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Bledi Cockneys:
Music, Identity and
Mediation in Algerian
London

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PhD

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and that all sources have been properly acknowledged.

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Stephen Wilford
London, November 2016

Abstract

The Algerian diaspora in London has grown exponentially in recent years, initially as a result of Algeria's civil conflict and subsequently for economic and educational reasons. The local Algerian population has found itself dispersed across the city and its surrounding areas, with no focal point around which to develop a sense community. This has produced feelings of individual and collective cultural disconnection, which are particularly pronounced given the strong discourse of nationalism that has shaped Algerian politics since the country's independence in 1962. At the same time, on a local level Algerians have been faced by both widespread public ignorance of their culture, and enduringly negative representations within the British media that associates Algerians with acts of terrorism.

In such circumstances, music has become important to Algerians in the city for a number of reasons. It offers, in a range of traditional and contemporary forms, a positive public display of Algerian culture for Algerian and non-Algerian audiences alike. Musical events also facilitate social interaction amongst the local diaspora, providing occasions in which Algerians from across the city can gather and collectively celebrate their culture. Whilst such moments of music-making provide entertainment and an expression of national pride, they also offer an opportunity for the negotiation of 'London Algerianness', a collective cultural identity that is shaped by, but uniquely different from, the Algerian cultures of France and the homeland.

This thesis focuses upon this notion of London Algerianness, examining the important role that music plays in constructing and mediating a shared, localised sense of collective cultural identity. Algerian music in London, it is argued, maintains connections with a transnational diaspora, but is also at the heart of a strong local identity, which is formed by the experiences of Algerians in early twenty-first century London.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This thesis presents an ethnographic account of my research with Algerian musicians and audiences in London over a three-year period (2011-2014). The work considers the role of musicking¹ (to borrow Christopher Small's [1998] terminology) within Algerian culture in the city, and focuses, in particular, upon issues of identity and mediation. I investigate and problematise the relationship between the 'local' and 'global' within contemporary diasporic cultures, and highlight the complexity and fluidity of musicking practices amongst this diasporic population. I also resolve to address the lack of scholarly attention paid to Algerian culture in Britain, and intend this thesis to provide a portrayal of the rich diversity of Algerian music-making in contemporary London.

Whilst my research reveals the extent, and complexity, of transnational connections and flows of music, the study remains focussed upon individuals and groups living and working in London, and is therefore framed by their relationship to the urban context in which they reside. The fragmentation of the Algerian diaspora in London, and the subsequent shared sense of cultural disconnection that this produces, is fundamental to understanding this diasporic population and its musicking practices. Unlike other diasporic and migrant groups in the city, Algerians have never established themselves in a particular area of the city, and therefore suffer from a lack of cultural cohesion, and a paucity of services or venues in which to socialise. Whilst this poses problems for Algerian musicians and audiences, it also reinforces the importance of music

¹ I draw upon Christopher Small's (1998) terminology` to describe the collective musical processes evident amongst Algerians in London. Like Small, my work is 'not so much about music as it is about people, about people as they play and sing, as they listen and compose, and even as they dance' (1998: 8). I am interested in the processes involved in musicking and the interactions between performers and listeners, and Algerians and non-Algerians, which they embody. I suggest therefore that musicking is a broad and fluid term, which is appropriate because of the multiple contexts, forms and functions of Algerian music-making in London. Small defines musicking by claiming that 'to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing' (1998: 9).

to the local diaspora in enabling displays of cultural pride and providing rare opportunities for social interaction. The Internet, and particularly social media, has provided another way in which Algerians are able to engage with one another, and musicians and audiences increasingly employ social media platforms to facilitate musicking in London.

Three central themes emerge from this research. The first is that musicking provides a form of social interaction that is intended to overcome the dispersal of Algerians across the city and the fragmentation of Algerian society in London. The second is that individual and collective musicking practices offer one of the primary ways in which Algerians in the city perform and negotiate their cultural identities, and that musical performance affords Algerians a stage upon which to construct a sense of shared London Algerianness. The third is that Algerian culture (and Algerians themselves) frequently remains obscured from public view in London, and that musical performances provide a rare opportunity to promote Algerian culture positively and overcome many of the negative stereotypes faced by Algerians in the city.

The thesis aims to address a number of research questions, and these provide a sense of structure and coherence to the subsequent chapters. These questions include: is a distinct Algerian musical culture identifiable in London, and if so, what factors (locally and transnationally) shape it? How is music employed by Algerians in London to construct, perform, negotiate and reify their sense of Algerianness? How does the diversity of musicking practices in the city reflect the heterogeneity of Algerian culture, and what does this tell us about contemporary Algerian life in London? How are local diasporic musicking practices shaped both by Algerian historical and socio-political discourse, and by local factors and conditions in contemporary London? How do local and transnational flows shape Algerian music in London, and what does this reveal about wider contemporary diasporic musicking?

This thesis consists of four chapters, each based upon ethnographic fieldwork, and is book-ended by an introduction (this chapter) and a conclusion. The second chapter (which follows this introduction) considers issues of performance in relation to music and identity, and examines how these

elements are interrelated through the musicking practices of Algerians in London. Framing this chapter are theories of the performativity of identities (extending the work of Judith Butler and others), and I consider how musicking provides a way for Algerians to individually and collectively construct, negotiate and reify notions of Algerianness. Chapter three is also concerned with issues of performance, and focuses upon public performances by Algerian musicians and ensembles in London during the summer of 2013. These musicians were not resident in London, but attracted Algerian and non-Algerian audiences from across the city, and this chapter therefore investigates the ways in which musical performances shape public conceptions of Algerian culture in London, and enable encounters between Algerians and non-Algerians.

The focus of chapter four is the mediation of Algerian music, and I examine three case studies/themes that highlight the diversity of diasporic musicking practices in London: the role of the Internet, and particularly social media, in mediating Algerian music locally and transnationally; the importance of a local radio station in constructing a sense of Algerian cultural unity through its broadcasts, whilst connecting London with France and the *bled*; and the ways in which Algerian musicians in the city have adopted and refashioned tropes of orientalism and exoticism in their publicity materials. These three examples evidence the complexity and diversity of musical mediation, and highlight the intersection of meanings and understandings of Algerian culture both locally and globally. Chapter five offers a case study of the Al Andalus Caravan, an Algerian *andalusi* 'association' based in London. The practices of this ensemble tie together many of the themes that have emerged in the previous chapter, and I show how the group brings together musicians, sustains and refashions a highly revered cultural tradition, teaches *andalus* music to new musicians and audiences, and enables the performance of a shared sense of Algerianness. The conclusion summarises the role that music plays for Algerians in London as a form of social practice, a way of producing and negotiating notions of Algerian identity, and a stage for publicising Algerian culture and creating a sense of the place of the Algerian diaspora in the city.

1.2 Research Methodologies, Issues, and Challenges

This work grew out of a personal interest in Algerian music and culture, and throughout the three years of fieldwork, I have established relationships with a wide cross-section of the Algerian population of the city. I have combined semi-structured interviews with attendance at rehearsals and events (both musical and non-musical), collected film footage, participated in social media networks, and engaged in informal discussions with Algerian co-workers. The venues in which the research has been conducted have been similarly diverse, reflecting the lack of fixed physical spaces provided for Algerians in London, and these have included cafes, restaurants, pubs, arts centres, casinos, offices, universities, and individuals' homes. This diversity, I suggest, is symbolic of the complex and fluid lives and music-making practices of many Algerians living in London.

There has been relatively little ethnographic work conducted on Algerian culture, but fieldwork provides a way of overcoming the problems of gathering accurate and representative data for such a study of Algerian music. One particular challenge, which has been apparent in the few studies of Algerian culture in Britain that have been published, is the reluctance of many members of the local diaspora to engage with officially-sanctioned research (such as censuses) for a variety of reasons, and the result of this has been dubious portrayals of local Algerian culture. Furthermore, the lack of public visibility of Algerian culture in London means that in-depth ethnographic research is one of the few ways of uncovering the depth and diversity of the diaspora's musicking practices within the city.

1.2.1 Ethnomusicology and fieldwork at home

The use of ethnographic fieldwork places this project firmly within the discipline of ethnomusicology. However, whilst such methodologies are archetypal of traditional ethnomusicological work, the location of my research is characteristic of more recent trends within the discipline. Over the last three decades there has been a gradual shift, with many ethnomusicologists engaging in fieldwork within, or geographically close to, the societies in which they live and work.

Much of this work has been focussed upon urban contexts, with scholars often investigating the place of musical cultures within large multicultural cities (Cottrell, 2004: 15). Bruno Nettl locates this trend within the development of the discipline, and writes that,

As the twentieth century wound its way onward, and as the world's population became more urban, and as urban culture increasingly penetrated the rural venues, the proportion of fieldwork done in villages and nomadic camps decreased, and research in urban venues arose. And increasingly, that venue might be a city in one's own culture. (2005: 185)

Jonathan P. Stock and Chou Chiener add that 'it is increasingly apparent that "we" and "they", the ethnomusicologists and those whom we study, are not normatively separated by distance, language, wealth, or lifestyle, even when such distinctions remain significant in many fieldwork situations' (2008: 110). The focus of such studies has varied significantly. Some scholars, such as Ruth Finnegan (1989), have looked at broad patterns of music-making within particular urban sites, whilst others, like Stephen Cottrell (2004), have conducted research within the communities of musicians to which they belong. In terms of diasporic musics, these studies have included researchers working within their own cultures, such as Su Zheng's (2010) investigation of the Chinese diaspora in the USA, and those working as cultural outsiders, as with Carolyn Landau's (2011) research with Moroccans in London.

Ethnomusicological fieldwork 'at home', and in urban areas, provides particular challenges and benefits for the researcher, and these are reflected in my own work with Algerians in London. Conducting fieldwork within a city with which I am so familiar has undoubtedly proven beneficial in removing the period of cultural readjustment and assimilation that has typically characterised ethnomusicological research. In addition, I have been able to conduct fieldwork throughout the entirety of my doctoral studies, enabling me to develop deep, extended relationships with individuals and organisations across London. Whilst the lack of fixed diasporic community, residing in a prescribed area of the city, has sometimes made it difficult to establish contacts, Internet-based social media, which is used extensively by Algerians, has offered one solution to this

issue, and has provided a fertile source of information. The transient nature of the diaspora, both locally and transnationally, with individuals moving in and out of the city, has made it difficult to define the physical boundaries of the field, and has problematised the idea of carrying out such research within a single urban space.

In spite of my extended fieldwork I have always remained a cultural outsider, a conspicuously non-Algerian researcher attempting to forge connections and gain new understandings of Algerian culture. This status has been very clear to myself and to others in a number of contexts, such as music events at which I am the only non-Algerian in the room. This has necessitated working hard to establish relationships and gain trust, but also provides a sense of critical distance from those that I work with.

However, even when not engaging in fieldwork, my daily life has taken place in the same city as my work, and I have travelled on the same public transport and patronised the same shops and restaurants as my Algerian friends and co-workers. As such, the 'field' is also the city in which I live and work, and as such, I am always, to some extent, immersed within it. Furthermore, many of the Algerians that I have met and worked with have been intrigued by my own views of their culture, and of the Algerian diaspora in London, as well as the opinions and understandings of Algeria that are held by my friends and family. I have been asked on a number of occasions to give a 'British view' of Algerian music and culture, and this has provoked a number of interesting and informative discussions about the status of Algerians in the city. Such conversations have, I believe, not only shaped my own understanding of Algerian culture and the ways in which the local diaspora view themselves, but have also caused friends and co-workers to reflect upon the ways that their culture is perceived by a wider non-Algerian public.²

Cottrell writes of the 'native anthropologist', the insider conducting

² One acquaintance that I met at an event in London was in fact conducting research into Algerian culture in Britain for his studies at a university in London. After returning to Algeria, he contacted me via Facebook in order to conduct an online interview about my opinions on London's Algerian musical culture, and we shared some of our thoughts on this matter.

research within their own culture, and suggests that such an approach challenges and invalidates traditional anthropological notions of the 'emic' (insider) and 'etic' (outsider) (2004: 16). Zheng describes her own experiences, writing that 'it is hard to pinpoint where my everyday life ended and where my fieldwork and research started' (2010: 23). Whilst I certainly cannot claim to be a 'native' researcher in the sense of Cottrell or Zheng, I suggest that my own status also challenges orthodox understandings of the insider/outsider binary. As a resident of London, I have a particular appreciation of the city (even though I was not born there), and as a British person can comprehend the views that non-Algerians often hold of Algerian culture. In contrast to my status at local Algerian events, within London I might be considered (very crudely) an 'insider', whilst Algerians often speak of feeling like 'outsiders' in the city. As such, I argue that this type of work with diasporic cultures within one's own city further problematizes established notions of 'emic' and 'etic' research, and provides new understandings of the complex relationships between researcher and co-workers.

1.2.2 Music and diaspora

The term diaspora originally referred to the displacement and subsequent resettlement of Jewish, Greek and African people, and suggested an enduring desire to return to the 'homeland'. The word has seen increasing usage within academic scholarship in recent decades, and particularly within the humanities and social sciences, with Rogers Brubaker noting that,

As the term has proliferated, its meaning has been stretched to accommodate the various intellectual, cultural and political agendas in the service of which it has been enlisted. This has resulted in what one might call a "'diaspora" diaspora' a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space. (2005: 1)

Thomas Turino suggests that diasporas are 'groups of people in multiple sites...who regardless of geographical distance maintain a common social identification and often concrete links and cultural exchange around the symbol of "home"'(2004: 5-6). However, contemporary 'diaspora studies' now embodies a range of approaches that seek to move beyond constrained notions of migration,

displacement, and enduring linkages with a clearly defined 'homeland'. Whilst the term has found increasing acceptance within the academy, it has not been without its critics. Observers have noted that the term risks both victimising groups of people, and binding individuals within prescribed cultural identities, in what Aisha Khan terms 'abiding implicit assumptions about affinities—*cultural* affinities, to be exact (and which imply racial essences)—that group together diasporic streams into not only distinguishable but selectively aggregated entities' (2015: 29).³ Whilst Khan's concerns are understandable, the problems that have arisen within certain scholarship on diasporas do not, I argue, preclude the enduring value of examining diasporic cultures. Robin Cohen has written of the 'positive virtues of retaining a diasporic identity' and argues that 'the tension between an ethnic, a national and a transnational identity is often a creative, enriching one' (2008: 7). The argument that I make in this thesis takes a similar approach, proposing that rather than binding individuals within prescribed cultural identities, Algerianness in contemporary London produces an expressive culture that is simultaneously local and transnational. This culture, I suggest, also evidences that the type of diasporic identity that Stuart Hall discerns, which is shaped by the past but constantly in a process of renewal and development. As Hall writes,

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. (1997: 113)

This definition of diasporic identity, as rooted in both the historical and contemporary, is the basis of the term 'secondary diaspora' that I employ throughout my work, and is intended to simultaneously reference the cultural legacy of links to the *bled* and France, and the vibrancy of Algerian culture as it is enacted and lived within contemporary London.⁴

Diaspora is also an apposite term to use in this study because of the

³ For discussion of the relationship between diaspora and victimization see Robin Cohen's work, and in particular Chapter 3 Victim Diasporas: Africans and Armenians (2008: 39-60)

⁴ See glossary.

importance and recurring usage of the term *bled* amongst Algerians, not just in London but also throughout diasporic networks and communities. The belief in retaining strong links to the *bled* characterises much Algerian culture, and helps to explain the discourses of nationalism that shape much musical activity within the city. Furthermore, diaspora provides a useful term for capturing the variety of experiences of individuals living within London, and the ways in which Algerian culture engages with British culture without necessarily producing hybridities or contributing to simplistic notions of multiculturalism. I am drawn here to Tina K. Ramnarine's suggestion that 'diasporic music-making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as individual agents in their everyday environments, making musical choices that suit them and their audiences' (2007: 7). This seems to align closely with the notion of musicking that I employ, as a way of understanding music-making and listening as part of everyday life for Algerians in the city. Rather than identifying examples of British-Algerian musical hybridities, I suggest that London Algerianness is something unique and powerful, and I concur with Ramnarine's assertion that 'in moving beyond simple understandings of hybridity as musical cultures in contact that result in 'new' musical expressions we move towards politically articulated readings of social relations and creative processes' (2007: 7).

1.2.3 Constructing the text

The text of this thesis is constructed around a combination of interviews, personal observations and theories drawn from scholarly works. Theories of identity (particularly relating to its performative nature) and mediation frame the thesis, and are introduced and explored in depth within relevant chapters.

Whilst I draw upon the work of a number of scholars, my primary focus remains upon ethnography, and the views and opinions of the Algerian musicians and audiences that I have worked with. Having attended a multitude of musical events, within various contexts, and having spoken to numerous individuals and organisations, I have accumulated a large body of materials that represent a spectrum of viewpoints. My role in writing this thesis has therefore

been to select quotes that illustrate widely held opinions, and to highlight the contrasting perspectives on particular subjects that have emerged. One aim of this thesis is to investigate the diversity of the local Algerian diaspora, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the underlying notion of cultural unity. The quotes that I have selected have therefore often been representative of assertions repeated to me on multiple occasions, and in order to avoid repetition within the text, I have chosen those that most clearly state these opinions. I have often used lengthy quotations drawn from my recorded interviews in the hopes that these reflect the voices of those that I work with, and avoid excessive explanatory interjections on my part. These quotations are intended to drive the text, whilst informing my own thoughts on these matters, and they are supplemented by the observations that I have made whilst conducting fieldwork.

I have always explained my intentions whilst undertaking research, and particularly when making recorded interviews. Interviewees have been made aware that their views might appear within this text, and may be attributed to them by name, in the hopes of asserting their agency and avoiding the presentation of a 'faceless' ethnography. Nevertheless, it has, on occasion, been necessary to anonymise certain quotations that either deal with politically sensitive issues, or may cause future problems for my interviewees within local diasporic circles. Whilst I have never been asked directly to conceal someone's identity, I have, in places, taken an editorial decision to do so, and hope that this protects my co-workers but does not detract from the text of the thesis.

1.2.4 Locating and framing the research

This study focuses upon Algerian music (and culture more broadly) in London, and is a timely piece of research for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Algerian diaspora within the city (and in Britain more widely) has grown exponentially in recent years (Collyer, 2003; IOM report, 2007; Communities and Local Government report, 2009). Whilst much of this migration initially resulted from the country's civil war (1991-2002), more recently Algerians have arrived in London to work and study. Not only has the city's Algerian population

expanded, but it has become increasingly settled, with cultural networks increasingly emerging that support local musicking practices. Many of those living in London have begun to speak in more positive terms about local diasporic society, and the growing opportunities that they are afforded.

Secondly, this study is timely as it coincides with public and political concerns about immigration to Europe and Britain from North Africa. As thousands of individuals and families attempt to escape the violence so tragically affecting Libya, Syria and other countries in the region, this study examines the realities of North African life and culture in London, a romanticised destination in the minds of many migrants. Furthermore, the broad parallels that are drawn between the Algerian civil war and the current situation in other North African countries means that this work hints at the possible future trajectories for diasporas locating themselves within the city.

Thirdly, this study examines the place of Algerian culture in London, and makes certain comparisons with the situation of the Algerian diaspora in French cities. As such, it investigates a form of 'secondary' diasporic identity, which breaks away from historical colonial nexus formed between the 'oppressor' and 'oppressed'. In other words, my work seeks to consider an Algerian diasporic culture that is shaped, but not constrained, by the complex and often violent relationship between Algeria and France. My research investigates the way in which local Algerian musicking engages with, and is constructed through, the relationship between Algerian culture and contemporary Britain, and considers how this forms what I term a distinct 'secondary' diasporic culture that is differentiated from that in either France or Algeria.

In recent decades, some scholars have questioned the validity of studying discrete national, ethnic or cultural identities. Globalisation and urban multiculturalism, it is argued, increasingly blur the definition and boundaries of such identities. Gerd Baumann, for example, offers an ethnographic study of Southall, an area of west London, and locates his own research in relation to the work of others, arguing that in many cases,

The recipe seemed uncomfortably predictable: page one isolated some community of culture that the author had pre-defined, and the final page

concluded that it, or they, were 'encapsulated'. The author's conclusion, in other words, seemed predetermined by the fieldworker's starting-point (1996, 9-10).

Baumann's solution is to focus upon a predefined and bounded geographical area (Southall), and to examine issues of self-identity within this urban space, rather than focussing upon specific cultural communities. Whilst Baumann's work is undoubtedly rich and illuminating, his approach produces as many questions as it answers. Firstly, Baumann concedes that individuals frequently travel in and out of the area, temporarily and permanently, whether for work or to visit friends and family, and as such the notion of Southall as a fixed physical space is undeniably problematic. As such, whilst Baumann recognises the fluidity of identities, this focus upon a predetermined area of London means that his work remains constrained by boundaries, with the restrictions of ethnocultural identity replaced by more fixed physical borders of space. Secondly, labels of religion, nationality, race and ethnicity are never far from the surface of Baumann's text. Whilst he is undoubtedly correct in calling attention to the complex and multi-layered nature of such identities, this also highlights that such concepts remain important to individuals and groups.

My argument is that labels of nationality or ethnicity remain apposite within recent global trends of migration, and require us to take an approach that examines the changing and contested nature of diasporic cultural identities. As Stuart Hall writes, 'cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture' (1997: 113).

Other scholars have also written about the enduring importance of national identities. Benedict Anderson's (2006) seminal work *Imagined Communities* argues that nationalism is a constructed, fluid notion, much like my concept of Algerian identities within contemporary London, whilst Michal Billig calls for scholars to 'look for the reasons why people in the contemporary world do not forget their nationality' (1995: 7). Craig Calhoun (2007) suggests that more nuanced readings of national identities are necessary, and he writes that,

Claims to nationhood are not just internal claims to social solidarity, common descent, or any other basis for constituting a political community; they are also claims to distinctiveness vis-à-vis other nations, claims to at least some level of autonomy and self-sufficiency, and claims to certain rights within a world-system of states. (2007: 56)

Such a description speaks to the ways that Algerian culture in London is not only concerned with diasporic unity and community, but is also shaped by its relationship to both Britain and France. This work therefore attempts to address, rather than dismiss, the enduring importance of discrete national and cultural diasporic identities, and seeks to understand the ways in which music allows Algerians in the city to negotiate such identities in and through the 'third space' that exists between their own culture and wider British society (Bhabha, 1994; Bashkow 2004, al-Aswad 2006). In drawing upon third space theory, I suggest that the shared identities constructed around notions of a local London Algerianness appear in the spaces between binary notions of discrete British and Algerian cultures. Members of the local diaspora in London frequently identify themselves along lines of nationality, but differentiate this cultural identity from those found in Algeria or France, forming what I term a 'secondary diaspora'. They also draw upon multiple historical narratives, including colonial and postcolonial, and place a particular focus upon marginalisation and discrimination, within both Britain and France. Therefore, this diasporic third space draws together multiple identities and histories that produce and negotiate shared notions of cultural belonging, but which remain shaped by the concept of Algerian nationalism.

