcher Jamil Hilal points out the importance of culture in his research entitled “Towards Formulating Indicators to Measure Palestinian Cultural Participation”:

الثقافة الفلسطينية، بتعبيراتها المختلفة، مكون حيوي من مكونات الوطنية الفلسطينية، وكان لها دوماً حضور محوري في مسارات التعبئة الاجتماعية وفي تغذية وطنية تجمعات الشعب الفلسطيني في مواقعها المختلفة.

Palestinian culture, in its various expressions, is a vital component of Palestinian nationalism, and it has always had a pivotal presence in the paths of social mobilization

⁹² See: Hilal, Jamil, “The Palestinian Middle Class: An Examination of the Chaos of Identity and Cultural Reference.” (Ramallah: The Palestinian Institution to Study Democracy - Citizen, 2006). Pg. 47-50.

and the national nourishment of the Palestinian people's gatherings in its various locations.⁹³

Hilal also stresses the need to support:

تحفيز الحراك والفعل الثقافي عبر تمكين القوى والمؤسسات والهيئات المعنية من رسم سياسات وظيفتها تنشيط الحياة الثقافية على قاعدة المشاركة، وبخاصة من الأجيال الشابة، في تجمعات الشعب الفلسطيني باعتبار أن الثقافة من الأدوات الضرورية التي عليه استخدامها في كفاحه التحرري. فالثقافة هي المجال الأرحب الذي يعبر فيه الشعب الفلسطيني عن انتماءاته وقيمه ويشيد عبره معاني شرطه الخاص وطموحاته وأهدافه الكبرى.

Stimulating cultural movement and action by enabling the concerned forces, institutions, and bodies to draw up policies whose function is to activate cultural life based on participation, especially from the younger generations, in the gatherings of the Palestinian people, given that culture is one of the necessary tools that they must use in their liberation struggle. Culture is the broadest field in which the Palestinian people express their affiliations and values and construct the meanings of their conditions, aspirations, and grand goals.⁹⁴

On the official level, the Palestinian Authority, through the Ministry of Culture, has paid attention to culture and supports cultural and artistic institutions. In its strategy for the heritage and culture sector 2021-2023, entitled "Partnership and Development," and through its vision, it indicates:

تسعى وزارة الثقافة الى تحقيق الغايات الأساسية والأهداف المنشودة التي تجيب عن السؤال الكبير حول دور الثقافة ووظيفتها في المجتمعات عامة وفي مجتمع يقع تحت الاحتلال ويقاوم من أجل استرداد باده واستعادة حقوقه خاصة. تقدم الوزارة في هذه الخطة رؤيتها لطبيعة مهامها ولأهدافها وبرامجها وشركائها بالإضافة

⁹³ Jamil Hilal, Towards the Formulation of Indicators for Measuring Palestinian Cultural Participation (Ramallah, 2012), Pg. 1

⁹⁴ Jamil Hilal, Towards the Formulation of Indicators for Measuring Palestinian Cultural Participation. Pg. 3.

الى المشاريع التي تعمل على تحقيقها. من المؤكد أن الدور الأساسي للثقافة هو الحفاظ على الرواية التاريخية لشعبنا وحماية ذاكرته وهويته الوطنية وصون تراثه الوطني وتحفيز المبدعين في قطاعات الكتابة والفن والمعرفة على مواصلة الخلق والإبداع حتى تظل فلسطين حاضرة ولا تغيب .

The Ministry of Culture seeks to achieve the primary goals and objectives that answer the big question about the role and function of culture in societies in general and in a society under occupation and fighting for the recovery of its country and the restoration of its rights in particular. In this plan, the Ministry presents its vision of the nature of its tasks, objectives, programs, and partners, in addition to the projects it is working to achieve. Indeed, the primary role of culture is to preserve the historical narrative of our people, protect its memory and national identity, preserve its national heritage, and motivate creators in the writing, arts, and knowledge sectors to continue creating and creating so that Palestine remains present and does not change.⁹⁵

On the artistic level, the “Palestinian Performing Arts Network” was formed in 2016. It is a large gathering of institutions working in performing arts, such as theatre, music, and circus. The Network emphasizes the importance of the arts in Palestinian society and works to promote artistic and cultural values and support institutions working in this field. Moreover, it confirms this through its message and self-definition as follows:

The Palestinian Performing Arts Network was established in 2015 as an umbrella framework for artistic institutions that play a collective role in promoting Palestinian cultural identity and the value of freedom of expression as a human need. These institutions have created accessibility to performing arts and continue to promote their

⁹⁵ Sectoral Strategy for Culture and Heritage 2021-2023. www.palgov.ps/files/server/وزارة%20الثقافة.pdf

work in all regions, especially those that are subject to political, social and economic marginalization.⁹⁶

Hence, on several levels, there is a tacit Palestinian agreement on the importance and role of the arts, which has activated, stimulated, and strengthened cultural and artistic work at the institutional levels. A group of institutions, institutes, and bodies became active in delving into and working in fields related to culture in its various forms, including musical institutes and institutions.

Shortly after the Oslo agreement, Ramallah witnessed a group of educational and cultural institutions opening, which played a prominent and essential role in changing the cultural scene and its productions. A different cultural and artistic scene emerged from these changes and transformations. Palestinian people have begun to receive new interests and new and diverse experiences at different levels and in different fields, such as literature, poetry, fine art, cinema, theater, and music.

As for the musicians, three major educational and cultural institutions concerned with teaching music and spreading its culture have been established. These are the National Conservatory of Music (currently the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music), the Kamandjati Association, and the Barenboim-Said Foundation. These institutions have contributed to establishing artistic music as a specialized academic field and recruited specialized professors who teach it according to curricula with international academic references, such as the British ABRSM curriculum, the Suzuki curriculum that deals with stringed instruments, the Delacroix curriculum, which specializes in teaching music to children, and others.

⁹⁶ Technologies, Entities. "PPAN - Who We Are." *PPAN - Who We Are*, <http://www.ppan.ps/articles/view/1/en>

These institutions have played leading roles in spreading music and its culture. They have also been keen to organize local musical performances and festivals where they host local and international musicians in musical evenings. In addition to graduating, several musicians from these institutions had the opportunity to complete their higher musical studies outside the country and to take music as a profession, whether through education or musical performances. It also contributed to issuing a set of music recordings by local musicians and documenting their musical experiences, which enriched the contemporary Palestinian music library.

It seems clear, primarily through educational music institutions, that there has been a fundamental and central shift in the musical values offered. The most outstanding value lies in emphasizing the unique value of music, its being of independent value. This does not necessarily mean separating it from what can be expressed politically or socially, directly or indirectly, but instead giving it a central space by dealing with it as a specialized academic field and an independent artistic field. What can be indicated by this significant shift, compared to the experience of musical expression during the period of the first intifada, is that focus on the musical form through the academic or artistic musical experience. The form, in this case, includes several matters such as the forms and modalities of musical performance, musical understanding through the remarkable history of music, whether Western or Arabic and the theory of musical performance. In this context, we will use what the music researcher and cultural critic Christopher Small propose as a helpful model in musical practice. Small calls his model “musicking,” and Small’s view suggests that the meaning of music lies in the inseparability of musical practice from the musical product, which may help us analyze and understand the meanings and values involved in musical practices, whether as education, musical performances, or others.

Small calls his model “musicking,” and Small’s view suggests that the meaning of music lies in the inseparability of musical practice from the musical product. By definition,

The meaning of music lies not just in musical works but in the totality of a musical performance, where do we start to look for insights that will unite the work and the event and allow us to understand it? The answer I propose is this. The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model or stand as metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants in the performance imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society, between humanity and the natural world and even perhaps the supernatural world.⁹⁷

In other words, Small’s theory proposes that musical meanings and values come through the musical practice itself. Moreover, the forms of musical practice are diverse. It may be a musical performance, a place for music education, or any organized effort based on gathering those desires around a musical activity. It created an overlapping and intertwined societal process not confined to the final music product. It may take various forms, such as a musical performance, a piece, or a recording.

Therefore, by examining these educational experiences, the modalities, methods, and visions that confirm the transformations in dealing with music as a unique and “independent” aesthetic field will be shown while trying to understand and analyze its meanings through the

⁹⁷ Small, Christopher. *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*. Pg. 13

context of those musical practices and what the owners of these experiences say. Through this, I do not seek to document the work of these institutions or differentiate between them. Instead, the purpose is to explore artistic and musical thinking patterns as an independent field within the broader cultural vision, which gives particular importance to arts and culture in the post-Oslo era.

II. The Experience of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (then the National Conservatory of Music) was inaugurated on the initiative of a group of musicians who had studied and practiced classical Western music and Arabic music for years, playing and composing: Rima Tarazi, Amin Nasser, Nadia Abboushi, Salwa Tabari, and Suhail Khoury.⁹⁸ These musicians needed a specialized place to teach music of all kinds, such as Arabic and classical Western music. This initiative came because these musicians felt the need for a specialized music school or institute to refine and develop their musical experiences, in addition to developing and supporting the Palestinian cultural identity, which is constantly threatened by the presence of the Israeli occupation. The Institute was opened in the city of Ramallah in 1993. It included forty students, three professors, a secretary, and a volunteer manager, manager, and the Institute has fallen under the umbrella of Birzeit University.⁹⁹

From the beginning, the Institute showed interest in Arabic music, classical Western music, and other musical genres. However, these two genres are the ones that have the most significant importance, where students learn to play an instrument of Arabic music or Western music according to an academic curriculum based on developing the technical and musical capabilities of the student, and thus the musical performance as a whole. For example, the

⁹⁸ See "Fingertip of Time Documentary - Rima Tarzi." *YouTube- Al-Jazeera Doc*, 19 Oct. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnFYgwJEgFs.

⁹⁹ Check Institute web page "Edward Said National Conservatory of Music." *ESNCM*, 30 June 2015, <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/history>

musical practice represented in the playing process. Musical material alone is no longer sufficient, but rather ways to deal with musical material in terms of understanding and playing.