1.2.5 Identifying Algerian music and culture

Although the Algerian diaspora in London is dispersed across the city, there remains a strong sense of shared national identity and common culture. In part, this results from the fact that many Algerians in London were born in the *bled*, and therefore often retain strong memories of the homeland and close connections with friends and family members living there.⁵ This shared culture,

⁵ The situation in large French cities, such as Paris or Marseille, that are home to large Algerian populations, might be somewhat different, I suggest. Whilst the 'communities' in these cities are often more established and physically located than in London, the

in its many forms, underpins local diasporic networks and collective practices, including music-making. A shared national culture is foregrounded in many of the performance contexts discussed in this thesis, and it is this British Algerianness that provides the foundation for an array of musicking practices.

This Algerian cultural identity is formed from the practices of Algerians in the *bled* and other diasporic populations (particularly in France), both historical and contemporary, but is also shaped by its existence within London. An important line of inquiry within this thesis is the way that music mediates localised internal ('Algerian') and external ('non-Algerian') understandings of Algerian culture, and how this relationship establishes and mediates the identities of Algerians living in the city. Zheng importantly points out that whilst notions of contemporary culture appear increasingly deterritorilised, 'we find that we cannot yet do away with two simple but vexing questions: "To which place does this culture belong?" and "To which place do I belong?"' (2010: 20).

These questions, I suggest, offer a salient starting point for studies of contemporary diasporic music-making, and Zheng is careful to explain that her work does not,

Celebrate rootless, boundless, and liberatory global travelling in a shrinking world, nor does it imply a depoliticized, denationalized, or decontextualized analytical approach. On the contrary, through examples from musicians' life stories and musical events intermingled with American local cultural politics and battles over multiculturalism, it names the privileges and limitations derived from differences of race, gender, class and nationality in journeys differentiated by origin, direction, route, circumstance, and purpose. (2010: 10)

This description (with a quick substitution of the word American for British) summarises my own starting point for this thesis. Like Zheng, I am concerned with the tension between transnational flows of diasporic culture, and the rooted realities of Algerian life in contemporary London. In other words, I suggest that this form of British Algerianness is unique and differentiated from Algerian culture elsewhere, but still maintains strong links to traditional and contemporary cultural practices in France and the *bled*.

development of second and third-generations of the Algerian diaspora mean that notions of national identity are perhaps more unstable.

Whilst this shared culture and identity is important to Algerians in London, it is neither homogenous nor fixed. As with any diasporic population, issues such as gender, wealth and age ensure that individual experiences and understanding are varied. Social class is a particularly important, although contentious, factor for Algerians in the city. A large percentage of the local Algerian population are highly educated and relatively economically prosperous, providing evidence of a significant cosmopolitan middle class. This middle class is maybe proportionally larger than would be common for cities in Algeria or amongst diasporic communities in France, perhaps as a result of the need for language skills other than Arabic or French for those wishing to work in the UK. However, there are also a large number of individuals from working class backgrounds, many of whom work in low-paid occupations and reside in the less prosperous areas of London. This class status is certainly not fixed, and some individuals warn against the dangers of falsely imposing British class structures onto Algerian society, arguing that nationalist cultural solidarity supercedes issues of wealth and class. Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly different life experiences within the local Algerian diaspora that result, in part, from employment and economic stability.

The gradual emergence of a second generation of Algerians, many of whom were born in the city, is also of particular significance. Like their contemporaries in Paris and Marseille, this younger diasporic population have a different relationship to the *bled*, and to Algerian culture. Rapper Yazid was born in Algeria before moving to the UK at a young age, and proudly identifies himself as Algerian, but suggests that many of his contemporaries view things differently. He recalls going to university in London and discovering that,

Most people there were from London. And the ethnic background wasn't a thing there. Having grown up in huge communities of Asians, or Somalis, or Kenyans, wherever they are from...it wasn't an issue. They had their identity. But growing up in Reading without that much influence, and that much stuff, it was always like that way (for us). You were English or Algerian. But as I've got older, I've realised that you have your own sort of identity. And you can have the best of both worlds. I like Algerian music, I like English music, I don't need to

separate them.⁶

This type of hybridised identity, formed from two cultures, is common amongst diasporas. However, whilst Yazid's experiences enable him to negotiate this complex relationship, many Algerians remain fiercely proud of their cultural identity. And it is this British-Algerian culture, I suggest, that mediates the connections between London and a wider, transnational Algerianness. Yazid goes on to argue that many younger members of the diaspora in London have felt increasingly disconnected from Algerian culture, and explains that,

I'm generalising, but a lot of the Algerians that I've met here, culturally have not taken much. But then there is a whole London attitude; I noticed that at university a lot. Like I said, the ethnic background didn't matter, they were just like "I'm me, I'm London". And I find that with a lot of Algerians as well.⁷

This sense of cultural disconnection separates the first and second generations of the Algerian diaspora in the city, and ensures that many of the local Algerian cultural events are organised and led by the former group. The city's Algerian *harraga*⁸ population are also often excluded from cultural events, due to their challenging financial situation and a fear of attracting the attention of the authorities. Gaining access to this section of the local diaspora proved extremely difficult, with mistrust and a reluctance to engage in discussions far more commonplace than with middle class members of the local Algerian population. Whilst informal conversations with *harraga* individuals were possible, and are reflected in the text of the thesis, more formalised interviews were not, and engagement with co-workers was therefore partly dependent upon legal and class status. Nevertheless, there remains a strong sense of shared cultural identity evident amongst a large majority of London's Algerians. It is the self-identification by individuals and groups with this Algerianness that has helped me to form connections and relationships throughout the local diaspora, and which continue to underpin many of the music-making practices of Algerians in the city.

⁶ Interview, 19th October 2013.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See glossary.

Issues around definition are also present when attempting to establish the concept of 'Algerian music'. In this instance, relying upon national or cultural labels, with preconceptions of discrete, bounded musical practices, may constrain such definitions and might ignore the activities of those performing musics not commonly associated with their own culture. However, as discussed above, it is also clear that the idea of a shared Algerian musical culture remains valued by the diaspora in London, and shapes many of the local musicking practices of Algerians.

A solution to this issue is provided by Zheng, who describes her work as a study of 'music in Asian/Chinese America', rather than 'Chinese music in America' (2010: 14). This important distinction shifts the focus from preconceived notions of bounded cultural practices, to the diverse realities of music-making within a local diaspora. Following Zheng, I suggest that this thesis is concerned with 'music in Algerian London', and as such, embraces a range of musical styles and traditions. My own approach is again informed by self-identification; I engage with the musics of practitioners and audiences who define themselves as Algerian.

It is notable that despite its limited size, the musical culture of the Algerian diaspora in London is remarkably diverse. It embraces a range of 'traditional' musical forms (*andalus*, *chaabi*, *malouf*, etc.), more 'contemporary' Algerian styles (such as *rai*), and musics not commonly identified as Algerian (such as hip-hop). In the case of hip-hop, it is the ways in which rappers conceive of themselves and their music as Algerian that is of particular interest to my work, as well as the integration of multiple languages (*Darija*, French, and English) and how the specific social and political themes of their lyrics engage Algerian audiences. Furthermore, the ways in which musicians and ensembles assimilate Algerian and non-Algerian musics, and alter their repertoire and performance practices depending upon context, help to elucidate the complexity of Algerian musicking in London, and how this mediates relationships and understandings between Algerian and non-Algerian listeners.

1.2.6 Encountering suspicion and mistrust

Whilst there is a sense of shared culture and national identity amongst Algerians in London, this does not guarantee unity within the local diaspora. The city's Algerian population continues to voice many of the suspicions and conspiracies that Paul Silverstein suggests emerged from their country's civil war (2002: 643). Individuals habitually note their suspicion of other Algerians, as well as the Algerian embassy and consulate. One woman speaks of her own experiences and explains that Algerians in London,

Want that unity, but it is hard to attain it, because with Algerians, everybody is suspicious of everybody. Every Algerian told me about the next Algerian "be careful, don't trust them". They are all suspicious, all paranoid. It's like there is a big conspiracy within the community to take each other down. But I don't feel like this personally. And I was shocked to hear that. I was a bit upset, each time I spoke to an Algerian and they said "be careful, be careful, be careful". I was like "what is it with you that we need to be careful with everybody?" For me, whatever happens will happen.⁹

These suspicions have also shaped my own experiences when conducting research. Whilst I have often been welcomed and encouraged, I have also been warned about engaging with other Algerians in the city, with the suggestion that certain individuals or groups are not to be trusted.¹⁰ Such experiences are the result of a particular Algerian political history, but a number of ethnomusicologists have recorded encountering similar suspicions amongst their co-workers. Nicole Beaudry notes that her Inuit, Yupik and Dene co-workers query the motivations of her research, and the benefits for their communities (2008: 239), whilst Anthony Seeger explains the complex layers of suspicion between co-workers, researchers, NGOs, journalists and governmental organisations in his work with Suyá Indians in Brazil (2008: 280-281). Lillis Ó Laoire writes of his experiences working with musicians on Tory Island (in County Donegal, Ireland), and the suspicions he confronted due to his

⁹ Interview, May 2013.

¹⁰ One interviewee, who I had already met on a number of occasions, began a recorded interview by asking if I was working with a certain individual and their organisation. I was only able to continue the interview after confirming that whilst I had spoken with this individual, I was not working on behalf of their group.

close associations with a journalist friend, who was not trusted by the islanders because of their previous encounters with the media. He reflects that the experience was,

Salutary in prompting me to examine some preconceptions I had about my own stance in relation to the islanders. I realised that if my interaction with the islanders, and especially the singers, was to continue on a positive footing, I would have to tread much more carefully and be much more aware than I had been of possible sensitivities. (2003: 125)

One concern that has been voiced is the belief that I might be working on behalf of the Algerian authorities. Although the use of an email-account from a well-known London university and the ability to produce a student card if necessary have legitimated my work, some people have remained suspicious of my motivations, and in one case the discovery of my name on the website of an institution at which I had previously worked led an individual to suggest that I was untrustworthy and might be working undercover.¹¹ This highlighted that whilst the Internet has been an important source of information and has enabled me to build connections with Algerians across the city, it also can also potentially lead to misunderstandings. I have also been aware of the sense of competition amongst musicians and cultural organisations, and the necessity of remaining neutral in disputes amongst members of the diaspora. Although this has sometimes proven difficult, I have made every effort not to compromise my position as a researcher by entering into such disputes, and my status as an outsider has often proven useful in reinforcing my neutrality.

My reputation, and an interest in my research, has often preceded my meeting with people for the first time, and news of my project travelled quickly amongst the relatively small network of Algerian musicians in London. Notwithstanding the suspicions that I have encountered, I have on occasion

¹¹ An Algerian co-worker recounted the conversation that he had had with a prominent member of the 'Algerian community', who I had previously emailed, and from whom I had not received a reply. When my name was mentioned in the context of filmmaking and possible collaborative work, this person exhibited uneasiness and insisted on conducting an Internet search for my name. This search produced a webpage for a research project that I had been involved in two years previously at a different London institution, and, in their eyes, cast doubts upon my honesty and trustworthiness.

been encouraged by Algerians to emphasise my university credentials, not only to reinforce my neutrality, but also because of the perceived value attached to academic research. It is certainly true that whilst not everyone has fully comprehended the processes involved in doctoral research, many individuals have been very keen to talk to me once they have learned that I am undertaking such a project.¹² Whilst such interests and understandings are rational, and sometimes beneficial to my research, they also produce a sense of discomfort at my own privileged position within these relationships. The feeling that people's willingness (including those with whom I have developed close friendships) to talk with me results from such power relations between researcher and co-worker are particularly uncomfortable, and evoke historical forms of ethnographic encounter between the 'West' and 'Other'. Jeff Todd Titon suggests that ethnomusicological research is comparable to a quest for knowledge and power, arguing that 'while the knowledge side of the quest myth may appear innocent, the power side remains implicated as an adjunct to colonialism, despite ethnomusicologists' frequent proclamations against ethnocentrism and on behalf of musical relativism' (2008:39). Although I am reluctant to couch my own work within such terminology, my experiences highlight the enduring difficulties of escaping such power relationships, even when conducting a form of urban ethnomusicology 'at home'. I cannot offer a solution to such concerns, but have endeavoured to avoid invoking any sense of authority during my ethnographic encounters, and hope that the text of this thesis gives voice to the Algerian musicians and audiences with whom I have worked.

1.2.7 Algerian languages in London

A further challenge has been the linguistic diversity evident amongst Algerians in London. Members of the local diaspora are often fluent in *Darija*, French and English, and conversations frequently switch rapidly between the three

¹² I have often had to explain the extended nature of a doctoral thesis, and that I am not seeking immediate answers or working to an impending deadline. In describing the differences between a thesis and a typical university essay, I have often explained that my work is similar to writing a book.

languages.¹³ Although far less common, some individuals also speak the Berber languages (*Tamazight* and *Taqbaylit*). One musician was born in Kabylia and speaks *Taqbaylit*, English and French, but not *Darija*, whilst an events organiser, who was born in France, explained that she had experienced criticism from fellow Algerians who learned that she could speak French but not *Darija*. Interviews with co-workers were therefore conducted primarily in English, with occasional recourse to French and *Darija* when necessary.

The importance of language to Algerian historical and political discourse should not be underestimated, and the attempts of the postcolonial Algerian government to impose Arabic as the national language continue to meet opposition from the country's Berber population. Rebecca P. Scales writes of Algerian linguistic complexity during French colonial rule, and in focussing upon the listening habits of radio audiences, explains that,

Historians continue to disagree about whether French colonial authorities deliberately fostered illiteracy in Arabic to promote Algerian assimilation to French values, though the fact the multiple interwar "nationalist" parties promoted the Arabization of Algeria's populations in their political platforms aroused suspicions within the colonial administration. (2010: 407)

This thesis draws upon sources written in a variety of languages, and the issues of spelling and transliteration have therefore arisen.¹⁴ Where possible I have employed the English spelling of words (such as Kabylia rather than *Kabylie*), but have often had to employ terminology that has not been translated into English. In these cases, I have used the most common form of spelling or transliteration (in my experience), whether this is French or Arabic, and have indicated this through the use of italics.

1.2.8 Digital anthropology and virtual fieldwork

The prevalent use of the Internet, and particularly social media, by Algerian

¹³ See glossary.

¹⁴ For example, the word for the song-cycle system upon which *andalusi* music is based is variously spelled as *nūba* (Shiloah, 1995) *nūbah* (Touma, 1996), or *nouba*. The north-eastern Berber region of Algeria is known as *Tamurt n Leqbayel* in *Tamazight*, Kabylia in English, and *Kabylie* in French.

musicians and audiences in London, to form both local and global connections, means that online ethnography forms an important element of this research. The Internet is not only used within Algerian musicking practices but is embedded within wider social and cultural processes, contesting notions of a distinction between the online and offline worlds. As Jonathan Sterne writes, even when music is produced and circulated through the Internet, ‘music culture is not “purely” online culture. It systematically violates the “online/offline” distinction upon which much Internet ethnography is still based’ (2006: 255).

Ethnographic research on Internet cultures remains a relatively small academic sub-discipline, but works by Daniel Miller and Don Slater (2000) and Robert V. Kozinets (2010) provide useful introductions to online fieldwork. Kozinets highlights the increasing value afforded to Internet-based ethnography, and argues that,

Online community and technological mediation is no longer a new form of communication and community, but has passed – or very shortly will pass – into the realm of the status quo, the way that our society simply is. If this is true, then researchers who ignore this reality will find their work increasingly passed by, rendered and judged irrelevant. (2010: 67-68)

In their handbook for Internet-based researchers, Tom Boellstorff, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce and T.L. Taylor (2012) build upon Sterne’s argument about the problems of ‘online/offline distinctions’, and write that,

Cultures, as shared systems of meaning and practice, shape our hopes and beliefs; our ideas about family, identity, and society; our deepest assumptions about being a person in this world. We now face a contemporary moment when the phrase “in the world” requires fresh inquiry. With the rise of virtual worlds, we find novel possibilities for human culture, even as we discover continuities with long-standing physical world conventions and practices. (2012: 1)

Both Tom Boellstorff (2008) and Daniel Miller (2011) have also produced detailed ethnographies that focus upon particular online ‘communities’ and ‘networks’, whilst Miller has co-edited with Heather A. Horst (2012) an anthology that brings together works by a number of researchers engaged in online ethnographic fieldwork.

Works that focus specifically upon the relationship between music-

making and online cultures remain scarce. René T.A. Lysloff (2003) examines an online community of music producers utilising 'mods'¹⁵ and, reflects upon notions of collective identity within online communities. Lysloff writes of the complexity of online social interactions, and concludes that 'the Internet provides a place for individuals to gather and, as a collective, to generate emergent (sub)cultures, complex prestige systems, elaborate commodity exchange networks, and structured governing bureaucracies' (2003: 59). Timothy J. Cooley, Katherine Meizel and Nasir Syed (2008) bring together their respective online research to consider what constitutes contemporary ethnographic fieldwork. In noting the importance of online research, but cautioning against the sense of disconnected ethnography that such methods can produce, they conclude that

Virtual fieldwork can certainly influence, facilitate, or manipulate our experience of ethnographic contact. As an organic part of our very real experiences – a part of our everyday lives – virtuality is also one of the many ways we experience people making music' (2003: 107).

1.3 Algerian History and Politics

Contemporary Algerian culture continues to be shaped by the instability and conflict that has characterised Algerian history and politics, particularly throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and Algerians in London often make reference to specific periods in their country's history. The era of French colonial rule (1830-1962), the eight-year war of independence (1954-1962), the *Tafsut Imazighen* (Berber Spring, of 1980), and the country's civil war¹⁶ (1991-2002) remain influential upon Algerian society, and their remnants can be recognised in events in London, such as the Algerian Cultural Festival and Nostalgically Algerian celebrations.¹⁷ However, whilst it is impossible to

¹⁵ Mods is an abbreviation for 'digital music modules'

¹⁶ There has been some debate over the correct terminology to use in order to describe the political violence of the 1990s, with some writers employing the term 'civil war', whilst others refer to the 'violence' or 'troubles' of the period. As this dispute is not a central concern of this thesis, I employ the term 'civil war' for the sake of simplicity.

¹⁷ The Algerian Cultural Festival, in 2012, marked the 60th anniversary of national independence, whilst the Nostalgically Algerian event celebrated the vibrancy of Algerian culture throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

deny the impact that these violent occurrences continue to have upon Algerian culture, I concur with James McDougall's (2005) warning about reifying essentialist assumptions about Algerian savagery.¹⁸ I draw attention to Algeria's troubled history not to add to the scholarship that focuses upon violence within Algerian society, but to explicate the historical conditions that frame contemporary Algerian cultural practices.

Algeria's location at the heart of North Africa and on the southern Mediterranean has ensured that the country has always been crossed by trade routes and has subsequently been a place of cultural encounter. Benjamin Stora, the prominent French-based, Algerian-born scholar, suggests that the country has always been 'a hub uniting Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia', and records that 'its privileged situation and its resources would provoke six major invasions before the French arrived' (2004: 2). The ensuing arrival of Roman, Arab and Turkish settlers, and their interaction with the region's Berber population, created a diverse and heterogeneous culture in Algeria. Arab invasions began in the seventh century, and whilst they were initially opposed, the increasing dominance of the country's Arab population was reinforced by the arrival of Moorish immigrants who had been forced to flee southern Spain by the *Reconquista* and arrived between the tenth and fifteenth centuries CE. The Turkish Ottomans gained control of Algeria in 1555 and further contributed to the diversity of Algerian culture, before the arrival of the French in 1830 (Stora, 2004: 3).

French rule in Algeria produced a complex but highly stratified society that would last until national independence in 1962, and which generally excluded the country's Arab Muslim population from positions of power (Evans: 2012a: 19-23).¹⁹ The country's Berber and Jewish populations were caught

¹⁸ A further example of the enduring role of violence and death in Algerian society is provided by Judith Scheele (2006), who provides an ethnography of Algerian graveyards, and argues that the arrangement of these spaces simultaneously highlight local practices for dealing with death and violence, and represent understandings of historical and political discourse, and social power relations.

¹⁹ It would certainly be incorrect to suggest that all French settlers (known colloquially as '*pied noir*', or black feet) lived a comfortable and privileged life, or that all members of the Muslim population suffered equally. Martin Evans (2012a) examines the diversity of both communities, and comments upon the suffering of many working class French

between the white French settler and Arab Muslim communities. The long-established Jewish community gained greater political rights than their Muslim neighbours, but suffered anti-Semitic abuse and discrimination from elements of both the Arab population and the right-wing of French settler society. Berbers, particularly in Kabylia, were considered by the authorities to be less 'threatening' than Muslims, and these cultural divisions within Algerian society enabled the authorities to instigate a system of divide-and-rule. Alistair Horne, in his highly influential history of the war of independence, writes that 'the Kabyle and Arab had little love for each other and – in the best colonial tradition – it was often the policy of the French administrators to set one off against the other' (2006: 50).²⁰ This heterogeneous society contrasts sharply with the notion of cultural unity that was propagated by the Algerian government after independence in 1962. Following bloody infighting within the Algerian nationalist movement, the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) emerged as the leadership of the Algerian people, and, having formed the first independent government, has remained in power ever since. The government continues to promote a history of national independence that suggests that the Algerian people, under the auspices of the FLN, collectively overthrew French rule in an act of glorious decolonisation. Martin Evans calls this the 'one million martyrs narrative' and suggests that it 'was seen to be spurious and indiscriminate, the measure of a secretive system which justified the status quo by blaming all of Algeria's ill on the colonial past' (2012: 355). Raphaëlle Branche (2011) also writes of the notion of glorious martyrdom that has been employed in Algerian postcolonial narratives, relating to both the war of independence and the civil war, and suggests that this has been intended to deny other discourses around the history of the country. The Algerian people, as depicted by this governmental narrative, are formed around a single Arab Muslim culture, and this actively denies the country's cultural diversity. Marnia Lazreg (1994) suggests that the

settlers. Nevertheless, in terms of legal status and political rights, those of French citizenship (who were usually white) had far more privileges than Arab Muslims.