As for musical publications and productions, one of the main activities carried out by the Institute gives special attention to and is related to the legacy of Arabic music. In 2000, the Institute issued CD of the Arab Music Ensemble at the Institute, entitled “Umm Al-Khalkhal” (*Mother of anklets*). This disc focused on instrumental music and re-consideration of it as a cultural heritage. It was stated in it: “We naturally do not object to the vocal musical heritage and do not detract from its importance, but rather we try to give instrumental music a space in which it presents itself to the ears without shame and masks and without the usual dependence on the voice and the word or movement and bodily formation.”¹⁰²

The Institute has also published a collection of books entitled “Sharqiyat” (*Oriental*s), an anthology of oriental music pieces composed musically based on original recordings and classified according to their technical difficulty. These pieces are classified for the eight-level exams for the students of the eastern section of the Institute. These anthologies were printed as four books the Institute’s students used in their exams. They were documented and edited by Ahmed Al-Khatib.¹⁰³

The Institute also issued, in cooperation with a group of conservatories in the Arab world, a series of versions of instrumental musical pieces by contemporary Arab musicians, commented on and edited by Ahmed Al-Khatib, under the supervision of the Institute’s General Director, Suhail Khoury. It includes pieces of music by contemporary composers such as Ahmed Al-Khatib, Charbel Rouhana, Khaled Muhammad Ali, Saed Sharaibi, and Issa Boulos.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² CD: Umm Al-Khalkhal, Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, 2000, <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/cds-dvds>

¹⁰³ See <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/ar/lmnshwrt>

¹⁰⁴ See “Publications.” *ESNCM*, 30 June 2015, <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/publications>.

This indicates and confirms the Institute's adoption of a specific musical identity and policy based on a close historical relationship with the legacy of Arabic music, as its orientation is considered a continuity and completion of this musical heritage, which began in Egypt and the Levant since the second half for the nineteenth century. Thus, the Institute is trying to develop and establish a musical identity based on the innovative elements in the experience of Arab music, such as the maqam and the well-known Arab musical instruments such as the qanun, oud, flute, and other recognized forms. Despite the issues and debates raised by the topic of renewal and development in Arab music since the famous Arab Music Conference (Cairo Congress), held in Egypt in 1932 in the presence of Abdel Wahhab and Bella Bartok, where the question was raised about the future of Arabic music and what methods and approaches Arab music should take to develop and modernize it. This may call for observations and questions later regarding the Institute's experience.¹⁰⁵

However, the Institute, through its experience and practice of Arabic music, confirms a significant shift in its vision of Arab music. It focuses on the presented musical material in terms of pruning it, understanding it, and how to deal with it within a disciplined and independent artistic and academic field. In other words, the Institute seeks for music to have its voice and to be subject to inner visions that pertain to it and its history within the contemporary Palestinian cultural and political context. This was obtained through its music production, education, and publishing efforts.

Within this cultural vision, the Institute launched a significant initiative regarding classical western music, reflecting the Institute's approach to classical western music. This is through his establishment of the Palestinian National Orchestra in 2010, which includes

¹⁰⁵ Al-Hefny, Mahmoud. *Arab Music Conference Held in Cairo 1932*. Egypt, Al-Amiri Press, 1932, <https://archive.org/details/CairoCongressofArabMusic/mode/2up>

professional Palestinian musicians of Palestinian origin from different parts of the world among its members. They meet once a year to present a musical program led by the conductor (maestro), usually hosted from abroad. This orchestra is the pinnacle of the Institute in its vision of Western music: “The Palestine National Orchestra (PNO) is the zenith of the ESNM’s orchestral vision, and the fruit of an incremental approach which has been propagated and nurtured since the establishment of the conservatory in 1993.”¹⁰⁶

The launch of the National Orchestra was specifically in Ramallah in 2010 in a musical performance at the Ramallah Cultural Palace under the slogan “Today is an orchestra, and tomorrow is a state,”¹⁰⁷ referring to the fact that culture is a path leading to the state. Suhail Khoury, Director General of the Institute, indicated in an interview with Wafa News Agency that:

أن الموسيقيين يساهمون في بناء الدولة الفلسطينية، من خلال بناء وتأسيس إحدى أهم ركائز الثقافة الوطنية، روح هذه الدولة الناشئة والحرّة. وأضاف: اليوم أوركسترا وغدا دولة هو شعارنا الذي رفعناه تعبيراً عن إيماننا العميق في أن الدولة لا تبنى بالحجارة والطرق فقط، بل ببناء وتكوين مكوناتها الإنسانية وطبيعتها الحضارية، ووجدانها الثقافي والفني.

Musicians contribute to building the Palestinian state, by building and establishing one of the most important pillars of national culture, the spirit of this emerging and free state. He adds: Today is an orchestra, and tomorrow is a state. This is our motto that we raised as an expression of our deep belief that the state is not built with stones and roads only, but rather by building and forming a human compass, its civilized nature, and its cultural and artistic merit.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Source: Institute's electronic page <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/pno/59>

¹⁰⁷ Obeidat, Ali. *Today Is an Orchestra, and Tomorrow Is a State*. Wafa, the Palestinian News and Information Agency. 31 Oct. 2010. https://wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=B450Hca566134092249aB450Hc

¹⁰⁸ Obeidat, Ali. *Today Is an Orchestra, and Tomorrow Is a State*.

The Institute also established the “Palestine Youth Orchestra” project in 2004. An orchestra annually gathers young musicians between the ages of 13-26 from all over the world, and guest musicians, to prepare for a program and tour of local or international musical performances. This orchestra has toured, most recently in the United Kingdom in the summer of 2016. The orchestra presented a varied program that included pieces by Beethoven, the Rahbani brothers, Zakaria Ahmed, and Mussorgsky. In a way, this orchestra was like a musical representative of Palestine abroad.

Consequently, classical Western music and building a national orchestra are essential to the Institute, especially at the cultural and national construction level. It expresses the importance of cultural practice in liberation and state-building. The availability and presence of a Palestinian orchestra is an important cultural achievement, as this is no longer the monopoly of some countries, especially Western ones. Building an orchestra requires a tremendous and intense effort, as this cannot be done within days. It is the accumulation of a long and continuous effort of teachers, trainers, technicians, and administrators. It begins by searching for musicians, assembling them, training them, and providing a place for their training and interaction with each other. Some of these musicians come from abroad and do not know each other, particularly those who play in the National Orchestra project.¹⁰⁹

It is essential to the Institute, as it is an implicit recognition of the importance of this musical form and its artistic value. The presence of this form is the orchestra. These orchestras play classical Western music or Arab orchestral compositions by Arab or Palestinian authors such as Salvador Armita and the Rahbani brothers. Through the Institute’s vision, the practice of this

¹⁰⁹ Al-Jazeera TV produced a documentary film entitled "Symphony of the Diaspora", in which it sheds light on the contexts that constitute the Palestinian National Orchestra, and some of the musicians talk about their experiences in this orchestra and their presence in Palestine. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDJneah92as>

“upscale” musical form seeks to place music in the Palestinian context as a distinct artistic value, an essential component of contemporary Palestinian culture.

Therefore, according to the Edward Said Institute, musical action and practice have a great responsibility and a decisive role in formulating a national identity. That is anti-occupation, seeking liberation, with a modern and open vision, and uninterrupted from the Arab musical heritage. Therefore, it is essential, but it may raise challenges and problems. The first of which lies in the identification of the implicit aspect of what is considered “superior” music, or the path that music should take, and the model that must be generalized and taken as a reference, which may raise philosophical problems that we will raise later through the conclusions of this chapter.

III. The Experience of the Al Kamandjâti Association

The Al Kamandjâti Association was established in 2002 by musician Ramzi Abu Radwan, who studied music in France and specialized in the viola. It is a non-profit association that provides opportunities for children to learn music, especially in remote and marginalized areas and refugee camps in Palestine and Lebanon: “Al Kamandjâti exists to teach music to Palestinian children, especially those in marginalized areas and to make music accessible to the entire Palestinian community, strengthening their appreciation of Palestinian identity, as well as of other Arab and international cultures.”¹¹⁰

The association was established in France and began organizing cultural activities to attract support, collecting musical instruments and educational materials to support and find schools to teach music to Palestinian children; the association confirms this:

Al-Kamandjâti in France continues to raise funds by organizing concerts (“Musicians for Palestine” in Chabada-Angers), festivals, lectures and the collection of musical

¹¹⁰ The association's electronic page <https://www.alkamandjati.org/en/article/85/Our-Mission>

instruments and other products (scores, music stands, CDs, etc) provided by donors. Al-Kamandjâti in France also seeks funding from different institutions in Europe and around the world, sends music instructors to Al Kamandjâti in Palestine for one or two school years, facilitates music studies in Europe for talented Palestinian students, and sends instrument makers and repairmen to Palestine to repair the instruments and to transmit their know-how to Palestinian children. A prominent Al Kamandjâti network was also established early on in Italy, by Nicola Perugini and Marco Dinoi. The network included members of the Mozart Orchestra of Bologna directed by Claudio Abado, Paci Christi, the Sienna Municipality, the Region of Puglia and the city of Bari. Since then, Al Kamandjati's Italian partners collect instruments, send music teachers and string instrument makers to Palestine, and host Palestinian musicians in Italy for collaborative work.¹¹¹

The association has a center located in the old city of Ramallah, which serves as the central administration for the association. In addition, the association provides music lessons for children in eight centers. It cooperates with these centers located in Palestinian villages and camps in the West Bank, such as Deir Ghassana, Qalandia refugee camp, and others. Where a group of specialized teachers, local and foreign, go to give music lessons in these centers and within an academic music program. Students also come to take their music lessons as part of an academic educational program for Al Kamandjâti, allowing children to learn one of the Arabic or classical Western instruments. They are the two types of music the association teaches and spreads its culture. The association also provides a "Musical Taste" program in a group of government schools and UNRWA schools in the rural and marginalized areas that the association

¹¹¹ The association's electronic page <https://www.alkamandjati.org/en/article/89/Our-History>

works with. Specialized teachers introduce children to the types of music, its instruments, and sounds as an introduction to musical culture.¹¹² One of the central goals of the association is to provide the opportunity for socially disadvantaged groups relatively far from the city of Ramallah to practice music. Whether by learning to play a musical instrument, singing in a choir, or participating in group tasting programs for school students in those areas where music and its culture are spread, in areas where other music institutions do not operate.