²⁰ Horne's book 'A Savage War of Peace' was famously read by American President George W. Bush in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, having been recommended as a core text on issues of insurgency in Muslim societies by American political diplomat Henry Kissinger, of whom Horne had authored a biography.

varying experiences and attitudes of Algerian women throughout history further problematise the notion of a single, unified Algerian culture, while Ranjana Khanna (2008) examines differing representations of contemporary Algerian femininity. Given the evident heterogeneity of Algerian culture, it is unsurprising that the monoculturalism propagated by the FLN was a contributing factor to the violence that emerged in Algeria in the 1980s and 1990s.

The series of events that swept across the country between 1980 and 2002 brought further violence and bloodshed, and provided the conditions within which many Algerians in London grew up. The on-going frustrations of Berbers in Kabylia at the lack of recognition of their culture, and the nationwide enforcement of Arabization, came to a head in 1980 when poet Mouloud Mammeri was banned from giving a public speech at a university.²¹ This precipitated the *Tafsut Imazighen* (Berber Spring), and the ensuing anger and frustrations of Berbers coincided with widespread unemployment and discontent at a lack of adequate housing. As the decade progressed, and the government failed to address the concerns of ordinary Algerians, many turned to an increasingly prominent Islamist opposition. The political wing of the Islamist movement, the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), won a landslide victory in the first round of Algeria's 1991 general election (see Bouandel, 2004; Bouandel and Zoubir, 1998). However, when the government cancelled the second round of the election and banned the FIS, effectively installing a military leadership by coup d'état, many Islamists took up arms, forming the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (GIA), and precipitating the violence that would engulf Algeria for more than a decade (Hafez, 2000). Musicians and other artists were caught up in this violence, and whilst some emigrated to France for their own safety, others remained in the *bled* and faced the threat of death.²² The civil war was effectively ended by a political amnesty for Islamists in 2000, and official recognition of the Berber language *Tamazight* in 2001, although sporadic

²¹ Arabization attempted to forcibly promote Arabic culture and language throughout postcolonial Algeria. Many of the country's Berber population considered (and continue to consider) this a direct attempt to deny and subdue their culture.

²² Well-known musicians who were killed during this period included the raï star Cheb Hasni, the raï producer Rachid Baba-Ahmed, and the political Berber singer Lounès Matoub.

violence has continued to plague the country. After the attacks on the USA in September 2001, the FLN government declared their support for the American administration, and became allies in the so-called 'War on Terror', making clear their position with regards to militant Islamism, and isolating themselves from many in the Arab world (see Roberts, 2003; Evans and Phillips, 2007; Le Sueur 2010).

Alongside domestic growth and change, a large transnational Algerian diaspora has also emerged. The Algerian diasporic population in France is particularly large, due to the on-going use of the French language in Algeria and the links established between the countries during colonial rule, and Algerians in France have often contributed to their country's cultural and political landscape by providing alternative critical voices that challenge those found in the *bled*. Algerians arrived in France throughout the twentieth century to study and in search of work, and were often employed as a source of cheap labour by French industry, whilst also providing the French army with a supply of troops during various conflicts. Allan Christelow (2012) charts the transnational flow of Algerians and Algerian culture through diasporic networks, and notes the issues faced by Algerians when attempting to integrate into French society. Paul A. Silverstein (2004) highlights the connection between anti-Islamic (often anti-Algerian) discrimination in France and the emergence of a *beur* identity²³, and argues that the endurance of Algerian and Berber diasporas challenges notions of French cultural unity.

Algerian culture continues to be shaped by the discourses that surround the country's complex and difficult history. The social and political turmoil that has engulfed Algeria over the previous half century has directly touched the lives of many of those living in London, and their families, and with issues around identity, religion and culture in the *bled* remaining unresolved, these debates continue to circulate amongst Algerians living within the city.

²³ See glossary.

1.4 The Musics of Algeria

1.4.1 *Andalusi* musics

Algerian culture has always been defined by its diversity and encompasses a broad range of musical styles.²⁴ The most revered musical tradition in Algeria is *andalus*, a music that is highly valued within Algerian society and which is performed both in the *bled* and throughout the diaspora. The music takes its name from the Andalusia region of southern Spain, and its origins in North Africa are usually connected with the arrival of Moorish Islamic immigrants who were forced into exile by the *Reconquista*.²⁵ *Andalus* culture spread throughout the Maghreb, with regional variations often preserving the name of the Spanish city from which the music arrived, and whilst *andalusi* musics throughout the region share a sense of cultural unity, distinct localised styles continue to be found in particular cities, regions and countries (Langlois, 2013; Davis, 2004: 3).²⁶ The *ma'lūf* school of *andalus* is found in the east of Algeria and is closely related to the *andalus* traditions of Tunisia, whilst in the west of the country the *gharnāī* tradition, based in and around the city of Tlemcen, is similar to the styles found in Morocco. The capital city of Algiers is home to the *ṣan'a* school, and it is this music that is performed by the Al Andalus Caravan, an *andalusi* musical 'association' based in London (see chapter 5 for discussion of this ensemble).

²⁴ Reynolds proposes five broad categories of musical tradition found in Algeria, which are: '1) Andalusian traditions, 2) Urban popular traditions, 3) Arabic-language folk traditions, 4) Berber and Saharan traditions, 5) the modern *raï*, or "pop-*raï*" phenomenon' (1995: 16). This system, it should be noted, does not take account of more recent musical trends in Algeria, which break from the country's musical 'traditions', such as the prevalence of rap and hip-hop, etc.

²⁵ Tony Langlois records that 'the gradual fall of Islamic Spain to the Christian *Reconquista* in the 15th century led to waves of refugees from the courts of Al-andalus to North Africa. The Muslim nobility and their Jewish retinue settled along the coast from Morocco to Libya, bringing with them the court musics of the city states of Córdoba, Granada, Valencia and Seville' (Langlois, 2013).

²⁶ Ruth Davis notes how different Spanish regional styles were transposed onto North African cities, before developing discrete identities, and writes that 'there is a popular belief that the differences between the various contemporary North African traditions still partly reflect this original pattern of migration from Spain, where each city allegedly cultivated its own rival school of Andalusian music. The imported repertoires continued to develop, through centuries of oral transmission, along separate lines in their host countries, resulting in the four distinct national traditions known today. (2004: 3)

Although *andalus* is often presented as an esteemed art form within a contemporary context, the music has a complex and often contradictory legacy in terms of its position within Algerian society. Langlois suggests that ‘during the colonial period, *ma’lūf* in particular was associated with hashish smoking and other immoral activities that took place in *fanādiq*, hotels where profane musics were played’ (2013). Amnon Shiloah, meanwhile, writes that ‘there is evidence that the sophisticated Andalusian compound art music form, the *nūba*, was most highly esteemed among the people of the Maghreb. In cultivating it they even perpetuated certain local Spanish styles and schools’ (1995: 83). Whilst *andalus* has therefore experienced varying degrees of respect and admiration throughout its history, since Algerian independence the music has been publicly and officially advocated as a national cultural treasure. Langlois suggests that ‘many of the most renowned *sheikhs* belonged to the minority Jewish population until independence from France in 1962, after which time the music was adopted as part of a national cultural heritage and academies were sponsored by the state’, and notes that ‘today, participation in and patronage of *andalouse* musics tends to come from the better-educated social classes in urban centres’ (2013).

There are a number of other musics that historically have emerged from the *andalusi* tradition, such as *ḥawzī*, a musical style performed in and around Tlemcen. Combining musical ideas from *gharnāṭī* with colloquial Arabic poetry, *ḥawzī* has its own history as a highly respected art form, and Elsner writes that,

Appealing to popular taste in language as well as content, the *ḥawzī* embraces serious themes...concerned with religion, saints, Muhammad and his companions, miracles, and the beauty of nature, as well as lighter themes...wine, women, love, dance, and music. (2002: 472)

Langlois provides further detail, noting that,

Ḥawzī songs, often lighter in mood than those of the *gharnāṭī* repertory, exist as individual songs and tunes, rather than as parts of sophisticated suites. As *ḥawzī* music has existed for several centuries, it is usually considered to be an art genre, but it is played by specialized *ḥawzī* ensembles and *andalouse* orchestras (2013).

1.4.2 *Chaabi*

Another music that gains respect amongst Algerian audiences is *chaabi* (or *sha'bī*), which 'bears some structural similarities to *andalouse*, but shows more influence of Berber and Ottoman styles' (Langlois, 2013). *Chaabi* developed in Algiers, from the early twentieth century onwards, and whilst it remains closely associated with the capital city, it is now popular throughout Algeria and the diaspora. The *chaabi* tradition borrows from *andalusi* and Berber musics, as well as more modern popular musics (such as jazz and Egyptian popular styles), and like *ḥawzī*, employs poetic lyrics in colloquial Arabic (Elsner, 2002: 475-476; Langlois, 2013). There are two forms of *chaabi*: the more traditional style, known as *chaabi-melhûn*, which involves extended performances and whose evolution is often ascribed to the master musician El Hadj Mohamed el Anka;²⁷ and *chaabi aasri*, which developed more recently, involves shorter pieces of repertoire, is sung in a more widely accessible form of Arabic, and is therefore far more popular amongst contemporary Algerian audiences (Morgan and Nickson, 2006: 7). *Chaabi*, *andalus* and *ḥawzī* have historically embraced musicians from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds, highlighting the cultural diversity of Algerian society. A number of Jewish musicians, for example, have been prominent performers of these styles, including Reinette L'Oranise (*chaabi* and *andalus*, as well as *rai*), Cheikh Raymond Leiris (*andalus*), and the Cheikh Larbi Bensari (*ḥawzī*) (Morgan and Nickson, 2006; Evans, 2012). L. Jafran Jones writes of the historical relationship between Jewish and Muslim musicians in Algeria, suggesting that,

Because Jews were not subject to the Islamic sanctions regarding music, their opportunity to perform in public was unrestricted, and by the beginning of the twentieth century they had become a major contingent among professional musicians in the Maghreb. It may be true, as some have claimed, that Jews had a virtual monopoly of popular music during this period, but they drew their material from Muslim sources (traditional and folk repertoire, Egyptian innovations, and some European currents),

²⁷ Langlois notes that 'a major star of the 1960s, the legendary Mohamed Al Anka, sang in the Kabyle Berber language as well as a local form of Arabic, acknowledging not only his own origins, but also the origins of a significant proportion of immigrants to Algiers' (2013).

sang in classical Arabic and local dialects, and were enthusiastically received by both Muslim and Jewish audiences. (2002: 434)

1.4.3 Berber musics

Algerian musical styles have often emerged from cultural encounters, resulting from the country's role as a place of passage between Europe and Africa and the diversity of Algerian society. As such, it is sometimes difficult to determine exact stylistic boundaries, and the distinctions between Berber and Arabic musics, whilst still identifiable in their more traditional forms, are often difficult to distinguish. The migration of Berbers from regions such as Kabylia to major cities (such as Algiers) has produced extensive cultural encounter and acculturation, and many of those living in London who self-identify as Berber were born in Algiers, and often do not speak *Taqbaylit* (the Berber dialect spoken in Kabylia). The term 'Berber music' in Algeria incorporates a number of musical styles, including the folk traditions of Kabylia, the Tuareg musics of the Sahara, and other smaller musical traditions found across the country.²⁸ Langlois notes that 'there are at least nine distinct, though related, Berber languages spoken in Algeria, and several tribes of Arabic-speaking Bedouin also exist; the variety of musical traditions that can be found in the country is great' (2013).

In more recent times, Berber identities have come to symbolise a sense of cultural unity that evokes a strong idea of heritage and recalls the struggles of Berbers in Algeria to gain recognition for their culture.²⁹ Music became particularly emblematic of Berber pride, and musicians such as Taos Amrouche, Idir, Lounis Aït Menguellet and Cheikh El Hasnaoui helped to establish a strong Berber music scene from the 1960s onwards, in both Algeria and France (Mokhtraï, 2002). Idir's hit song '*A Vava Inouva*' ('From my father to me')

²⁸ JaFran Jones questions the very notion of a distinct Berber style, and writes that 'it is transmitted orally, without theoretical elaboration and without traditional links to "classical" Arab or European systems. One may, indeed, question whether there is a general concept of "Berber music". Each group has its own music, with no particular reference to that of the others' (2002, 432).

²⁹ Goodman's (2005) ethnographic study of Kabyle Berber cultural identities, both in Algeria and the Parisian diaspora, is of particular significance here, and will be drawn upon throughout this thesis.

became particularly popular, and following its release, was one of the first commercial hits for a Berber musician in France. Idir provided support and patronage to another Algerian Berber musician, Lounès Matoub, a politically-minded singer-songwriter who became a public figurehead, voicing desires for recognition of the Berber culture and language in Algeria, and publicly opposing both government policy and the views of the Islamist opposition throughout the 1990s. A famous and much loved musician and activist, Matoub was tragically killed in 1998 at the height of the civil war, and the enduring uncertainties over his murder, and suggestions of governmental involvement in his killing, continue to be debated and divide opinions amongst Algerians (Vidal-Hall, 1998; Silverstein, 1998, 2002; Morgan, 2004).

1.4.4 Music and politics

Prior to the Berber Spring and civil war music had already played a role in Algerian politics. Social and economic inequalities were characteristic of Algerian society during French colonial rule, and would motivate a committed anti-colonial movement from the 1920s onwards.³⁰ Although music never became a ubiquitous form of protest, partly because the French authorities recognised its capacity to evoke political awareness, there were still cases of musicians and musical broadcasts engaging with political discourse. Rebecca P. Scales describes a situation in 1938 when,

The Chief of Police in Blida observed worrying behaviour, writing to Algiers how “Yesterday evening...one of my native inspectors surprised the owner of a *café maure* in the process of playing several records of nationalist propaganda.” Although the agent immediately seized the records, the policeman remained troubled by the fact that the “consumers picked up the refrains of the chorus,” confirming definitively that broadcast sound, whether surfacing from phonograph or radio

³⁰ For example, one contentious aspect of this situation was the growth of French vineyards in Algeria, which not only produced wine that the country’s Muslim population viewed as *haram* (forbidden and prohibited by the teachings of Islam), but also contributed far more to the French economy than to that of Algeria. Roland Barthes acknowledged this in his pivotal work *Mythologies*, reflecting that ‘for it is true that wine is a good and fine substance, but it is no less true that its production is deeply involved in French capitalism, whether it is that of the private distillers or that of the big settlers in Algeria who impose on the Muslims, on the very land of which they have been disposed, a crop of which they have no need, while they lack even bread’ (1972: 61).

speakers, had become the soundtrack to anti-colonial resistance. By singing along to the song on the record, these café customers had become political activists rather than passive listeners. (2010: 413-414)³¹

Martin Evans highlights the case of the popular singer Bachtarzi Mahieddine who, despite being under surveillance from the authorities, used his lyrics to criticise the French Popular Front government of the mid-1930s, who had attracted widespread criticism from Algerians for failing to implement social reform in their country (2012: 71-75). An official police report, also from 1938, focuses upon one of Mahieddine's concerts and notes his calls for Algerian unity, recording that,

A master of ceremonies Bachtarzi Mahieddine, full of wit and aplomb, engaged with the audience under the guise of entertainment. In asides interspersed between the songs he told them 'do not let yourselves be exploited' and: 'The delegations sent by you have come back with nothing gained. Unite. Forget the quarrels that divide you. There must be no more distinctions between Kaybles and Arabs.' He also warned against falling into the trap of anti-Semitism and called on the audience to 'take control of their own lives' (quoted in Evans, 2012: 74).

1.4.5 *Raï*

It was during these early decades of the twentieth-century that a musical style developed in and around the cosmopolitan western city of Oran that would go on to become one of Algeria's most famous exports.³² Adapting ideas from the male performers of the local *melhûn* poetic style, female musicians (known as *cheikhas*), performing in bars, nightclubs and brothels, established the roots of *raï* music, imbuing the genre with a disreputable status that it has never quite lost (Schade-Poulsen, 1999; Noor Al-Deen, 2005; Morgan and Nickson, 2006).³³ The word *raï* translates loosely as 'opinion', and throughout its history

³¹ Blida is a city in central Algeria, located to the south-west of Algiers. *Café maure*, meaning 'Moorish café', is the name that French colonists gave to the local cafes frequented by Algerians.

³² Horne writes that 'Oran, the second city of Algeria, was even more European than Algiers; in fact, with 300,000 *pieg noir* inhabitants to 150,000 Muslims, it was the only centre where they predominated' (2006: 47).

³³ Morgan and Nickson describe the Algerian cheikha thus: 'These women were generally the daughters and wives of peasants or manual labourers, or orphans who had survived the harshest of upbringings and opted for the life in music as the only way

the music has been characterised by the outspoken views of its singers. Although some *rai* musicians, such as the esteemed female singer Cheikha Rimitti, were engaged in the anti-colonial movement during the war of independence, the music has never found favour with the country's post-colonial government, who have been keen to project Algeria as a modern, virtuous nation.³⁴ Marc Schade-Poulsen writes that '*rai*'s syncretism did not fit at all into official national politics, and even less did its association with the tradition of the *shikha* (cheikha) (1999: 20). The emergence of *rai* coincided with the development of an Algerian recording industry, and the phonograph became popular across the social spectrum, enabling ordinary Algerians to hear music throughout the country and abroad. Scales writes that,

Egyptian musical films playing in Algerian cities introduced Middle Eastern musical stars like the chanteuse Oum Kalthoum to a broad audience, while Algerian performers including Mahieddine Bachetarzi and Lili Labassi recorded hundreds of songs, signed record contracts, and joined European firms as talent agents. The music of this first generation of Maghrebi recording is seen today as the origin of contemporary Algiers-based *la chaabi* and Oranais *rai*, but interwar colonial observers typically viewed these records as evidence of a dangerous Arabic-language auditory culture that had thus far escaped French surveillance. (2010: 397)

During the 1960s and 1970s, *rai* further integrated musical ideas and instrumentation from other cultures, both within North Africa and the Middle East, and from Euro-American popular musics (McMurray & Swedenburg, 1991: 39). The sound that would emerge was modern and appealed to young Algerians, and was a stark contrast to more conservative traditions such as *andalus* and *chaabi*. A government ban on the broadcasting of *rai* on national

to keep on living with some king of dignity. They were known as the "women of the cold shoulder" because of their revealing clothing which put them beyond the pale of "decent" society. Adopting the rural bedoui style of the cheikhs, they mixed it with the style of the meddhahates and came up with a truly individual, rough-neck, free-speaking and generally "shocking" approach to poetry and music' (2006: 8).

³⁴ Cheikha Rimitti grew up as a homeless orphan, but who became a famous and respected star, and has come to be viewed as the 'mother' of *rai*. During her lifetime she recalled that 'the FLN (Front de Liberation National) didn't have to contact me. Straight after the uprising of November 1, 1954 I began to sing about the armed struggle. For we, the generation of cheikhs Hamada and Madani, were prepared for the armed struggle' (Morgan & Nickson, 2006: 10).

radio stations and television channels, which would last up until the mid-1980s, only served to confirm its status as a form of rebellious youth culture, and the *chebs* who emerged during this period would go on to become some of the genre's biggest stars (DeAngelis, 2003: 280-286). However, as *rai* grew in popularity, Algeria was descending into social turmoil and violence, and James D. Le Sueur notes that '*rai* burst onto the cultural scene just as identity politics in Algeria took a critical turn for the worst' (2010: 183). Musicians such as Cheb Khaled and Cheb Mami found international fame, but were forced to move to France to escape the threat of violence. Malika Mehdid (2006) notes the transition of *rai* throughout Algerian history, as the music shifted from anti-colonial protest, via socially-contentious youth culture, to become the target of Islamist opposition militants during the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. At the height of *rai*'s popularity, Cheb Khaled's hits, such as 'Didi' and 'Aïcha', featured highly in European music charts, whilst Cheb Mami's collaboration with Sting on the song 'Desert Rose' took Algerian music to a new audience across Europe and North America. Such songs remain popular with Algerian audiences, yet contemporary *rai* is often dismissed as commercial and vacuous, with lyrics that ensure the music remains disreputable for many. Nevertheless, Algerian *rai* continues to provide a degree of cultural capital outside of Algerian societies, and London-based singers, such as Abdelkader Saadoun and Cheb Nacim, remain popular.

1.4.6 Rap and hip hop

Music from outside of Algeria has frequently proven popular with Algerian listeners. Historically, musicians from Morocco and Egypt (such as Abdel Halim Hafez and Oum Kalthoum), in particular, have found success in Algeria, whilst more recently, Algerian youth culture has enthusiastically embraced hip-hop and other non-Algerian musical styles. The Algerian (and broader Maghrebi) diaspora in French cities produced a vibrant hip-hop scene in the 1990s, with bands such as *In'tik* (meaning 'everything is going great' in Algerian *Darija*) and MBS (which stands for *Le Micro Brise Le Silence*, or 'the Microphone Breaks the Silence') confronting political and social issues in their lyrics, and finding

success amongst Algerian audiences in both the diaspora and the *bled*. Hip-hop remains particularly popular amongst the Algerian youth, and young Algerian rappers continue to engage with socio-political concerns.

‘Algerian music’ is therefore an extremely broad categorisation, which draws upon a range of traditional and contemporary musical styles, and embraces musical influences from outside of Algerian culture. Whilst the Algerian population of London is relatively small, it embodies this sense of musical diversity, and incorporates numerous Algerian and non-Algerian musical styles.

1.5 Extant Literature on Algerian Musics

1.5.1 *Andalusi* musics

Contemporary Algerian culture incorporates a broad range of musical styles and traditions, and introductory works by scholars evidence the diversity of these musics. Jürgen Elsner (2002) examines some of Algeria’s urban musics, including *andalus*, *chaabi*, *hawzī* and *raï*, as well as *qādiriyya* and *ḥawfī*, two musical traditions that are performed exclusively by women and have received little scholarly attention elsewhere. Tony Langlois provides another introductory text (2013) and a discussion of the place of music and media technologies in Algerian and Moroccan cultures, examining the role of *raï* in shaping gender relations, and investigating the ways in which technologies have altered Maghrebi societies, both domestically and transnationally. Further texts include L. JaFran Jones’ (2002) overview of music in the Maghreb, with its analysis of traditional and contemporary *andalusi* music cultures, and Dwight Reynolds’ (1996) discography of Algerian music, which highlights the legacy of commercial and ethnographic recordings in the country.

Despite the revered position of *andalus* music within Algerian society, there are relatively few texts that focus upon it, but works by Amnon Shiloah (1995), Habib Hassan Touma (1996) and Mahmoud Guettat (2002) provide useful introductory overviews. Christian Poché’s (1995) work is more extensive, and combines historical analysis with details of musical structure and instrumentation, whilst drawing out the relationship between Arabic poetic

traditions and *andalus* lyrics. Sid Ahmed Serri (2006), a leading practitioner of Algerian *andalus*, provides an instructive guide for performers, which contains the lyrics of many pieces from the *ṣan'a* school. Henry George Farmer's writings (1976 [including writings by Francesco Salvador-Daniel], 2001) are somewhat dated but offer some useful historical information, with a focus upon *andalusi* music-making during colonial rule. The most extensive work on Algerian *andalus* is Jonathan Glasser's (2008) doctoral thesis, which provides an ethnographic account of the music within the contemporary Maghreb. Glasser examines socio-political issues, pedagogy, and patrimony, and provides a comprehensive critical discussion of the 'association' networks found throughout the region.

1.5.2 Rai

Rai has remained popular not only with Algerian and non-Algerian audiences, but also with scholars, whose work has examined the music in both historical and contemporary contexts. Bouziane Mazouzi (1990) provides an introductory text that offers details of musical structures and theories, as well as instrumentation and performance practices. The most extensive English-language text on *rai* is Marc Schade-Poulsen's (1999) ethnographic work, which considers the complexities of the music's place within Algerian society, and focuses in particular upon gender relationships. Schade-Poulsen examines both physical sites of musicking (the city, recording studios, cabarets and nightclubs) and themes with *rai* (the relationship between *rai* and love, the reactions of young men listening to *rai* records), and concludes that *rai* is far more than a form of entertainment or voice of youthful dissent. Angelica Maria DeAngelis (2003) shares similar concerns regarding the relationship between the music and gender, and whilst she highlights the important role played by female singers in the early development of *rai*, she describes how, historically, venues (nightclubs, cafes, etc.) discouraged women from attending performances, which therefore created a strong connection between *rai* and Algerian masculinity. She also dismisses any assumed division between *rai* and Islam, suggesting that the propagation of such notions benefited both the Algerian

government³⁵ and world music industries,³⁶ and draws upon Schade-Poulsen's ethnographic interviews to show how, during the 1990s, male Islamists could also be consumers of *rai*. She connects the exclusion of women from *rai* venues to the relationship between the music and Islamic practices, reporting that men frequently perform the *shahada*³⁷ at the beginnings of concerts and 'draw on Islamic symbolism and vocabulary, both of which form an integral part of daily life and expression in Maghrebi communities' (2003: 294). French ethnologist Marie Virolle (1995) examines gender through analysis of the *rai* lyrics sung by women, and argues that these lyrics offer a space for singers to engage with their own femininity and to negotiate issues of personal freedom (1995: 127-128). She suggests that *rai* plays a central role in Algerian socio-cultural discourse, circulating domestically and transnationally, amongst Algerian and non-Algerian listeners (1995:173-175).

Nasser Al-Tae's (2003) work also examines *rai* lyrics and considers identity construction amongst musicians and audiences. Al-Tae places the music within a historical context and examines political narratives and representations of gender within lyrics, but offers little in the way of original research into the genre. Another theme within analyses of *rai* lyrics has been code-switching (the alternation between multiple languages or styles of speech within a single conversation or statement), which is also characteristic of the everyday language used by many Algerians. Abdelali Bentahila and Eirlys E. Davies (2002) argue that the use of both French and Arabic in such lyrics is symbolic of the multilingual nature of Algerian culture, and makes *rai* accessible to listeners within Francophone commercial markets. Samira Hassa's (2010) work on rap lyrics examines code-switching between French, English, *Darija*

³⁵ DeAngelis argues that the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale) government, particularly at a time when political opposition was growing and domestic civil war approaching, were keen to separate a potentially volatile youth from the popular Islamist groups challenging their authority (2003: 279-283).

³⁶ Drawing upon Gross, McMurray & Swedenburg (1992), she argues that the world music industries were keen to encourage the 'Westernization' of *rai* and were worried about the impact that any links with Islamic militantism might have upon sales, whilst also positioning it as a youthful 'protest music' disassociated from established political discourse.

³⁷ The Islamic profession of faith.

and *Verlan*, and focuses particularly upon hip-hop produced by the Algerian diaspora in France.

Tony Langlois' doctoral thesis (1996a) examines the commercial production of *raï* and its relationship with national politics during the 1990s, and views the music as central to Algerian political discourse during the country's civil war. In this and other work (1996b) he considers how commercial imperatives shaped the relationship between musician and *editeur* (a role combining producer, composer and studio engineer) within the recording studio, and draws a distinction between the 'local' *raï* produced for Algerian audiences, and the 'global' sound produced for non-Algerian listeners. He inverts Bohlman's suggestion of exoticism within *raï* (2002), and argues that, rather than symbolising homogeneity through globalisation, a synthesised *raï* sound proved popular with Algerian listeners because of its connotations of modernity (1996b: 263-264). Langlois also underscores the perilous position of *raï* musicians and *editeurs* during this period, drawing upon the deaths of Cheb Hasni³⁸ and Rachida Baba-Ahmed³⁹ to highlight both censorship and threats of violence. David McMurray and Ted Swedenburg (1991) draw attention to the growing popularity of *raï* in the USA during the early 1990s and chronicle the development of the genre, noting that the music was gradually seen as beneficial by the Algerian authorities after years of censorship.

1.5.3 Algerian musics in the diaspora

There is a small but significant body of research that focuses on Algerian diasporic music-making practices, particularly amongst the diaspora in France. Gabriele Marranci's work (2003, 2005) examines the commercialisation of *raï* and argues that the music provides a way of negotiating the cultural differences between French and Algerian societies, supporting the integration of Algerians

³⁸ 'Cheb' Hasni Chakroun was one of the most popular and commercially successful *raï* singers in Algeria when he was assassinated in September 1994, allegedly by Islamist militants who dislike the content of his lyrics.

³⁹ Rachid Baba-Ahmed was a producer (or *editeur*) of *raï*, who helped to create some of the most successful records during the period when the genre was at its most popular. Like Cheb Hasni, he was assassinated by alleged Islamist militants in Oran, in February 1995.

into French society. George Lipsitz (1994) considers the differences of opinion between diasporic Algerian and non-Algerian audiences, claiming that whilst the music was sometimes considered as too Westernised during the period of its commercial popularity, at other times it was criticized for being 'too foreign, too primitive, too exotic, too strange' (1994: 124). Gilles Suzanne's work (2007) examines *raï* in Marseille, and focuses upon the tensions between performers, diasporic audiences and agents of the world music industries. Rupa Huq (2005) is concerned with issues of power and identity, and compares *raï* with south Asian *bhangra* music. She considers their reception and popularity amongst diasporic listenerships, who identify closely with their respective musics, and contrasts this with the exploitation of both genres by the commercial music industries. In spite of their wider popularity, Huq argues that both *raï* and *bhangra* remain meaningful for Algerians and South Asians, and suggests that both musics remain tied to issues of diasporic identity. There is significantly less work focussing upon Algerian music-making in London, but Marie-Pierre Gibert's (2011) article examines the west London-based *W10 North African Arts*, a cultural organisation that provides performance and recording opportunities for local young musicians, many of whom are of North African descent. Her work, although brief, highlights important themes around the fluidity of diasporic identities and transnational connections. Carolyn Landau's (née Pugh, 2005), unpublished Masters thesis also engages with Algerian musicians in London, and the degree of stability within this local diaspora over the past decade is apparent in the number of musicians who appear in Landau's work and remain active on the local music scene.

1.5.4 Rap and hip hop

Joan Gross, David McMurray and Ted Swedenburg's work compares *raï* with the Algerian hip-hop scene in France, and contrasts the meanings of these two musics for Algerian listeners, concluding that '*raï* represents a more cautious and separatist sensibility insofar as it reproduces cultural linkages with a remembered Algeria...rap music, by contrast, is deployed in more volatile and intrusive ways, and expresses and mobilizes new forms of identity' (2001, 148-

149). Valérie Orlando (2003) considers similar themes, noting the importance of both musics to members of the Algerian diaspora in France throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Bouziane Daoudi and Hadj Miliani's (2002) work investigates the relationship between various musics (including *rai* and hip-hop) and Algerian political discourses. Elsewhere Miliani (2002) examines hip-hop in the *bled*, considering how a North American art form has been appropriated and reshaped by musicians in Algeria to discuss local politics, and argues that the messages found in imported music helped to shape the ways in which Algerian rappers and audiences engaged with political discourses during their country's civil war.

1.5.5 Berber musics

Algerian Berber musics have also attracted scholarly attention. Jane. E Goodman has conducted extensive research in Kabylia, and her work engages with a number of issues and themes, both historical and contemporary, that have shaped Kabyle music-making (1998, 2002a, 2002b).⁴⁰ Her (2005) book provides the most extensive work on Algerian Berber culture, and examines the construction of Berber identities through the networks that connect the Kabyle homeland with diasporic groups in France. Jean Amrouche (1986) examines Kabyle poetry, and argues that both poetry and music are vital forms of communication amongst Berbers, in both formal and informal performance contexts, and are maintained by a strong, established oral tradition. Edda Brandes (1990) examines gender relationships within the music of the *Kel-Ahaggar* (or Tuareg) of the southeastern Algerian Sahara. Her work shows how music maintains clear gender boundaries within *Kel-Ahaggar* society, and she highlights the *imzad*, a bowed single-string instrument played by women, which was traditionally the preserve of the nobility. Mehenna Mahfoufi (2006) also considers gender within Berber society, and his ethnographic work, conducted

⁴⁰ Goodman examines the relationship between traditional and contemporary songs and religious beliefs, and their role in constructing post-colonial Berber identities (1998); the complexities of copyright claims and laws within 'New Kabyle Song' (2002a); and the different interpretations of Berber oral texts by the successive colonial and post-colonial authorities, and the media, as well as the problems of conceiving of a single 'pure', or 'authentic', Berber culture (2000b).

in Kabylia, examines gender-specific performance contexts, as well as the role of women's songs during the Algerian war of independence. Rachid Mokhtraï (2002) focuses upon the Kabyle singer Cheikh El Hasnaoui, an important figure in the development of Berber popular song, and charts Hasnaoui's career in both Algeria and France. The musician to gain most attention, from scholars and journalists, is popular singer and political activist Lounès Matoub, who was killed during the Algerian civil war. Andy Morgan (2004) traces Matoub's life, placing his assassination with the context of Algerian politics during this period. He notes the controversial circumstances surrounding the singer's death, and the endurance of conspiracy theories about governmental involvement in his killing, and this theme is also considered in the works of Paul A. Silverstein (1998, 2002) and Judith Vidal-Hall (1998).

1.6 Algerian London

The diaspora in London forms one of the largest Algerian populations outside of the *bled*. Although it is far smaller than the Algerian communities living in France, and most individuals emigrated far more recently, there are nevertheless thousands of Algerians living within the city. The reluctance of many individuals to engage with anything perceived to be connected to the authorities (due to the continuing suspicions that emerged during the civil war, according to Silverstein [2002]⁴¹), and the uncertain legal status of a significant proportion of the city's Algerian population, means that official statistics regarding the number of Algerians living in Britain remain questionable, but there seems little doubt that numbers have grown since the 2004 estimate of 20,000-25,000 (Communities and Local Government report, 2009). Many of those living in London arrived in the city during the 1990s and early 2000s, often in search of work or in the hopes of furthering their education, and a large number of these individuals migrated to Britain to escape the violence of the civil war that was raging in their country at the time (Collyer, 2003).

⁴¹ Silverstein (2002) writes of 'the proliferation of practices of conspiracy theorizing among Algerian citizens and expatriates in light of the current civil war that since 1992 has resulted in 100,000 deaths and an ongoing state of emergency disrupting nascent democratic legal and political processes' (2002:643).

Nevertheless, there is a broad age demographic, which incorporates everyone from those that arrived in the city as early as the mid-1970s to a growing second generation of British-born Algerians (IOM report, 2007).

Despite these growing numbers, the diaspora remains characterised by dispersal and fragmentation, and has not settled or developed a strong presence in any particular area of the British capital, unlike the city's more established diasporic communities.⁴² Jonathan Duffy (2003) suggests that in the early 2000s there was a significantly large Algerian community residing on and around the Blackstock Road in Finsbury Park, northeast London, an area that gained the moniker 'Little Algiers' during this period.⁴³ Contemporary media reports (Alderson et al, 2003; Duffy, 2003; Laville, 2003; Savage, 2014) note that the area was considered synonymous with terrorism, at a time of heightened scrutiny and pressure upon Muslim communities in Britain and around the world following the 11th September 2001 attacks in New York, and the terrorist bombings in London on the 7th July 2005.⁴⁴ A *BBC* report from January 2003 began by noting that 'Algerians in the UK are under the spotlight after police found traces of a deadly poison last week, not far from the heart of their community in Britain' (Duffy, 2003), whilst an article in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper during the same month appeared under the headline '100 known Algerian terrorists came to this country as asylum seekers' (Laville, 2003). The perception amongst many Algerians in London is that they remain stereotyped and impeded by such depictions, and one musician, who has lived in the city for a number of years, comments that,

Some people know (Algerians as) "they are trouble-makers, they are terrorists", things like that. Because there was a time, maybe about seven or eight years ago, I bought a newspaper and I saw Algerians in there. Trying to make a problem, selling weapons. They've been to

⁴² Examples of this might include the Bangladeshi diaspora in East London (particularly Tower Hamlets), the Chinese diaspora in North East London, and the Jewish diaspora in North London areas such as Golders Green.

⁴³ Whilst the name Little Algiers seems to be used less frequently for the area than it perhaps once was, I have still encountered it during my research and it certainly appears to remain in popular circulation.

⁴⁴ Kabir (2010: 112-142) provides a comprehensive critical reading of media representations of Muslims in Britain, and makes extensive reference to this particular period of time.

Afghanistan, and this and that. I would say yes, there is some of that, because it existed. But it is also just propaganda. You can't say all of you...you get good and bad everywhere.⁴⁵

Finsbury Park remains home to a large Muslim population due to the presence of the North London Central Mosque (commonly known as the Finsbury Park Mosque, and one of the most prominent Islamic institutions in the city), and Blackstock Road still contains Algerian cafes and a halal butchers shop. But the consensus amongst Algerians and outside observers is that the Algerian 'community' of the early 2000s has gradually dissipated away from the area.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, more contemporary reports continue to connect Finsbury Park and its mosque, and by association Algerians, with terrorism, and unfavourable representations of the city's Algerian population continue to circulate in newspaper reports (Swinford, 2011; Davies, 2014; Savage 2014). The area's apparently disreputable status is often given by Algerians as a reason that those with families have elected to move elsewhere, and within the local diaspora, Finsbury Park is often described as a place in which the city's *harraga* population live, which only serves to reinforce such negative stereotypes.

Events occurring outside of Britain have also served to shape opinion of Algeria and Algerians amongst Londoners, and these take on particular significance because of the lack of public profile for Algerian culture within the city. Although news stories regarding Algeria appear only sporadically within the British media, there were a number of events between 2011 and 2014 that gained significant coverage. In January 2013, a terrorist group attacked an oil refinery in In Amenas, in eastern Algeria, and held hostage hundreds of workers, including a number of British citizens. The incident was widely reported in the UK, with the headlines including 'Islamist militants kill Briton and take 20 hostage in Algeria' (The Guardian, 17/1/2013) and 'Desert storm: Islamists take Mali fight to Algeria' (The Independent, 17/1/2013). London's largest newspaper, The Evening Standard, featured a picture of Algerian troops attempting to storm the refinery, with the sub-headline 'Fears for Britons as

⁴⁵ Interview, 10th February 2012.

⁴⁶ Robert Lambert's (2011) book focuses upon issues of Islamic terrorism in London, and particularly upon the militant Islamist group Al Qaeda. He discusses Finsbury Park, and its mosque, in great detail, and refers to the presence of Algerians.

Algerian special forces storm gas plant' (The Evening Standard, 17/1/2013). In July 2014, an Air Algérie flight from Burkina Faso to Algiers disappeared. When the wreckage of the airplane was discovered six days later, there were no survivors, and the death of a British passenger on-board ensured that the story became headline news. Although the reasons for the crash have not been confirmed, suggestions of terrorist activity have served to reinforce negative stereotyping of Algerians within Britain. Radio station owner Djamel is aware of the detrimental effect that media representations have often had upon Algerians in London, and argues that,

Until now it has been as if Algeria is just an alien country to everyone. They don't know anything about it. Either the media has decided not to talk about it, or it has focussed on politics rather than culture. We have got to a stage where we have to be proud of who we are, and we have to reconnect with who we are.⁴⁷

In suggesting that British public perceptions of Algeria have been formed by the media, he claims that the general public 'don't know about the culture, and I don't blame them, because it is just the way it is. From the late 1980s to the late 1990s, maybe 2000, we went through hell. And that really affected the way that people see Algeria'⁴⁸. Whilst he can understand that the country's civil war inevitably shaped opinions of Algeria, he argues that the British media are responsible for the negative portrayal of certain countries, and explains that,

If you say Afghanistan to me, I will see it as war. If you tell me about Pakistan, it's about war. And I think it's peoples' perceptions and how they see it. It's the media who played a big role in how we see different countries and different cultures. And we've labelled them without knowing because we are so connected to what the media says. I think that we need to go beyond what the media says, and search, and try to find a real understanding of a culture. And when we are talking about Algeria, we need to dig deeply to find what exactly it is all about. So with the media now, I think it declined a certain process because it's just news that works for certain people and doesn't work for others. And it is not giving the right and accurate and precise information about a country because the media becomes politics rather than a tool of communication. They won't cover a whole segment of the community.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Interview, 18th February 2013.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Despite these claims, there have been some positive news stories regarding Algerians within the British media, particularly focussing upon sporting events. At the 2012 Olympic games, held in London, Algerian runner Taoufik Makhloufi won the gold medal in the 1500 metres competition, in a surprise result that gained significant exposure in the local press, and internationally. At the Brazil 2014 football World Cup, the Algerian national side progressed further in the competition than England, and despite eventually losing narrowly to Germany, attracted widespread acclaim and media coverage. Although these events did not overcome years of negative reporting, they were nevertheless celebrated by Algerians in London, and considered a welcome change from previous media stories about civil war and terrorism.

Whilst many Algerians in London feel a sense of persecution over the manner in which their culture has been represented, there is also concern about the lack of unity or ‘community’ amongst the local diaspora, and this is a further consequence of physical dispersal throughout the city. However, although there is a notable lack of venues or services dedicated to Algerians, musicians and audiences are willing to travel significant distances in order to access and engage with Algerian culture. The Al Andalus Caravan rehearse in central London but its members travel from across the city, with director Tewfik Ouagueni driving 40 miles from his home in Reading to their rehearsal room in Pimlico each Sunday.⁵⁰ *Chaabi* singer Sid Ahmed Tabti also travels into London from outside the city, making regular trips of 25 miles from his home in Woking to venues in London. Algerians also make use of the Internet to communicate both locally and transnationally. Video messaging platforms allow the diaspora in London to converse with friends and family in France and the *bled*, whilst social media is important for connecting Algerians in the city and for promoting upcoming music events. In addition, the Internet enables musicians to promote and distribute their music, and hosts the city’s only Algerian radio station.⁵¹

The anger and frustration at negative media portrayals is further heightened by the perceived lack of knowledge or interest in Algerian culture

⁵⁰ See chapter 5 for extensive discussion of the Al Andalus Caravan.

⁵¹ See chapter 4, on music and mediation, for discussion of the role of the Internet and social media in local Algerian musicking practices.

amongst London's general public. Algerians often recall encountering ignorance and misunderstanding, and whilst this can produce irritation, it also provides an incentive for encouraging public displays of Algerian cultural pride. Djamel explains that,

A lot of people (in London) don't actually know about the Algerian culture. Maybe they know that when it comes to music, it's *rai*, and when it comes to food, it's *cous cous*. So there is a tremendous area that needs to be explored, and to be shown and exposed. But unfortunately it's really understated, and people don't know anything about it.⁵²

However, whilst Djamel is clearly frustrated, he also identifies recent trends within the local diaspora that has seen an increasing interest in actively promoting Algerian culture, and argues that 'I feel that there are a lot of people that are showing the real Algeria, in the sense of the culture'⁵³. This sense of hope and positivity, whilst not universal, is shared by many Algerians in London who hold a desire to promote their culture more widely, and who speak of a determination to establish a more coherent sense of community within the city. This shared feeling of aspiration and expectation, and the belief that the diaspora in London is gradually becoming more active, highlights the current relevance of conducting research into Algerian music in the city.

In spite of the logistical problems that Algerians encounter, the lack of a clear Algerian community within London, and the conviction that they face derision and ignorance from the media and general public, there remains a strong desire to promote and engage with a form of shared Algerian identity. Displays of Algerian nationalism are often apparent, in the images and flags that appear in the small cafes that are scattered across the city and the narratives used to promote large-scale events organised by members of the diaspora (such as the 2012 Algerian Cultural Festival). Individuals often foreground their nationality and shared culture in discussions, evoking memories of the *bled*, and this partly counteracts the widespread criticism of the lack of community cohesion. Whilst these notions of Algerianness are inevitably complex and fluid, and are problematic and contested, the concept of a shared national identity

⁵² Interview, 18th February 2013.

⁵³ Ibid.

and culture remains important. Such intensive nationalistic and cultural pride can be explained, in part, by the efforts of the postcolonial independent government to promote nationalism, and to construct a unified Algerian identity around an Arab-Islamic culture. Furthermore, the first generation status of a large proportion of the diaspora in London means that connections with the *bled*, and with Algerian culture, remain particularly strong. The International Organization for Migration's 2007 report suggests that at the time of their study, almost 50% of Algerians in the city were aged 30-39, and notes that 'most Algerians have therefore arrived in the last 12 years. These figures must be increased further because Algerians really started applying for asylum in significant numbers from 1995' (IOM, 2007: 13). Therefore, many Algerians in London have direct experience of governmental efforts to promote Algerian national and cultural pride in the wake of their country's war of independence and civil war. Whilst many remain sceptical and wary of the influence of the Algerian authorities, such a long-term nationalistic project in Algeria has had inevitable influence over those born and raised in the *bled*.

Nevertheless, Algerian music-making in London is not circumscribed within local diasporic networks, and one musician, who was born in Algeria but has lived in London for a number of years, described one of his previous music projects by stating that 'we were not an Algerian band anyway. We were like Anglo-Algerian'.⁵⁴ This self-definition, which distinguishes local practices from Algerian culture in the *bled* and France, is important for understanding the fluid interactions between Algerian and non-Algerian musicians and audiences within a 'third space', and the ways in which this shapes Algerian music in the city as part of a 'secondary diaspora'. Whilst this particular musician is heavily involved in the local Algerian music scene in London, and has organised and performed at a number of explicitly Algerian events, he adds that 'I am an Algerian musician and I do know that I'm an Algerian musician. But I have played with Somali bands, with Ghanaian bands, with Gambian bands. I have played with jazz musicians, with folk musicians'⁵⁵. In addition, localised forms of

⁵⁴ Interview, March 2014.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Algerianness are further complicated by the multiple identities embodied and experienced by Algerians in London. Alongside their sense of national identity, Algerians may simultaneously regard themselves as Muslim, Berber, North African/Maghrebi, Arab, African, or British, and this degree of complexity highlights the diversity of Algerian society within the city, as well as the sort of intricacies that characterise many diasporic identities within contemporary London.