Al Kamandjâti also worked on qualifying a group of musical instrument makers and provided them with opportunities to learn this profession abroad through intensive courses or long-term education. A special workshop was opened to sell and repair Western stringed instruments, such as violins, cellos, and double basses, adjacent to the association's headquarters in Ramallah. A good number of musicians are in constant need of repairing and maintaining their instruments. Therefore, the presence of specialists in this field will meet the needs of those musicians and will provide opportunities for these makers to practice and develop this profession. Whereas, when a musician needed to buy a musical instrument or perform maintenance work on his instrument, he had to resort to either an Israeli maker or send his instrument outside the country, specifically to Europe.¹¹³

The association is interested in two types of music, Arabic music, and classical western music, as part of the association's musical vision. The association believes these values deserve to be learned by children and passed on to them through their experience in Al Kamandjâti, whether in terms of tasting or learning and practice. The association expresses the importance of learning classical Western music in terms of being a cultural product that must be recognized

¹¹² The association's electronic page <https://www.alkamandjati.org/article/908/-المدارس-في-التذوق-الموسيقي-الأونروا-الحكومية>

¹¹³ See Instruments repairing and making workshops <https://www.alkamandjati.org/en/article/1138/Instruments-repairing-and-making--workshops>

agendas through the music itself and that this cultural product should not be loaded with any dimensions that indicate that it is “imposed” or has political or cultural “agendas,” or that it is at the expense of the other music.¹¹⁴ This central idea specifically carries a shift in the artistic vision of music, and it shares and intertwines with the vision of the Edward Said Institute of Music.

Therefore, the experience of the Al Kamandjâti Association emphasizes the musical content as well, whether through education or through spreading musical culture and making it available to the largest possible audience, especially children in less fortunate places. The musical act seeks to be central through the association’s publications and activities. That is, an “independent” and self-contained artistic field, with an artistic responsibility that sees the musical practice as one of the tributaries of contemporary Palestinian culture.

Al Kamandjâti’s musical vision reaffirms that the “separation” of the musical experience and the focus of musical expression and practice on itself is one of the essential tools in shaping the Palestinian cultural identity. Focusing on the musical act, developing it, owning it, and making it available to the largest possible segment is of great importance within the framework of the national dimension. Especially in building the modern state, artistic and cultural practice and their fields are fundamental pillars in promoting and building this model, which the Palestinian Authority follows following the Oslo Accords.

IV. Experience of the Barenboim-Said Foundation

In 2002, the Palestinian-American thinker Edward Said met the Argentine-Israeli conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim. They established a cultural and musical relationship that resulted in several musical projects.¹¹⁵ In the same year, Said and Barenboim were invited to conduct

¹¹⁴ The association's electronic page <https://www.alkamandjati.org/article/900/القيم>

¹¹⁵ Mariam Said tells the story of the meeting between Edward Said and Daniel Birnbaum and their musical projects in a video interview available on the Foundation's website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=30&v=iPnScHu2ID8

music workshops in the Spanish city of Seville by the local government of the Spanish province of Andalusia.¹¹⁶ After several years, the Barenboim-Said Foundation was established in the Spanish city of Seville. This foundation aimed to support and finance the musical projects and activities that Said and Barenboim supported. During that period, that is, between the years 2003-2005, Saeed and Barenboim supported through their foundation the National Conservatory of Music (currently the Edward Said National Conservatory) as part of their projects to support music and music education in Palestine.¹¹⁷ They sent specialized professors to teach at the institute. The foundation established a center for it in the city of Ramallah in 2005, and the local government of Andalusia County (JUNTA), as part of the Spanish government, continues to fund the Barenboim Said Foundation. The foundation also financially supported the Al Kamandjati association between 2005 and 2011.

The institution only teaches classical western musical instruments and does not teach any other types of music. It teaches orchestral instruments only, in addition to classical piano, classical singing, and singing choirs. Furthermore, it has about nine professors, most of whom are Europeans, who did their postgraduate studies in classical western music.¹¹⁸ The institution also has a specialized academic program for eight years. This program provides musical qualifications for students to complete their graduate studies in music.¹¹⁹

The foundation's goal is to teach music in Palestine, especially with the existence of the occupation and its effects. In addition, the foundation provides an opportunity for these students and opens the way for them to be professional musicians in the future, that is, to become a source of livelihood for them and thus contribute to opening horizons and job opportunities for

¹¹⁶ Birenbaum-Said Foundation website <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/about-us>

¹¹⁷ Birenbaum-Said Foundation website <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/about-us>

¹¹⁸ Birenbaum-Said Foundation website. <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/team>

¹¹⁹ Birenbaum-Said Foundation website. <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/bscfm-programs>

musicians in Palestine. Alternatively, to practice music as a hobby and as something extra and essential in their lives.¹²⁰

As for music education, in the institution, music students, in general, need help with the annual change of European professors, and there need to be more Palestinian teachers qualified to teach classical Western music. Therefore, there are new European professors approximately every year, and their lack of stay for extended periods (between 2-4 years) prevents continuity in the accumulation of musical effort. This negatively affects the musical progress the institution aspires to be within the European level in teaching classical Western music. There are several reasons for this, but the most important is the problem of obtaining and renewing a visa by the Israeli occupation. All three institutions suffer from this problem, as professors of classical Western music are mostly foreigners, and they come for a year or two and then return to their countries, and they rarely stay for more than that. It should also be mentioned that the professors of the Barenboim-Said Foundation suffer the least from others in other institutions, as the institution has extensions with European governments, which, in turn, contributes to facilitating the process of issuing and renewing visas.