Algerianness in London is therefore clearly differentiated from Algerian identities elsewhere. The most immediate and obvious comparison to make is with the Algerian diaspora in France, and it is clear that Algerians in London see themselves as distinguished from their counterparts in Paris and other major French cities. This may result from the comparatively recent arrival of many Algerians in London, when compared with the decades of migration from the *bled* to France, as well as the lack of a developed second or third generation within the local diaspora. The strong, but often tense, relationship between Algeria and France is often used by Algerians in London to reflect upon their own sense of identity. One Algerian man explains that he often ‘feels French’ and suggests that ‘we are the same in a lot of ways. We have croissants, we drink coffee’. A woman born in France to Algerian parents defines herself as ‘French-Algerian’. She recalls a discussion with a non-Algerian Arabic speaker who suggested that she must be French (rather than Algerian) because she cannot speak any Arabic, and responded that ‘I was like “no I’m not French.” Because in France, you will never be called French as an Algerian. (Even though) you can be born there, grow up there...So I’ve learned to call myself French-Algerian, and it’s really my identity’⁵⁶. She employs musical tastes and listening habits to draw a distinction between those born in France and those born in the *bled*, suggesting that ‘many French-Algerians might listen to *rai*, but they’re not very likely to listen to *maluf* or *gnawa*.⁵⁷ Some would, I’m not saying that they wouldn’t, but we are more Westernised in the way that we listen to

⁵⁶ Interview, May 2013.

⁵⁷ See glossary.

music. We listen to pop music, we listen to reggae, we listen to R&B⁵⁸. She goes on to claim that Algerian communities in French cities often remain closed and restrained by cultural traditions, and contrasts this with the diaspora in London. Noting that her own experiences in Britain have somewhat disconnected her from own culture she believes that,

If I was living in France, I would probably not have been so isolated from my culture. Although, I grew up in France and left France when I was nineteen, so already by then I should have (been more aware). I had a few friends who were North African, but I should have been a bit more aware of some of our protocols and traditions. But obviously I came to London, with no Algerians around me.⁵⁹

The contrast between those born in Algeria and those born in France is one that is often reemphasised, and whilst members of the diaspora in London travel to visit relatives and friends in France, this woman draws a distinction between what she terms ‘Algerian-Algerians’ and ‘French-Algerians’. Reflecting upon the supposed differences between these two identities, she recalls an article by a London-based Algerian female blogger, and notes that,

She was speaking about this thing of French-Algerian and Algerian-Algerian and making a comparison. She was Algerian-Algerian and she was a bit hard on us (French-Algerians). But loads of people have an identity crisis. For them it’s true, and they might think that I have an identity crisis, but I don’t. I was born in France, that makes me French. I went to French school, my education was French, but my parents were Algerian. That makes me French-Algerian. To me I don’t have any identity crisis, this is who I am. I have no issues with it.⁶⁰

This sense of integration into French society, established through the multiple generations of Algerians residing in France as a result of the complex historical relationship between the two countries, is very different from the experiences of Algerians living in London. However, whilst the British Algerian community is not as established as their peers within French society, this helps to avoid social confinement within a bounded diasporic community, forcing London’s Algerian population to engage with the city in which they live due to the lack of

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

infrastructure for the local Algerian diaspora.

The local Algerian community is therefore shaped by a triangulated relationship between the UK, France and the *bled*, drawing upon cultural similarities and differences between Algerian and Franco-Algerian societies. However, there is also an issue of social class that is played out within London, with the local population encompassing varying degrees of education, wealth and social status. Although many Algerians are reluctant to explicitly voice class differences, they are partly played out through musical performance and preference. As discussed throughout the thesis, *andalus* remains a socially respected and predominantly middle class music, whilst *rai* and *chaabi* are identified primarily with working class identities. Such class distinctions are partly preserved within the performance practices of the local Algerian community, but the relatively small size of the city's network of Algerian musicians also means that performers move between styles. It is not uncommon, for example, for musicians to perform both *chaabi* and *andalus*, and this simultaneously challenges class distinctions and evidences the shared Arabo-andalus heritage of these two musical traditions.

Algerianness in London is shaped directly by the place of nationalism within the culture of the contemporary city, and by the apparently contradictory positions of national identity within notions of 'multicultural Britain'. Popular discourses that are propagated through politics and the mainstream media set the celebration of London as a site of multicultural integration against fears of immigration and the alleged loss of 'British identity'.⁶¹ As such, many Algerians in London employ their feelings of national identity to negotiate their sense of cultural difference whilst remaining keen to integrate into society, and are aware of the racist undertones of the anti-immigrant rhetoric presented by elements of the media. Although some young Algerians speak of a desire to distance themselves from bounded notions of national and cultural difference, they continue to experience the regular evocations of nationalism that appear within

⁶¹ Examples of newspaper headlines include 'British identity is waning in England' (Hennessy, 2013), 'Britain lacks vision because it is suffering an identity crisis' (Johnston, 2014), and 'New Labour's war on British identity has left Salmond with an open goal' (Lawson, 2014).

the city, from the flag-waving 'Britishness' performed during the royal jubilee celebrations and London 2012 Olympic games, to poems on Underground trains and the labelling of supermarket products as 'Mexican', 'Indian', etc.⁶² The promotion of Moroccan culture, via everything from labels on hummus and cous cous packaging to posters advertising holidays in the country, can be particularly sensitive for the local Algerian community, who note the absence of Algerian culture within British public appreciation of North Africa. Algerian cultural identities therefore emerge both through the enduring celebration of nationalism within contemporary London and from the long and complex history of nationalism within Algerian societies, both in the diaspora and the *bled*.

⁶² Eavan Boland's (1986) work *The Emigrant Irish* is one of a number of poems reproduced on posters on Underground trains, and recalls the struggles of the Irish diaspora. Boland writes of her own experiences as a member of a diaspora living in London, including her personal search for a sense of identity.

Chapter 2: Performing Algerian Musics and Identities

This chapter examines the role that musicking plays in constructing, negotiating and reifying notions of Algerian identity amongst the diaspora in London. Musical events, I argue, not only bring together musicians and audiences from across the city through socio-cultural networks, but also provide a rare space in which individual and collective concepts of local Algerianness are enacted and disputed. As such, these are not simply performances of music, but also of cultural and national identity. Many of these events are also not solely devoted to musical performance, but rather incorporate musicking within broader celebrations of Algerian culture, and this highlights the ways in which music functions as an important component of Algerian life in London. Given the dispersal of Algerians across the city, and a subsequent sense of cultural disconnection, such events remain deeply embedded within process of memory and nostalgia, whilst also serving to publicly mediate Algerian culture to non-Algerian audiences. It is through such events, I suggest, that performative processes of identity are generated and assembled, creating a shared, but not fixed, sense of Algerianness amongst members of the local diaspora. Martin Stokes notes the importance of music in constructing identity when he writes that ‘music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them’ (1994: 5). Thomas Turino argues that membership of a diaspora is itself an act of self-identification and he suggests that ‘being part of a diaspora or nation requires a subjective recognition and acceptance; one has to “join up”, that is, identify with that social formation’ (2004: 5).

The use of identity within this discussion does not rest upon fixed, essentialist notions of culture and nationality, but rather considers it an ongoing, performative process, through which individuals and groups consciously and subconsciously negotiate a shared culture and position themselves within society. As such, I draw upon a body of scholarly literature that has developed from Judith Butler’s work on gender, and which now encompasses research across a number of disciplines. There are numerous works on music (including

those by ethnomusicologists) that take as their basis the idea that identity is performative. I am particularly drawn to Frederick Lau's (2001) work with the Teochew-speaking Chinese diaspora of Thailand as a point of departure. It is possible to note the similarities with my own work in his assertion that,

Taking the socially constructed nature of identity formation as a point of departure, I argue that Teochew-Thai identity is always being assembled and actualized based on certain culturally grounded and historically informed elements and ethos embedded in *xiansi* music, its performance, and related Teochew musical practices. This identity, rather than the homogenous Sino-Thai identity implied in William Skinner's assimilation model, is partial, fragmented, ephemeral, contradictory, and never complete in itself without the interventions of and engagement with the ever-changing historical condition of the modern Thai nation. (Lau, 2001: 43)

What is particularly important in Lau's description is his focus upon the 'culturally grounded' and 'historically informed' conditions of these identities, whilst also acknowledging that they remain fluid and reliant upon their contemporary context. It is this marriage of the historical and contemporary, the local (Algerian culture in London) and global (transnational Algerianness), which is at the heart of this chapter.

The idea of identity as a performative process grows out of the work of Judith Butler, and was initially introduced in her seminal writings on gender (Butler: 1988, 1990). Butler challenges the conceptualization of gender as formed of physical, essential differences. She argues that the binary gendered categories of male and female are primarily cultural constructions, which have been established and reinscribed through repetitive social performances that serve to reify patriarchal hegemonic structures. Butler draws upon Simone de Beauvoir's claim that 'one is not born, but rather *becomes* a woman, (and) it follows that *woman* itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end' (1990: 33). She writes that,

In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed, are *performative* in the sense that

the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means.' (1990: 136)

Butler, however, is not without her critics, and a number of scholars have questioned the place of agency and determinism within her theories. Geoff Boucher, for example, writes that Butler's work 'lands in an oscillation between voluntarism and determinism. Butler's resolution of this problem tends to evacuate institutional determinacy from the theory and produces a politics of performativity that is unsatisfactory in terms of its abstract individualism' (2006: 137). He goes on to conclude that,

The methodological individualism that all this suggests constrains Butler's account of the social field to the classical opposition between individual and society, generating a perspective that conceptualises marginal subversion in terms of the resistance of the individual to hegemonic norms and ethical alterity in terms of the duty of one individual towards another. Ultimately, for all her hostility to liberal political philosophy, her own alternative seems to be only another, somewhat more radical version of moral and political individualism. (Boucher, 2006: 137)

Boucher certainly underscores an important issue, and a workable theory of performative diasporic identities is undoubtedly reliant upon notions of collectivity that stand in opposition to individualism. However, I suggest that Butler is not simply positing agency as an individual act of subversion, but rather as intrinsically linked to her notion of 'effect'. This is not, to quote Boucher, simply the 'opposition between the individual and society', but a way of perceiving identities as simultaneously configured by societal norms, collective processes and individual actions. As Butler writes,

The reconceptualization of identity as an *effect*, that is, as *produced or generated*, opens up possibilities of "agency" that are insidiously foreclosed by positions that take identity categories as foundational and fixed. For an identity to be an effect means that it is neither fatally determined nor fully artificial and arbitrary. (1990: 147)

Butler also argues that identities are neither stable nor permanent, and performativity is therefore a process that enables individuals and groups to

challenge heteronormative social constructions. She examines some of the ways in which gendered binaries have moved beyond bounded mimetic practice and have been deconstructed through performance. Butler is also careful to draw a distinction between what she terms 'expression' and 'performance', suggesting that gender needs to be viewed as a performative process, rather than simply a reiteration of social constructions that are inscribed within bodily gestures (1990: 141). Butler therefore proposes that gendered identities are constructed around social norms, but that their performative nature allows them to be contested. Similarly, I argue that performances of Algerianness rely upon common understandings of Algerian nationality and culture, but are negotiated through performance, whether by playing *chaabi* in a local café or waving of a flag at a concert. These performances, as practices and spaces that are shared by members of the local diaspora, rework Algerian music within the context of contemporary London, and produce new forms of Algerian identity, that bridge the space between Britain and the *bled*. In other words, Algerianness, as it is understood within the context of the London diaspora, is a performative process of identity formation through cultural practice.

Lisa Duggan (1998) summarises what she terms the 'theory wars' within history and social sciences scholarship, and highlights other criticisms that have been levelled at Butler's work. Duggan notes that a number of scholars have argued against the rationality of considering gender as anything other than a biological given, and have criticised Butler as belonging to a scholarly movement whose theoretical and linguistic complexities have alienated readers and made their work increasingly inaccessible (1998: 9-15). Lise Nelson (1999) is concerned with the repercussions of Butler's work for geographers, and like Boucher, argues that Butler overlooks important aspects of agency, focussing instead upon specific instances that disregard individualism with personal and collective histories and geographies. Nelson is concerned with the place of the subject within Butler's work, and writes that her 'elaboration of performativity',

Contributes to theorizing processes of subjectification—that is, the processes by which subjects are compelled through structures of meaning to participate in reproducing dominant discourses of identity...

her preoccupation with this moment of subjectification, in which a concrete subject is 'subjugated' by discourse—and her determination to deconstruct the notion of a unified, autonomous subject—causes her to foreclose theorizing the interrelated issues of social change, resistance and the historical/geographical embeddedness of identity performance. (1999: 336)

These concerns about Butler's understanding of the subject as neither unified nor autonomous are certainly valid. However, I suggest that this is perhaps an intentional act on the part of Butler, enabling her to explicate the fluidity of contemporary identities without necessarily rendering subjectivity problematic or oppositional. In employing theories of performativity to understand diasporic identities, my intention is certain to intergrate individual and collective processes, and to attend to both resistance and the historical/geographical embeddedness of identities. As such, I acknowledge the importance of Nelson's call for 'a discussion of how to think about identity as an iterative, non-foundational process *in relation to* intentional human practice' (1999: 333).

Despite the criticisms made of Butler, I find enough of value in her work to employ and expand her theory of the performativity of identities throughout this thesis. I argue that such a theory challenges the idea of identities as essential or fixed, and in fact embodies a type of agency that is evident in the mediation of nationalism amongst Algerian musicians and audiences in London. I suggest that in investigating contemporary diasporic identities, and the place of musicking within the production of such identities, examining performativity is a useful way of understanding the complexity and fluidity of such identities.

Butler's assertion that gender identity is an on-going performative process, formed of embodied gestures and shared understandings of difference, can certainly be extended to incorporate other forms of identity, including those of culture and nationality. Whilst the contestation of gender has proven controversial, the notion that national and cultural identities might remain more fluid has gained greater support. For example, there has been recognition that the borders of many African nations were formed by the idiosyncrasies of European colonialism, and the cultural interrelations between Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia continue to problematize their rigid conception as discrete

countries. However, whilst there is undoubted validity to some of these concerns, there remains an enduring deference to national identity, both within homelands and amongst diasporas. The challenge, then, is to find ways of conceptualizing identities that neither assume nor dismiss their value to individuals and groups. Frederick Lau, in another description that resonates with my own work, writes that,

While I agree with the fashionable view that identity is fluid and situational, I also maintain that people often carry certain deeply held and uncontested ideas of who they are with them at all times. This notion of the essential self – fixed and uncontested assumptions that informs and grounds [*sic*] an individual's sense of being – is a precondition and an indispensable ingredient for the invention, construction, negotiation, and transformation of identity. (Lau, 2001: 38)

Thus, the challenge, as Lau indicates, is to find ways of understanding and explicating the importance of identities whilst acknowledging their fluidity. Another work that is concerned with nationalistic identities, within an urban context, is Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas' (2003) study of the Puerto Rican population of Chicago. Once again, she does not deny the significance of a shared, collective sense of Puerto Rican nationalism, but argues that this identity is performative, collectively negotiated within the city's local diasporic networks. She writes that,

Self-conscious nationalist performances did not subsume all other forms of social differentiation, but accentuated proclivities along lines of class, race, gender, and spatial politics in localized, everyday life. In short, nationalism provided the preferred vocabulary to discuss, challenge, and constantly reconfigure views of class, race, space, gendered identities, and migration history in Puerto Rican Chicago. (2003: 2)

What is useful in Ramos-Zayas' work is the way in which she understands the perception of the city (Chicago) as shaped by a sense of national (Puerto Rican) identity, as an urban diasporic culture that maintains differentiation. Similarly, I suggest that Algerians in London often conceive of their city through the lens of nationalism, via a shared sense of Algerianness, which provides a common cultural framework, but does not necessarily guarantee unity or cohesion.

Therefore, whilst Algerian society in London continues to be fractured along similar lines (class, race, gender, etc.) as Puerto Rican Chicago, there is nevertheless a sense of a shared, clearly demarcated culture. Ramos-Zayas concludes that,

The performance of Puerto Rican nationalism in Chicago's barrio was premised on separatist rhetoric, community-building strategies, and historical narratives that discredited the very ideological foundation of the American nation and of the American dream and its postulates of meritocracy, individualism, and equality. (2003: 236)

Similarly, performances of Algerianness in London, such as musical events, are often concerned with community-building and a sense of shared cultural delineation. This is not to suggest that Algerian culture remains discrete, bounded and only available to members of the local diaspora, but rather acknowledges the ways in which Algerian identities are performatively shaped by, and through, musicking practices, and allow Algerian musicians and audiences in the city to simultaneously share a sense of cultural belonging and to promote their culture to those outside of the local diaspora. Tina K. Ramnarine (2007) argues that such diasporic cultural practices serve to problematize accepted understandings of urban diasporic music-making, which create a clear binary between the 'melting pot' (the idealisation of the city as the site of egalitarian inter-cultural interaction) and 'mosaic' (the notion of the city as formed of discrete cultural groupings, based upon nationality, ethnicity etc.).

There is also a body of literature that examines the relationship between diasporic music-making and identities through the notion of performativity. Ingrid Monson (2000), for example, in her work on transnational African musicking practices, examines the relationship between musical performance, expression, and diasporic identities, suggesting that,

Music's ability to link several expressive modalities – including language (lyrics or recitation), dance, and visual displays (clothing and personal style), as well as present idealized ethical and social sensibilities – seems central to its symbolic power across diasporic settings. (2000: 6)

As such, Monson touches upon a similar type of performance of embodied symbols of identity to that described by Butler, and the 'symbolic power' and 'expressive modalities' that she writes of chime with the musicking evident within London's Algerian diaspora. Jane Sugarman (2004) is concerned with music-making amongst the transnational Albanian diaspora, for whom, she argues, music plays a central role in demarcating a distinct sense of identity. Her observation that these Albanian communities 'need to be able to create new cultural forms in order to re-imagine themselves and to experiment with new forms of communal identity' (2004: 23) also exhibits similarities with Algerians in London, for whom musicking offers a way of negotiating collective nationalistic identities.

Gregory Dietrich (2004), in his study of *Desi* music in Chicago, identifies two ways in which music can function within the production of diasporic identities. He writes that,

First, music *unites* members of diasporas, producing imaginations of a shared homeland through musical sound, aligning them with other members of the homeland despite the often high degree of regional cultural diversity this encompasses. Music and dance are frequently central to the social events in which diasporas reinforce homeland values and traditions. Second, music *empowers* diaspora groups by staking out a unique cultural space in the host nation, providing a voice for the marginalized community with which to assert cultural difference.' (2004: 104)

These two functions align closely with the place of music within London's Algerian diaspora, for whom musical events are both an opportunity for social interaction and a stage for negotiating the place of Algerian culture within the city. And whilst music-making is often embedded within wider contexts, such as events highlighting the breadth and diversity of Algerian culture, music offers a particularly immediate way of attracting both Algerian and non-Algerian listeners, through the alluring sonic and visual symbols that music provides.

Whilst there are clearly important connections between music and identity for many diasporic populations, there are three issues with regards to London's Algerian diaspora that make examining this relationship of particular

importance. The first of these is the physical dispersal of Algerians across the city, resulting in both a sense of separation and cultural disconnection. The lack of a fixed site of Algerianness in London (which might, for example, be more evident in the neighbourhoods that are home to many of the city's Bangladeshi or West Indian populations) means that there is a notable lack of Algerian 'community'. The result is that musical events afford the local diaspora an opportunity to meet and socialise, and to collectively negotiate their own sense of Algerian identity, which remains clearly defined from the Algerianness of those in France, the *bled*, and elsewhere.

Secondly, Algerians complain both about the lack of wider public awareness of their culture, and of the recurrently negative depiction of Algeria and its citizens within the British media, whose reports often serve to imply connections between Algerians and terrorist activity. Whilst the city's transport networks feature advertisements for the tourist industries of Morocco and Tunisia, Algeria generally remains concealed from the public sphere, and musical performances are therefore considered an opportunity to communicate with those outside of local diasporic networks. Algerianness, as the wider general public of London understands it, is therefore shaped by musicking, and performances of music are also outward facing performances of Algerian identity.

Thirdly, issues of identity are central to contemporary Algerian socio-political discourse, and the instability of these identities makes them particularly pertinent to a study of contemporary Algerian culture. The postcolonial propagation of Arabization, in particular, has had pronounced consequences, from the Berber Spring of 1980 to the civil unrest of the 1990s. Similarly, the migration of Algerians first to France and then to the UK, have further complicated notions of Algerianness, and have put issues of diasporic identity at the forefront of contemporary Algerian culture.

Given the evident complexities of contemporary Algerianness, it is unsurprising to discover that much of the extent scholarship on Algerian culture and history deals explicitly with issues of identity. Benjamin Stora's critical

history of Algeria examines the creation of Algerian nationalistic identities, and he writes that,

The colourful plurality of local entities, the Berber cultural protests, the resurgence of religious feeling at the foundation of populism (Islamism), and the relics of unassumed French memory have undermined the central authority...The relation of defiance...is deeply rooted in Algerian society, especially since, after independence, the Algerian state has operated on the single-party principle, banning plural, contradictory expressions. (2001: 238)

Hugh Roberts, writing about the political instability of the 1990s, notes 'the organised expressions of competing interests and viewpoints rooted in the cultural sphere. A preoccupation with the issue of Algeria's identity has been fundamental both to the Islamist parties and to their most vigorous adversaries' (2003: 235). He goes on to discuss 'these competing definitions of identity', writing of *l'Algérie arabo-musulmane* (Arab-Muslim Algeria), *l'Algérie islamique* (Islamic Algeria), *l'Algérie laïque et républicaine, etc.* (secular and republican Algeria) (2003: 235).

Paul A Silverstein (2004) examines inter-generational conflict within the cosmopolitan Franco-Algerian diaspora, and in discussing the generational fragmentation of these Algerian communities, writes that,

The imagination and practice of belonging in immigrant France is mediated by forms of generational identity and political engagement. Complex and often tendentious relations between different ages of Algerian emigrants, or between parents and children within a single immigrant household, mark daily life in the cités.⁶³ (2004: 153)

James McDougall's (2003) work is concerned with the unity (or disunity) of Algerian nationalist identities, and he touches upon the notion that such identities are performatively contested when he writes of,

⁶³ 'Cité', in France, commonly refers to socially-disadvantaged housing estates, normally found on the edge of major cities. The term has often had negative connotations, and is frequently used to describe HLM (*Habitation à Loyer Modéré*, 'rent-controlled housing').