Furthermore, articulating the initiative of the East-West Divan Orchestra project, there is no relationship between the institution's project in Ramallah and the project of this orchestra. That is, the management of the two projects and the financing are different. The East-West Divan project is one of the musical projects that took place in 1999 and is still ongoing at the initiative of Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said. It is based on bringing together a group of professional and young musicians from the Arab world (Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt) with Israeli musicians. This orchestra has received global attention and performed in many European

¹²⁰ Barenboim-Said Foundation website. <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/admissions>

countries, with a show in Morocco and Ramallah in 2005. However, it has been boycotted by a good portion of Palestinian musicians because the orchestra was seen as promoting normalization with Israel and even betraying the Palestinian cause.¹²¹ It is worth mentioning that this orchestra project is one of the Barenboim-Said Foundation projects, funded by the Spanish government through the local government of the Andalusian province in the Spanish city of Seville.

Daniel Barenboim considers that this orchestra has a unique and essential symbolic significance. It brings together Arab, Palestinian, and Israeli musicians to play compositions of classical Western music. This is what musicians do when they play together in this orchestra because they must play together despite their political differences. After all, music requires them to listen to each other passionately when they play, whether Arabs or Israelis, for the sake of an ideal musical world.¹²² Despite this, Barenboim does not consider himself a representative of any official party and calls for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of 1967. Many Israelis have also criticized him for his political positions.

It is also worth noting that in 2016, the Barenboim-Said Academy was opened in Berlin; it continues the musical initiatives and projects that arose between them, specifically the Diwan Orchestra project.¹²³ This is a prestige academy that the German government financially supports; it is recognized and certified at the level of the German state as a place to meet and

¹²¹ The documentary "Knowledge is the Beginning," directed by Paul Smaczny, talks about the story of the emergence of this orchestra, its contexts, and its members, and documents Birnbaum's visit to Palestine and part of its performances. By the nature of the occupation, this project is dealt with at the Western media level as a brave act and establishes a culture of peace through knowledge and acceptance of the other. It is the assumption that knowledge, that is, knowing the other, acknowledging his existence, or listening to his story, will lead to peace. It is possible to watch the full movie on YouTube.

¹²² Interview, The Frost. "Daniel Barenboim: 'Spaces of Dialogue.'" *Daniel Barenboim: 'Spaces of Dialogue'* | Arts and Culture | Al Jazeera, 4 Aug. 2013, www.aljazeera.com/program/the-frost-interview/2013/8/4/daniel-barenboim-spaces-of-dialogue.

¹²³ For the Barenboim -Said Academy in Berlin see <https://www.barenboimsaid.de/en>

refine high-level musical talents from the Arab world, Turkey, Iran, and Israel. This academy held an exhibition in 2017 entitled “Utopia Tone,” where the exhibition talks about the history of the Diwan Orchestra East-West and promotes it. In this exhibition, the academy launched the slogan, “Go there, habibi. Go there and meet with these people. You are part of the new generation.” This academy’s music program links academic music with the humanities, where students learn courses and subjects such as history, philosophy, literature, and music.¹²⁴

It is logical to think, then, that the students of the Barenboim-Said Foundation in Ramallah might be candidates to complete their postgraduate studies in music at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Berlin, especially concerning one of the projects and initiatives are undertaken by the conductor of the Barenboim-Said orchestra after the death of his partner in these projects, the thinker Edward Said. However, the Foundation’s work in Ramallah does not promote the Diwan Orchestra, and they cannot do so because the Foundation’s mission in Ramallah is different. Although it is one of Barenboim’s projects, it does not belong to the Foundation’s project in Ramallah. The primary mission in Ramallah is to refine, teach, and develop classical music among Palestinian students, especially children.¹²⁵

Hence, the Barenboim-Said Foundation does not seek, nor does it indicate, to link its work to a specific cultural context with direct political dimensions about the building of the Palestinian state. It focuses on the importance of musical work and the fact that musical values are embedded within it. Alternatively, it only bears responsibility for interpreting the institution’s work beyond the musical horizon. However, according to the concept above and the context of cultural practice, especially in the post-Oslo context, it may be impossible to look at the

¹²⁴ Hegasy, Sonja. “Inauguration of the Pierre Boulez Hall in Berlin: ‘Music for the Thinking Ear’ - Qantara.de.” *Qantara.de - Dialogue With the Islamic World*, 2017, <https://en.qantara.de/content/inauguration-of-the-pierre-boulez-hall-in-berlin-music-for-the-thinking-ear>

¹²⁵ Barenboim-Said Foundation website <https://www.barenboimsaidformusic.com/about-us>

institution's work within the purely musical vision and not link it to the broader cultural and political context, specifically, within the political vision of the Said-Barenboim project.

It remains crucial to say that it is possible to disagree or agree with the institution's vision based on the positions of Barenboim or Said or through their initiatives and statements. However, the institution's work is consistent with the general vision that falls under the importance of work and cultural practice in the Palestinian context and is implicitly agreed upon by most institutions in the artistic field. Especially since culture's value and importance remain loose; it can be interpreted in several directions.