The need to get away from, or at least to problematise, the homogenising totalities of 'nation' and 'identity', and to look instead at particularly situated practices of producing, institutionalising and contesting representations of 'the nation', with a critical eye to the means and relations of that production, the material forces in play in the 'market of symbolic goods' (to borrow from Bourdieu) where the history, culture and politics of nationhood meet. (2003: 11)

In writing of the production, institutionalisation and contestation of 'the nation', McDougall alludes to the performativity and fluidity of notions of contemporary Algerianness. What is important, therefore, is recognising the historical legacy of Algerian nationalism, and of seeing contemporary Algerianness in London as part of an on-going process of collective identity construction and negotiation. In other words, the performance of Algerianness within the musicking practices of the city's diaspora is both historically grounded and enduringly evolving, and it is partly through music, I suggest, that understandings of contemporary Algerian identities are formed, elucidated and reified, for Algerians and non-Algerians alike.

2.1 Performing Music and Performing Identity

Whilst the Algerian population of London is relatively small, conducting research into the performance of Algerian music in the city is not without its difficulties. The lack of distinct and definably Algerian music venues means that performances take place in various locations across the city, in cafés, restaurants, arts and cultural centres, festivals, nightclubs, pubs, churches, and in one case, the headquarters of an international bank. The musics performed by members of the local diaspora are equally diverse, and include traditional and folk musics (*andalus*, *chaabi*, *maalouf*), popular musics (such as *rai*), 'non-Algerian' musics (such as rap), and a broad range of 'fusion' styles, that integrate both Algerian and non-Algerian musical influences. Furthermore, Algerian musicians themselves are a heterogeneous group, including everything from full-time professionals to occasional performers, and from highly trained, conservatoire-educated musicians to total beginners. They also

evidence the diversity of the local Algerian population, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, wealth and class.

I suggest therefore that there are three broad contexts within which Algerian music is performed in London. The first of these is the performance of definably Algerian musics to predominantly Algerian audiences, such in the case of *chaabi* music being played in Algerian cafés. The second is as part of explicitly Algerian public events, such as festivals or cultural celebrations, which are open to all but predominantly attract Algerian listeners, and are fertile spaces for the explicit negotiation of Algerianness. And the third is within contexts that attract mostly non-Algerian audiences, such as in restaurants or at large, predominantly non-Algerian festivals, whereby musical performance becomes a means of communicating Algerian culture to those outside of local diasporic networks. Whilst this model offers a continuum of perform contexts, which are far from fixed or entirely discrete, it provides a loose framework for thinking about the performance of Algerian music in the city, and the interactions between Algerian and non-Algerian musicians and audiences.

At the heart of many of these musical events is a desire for social interaction, and performances therefore often serve as a means of overcoming physical dispersal and culture disconnection within London. Musicians and audiences alike frequently voice their discontent at the lack of opportunities for Algerians to meet and share their sense of cultural pride. One musician, who arrived in the city in the late 1990s, speaks of the lack of a definably Algerian area of the city, stating that ‘it’s not like with the Turkish, if you go to Dalston. You find Pakistanis in Whitechapel. But we haven’t got that special area. You can go to any area, but it’s just like a road, and that is it. But not our own area’⁶⁴. Like many Algerians in the city, he draws a direct correlation between the lack of defined physical space and a feeling of marginalisation. Members of the local diaspora frequently assert their belief that the city’s authorities and its inhabitants overlook Algerians and Algerian culture because they do not inhabit a particular space within London, and that this makes it easy for them to be

⁶⁴ Interview, March 2014.

obscured from public view. He goes on to contrast the condition of Algerians in London and Paris, arguing that,

Because France was our coloniser, the first people emigrated to France because we speak the same language. We have got a culture that is common. We know them, they know us, so it is easy to establish our culture there. You go to *Barbès*, it is Algeria. They are speaking Arabic, you can eat *loubia*, an Algerian dish, you can eat whatever you want.⁶⁵ The music is there. Even French people are playing with Algerians, no problem, and they love it. It's not like here. If you are lucky, you play in a coffee shop. That is lucky! Or you can wait for the festivals or events.⁶⁶

Contrasts between Algerian life in London and that in French cities, such as Paris and Marseille, are common. Whilst France has become home to the largest Algerian population outside of the *bled*, it is also somewhere that Algerians often associate with racist and xenophobic discrimination. This results in an on-going debate about whether Algerians are better served by Britain or France: is the lack of a visible 'community' and services beneficial or not, and is dispersal and disengagement worthwhile if it avoids the creation of boundaries, both physical (the neighbourhood, ghetto, or *banlieue*) and social (labels of race and nationality)? As one co-worker, an active musician, argued, 'when we are spread, it is better for the community to get integrated. Like in France you go to the thirteenth or to St Denis, you will find only Algerians and other Africans'⁶⁷.

The dissemination of Algerians throughout the city, and debates and disagreements about the unity of the local diaspora, produce questions around the very notion of a cohesive Algerian identity in London. For some, an individual's nationality (whether born in the *bled* or the diaspora) is enough provide a sense of Algerianness to ensure diasporic unity. One co-worker, who has lived in London for a number of years and is a keen patron of music, disputes any notion of difference or detachment, arguing that,

It doesn't matter what you earn. If you are Algerian, that's fine. Most of the people I know, we don't have that differentiation between job titles,

⁶⁵ Loubia is a type of spicy bean stew, made with haricot beans, that is a popular staple food in Algeria.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Interview, February 2012.

or you have papers or you don't have papers. For us, if you are Algerian, you are Algerian. We get on fine, there are no worries. We have that solidarity.⁶⁸

Others are less convinced of claims of Algerian collective solidarity in the city. A number of factors can be used to demarcate difference, including Algerian geography (where in the country an individual or their family originates from), and of particular note, a sense of Berber identity. Although there is no clear Berber cultural movement or sense of Berber nationalism in London (unlike in Paris and other French cities), many individuals are keen to state their Berber identity alongside their Algerian one. Nevertheless, there is a palpable sense of collective Algerian identity, and this underpins many of the musical events that take place in London. It is evident, therefore, that Algerianness remains important, and this provides a stimulus for musicking. For some, a range of cultural events, such as book clubs, film screenings, and political debates, shape their sense of Algerian identity. However, musical events and concerts remain one of the most significant ways in which Algerianness is both performed and mediated, whether in the shape of café-based performances of *chaabi*, or at large-scale cultural events, where visual and auditory symbols of Algeria are shared amongst Algerian and non-Algerian musicians and listeners.

The social interaction that music events facilitate is often explicitly stated. Rachida, an *andalusi* singer and events organiser, argues that 'I think it's not so much to do with the music anymore, it's to do with the gatherings', suggesting the people attend musical events 'not to be seen, to see. To meet people. To see who is out there'⁶⁹. Similarly, musicians speak of musicking as a way of meeting other performers. Yasmine, a singer and 'ud player who is now very active on the local music scene, recalls that before becoming involved in musical activities, 'I did know a few people...who came over the same year, that I met at university. But I didn't have a big network of Algerian contacts before that'⁷⁰. This is not to reductively suggest that musical performances are purely

⁶⁸ Interview, March 2014.

⁶⁹ Interview, 26th July 2013.

⁷⁰ Interview, 1st March 2013.

social occasions, but rather to note that social interaction is deeply embedded within these events for musicians and audiences alike.

The examples of musical performances discussed throughout the rest of this chapter serve to highlight the diversity of Algerian musical events in London, in terms of location, context, intention, musical style and audience. In the process, it becomes clear that musicking serves as both social forum for Algerians in the city, and as a platform for the performative construction, negotiation and reification of contemporary diasporic Algerianness in London.

2.2 Sites of Algerian Musical Performance

The lack of physical spaces within London that are designated to support Algerian cultural practices means that musicking takes place within a wide range of venues, distributed across the city. The few businesses and services that are determinably Algerian include restaurants, halal butchers, and small local cafes, and it is these cafes that serve as the only identifiably Algerian sites of music-making in London. Cafes offer their Algerian patrons an opportunity to meet and informally socialise, and like their counterparts in North Africa and the Middle East, discussions range from family business to sport and politics.⁷¹ What is most immediately apparent in many of these cafes is the clear intention to recreate a sense of the *bled* for their Algerian customers, evidenced in cultural symbols and products such as paintings and photographs, decoration, food, and music. The location of these cafes, away from central London and often in less salubrious areas of the city, means that they predominantly attract a regular clientele, formed, almost exclusively, from members of the Algerian diaspora. Whilst attendance at cafes is not strictly demarcated along lines of class, they usually draw far fewer patrons from the wealthier sections of the city's Algerian population. More noticeable is the clear gender division that is customarily in place. Whilst no one has ever stated to me that women are

⁷¹ Paul A. Silverstein writes of the importance of cafes in France for immigrants arriving from the Algerian homeland, suggesting that these cafes offer a place of meeting and shelter, and from which news from the homeland could be distributed amongst the local Algerian (and particularly Kabyle) diaspora (2004).

prohibited from frequenting such cafes, my experiences suggest that the audience is almost always exclusively male. The gender barriers within such cafes are explored by Algerian female director Amina Zoubir in her 2012 film *Prends Ta Place* (Take Your Place), and she examines such issues through both the experiences of women entering these cafes, and the views of the regular male clientele, who make clear that such spaces are considered the preserve of men. A female musician in London explains that such cafes tend to draw the more traditional and conservative elements of the local diaspora, stating that 'I think in these areas people still meet in cafes and the cafes that are Algerian are only male. It's not a rule, but that's what tends to happen. And so for women, it's not as easy I think to meet with the community. So it has to be through a channel like music'⁷².

Whilst female musicians may feel excluded from such spaces, cafes are nevertheless important sites of musicking for many within the local diaspora. The Algerian café has long been a place of music-making. Hana Noor Al-Deen (2005) suggests that it was the café culture of the city of *Wahran* (Oran) that cultivated *raï* music, with both male and female musicians appearing in such cafes. However it is *chaabi* that is most commonly associated with Algerian cafés, particularly in the capital city of Algiers. Mustapha Harzoune suggests that café-based performances of *chaabi* are an important characteristic of Algiers, helping to form its soundscape. He writes that,

Algiers would not be Algiers without chaabi. It is impossible to not go and sip a tea at the Tantonville or the Malakoff cafes, to not pay tribute to the master '*ma'alem*' Hadj Mohammed El Anka, and to the many others. This musical genre shows that Algiers has always been a city of *métissage* and mixed sounds. (2012/13: 170)

The custom of Algerian cafes hosting performances of music is continued in London, in venues such as Rostomia, an establishment located on the Goldhawk Road in the Shepherd's Bush area of west London. The café is small and unassuming, and from the outside is indistinguishable as Algerian to those unaware that its name is taken from a neighbourhood of Algiers. The café is

⁷² Interview, March 2013.

family-run, and managed by two brothers, one of whom, Redouane, is a guitarist and advocate of Algerian music. The café's clientele is, unsurprisingly, almost exclusively male, but draws Algerian patrons from across a wide age range, from people in their late teens to those in their fifties and sixties. The front of the café contains a few tables and chairs and is normally taken up by members of its regular clientele. A glass counter, filled with Algerian delicacies, serves as a focal point, and is covered by memorabilia (flag, pennants, mugs etc.) of various professional Algerian football teams, which serve as visual reminders of the café's Algerianness. A small staircase leads down into the back of the venue, a darkly lit area with low tables and chairs down each side, and old photographs of Algeria adorn the walls. At the very back of the café is a large flat-screen television, mounted on the wall, which is usually showing football matches, and a small PA system used during parties, celebrations and musical performances. Rostomia is renowned amongst the city's Algerian population as a venue for musical performances, and these incorporate *andalus*, *raï*, and particularly *chaabi*. The café is a popular performance space amongst London's network of Algerian *chaabi* musicians, many of whom were born in Algiers, and self-identify as part of the city's working class culture from which the music emerged. Individuals often speak of the importance of retaining this musical heritage, making reference to its roots in the Casbah neighbourhood of Algiers, and speak of the sense of cultural pride that they gain from performing *chaabi*.

Chaabi emerged in Algiers in the early decades of the twentieth century, drawing upon numerous musical sources, including the *amdāh* (religious songs that praise Allāh and the Prophet Mohammed) and local *andalusi* traditions, as well as non-Algerian musics such as Egyptian *sharqī* and jazz (Elsner, 2002: 475).⁷³ Its enduring popularity amongst Algerian audiences is explained by a strong working class identity that demarcates it from more elitist musical forms

⁷³ Algerian *chaabi* is a distinct musical form, notably different from the Moroccan *chaabi* and Egyptian *sh'abi* genres, with which it shares a name. In Egypt, the name is also used to refer to the 'music of the people', but this developed significantly later, in the second half of the twentieth century. In Morocco, *chaabi* is a more general term that covers a range of urban and rural musical styles.

(such as *andalusi*), and this is evident in both its name (meaning ‘of the people’), and its continuing association with Algiers’ working class neighbourhood of the Casbah. Langlois illustrates the importance of *chaabi*’s socio-cultural status when he writes that ‘as the music most associated with the working classes of the city of Algiers, *sha’bī* was promoted by the first, socialist, post-colonial regimes, despite (or even because of) the social criticism contained in its lyrics’ (Grove Music Online, 2013). The music is formed of two broad styles: *chaabi-malḥûn* (the more traditional style, with lyrics based upon the colloquial poetic *malḥûn*) and *chaabi aasri* (meaning contemporary), the latter of which produced a number of well-known hit songs during the second half of the twentieth century (Morgan and Nickson, 2006: 7). *Chaabi* songs, particularly in the more traditional form, ‘consist of lengthy narrative songs sung by a single performer interspersed with vociferous choral sections involving the ensemble’ (Langlois, 2013). Elsner notes that a traditional *chaabi* lyric ‘used the vernacular (*malḥûn*) and was formally related to the *qaṣīda* in its strophic structure and equal rhymes over several lines and half-lines of verse’ (2002: 475).⁷⁴ During the latter half of the twentieth century, as Algerian audiences were increasingly exposed to foreign popular musics, public tastes demanded shorter pieces of repertoire, and the condensed songs of *chaabi aasri*, which could more easily be made available via commercial recordings, found greater widespread popularity than the traditional style. *Chaabi aasri* also introduced newer, more modern instrumentation, including the fretted four-string *mandole*, guitar, and banjo, which appealed to younger Algerian audiences, and Elsner writes that,

This has led to changes in the overall profile of the sound, which has become sharper, more vigorous, more penetrating, and more subjective; at the same time, the reinforcement of higher frequencies gives the overall sound a greater stridency. Structurally, these changes have reinforced a tendency towards simplifying the music and making it more understandable – it demands little in the way of specialised training or knowledge. The new *sha’bī* are characterized by shorter sections and phrases: the melodies tend to be structured on fifths and thirds, triadic

⁷⁴ *Qaṣīda* is an older form of Arabic lyrical poetry, from which *malḥûn* developed.

groupings, chromatic passages, and *cante-jondo* turns. (Elsner, 2002: 475)

Langlois adds that ‘as both *mandūl* and banjo are fretted instruments, quarter-tones are not employed in this genre, distinguishing it from more élite musics. Modern groups use the Spanish guitar, bass guitar and synthesizer in addition to this arrangement’ (2013).

The most revered of all *chaabi* musicians is El Hadj Mohamed El-Anka (often referred to as the ‘father’ of *chaabi*), who was born in the Casbah in 1907 and is considered to have created *chaabi* by integrating the ‘*madḥ* (the singular of *amdāḥ*) with new musical accompaniment within the orchestra that he created in 1929 (Elsner, 2002: 476). A renowned performer and recording artist, as well as a teacher, El Anka became the first virtuosic star of *chaabi*, and, as Elsner writes,

He was invited by the newly constituted, fragile Algerian radio network to introduce the popular ‘*madḥ* over the airwaves. Recordings of his performances were enthusiastically sought. His innovative, refreshing style of popular song, despite its controversial content, was by 1932 known as *sha’bī* (*chaâbi*) ‘the epitome of the popular’ (2002: 476).

During the 1950s and 1960s, as the country was engulfed by the violence of the war of independence, El Anka’s music remained enduringly popular, and as Langlois writes, he was considered a ‘major star [who] sang in the Kabyle Berber language as well as a local form of Arabic, acknowledging not only his own origins, but also the origins of a significant proportion of immigrants to Algiers’ (Langlois, 2013).

It is the repertoire of *chaabi-malḥûn*, including works by El Anka, which the musicians of Rostomia draw upon. In so doing, their performances strike a careful balance, gaining a form of approval from Algerian listeners that is absent from more modern styles (such as *rai*), whilst also retaining a working class identity that demarcates *chaabi* from more exclusive musics, such as *andalus*.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Whilst *chaabi* and *andalus* are now considered as distinct musical styles, with very different socio-cultural identities, many of *chaabi*’s early pioneers had trained as *andalus* musicians. *Chaabi* took influences from a number of musical sources, and

Given the limited size of the city's diaspora, however, there remains significant crossover between *chaabi* and *andalus*, with musicians frequently called upon to perform both styles. Ali Aït Si Larbi is a *darbuka* player from Algiers, who performs *chaabi* at Rostomia and *andalus* with the Al-Andalus Caravan. He closely identifies *chaabi* with his city of birth, and recalls his induction into the music at an early age, explaining that 'I'm from Algiers. So most of my interest was in it, because every time there's a wedding party you'll see bands playing music, it will be *chaabi* music. You go out and get in the car with my dad and it's *chaabi* music. So that's what I was really interested in'.⁷⁶ After moving to Britain, Ali lived in Slough and Northampton, before relocating to London, and he suggests that performing *chaabi* at Rostomia was instrumental to his integration into local diasporic networks, and in enabling him to meet other musicians. He quickly joined the network of performers at the café, and recalls speaking to musicians and discovering that 'he's got a friend, and I've got another friend, and we ended up going to play in Shepherds Bush, in Rostomia'. He suggests that 'you start seeing musicians coming out from nowhere. They say "oh yeah, I've done it and I gave it up for twenty years". You see people in their forties and they say "I play violin, but I didn't do it for twenty years". But then we start getting together'.⁷⁷ Performing at Rostomia led Ali to meet Tewfik Ouagueni, the Musical Director of the Al Andalus Caravan (and formerly a regular performer at the café), and he soon joined the ensemble as a percussionist. Playing at this café therefore offered a way for Ali to meet other musicians, to reconnect with the music of his childhood in the *bled*, and to establish connections with other Algerian musicians in London.

Whilst *chaabi-malhûn* garners a degree of reverence and respect in Algeria, it is not always popular with younger listeners. The length of performances (with pieces often in excess of thirty minutes), the slow tempo of the music and its poetic lyrics in Arabic are seen as the reasons for this

Tony Langlois writes that *chaabi* 'also bears some structural similarities to *andalouse*, but shows more influence of Berber and Ottoman styles' (Langlois, Grove Music, 2014).

⁷⁶ Interview, 10th February 2012.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

disinterest from a younger generation. In contrast, the more modern style of *chaabi aasri*, which emerged from Algeria in the 1970s and embraced technology, is far more popular among younger listeners. As a result, *chaabi-malhûn* is considered somewhat archaic, and its continued association with an older generation performing in local cafes has done little to expand its listenership within contemporary Algerian societies. One musician summarises these criticisms of traditional *chaabi*, arguing that the music is incompatible with daily life in London, where, he argues, ‘everything is quick. We are living a life that is quick. We are using tickets, the Oyster card, and it’s ‘peep’, and you go. Everything is quick, quick, quick’⁷⁸. He continues that ‘especially in London, they are all working for five days like dogs, like in the Beatles’ song, “it’s been a hard days’ night, and I’ve been working like a dog.” It’s true! We work like dogs here. If you do your eight hours, it’s eight hours. So the stress is there’⁷⁹. He claims that this is ‘what those people, especially the *chaabi* people, don’t understand’⁸⁰. When asked about the popularity of *chaabi* amongst Algerian audiences, he states that,

If you do a *raï* festival and a *chaabi* festival, you will find more people at the *raï* than the *chaabi*. This is the truth. Because those people are still in the tradition, in the old clothes... It is just *darbuka, darbuka*. Why? I’m not playing *chaabi*. Give another face to *chaabi*. The music is there, it is beautiful. It’s acoustic as well. Why carry on with what you’ve got? If they’re using a keyboard, use a keyboard! What is the problem? Change! Don’t play it monotonic, all in the same tone, all of you just playing the same notes. No, why don’t you play in harmony, which gives you more?⁸¹

The musicians who perform at Rostomia, in contrast, argue that it is the Algerian cultural traditions that they are keeping alive that make playing *chaabi* so important, and they are dismissive of any suggestions that the music is archaic or no longer relevant.

Their commitment to playing *chaabi* means that they are willing to make significant sacrifices in order to perform. At a performance at Rostomia in early

⁷⁸ Interview, March 2014.