Critical Notes and Conclusions

The shift in musical practice, and its transformation into a theme in the Palestinian context, led to the promotion of music, and dealing with it as a severe and significant artistic production, related to cultural construction and its importance in shaping the Palestinian identity. However, at the same time - and in order to preserve the traditions of cultural studies - it raised problems and questions that must be addressed and raised. When talking about significant musical experiences, the contexts that those experiences went through are generally ignored because those contexts are important in imparting the meanings that music carries. Was not the Nasserite experience, for example, important in generalizing the model of Abd al-Wahhab and Umm Kulthum? And the suppression of other musical models, such as the experience of Sheikh Imam and Ahmed Fouad Negm? Would Beethoven achieve all this clamor with his music without the French Revolution and its influence? Would Johann Sebastian Bach have aroused all this interest had his music not been an embodiment and confirmation of the narrative of the victory of reason within the long battle of the history of Western modernity? There have always been social, political, and economic structures that have promoted, stabilized, and popularized

artistic experiences in general. The assumption based on considering these significant musical experiences as primary references, including the experience of Arabic music, is a perception based on forgetting these structures that carried the significant experiences and ignoring any oppression that other experiences were subjected to, thus their disappearance. This does not negate the importance of these creators and the importance of their work and examining it through its artistic contexts.

The generalization of a specific model carries within it a reproduction of what exists. Therefore, the attempt to generalize some models and take them as an aesthetic reference is based on obfuscation about the emerging and historical relationship between the artistic product and between classes, organizations and gains, and existing institutions and parties. A comprehensive understanding of the transformations of artistic values can only be presented by looking at these evident and hidden relationships together. Thus, preserving a symbolic authority enhances the value of existing relationships and does not question them and their structure. In this context, the playwright Bertolt Brecht's words about theater and art, in general, seem important, as he says: "There is no play and no theatrical performance which does not in some way or other affect the dispositions and conceptions of the audience. Art is never without consequences, and indeed that says something for it."¹²⁶

Therefore, crystallizing an understanding of artistic expression cannot remain hostage to the artistic world alone, nor can its artistic world be neglected simultaneously by focusing on other factors outside it, such as the societal, economic, and political structure. This requires a double effort that requires a dialectical vision that sees the artwork within its artistic system,

¹²⁶ Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. [1st ed.]. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964. Pg. 151.

driven by ensuring the broader cultural and social space and revealing the invisible relationships and overlaps between the two, despite the difficulty of monitoring and proving them sometimes. However, this remains the preoccupation of cultural studies, which belong to the system of critical studies, which must raise questions about what appears to be proven, confident, and firm more than providing answers.

As for musical institutionalization, through the three experiences we mentioned earlier, it is possible to crystallize two critical problems through their work. The first is related to artistic taste, and the second is related to the post-Oslo political system model. In terms of artistic taste, there is a promotion of musical visions with specific references related to the model of Arabic music and classical Western music and ways to deal with them, thus stressing specific values and models, especially concerning Arab music. It must be noted that the understanding resulting from these experiences was carried on the shoulders of the central organs of the nation-state, its vision in the Arab world, and within specific contexts. It is the only understanding necessary to experience Arabic and classical Western music. This implicitly labels what counts as “serious” music as high culture and coincides with the economic imagination that emerged after Oslo, which accompanied the emergence of new elites and classes and emphasized individual values and globalized consumer lifestyles. Consequently, its learning and practice, or its “consumption,” becomes as if it achieves distinction and enhances the social and cultural capital of an educated elite or a new class. In this sense, music becomes an exchange value that maintains and stabilizes divergent tastes resulting from the unequal class and social capital structures in various forms.

As for the model of the political system, does not the discourse on the importance of culture and its playing of liberating and enlightening roles that preserve the Palestinian identity and build the state only constitute a compromise with the existing political system? Establishing

an “independent” musical field is essential, especially in developing the art of music. However, the problem may lie in the implicit consideration of the general values that institutional musical practice bears in common with the prevailing discourse on the importance of culture and its roles. Then does this discourse confirm the legitimacy of the artistic intentions of the political system and implicitly recognize their importance and lack of accountability? At the same time, does the political system not grant them acceptance, confirming the legitimacy of their existence and their cultural and artistic values? The contents of these cultural values remain within their general framework and need to address the visions and ways through which culture is seen. Also, this discreet relationship does not necessarily occur with the awareness of these parties, while questioning it does not question the severe and sincere intentions of those with musical and artistic experiences.

This discourse has nothing new, as it was practiced in all Arab countries whose military regimes claimed to follow a modern, progressive, and nationalist path, such as Syria, Egypt, and Iraq. Nevertheless, their people faced fates that can be described as tragic. These regimes needed to strengthen the roles of culture and art. They sponsored and supported artists and creators and their projects in various forms, despite the differences in the context of Palestine and its complexities. However, it seems that the cultural and artistic values resulting from the work of these art institutions are based on something other than presenting a cultural model that questions or criticizes the regime’s political structure. It is based on an alternative model for the proposed roles of culture insofar as it becomes complementary to it. It is identical to its discourse on the concept of culture.