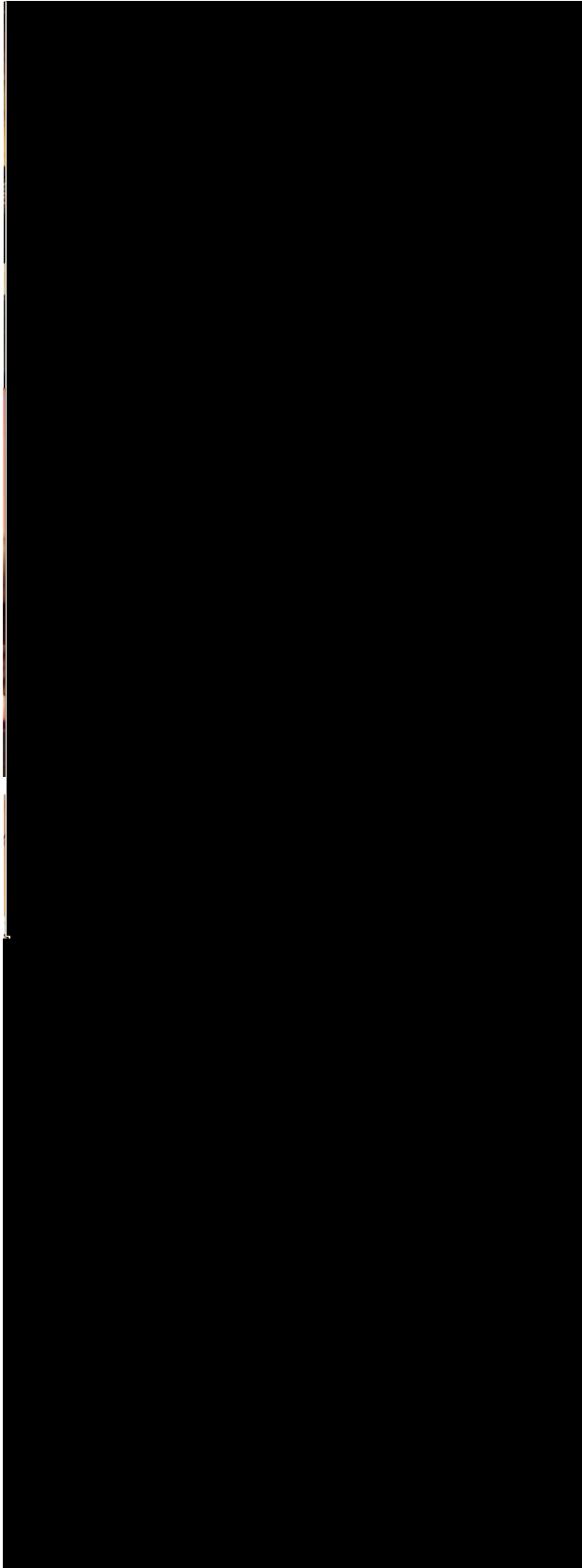
⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

2012, the evening began with the musicians arriving at the café having travelled from their homes across the city and throughout the surrounding areas. Whilst some were based locally, many had travelled significant distances: singer Sid Ahmed el Bahi, who led the evening's performance, had come from his home in Woking (a town twenty miles south of central London), whilst Ali Aït Si Larbi had ridden his motorbike across London from his home in the south of the city.⁸² As the musicians gradually arrived, they sat together talking and drinking coffee, whilst the majority of that evening's customers stayed sat up at the front of the café. After lengthy discussions, they slowly arranged their seats in a small circle at the back of the venue, attracting very little interest from the other patrons. Redouane set up microphones for the musicians, connected to the venue's PA system, but this still did not stimulate interest amongst the other people present. Their performance of *chaabi-malhûn* repertoire immediately exhibited their skills as musicians, and whilst Sid Ahmed el Bahi led proceedings, singing and playing *mandole*, the other musicians responded in chorus and took turns with improvisations. It was clear that the musicians were deeply engrossed in their performance, carefully interacting with one another. However, there was still little interest or response from the café's customers. The only other people in the room for much of the performance were two young Algerian men, who were sat leaning against the wall and watching the Spanish football match (broadcast on an Arabic-language network) the was being shown on the television screen behind the musicians. The other customers, still sat at the front of the café, paid little interest to the music apart from the occasional cursory glance.

⁸² These were not insignificant distances for the musicians to travel under normal circumstances, but were made more noteworthy by the forecast of heavy snow in London. Throughout the evening, snow fell across London, and the city's public transport infrastructure ground to a halt, with my own journey home across the capital taking over three hours. This served to further highlight the devotion of the musicians performing at Rostomia.



2.1: Algerian chaabi musicians performing at Rostomia café, London, March 2012

What was most notable in this performance was the apparent disinterest from the majority of the café's customers in the *chaabi* music that was being played. On the one hand, this throws into question the significance and value of such performances for many within the local diaspora. It is undoubtedly apparent that *chaabi*, unlike other musics, remains something of an acquired taste amongst Algerian audiences in the city. Certainly, in the case of this particular performance, there was relatively little interaction amongst musicians and audience, and whilst we might consider all of those present to have been participants in this act of musicking, this was apparently more passive than active amongst the majority of the venue's patrons. There is little doubt, however, that the performance was highly important for the musicians involved, not only as an act of collective music-making, but also as a way of performing Algerianness through *chaabi* music. This was, I argue, not simply a vague sense of nationalistic pride, but rather a statement of a clearly defined working-class urban identity that remains deeply embodied within Algerian *chaabi* music.

Furthermore, I suggest that whilst those in attendance might not have been actively engaged as listeners, musicking served to enhance the sense of Algerianness created within the venue. By this, I mean that by adding to the soundscape of the café, *chaabi* music served as a further marker of Algerian identity, in ways that are particularly meaningful for members of the local Algerian diaspora. Harzoune (2012/13) writes of the importance of *chaabi* to the café culture of Algiers, and in the same way I argue that this particular musical performance was central to demarcating a sense of Algerian identity within the café, and siting it within contemporary London. Music here is not acting as a form of entertainment, and as such does not draw attention to itself, but rather is part of a process of cultural performance, acting as a sonic symbol of Algerianness alongside the visual and other sensual representations present in the café. At the same time, the context of the performance and the symbols of Algerianness that exist within the venue imbue the music and musicians with particular meanings and understandings. This act of musicking becomes Algerian through its context within an Algerian café, with the café's décor, food and clientele serving to produce the Algerianness that the music embodies. In

other words, the sounds produced by these *chaabi* musicians are part of a larger performance of Algerianness, both shaped by, and continually shaping, understandings of Algerian culture and identity within this particular café. As such, the *chaabi* music played at Rostomia not only brings musicians together to perform, but helps to construct and mediate a sense of contemporary Algerianness within the venue for member's of London's Algerian diaspora.

2.3 Staging Algerian Music

Whilst cafes provide one of the few fixed sites of musical performance for the local diaspora, London is home to an extensive network of Algerian musicians who perform within numerous venues and a variety of contexts across the city. A significant number of events are organised by members of the local diaspora, feature London-based musicians, and whilst they are often open to the public, they attract a predominantly Algerian audience. These events include both uniquely musical concerts, and broader Algerian cultural events that often combine musicking with poetry, film and political debate.

These types of event are often held in public spaces located in central London, such as concert halls or universities, where organisers believe they will be most accessible to an Algerian population dispersed across the city. Unlike some of the city's other diasporic cultures, whose musicking is circumscribed within specific areas of London with large diasporic populations, the majority of Algerian public music-making takes place centrally, drawing Algerian audiences into the heart of the city. Such events attract a much broader cross-section of the local Algerian population than café-based performances, and provide a space within which Algerians from different social classes, and with varying levels of education, are able to interact. However, the cultural networks that facilitate these events are mostly composed of more affluent members of the local Algerian community. Whilst there are no strict boundaries of social class to constrain involvement and attendance, those organising the events often require financial resources, personal contacts and a high level of English language competency to interact with promoters and venues, and this can limit

the opportunities for those from more working class backgrounds to be involved in the events. Furthermore, the public nature of these events often discourage the participation of members of the *harraga* community, who are fearful of attracting attention to themselves

The events are primarily publicised by word of mouth and extensive use of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, and are generally promoted within local diasporic networks. As such, they offer another context within which the city's Algerian population are able to meet and socialise, but they also provide a further stage for the collective negotiation of Algerian identities within London.

One such event was the launch of an exhibition by London-based Algerian artist Houria Niati, in October 2013. Houria, who was born in Khemis-Miliana in central northern Algeria, is a remarkable character, both because her childhood coincided with the country's war of independence, and because of the length of her residency in London. Having trained as a visual artist in Algeria, she moved to London in 1977, and has continued to practise as both an artist and *andalus* singer in the city. Her personal history makes her a particularly revered individual within local diasporic circles.

This particular event was entitled 'Brains Fusion', and formed part of her exhibition *Identity Search*, which ran between September and October 2013 at Conway Hall, an art deco building in central London that regularly hosts cultural events. The use of 'identity' within the title of the exhibition alludes to both Houria's reflections upon her own identity, and the ways in which she believes her work relates to broader discourses of Algerianness. The exhibition's introduction on her website explains that,

It takes time to recover from the indignities of colonialism, to exploit its positive aspects, let go memories of its deleterious side - or not, and blend this shifting cavalcade with celebration of one's indigenous culture. In the case of Algerian artist, Houria Niati, as usual, the nuanced layers of heritage are complex. Start with Arab/Islamic, add French colonialism, mash it up with the Berber blood of her mother and the Arab of her father. To add to the mix, Niati has been a diasporic artist since 1977 when she arrived in London. (Highet, 2013)

The focus upon identity, set within various contexts, could not be more explicit. As with many such public Algerian events, the exhibition launch was publicised predominantly through social media and word of mouth, attracting members of the local Algerian population and friends of Houria. Alongside a short lecture by the artist, and the performance of a poem that she had co-written, the event also incorporated Algerian cuisine and drinks, and thus employed similar symbols of Algerianness to those found in Rostomia.

The event also featured performances by local Algerian musicians, including a trio featuring singer Rachida Lamri and percussionist Samir Nacer, who played two sets of *andalusi inqilabat*. The inclusion of *andalus* music within this programme was significant. The revered status of *andalus* amongst Algerian audiences meant that it fitted with the semi-formal setting of an art exhibition, perhaps more than other musical styles would. The sense of esteem in which the music is held in Algeria means that it has become increasingly associated with the country's educated middle classes, and as such, it was clear that the meanings embedded within this performance were very different from those of the *chaabi* music found within local cafes. Additionally, *andalus* has a long and complex history in Algeria, having moved from a respected but marginalised art form under French colonial rule, to a symbol of national pride, as propagated by the postcolonial independent Algerian government. Much of Houria's work is concerned with examining Algerian nationalism, and particularly the status of women in the country, and the important role played by female performers in the history of *andalusi* music further highlights the motivations for programming *andalus* at this particular event. This event was therefore not only a public celebration of Algerian culture, but also a performative act, within which music not only demarcated a sense of Algerianness, but conferred and mediated specific socio-cultural meanings for the Algerian musicians and listeners in attendance.

Another event that openly examined discourses of Algerian identity was entitled *Nostalgically Algerian: La Belle Époque*, and was held in central London in December 2013. Organised jointly by local Algerian cultural organisation Culturama and the Algerian Solidarity Campaign, an independent political group

based in the city, the event celebrated the period of relative political stability in Algeria, between national independence in 1962 and the civil unrest initiated by the *Tafsut Imazighen* of 1980. The first half of the evening incorporated a lecture from historian Ed McAllister, who reflected upon this period of Algerian history through the lens of his ethnographic fieldwork in the Bab el Oued area of Algiers. McAllister focused upon the cultural vibrancy of the area and the sense of positivity amongst its inhabitants at this time, describing an era that not only coincided with the childhood experiences of some of those present, but also contrasted with the violence and social unrest of national independence and the Algerian civil war. The lively questions and discussion that followed McAllister's presentation evidenced the engagement of many of the audience with this topic, and produced a sense of collective Algerianness based upon positive personal and collective memories of the *bled*. After this, the audience were again served Algerian food and drinks, providing both further symbols of Algerian culture, and an opportunity for interaction amongst those present.

The second half of the evening was comprised of performances by musicians. The first of these was from Rabah Donquishote, a former member of the acclaimed and successful Franco-Algerian rap group MBS (*Le Micro Brise Le Silence* [The Microphone Breaks the Silence]), who had recently moved from Paris to London. MBS are not only one of Algeria's most famous and respected hip-hop groups, but are also known for their lyrics criticising the Algerian government and the political situation in their homeland. Formed in the late 1980s, the group's career has coincided with the unrest in Algeria of the 1990s and 2000s, and they are widely acknowledged as influencing many young Algerian rappers to engage with socio-political themes in their music. Rabah's performance of the group's songs therefore contrasted with the subject of McAllister's paper, shifting the focus of the event to the violence and turmoil of the country's civil war. A stage had been set up for the evening's musical performances, but Rabah preferred to move to the centre of the room and perform in the middle of a circle of listeners. This allowed him to engage directly with the audience, animatedly pacing up and down as his lyrics denounced the political situation in Algeria, and he was warmly received and enthusiastically

encouraged by those listening. Rabah's lyrics, like those of many Algerian hip hop artists, often attack the country's political regime for its perceived record on social inequality, corruption and human rights, as well as their role in the history of Algeria's civil conflict. Algeria's President and military generals are particularly common targets for critique. Rabah's 2004 album 'Rabah President', for example, includes the track 'Monsieur Le Président' which features the lines 'Nobody talk about the butchery, understand? For us the war is over, it's called an amnesty. And for those missing or dead it is a general amnesia. And for those still being killed it's a total blackout. There is enough to break the morale of the people whose lives are bad. But it's ok, it's ok, this is normal. Apparently...and yes he is called Monsieur Le Président'.

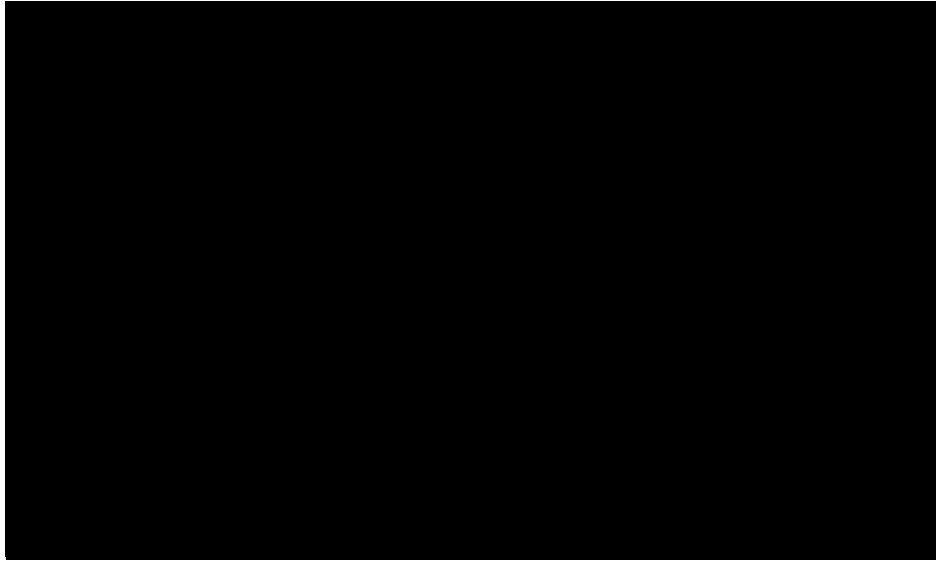
He was followed by a performance from a trio of locally-based Algerian musicians, led by popular singer and guitarist Nazim Ziryab, who incorporated a range of Algerian and non-Algerian styles, including *rai*, reggae and various Berber musics. Many audience members got to their feet, dancing and ululating, and the celebratory atmosphere that the group created provided another thematic shift for the event.

What was notable at this particular event was how the musical performances, warmly received by the majority of the Algerian audience, changed the mood and focus of the event throughout the evening, and were somewhat disconnected from the stated aims of the organisers. Rather than drawing upon the sounds associated with post-independence 1960s and 1970s Algeria (a period that produced a number of celebrated recordings and launched the careers of well-known musicians)⁸³, which was the stated focus of Nostalgically Algerian and had been discussed by Ed McAllister, the programme instead reflected more contemporary tastes. The appearance of a member of MBS, a famous and revered group who are unafraid to tackle sensitive political issues, undoubtedly helped to draw an audience to the event,

⁸³ There has been a resurgent interest in the music of this period, and a number of compilations of recordings have recently been released, including 'Habibi: Algérie de ma jeunesse' ('My baby: Algeria of my youth) [Warner Classics, 2012], '1970's Algerian Proto-Rai Underground' [Sublime Frequencies, 2014] and '1970's Algerian Folk and Pop' [Sublime Frequencies, 2014]

but had little connection to this period of Algerian history. Similarly, the programme provided local Algerian musicians with an opportunity for public performance, but their chosen styles bore little explicit relation to the music of the 1960s and 1970s. The event therefore appeared more concerned with presenting a sense of Algerian collective cultural identity, spanning the period of Algerian history from national independence onwards. Within this particular context, Algerianness was a broad concept based upon national identity, and was created through the involvement of Algerian performers and audience members, as well as music and food. However, beyond the mixed themes of the event, Nostalgically Algerian provided a space for interaction and cultural reconnection, bringing together members of the local diaspora and evoking memories of the *bled*. This sense of Algerianness was therefore rooted not only in Algeria, but also in contemporary London, and the feeling of national and cultural pride that was purveyed throughout the event was a product of interactions between Algerians living in the city.

Culturama organised another event in March 2014, in celebration of International Women's Day, which featured performances by a number of locally-based Algerian musicians. Whilst other concerts and festivals are promoted as explicitly Algerian, this particular event was not publicised as overtly Algerian, but still drew an audience from predominantly within the local diaspora. Hosted at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the event aimed to debate a range of issues affecting women and to promote the work of female artists in London. The programme included performances by Alia Alzougbi, of a short play by Yamina Bakiri, and by British-Saudi poet Hala Ali, of her piece *Khaleeji Man*. The evening also featured a screening of the film *J'ai habité l'absence deux fois* (I have lived with the pain of loss twice) by Algerian filmmaker Drifa Mezzener, which examines issues of Algerian diaspora, memory and identity. The film's narrative, which focussed upon the story of Mezzener's family in Algiers and the enduring impact of her brother's emigration to London, clearly touched many of the Algerians in attendance at the event who had followed a similar migratory journey.



2.2: Al Andalus Caravan performing at Culturama's 'International Women's' Day' event

The musical performers included Houria Niati, who sang a number of a cappella pieces drawn from *andalusi* and folk repertoire, and the Al Andalus Caravan, who played two sets of *andalusi nubat* and *inqilibat*. The motivation for this choice of performers was clear, with the event presenting not only Algerian musical styles that are commonly performed by women (unlike predominantly male musics, such as *chaabi* or *rai*), but also featuring a large number of female musicians. After the music, Algerian food was once again served to the audience. What was notable in the case of this particular event was that whilst it contained similar Algerian elements (music, food, performers, audience) to those previously discussed, the Algerianness of the night was far less explicit. The promotional materials stated that this event was focussed upon International Women's Day and made no reference to its Algerian character. Rather, it was within local diasporic networks, where Algerians recognised the names of those organising and performing at the event, that the event's Algerianness became apparent. The evening combined reflection (particularly upon issues of gender politics) with celebration, but throughout remained predominantly focussed upon Algerian culture. It was significant that such a cultural celebration, featuring mainly Algerian performers and audience members, could take place within a public context without making explicit

reference to the event's Algerian character. This apparent demotion of Algerianness within the promotional narrative of the event resulted from a desire to focus upon issues of gender equality and women's rights, in both local and transnational contexts, rather than because of the enduring patriarchy of many Algerian societies. Many of those involved in organising and running the evening, as well as the performers, were women, and this contrasted markedly with other sites of Algerian music-making in the city, such as the almost exclusively male cafes that host performances of *chaabi*. As such, the event not only highlighted the important role played by women within particular styles of Algerian music (such as *andalus*), but also drew attention to the influence of Algerian women within certain sections of the diaspora in contemporary London, acting as an important source of empowerment for these women.

The largest Algerian cultural event in London in recent years was the Algerian Cultural Festival, held in October 2012 at Rich Mix, an established arts centre in Shoreditch, in London's east end. The festival was organised by the Algerian Cultural Collective, a group formed of younger members of the local diaspora and established in order to coordinate the event, who described themselves as 'an independent, inclusive, and fast-growing collective of young professionals, students, and artists based in London, with contributions from the global Algerian diaspora' (Festival programme). The event coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian independence, and the aims of the festival were twofold: to commemorate this important juncture in Algerian history, and to promote the work of Algerian artists living and working in London. The programme explains that,

The Algerian Cultural Festival (ACF) was born out of a desire to both commemorate a momentous anniversary in Algerian history, an important date little talked about in Britain, and to promote the country's rich cultural heritage, under-stated, under-covered and often misunderstood abroad. Most importantly, the Algerian Cultural Collective (ACC)'s long-term vision revolves around sowing the seeds to nurture intermarriage of cultural initiatives between Algeria and the UK.

Fragmented and lacking cultural references, the Algerian community in the UK is largely absent in Britain's showcase of international folklore. Albeit fast-growing and increasingly prosperous, the Algerian diaspora in

the UK is still haunted by long-echoing media reports on the tragic civil war in 1990s. The resulting static stereotyping remains unchallenged. Algerian cultural manifestations are seldom seen across the UK, and initiatives to connect and enable expression and exchange are few and far between. (Festival programme)

This statement highlights some of the issues and concerns regularly expounded by Algerians in the city, and underscores the motivations of the festival's organisers. In the face of fragmentation and a lack of cultural references, the event was understood by its organisers, participants and audiences as an important opportunity to draw wider attention to local Algerian cultural practices.

There was undoubtedly a sense of anticipation in the months leading up to the festival, with the events organisers and participants, as well as the wider local diaspora, sharing the hope that it might stimulate increased awareness of Algerian culture throughout the city. Many people described a hope that the festival might bring Algerians together, and mend some of the divisions and tensions that have often fractured the local diasporic community. Houria Niati, who was exhibiting her work at the event, stated that,

I think that this cultural event is really vital and important in terms of bringing Algerians together. This kind of cultural festival in London has never happened, for years. I have been here since 1977 and we were a tiny Algerian community in London. Very tiny, very small. And gradually it started developing and developing. These kind of events, like the Algerian Cultural Festival, it is really something very valuable and it should be done every month! Absolutely every month it should be done! There are so many community centres in this country, surely we can find a place to do it regularly? And then if you give a chance to one, or two, or three, or ten, they will go and talk to others and do it themselves. And then we will be flourishing.⁸⁴

Others were more reticent and sceptical, questioning whether the festival had been covertly organised by the Algerian authorities or embassy, or else arguing that the event would have little lasting impact. One musician who performed at the festival reflected later that,

⁸⁴ Interview with Houria Niati, Algerian Cultural Festival, 2012). Available from: <<https://soundcloud.com/acf-london/houria-niati>>

The festival took only one day I think? It's not that big. A festival or event like that should take between four days and a week, in my opinion. To get more people coming, and you can do workshops, for example. It is not only music...painting, plays, cinema and all that stuff. But one day is not enough, even to get us together.⁸⁵

This statement reflects concerns that the festival had failed to successfully reach out to audiences, both Algerian and non-Algerian, and he goes on to suggest that the attendance from with the local diaspora was limited because,

It was a Saturday and many people were off (work), but maybe they had other things to do? But maybe if it was for one week, or at least two days, people who cannot come on Saturday could come on Sunday...You know that our community is spread all over London and the UK. We are not connected, that is the problem. If there is any event, a few people know, and many others cannot make it because they have something else to do. And there is a lack of connection, many people cannot make it.⁸⁶

This clearly conflicts and contrasts with Houria's statement, and provides evidence of the lack of consensus amongst Algerians about the festival.