CHAPTER 5

Abstracts of the study

From the beginning of the eighties until the Oslo agreement and beyond, the experience of musical expression went through two main phases. The first phase was characterized as a dramatization phase, meaning that it sought to be representative, sincere, spontaneous, expressive, communicative, and identifiable, and complementary to the sense of revolutionary spirit and struggle that existed in every period, especially in the period of the first intifada. The musicians (instrumentalists, singers, and producers) were involved in this uprising, and the musical act was seen only through its support of and its adherence to this revolutionary situation. Therefore, this music and songs carried the daily vocabulary of this uprising, and most of its melodies were derived from the heritage of popular singing. That is, it was directly expressing what was happening in reality at the time, as the direct event was its main inspiration and was based on its nourishment. It was distinguished by its simplicity in terms of musical form. The second stage was characterized by the emergence of music and interest in it as an independent field, an independent art form, and thus the transformation of this representation into a stand-alone subject.

This study has attempted to establish and draw the features of the pre-Oslo music scene, specifically between the early eighties and the first intifada in 1987, which helped position the subsequent developments of the Oslo era. I have sought, specifically, to show how professional artistic teams emerged in conjunction with political work. This can be viewed as an integral part of a comprehensive struggle process in which the artistic and the political intertwine. In that era, the direct moral-political value of artistic activity gave it legitimacy and justification for its

existence. Art must be committed, but this did not prevent the artists (or part of them) from seeking to expand the meaning of the moral-political value of the artistic work to get rid of the political program directly partisan and thus broaden the field of acceptable artistic taste.

At the end of the 1970s, the Al-Asheqeen Band and the El-Funoun Band emerged as the central bands; both took the heritage of popular music as an essential material in their artistic and musical expressions. They were distinguished by the fact that they expressed in their songs, especially in the early periods of their founding, up to the period of the first intifada, the Palestinian revolution, and its various stages. Their productions expressed the political positions and visions of the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Later, during the Oslo period, a change emerged in their artistic and musical styles and expressions, especially the El-Funoun Band. An interest in and development of the artistic and musical forms used began. Music and its expressions seemed to adopt an “independent approach” to express the conscience of the Palestinian experience and its identity without being a direct reflection of a political “agenda” or “propaganda.”

following the outbreak of the uprising in 1987, a group of local bands emerged, producing tapes that included songs of the resistance. These bands were affiliated in one way or another with the existing political parties involved in the uprising. These parties were an integral part of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Therefore, these songs represented the general programs and visions of those parties.

A group of musical experiences before and after that period had particular importance in musical practice and expression, as it had a wide public spread and established the music and production of artistic music, and an academic that saw music as a new role through its “independence,” focus on itself, and structure. That is, taking care of it and developing it as an

existing artistic experience without attaching it to a partisan political structure. Thus, it becomes a subject in itself.

Late in the uprising, new experiences began to emerge, and they have particular importance in musical expressions, such as the experience of the Sabreen band, Alrahaala (The Traveler), and others. These experiences opened up and were influenced by different and varied musical influences and currents, such as Arab music currents, international music currents, and jazz and classical music. These experiences were meaningful because they focused from the outset on musical and expressive obsession, specifically existential. It focused on the existential experience of contemporary Palestinian people. These experiments established the “separation” of music and the crystallization of artistic music of importance that had an evident influence in the Oslo era and beyond artistic music.

Music achieved its “independence” in the Oslo era after Palestinian society was subjected to significant changes, the most prominent of which may be the introduction of globalized consumer lifestyles as part of the massive network of global capital and the emergence of new classes that have their values. It must be said that this does not mean that music abandons its role in expressing the collective situation experienced by the Palestinians but instead changes its role.

There were, and in the Oslo period, various musical productions and currents, including what is commercial and a continuation of the currents of capitalist globalization, such as pop music and others. However, the study dealt with artistic music, which resulted in a case of musical bruising, a continuation of what was called committed music. Hence the emergence of music as an independent academic and artistic field.

The music scene has changed completely during the last twenty years. A group of educational and cultural institutions has established musical values that enhance their existence

and deal with them as an expressive art form, which is of essential importance in building and crafting contemporary Palestinian culture and enhancing its existence. This vision was derived through the visions and transformations of cultural practice in its most general form in the contemporary Palestinian context. This emerged through the experiences of these institutions and the methods and visions through which music is practiced. These institutions have contributed to the emergence of a new music scene by spreading the music culture and making it available to the young generation during its operation.

Two Palestinian institutions, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music and the Al-Kamandjâti Association, focused on teaching two styles of music. The first is Arabic music and its legacy since the second half of the nineteenth century, and classical Western music. These two institutions have established an orchestra that plays these styles and organizes performances and festivals. They supervised the graduation of a group of professional musicians. These institutions allowed musicians to take music as a profession and opened the door for musicians and authors to produce music within a professional musical structure. As for the Barenboim-Said Foundation, an international institution, has various musical projects in different regions of the world. Its headquarters is in the Spanish city of Seville. Furthermore, the Foundation's presence in Ramallah is one of those projects. It focused its education and program on classical Western music for children and young adults. It actively organized musical performances and hosted international musicians and performers in classical Western music. The Foundation is a summary and continuity of the cultural and political vision of the Maestro's projects, Daniel Barenboim, which began with the late thinker Edward Said.

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