This was not the first festival of its kind to be held in London, and some of those who have resided in the city for some time could remember similar previous event. Karim, a musician who was involved in its organisation, recalls previous efforts to programme such events:

The first festival we did was in west London, it was called *Festival d'Algérie*. It was a two-day event. We had a film, we brought a band from France, I believe Djamel Allam. It was quite a big thing. It was at the Watermans Arts Centre.⁸⁷

Whilst Karim draws parallels between this previous event and the 2012 Algerian Cultural Festival, he also notes the changing circumstances and status of Algerians in the city during the intervening years. He records that the previous event was in the early '90s,

⁸⁵ Interview, March 2014.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Interview, 11th March 2014. Djamel Allam is a renowned Algerian Berber musician, who moved to France in the 1970s. The Watermans Arts Centre is a multipurpose arts venue in Brentford, west London.

But then it wasn't very Algerian, it was very English. Very few Algerians, and other non-British. Because the community was very small, and Algeria was going through a difficult time. So you found all the people were interested in the cause who came. That was the first one. Then we did three after that. And then there was a gap after 9/11, I think things really changed a lot. There was a change of perception, propaganda going on, all of that. So ethnic music from the Arab world, it wasn't the fashionable thing somehow.⁸⁸

It is notable that Karim speaks of the negative portrayal of Algerian (and wider 'Arab') culture in Britain, and the problems that musicians have faced in attracting listeners from outside of the local diaspora. Given this recent history of cultural marginalisation in London, it is clear just how important the Algerian Cultural Festival was considered to be by many of the city's Algerian population, not only in bringing together members of the diaspora, but in providing a public stage upon which to present Algerian culture to the wider public.

The promotional campaign for the festival served to highlight its difference from many other Algerian cultural events in the city, both in terms of resources and in the desires of its organisers to attract a non-Algerian public. A significant number of printed materials were produced, including posters and flyers, and these were distributed in venues across London. Adverts and listings appeared in the local media, both in print and online. There was also a pronounced social media presence, which featured not only the sharing of information through the normal platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), but also the hosting of interviews with participants (musicians, artists, film directors, etc.) on the festival's SoundCloud page. However, despite all of these efforts, on the day of the festival, the vast majority of the audience was still drawn from the city's Algerian diaspora. Despite the best intentions of the organisers, without the financial support or marketing resources of major institutions (such as large concert venues, the Algerian embassy or the Mayor of London's office), it remains difficult to attract audiences to events, and this is particularly the case for Algerian culture given its relative public anonymity within Britain.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Nevertheless, the festival did succeed in attracting many Algerians, not only from London, but from across Britain, including people who had travelled from Oxford, Bristol, Manchester and Glasgow. Many had heard of the event through social media or friends and family in London, and with few other opportunities to engage with Algerian culture in their respective cities, made lengthy journeys to attend the festival. After the event, Karim recalled that,

I was talking to this guy and he said, "I need a ticket". I asked "why do you need a ticket?" He said, "I came from Manchester, there are four of us!" So I said "why the fuck come from Manchester for a gig?" But then you understand that it's the starvation (of Algerian culture).⁸⁹

Karim recalls asking this individual about what motivated him to attend, and recalls that,

He said "the festival is for Algeria, and independence", and they wanted to be part of it...People were there for the fiftieth anniversary of independence. I don't think they came only for the music. They came for music, and a night out, and to be Algerian, and to be proud for one evening.⁹⁰

Karim therefore intimates that the festival was not only an opportunity to engage with Algerian music and culture, but also to collectively express a sense of Algerianness. This underscores the performative character of the event: attendance at, and involvement with, the festival was an important part of 'being' Algerian and of exhibiting pride in one's culture. Music, in this context, acted as a symbol of Algerian culture, and produced a process through which individuals could experience and publicly perform their Algerian identity. Importantly, however, this music was being performed by London-based artists and groups, rather than by more renowned Algerian musicians from France or the *bled*. This ensured that the festival was unmistakably beneficial for the local diaspora, and produced a sense of Algerianness that was very much located in contemporary London. Karim believes that this was important to the essence of the event, and argues that,

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

You're going to find that they (Algerians) want to be part of it. It's not that we brought a major name to attract all of these people from Manchester or Scotland. It was the local community. And that is exactly what I wanted. I said "look, if you want to celebrate something, let's give an opportunity to local bands". Because every time there is a gig, we have flown in someone to be the star for the community. Let us say "within the community we can have fun with what we have!"⁹¹

Whilst the most notable name on the festival's programme was that of Mireille Fanon-Mendes France, who resides and works in France, the majority of those involved with the event were based in Britain, and predominantly in London.⁹² Much of the festival consisted of performances by British-based Algerian musicians, and the diversity of styles performed evidenced the heterogeneity of the musical culture of the city's Algerian diaspora.

The musical focus of the festival gradually shifted throughout the day, beginning with more traditional musical styles, which included performances of *maalouf* (a style originating in Constantine, in the east of the country) by the group Diwan El Malouf, *chaabi* by an ensemble led by Sid Ahmed El Bahi, and *andalusi* repertoire from the Al Andalus Caravan. These musics were heard outside of their normal performance contexts (such as cafes or concert halls) and were presented to a much wider cross-section of the local diaspora. The focus then switched to more contemporary musical styles. Rapper Raouf Adear performed a set of politicised hip-hop, whilst singer Cheb Nacim combined a number of original pieces with covers of well-known *raï* songs. After this, singer Yadi, and groups Maghreb Soul Spirit and The Papers, played sets that incorporated a range of musical idioms and combined Algerian and non-Algerian influences. As such, the musical performances at the festival not only served to highlight the diversity of Algerian music-making in London, but also presented these musics to a wide cross-section of the local diaspora, challenging many of the conventional performance contexts within which such musics are typically heard. Whereas musical performances in Algeria or France

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mireille Fanon-Mendes France is the daughter of renowned writer and theorist Frantz Fanon, who worked in, and wrote extensively about, Algeria.

might be restrained by interest in a particular musical traditional, or by certain social factors (such as gender, class etc.), the festival incorporated many different forms of Algerian music, and attracted an appropriately diverse audience. This was a result of a yearning for Algerian cultural events in Britain amongst the local diaspora, and the festival heightened interest amongst British-based Algerians in the music that was performed. Whilst the local diaspora often faces challenges in programming cultural events, it also forces such festivals to embody a wide range of musical traditions, and ensures that listeners are exposed to the diversity of Algerian cultural practices. And despite the relatively small size of London's Algerian population, the music and other elements within the festival reflected both the diversity and vibrancy of the city's Algerian diaspora.

The Algerian Cultural Festival, along with the other public-facing events discussed here, stress the important roles played by music in collective performances of Algerianness in London. Musical performances are not only a point of focus for the local diaspora, providing performance opportunities for musicians and bringing individuals together, but also serve to allow individuals to reconnect with their Algerian culture, and to question the very meanings of contemporary Algerianness within the city. This London Algerianness is constructed through shared understandings of cultural and national identities, but also provides evidence of the unique situation of Algerians within the city. As such, musical and cultural events are able to reshape conventions, combining Algerian musics and musicians in ways that may not be possible in the *bled*, or amongst the French diaspora. The relative freedom of Algerians in London from conservative cultural practices goes some way to emancipating female musicians, and allows festivals and other events to programme musical performances that challenge and cross-cut conventions and particular historical narratives. These events therefore highlight the diverse contexts and functions of such performances, both reinscribing cultural conventions and understandings of music, whilst also challenging the convictions of musicians and audiences. As such, it is clear that neither Algerian musics, nor identities, are fixed entities, but rather are formed by an on-going process of diasporic

cultural negotiation, which, in turn, mediates understandings of contemporary London Algerianness.

2.4 Communicating Algerian Identities through Musical Performance

Alongside performances for Algerian listeners (whether in cafes, or at public events and festivals), Algerian musicians also play within contexts that attract predominantly non-Algerian audiences. These performances provide such musicians with additional performance opportunities, outside of local diasporic networks, and this is considered particularly important because of the perceived lack of support for Algerian music in the city, and the dearth of Algerian venues. Samir, a percussionist who is particularly engaged with the local music scene, speaks of the Algerian Cultural Festival and complains that Algerians in London,

Don't realise that there is nothing, that is what I am saying. There is nothing actually coming out. One (event) in two years, that is nothing. We have done the event in October 2012, and we are in 2014 now. There has not been a big event like that one in two years.⁹³

These frustrations are shared by many of the city's Algerian musicians. A number of younger artists have elected to move away from the more traditional Algerian styles, both as a result of their own musical tastes, and in the belief that this will increase their opportunities to perform publicly. Whilst many musicians remain content to perform to Algerian audiences, others believe that certain styles, such as *rai*, can be used to attract non-Algerian listeners. There seem few limitations to the contexts within which such Algerian musicians can gain employment, from restaurants requiring musical entertainment for their patrons, and private events for wealthy individuals and organisations, to large-scale public festivals celebrating 'Multicultural London'.

In addition, some musicians suggest that such performances increase the visibility of Algerian culture within London. Given the apparent lack of

⁹³ Interview, 18th March 2014

knowledge or interest in Algeria amongst the city's general public, music is considered a striking and immediate way of increasing awareness of Algeria and Algerians. However, even *rai* music, which during the 1990s gained considerable public exposure, is now unfamiliar to many non-Algerians, and there is therefore an apparent lack of cultural currency in expressing one's Algerianness within such contexts.

Many musicians are able to perform in a multitude of different contexts, engaging with events that are intended to either attract Algerian or non-Algerian listeners. For example, the Al Andalus Caravan was able to perform at both the Algerian Cultural Festival and A Musical Journey event (see chapter 5 for further discussion), with markedly different audiences for each. Similarly, *rai* singer Cheb Nacim performs both in cafes (such as Rostomia) and at festival's celebrating the supposedly multicultural character of contemporary London.

The musician Abdelkader Saadoun is an example of an artist who performs predominantly for non-Algerian audiences. 'Kader' was born in Khemis-Miliana (the same town as Houria Niati), and his father, who worked in a local arts centre, encouraged his artistic and creative endeavours. Since moving to London, he has established himself as one of the most high profile Algerian performers in Britain, and is amongst a small group of musicians able to support themselves financially solely through playing and teaching. Part of his success comes from his tireless self-promotion, and he has established a significant Internet presence, which includes interviews, events listings, and videos of performances, as well as his own website.

Kader has performed at a number of high profile events, such as the annual WOMAD festival (World of Music, Arts and Dance), one of the largest 'world music' festivals in Britain. Whilst he regularly plays in London, he also performs abroad, in France and Spain, and speaks of the differences he perceives between British and French audiences, remarking that,

It is easy in France. If I go to France I just hire the venue and put up one advert and the place is packed. Because when you say *rai*, you don't have to explain what it is. I just say "Abdelkader Saadoun playing Algerian music, *rai* music", and you go there and the place is packed. But here (in London) people are not sure. It is up to the media here. You

can still pack the stage but you need to do a lot of work and a lot of advertising.⁹⁴

He continues by discussing, in detail, the difficulties that he has faced in attempting to find performance opportunities in Britain, stating that,

Well England is a very big country as well, (but) in France there are more Algerians and other North Africans based there, because of the history. And there is more of a community there. *Rai* music, and other Algerian music is very popular there. And there is more work for North African artists and Algerian artists like myself to go and work in France. But I guess in England, for me and maybe other artists, it is a challenge. A lot of artists came to England and they gave up, or ended up going back to France or Algeria, because it is not that easy, even to perform in England. You have to organise your own gigs, you have to promote everything, and there is not much support, like you would get in North Africa, or France, or Morocco. So it is still a bit difficult. The only way you can perform is being booked through agents or *Real World*, which is a big part of promoting Algerian and North African music. And some other organisations, like Rich Mix, and the one I'm performing for, Dash Arts. I think they played a very good role in supporting North African music, and other world music.⁹⁵

Kader is unafraid to label himself as world music artist, and this suggests a desire for a degree of public exposure and commercial success. He claims that it is the 'otherness' of the musics that he performs, and of world music in general, that makes it appeal to 'British' audiences, and is unafraid to employ this to attract new listeners to his performances. Kader states that 'people love music. In general, I have found British or English people are very open to other cultures. Even my last gig, a lot of people loved my music. They said, "wow, it's new, it's different". They are still experimenting with world music'.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Interview, 7th May 2013.

⁹⁵ Ibid. Real World is a British record label, established by Peter Gabriel in 1989, which produces recordings by 'world music' artists. Gabriel also founded the WOMAD festival, and Real World has thus been responsible for programming a number of 'world music' performances. Dash Arts is a London-based arts organisation, which supports and promotes arts and culture from around the world. They have programmed numerous events in London featuring members of local diasporas, and between 2010 and 2012 ran an 'Arabic Series', during which Kader and other members of the Algerian diaspora in London performed.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

What is particularly remarkable about Kader is the variety of contexts within which he has performed, and this has included restaurants, local pubs, nightclubs, a large casino in central London, and the headquarters of an international bank. There were inevitable differences between the audiences in each of these venues, from bank workers to the patrons of a south London pub, and Kader's music therefore reaches a broad cross-section of the city's general public. Similarly, his choice of musical repertoire is also diverse, and includes both original compositions and performances of *rai*, *andalus*, *chaabi* and Berber musics. He displays a form of bimusicality in his ability to perform more than one style, and this is apparent not only in his expertise in both Algerian and non-Algerian musics, but also his aptitude in a variety of Algerian musical traditions. This is not something unique to Kader, but rather characteristic of Algerian musicians in the city, who are required to exhibit flexibility in their music-making due to the lack of performance opportunities available to them. Stephen Cottrell (2007), writing about bimusicality in London, suggests that 'these kind of adaptive strategies, where musicians expand their range of performance skills to cater for a fragmented landscape of different performance opportunities, are particularly noticeable in our own Western urban centres' (2007: 91). The one unifying factor in each of the contexts within which Kader performs is his status as an Algerian musician, playing predominantly Algerian musics, mainly for non-Algerian listeners. However, the ways in which Kader communicates his Algerianness to audiences, and uses it to mediate their understandings of Algerian culture and himself as a musician, vary significantly.

In certain contexts, Kader intentionally conceals his Algerian identity. This was the case during a residency as a musician at the Del'Aziz restaurant on Bankside.⁹⁷ The company which owns the restaurant describes their small chain of establishments as 'restaurants, bars and boutique bakeries, capturing the flavours and scents of the Mediterranean', stating that 'we offer a wide range of contemporary and traditional dishes reflecting the flavours of the

⁹⁷ Bankside is an area of central London, running along the southern bank of the river Thames. Historically it was a relatively poor area of the city, but in recent years has become increasingly gentrified and popular, and is now home to numerous bars, restaurants and art galleries.

French provinces to the Lebanese mountains via the souks of north Africa' (Del'Aziz website).⁹⁸ The restaurant embodies a pan-Mediterranean ambience, and their focus upon the region's cuisine includes offering its patrons the opportunity to purchase everything from tagines to Lebanese cookbooks. Their menu suggests that their 'dishes reflect the tantalising flavours of the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, the subtly scented and spicy dishes from Maghreb (sic) and Egypt as well as the simplicity, freshness and healthiness of the Mediterranean diet' (Del'Aziz website). Within this context, Kader's performances were intended to provide a suitable sonic background for the experiences of the restaurant's diners. His performance included the usual selection of Algerian musics (*chaabi, raï*, etc.), and he proved extremely popular with the audience, and yet Kader made no reference to his national identity throughout the evening. Whereas the repertoire that was performed in the restaurant was identical to that which Kader plays in other contexts, this particular setting required him to take on the role of 'North African/Middle Eastern' musician, and as such, his Algerianness remained concealed from the audience.

A further example of this was apparent at an event in a south London pub, in Blackheath, where Kader played percussion with Argentinian singer-guitarist Alejandra Burgos and her band. The evening consisted of the musicians performing a range of cover songs by groups such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. At one point in the evening, Burgos introduced herself to the audience as Argentinian, and her guitarist as Spanish, before turning to Kader and asking where he was from. Kader replied, 'here! I am from here, from London'. It is striking that a musician who, in certain contexts, is keen to make known his Algerian identity, would publicly self-identify as a Londoner at this particular event. This can be partly explained by the fact that Kader was the only London-based musician onstage. By connecting himself to the city, he was both playing the role of host (his group would play another concert with Burgos and her band the following night), and reinforcing and reifying his own personal

⁹⁸ The Bankside restaurant is one of five Del'Aziz branches, which are spread across London.

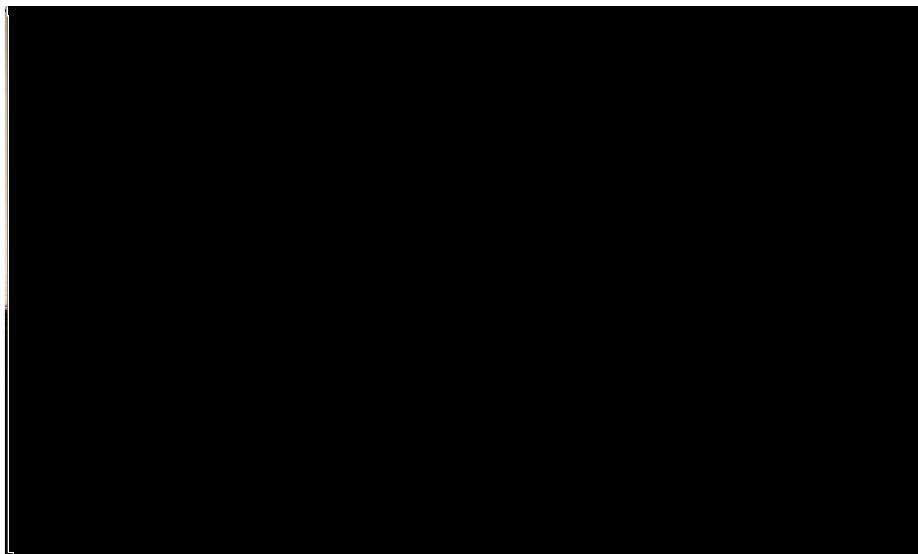
relationship with London. However, I suggest that this was also a professional decision, taken because of the context within which he was performing. Whereas at other events, Kader's sense of alterity, as either an Algerian or 'world music' performer, might be considered a commercial decision based upon the desires of non-Algerian listeners, in this particular context there was apparently little to be gained. This highlights an important aspect of these outward-facing public performances of Algerianness: the ways in which Algerian musicians choose to either underscore or obscure their Algerian identity depending upon context and the expectations of their audience.

Whilst his Algerian identity is obscured in certain contexts, at other times Kader elects to highlight it, and this has formed an integral part of his self-promotion as a professional musician in London. His website has long designated him as the 'Algerian King of Rock'n'Rai in the UK', whilst his biography notes his place of birth, adding that '*rai* originates from traditional Algerian music (*chaabi*, Kabyle, *chaawi*)' (Abdelkader Saadoun website).⁹⁹ Kader's business cards, which he hands out to audience members and promoters, feature his photograph and contact details on one side, and a large image of the Algerian flag on the other. This type of explicit statement of Algerian identity is also used during many of his performances. At the launch event of his album *Homage*, Kader took time to describe to the audience (who included both Algerian and non-Algerian members) the historical roots of the music he was playing, identifying the songs as Algerian and making statements such as 'this is how we play it in Algeria'. Similarly, some event promoters are keen to highlight Kader's nationality. In May 2013, he was booked by a local cultural organisation, Dash Arts, to perform at an event at the London headquarters of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).¹⁰⁰ The event was being provided for the bank's employees and their

⁹⁹ See: <http://www.saadoun.com> [Accessed: 9/2/2015]

¹⁰⁰ The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was created in 1991, and its first President was French economist and scholar Jacques Attali. The organisation's website states that 'Dash Arts has rapidly emerged as a unique international creative force, producing new theatre, dance, music and art events in collaboration with exceptional artists from abroad. Dash Arts travels across continents

families, and formed part of an initiative to widen cultural understanding within their organisation. Although Kader was able to invite a small number of friends, the majority of those in attendance were therefore not Algerian.¹⁰¹ The bank's website described Kader as 'one of the most celebrated names in modern North African roots music', and promised that he and his band would provide 'a dynamic musical journey through the traditional and modern sounds of their homelands. This show will present a narrative of the origins of the diverse musical traditions of the region, and their evolution and resonances in the modern day'. The website also described him as an 'Algerian-born musician' and offered a brief description of *raï* music for the uninitiated.¹⁰² As with his album launch, Kader made specific reference to his Algerian heritage throughout the performance. In this context, publicly displaying and stating his own sense Algerianness was clearly important to Kader, and those in attendance were left in no doubt about the Algerian identity of both music and musicians.



2.3: Abdelkader Saadoun (seated, third from left) and band performing at the EBRD.

to shed new light on great cultures and creates work through intensive periods of Research and Development. See: www.dasharts.org.uk [Accessed: 9/6/2015]

¹⁰¹ Security was noticeably tight at the bank, and any non-employees were required to register in advance of the event and to provide formal identification upon arrival. This precluded the public (whether Algerian or not) from deciding to attend on the night of the concert.

¹⁰² See: <http://www.ebrd.com/news.html> [Accessed: 9/6/2015]

It is apparent that the way in which Kader employs his Algerian identity is dependent upon context and audience. In reality, there is little notable difference in the music that he performs in each of these contexts, yet the degree to which he foregrounds his Algerianness varies considerably. Or, to adopt Judith Butler's terminology, the performative nature of this identity remains in a state of flux, with the 'acts, gestures, (and) enactments' of Algerianness either evident or absent 'on the *surface* of the body', dependant upon context, whilst the Algerian character of the music being played remains intact (1990: 136).

Along with these specific performance contexts, in which audiences' understandings of Algerian culture is shaped by performers such as Kader, there are also larger events at which Algerian musicians appear alongside non-Algerian artists. These include festivals, such as the London Mela, held annually in Gunnersbury Park in west London, and described by the Mayor of London's office as a 'celebration inspired by South Asian culture' (London Mela website). The festival is broadcast by the BBC Asian Network, and aims to attract both members of local south Asian diasporic populations, as well as a wider general public from across the city. The event's main stage has a strong emphasis upon South Asian music and dance, and in 2012 featured acts such as *Bhangra* star Jaz Dhami and Pakistani *Qawwali* musicians Faryad Ali and Imran Ali Qawwals. Having been established in 2003, the Mela has recently begun to integrate the city's annual celebrations for Eid ul-Fitr, recognising the Islamic religious holiday that marks the end of the month of fasting called Ramadan. The publicly stated rationale for incorporating Eid ul-Fitr into the Mela is a desire to promote an image of inter-cultural integration and understanding by improving relations between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs within London.¹⁰³ The development of the Eid section of the Mela, and the programming decisions for the Eid stage, have been overseen by Lynda Nebab, a French-Algerian woman who also heads up the London-based National Algerian Centre. Whilst the Eid celebrations purport to celebrate Islamic diversity, and represent the

¹⁰³ Prior to the 2012 Mela, the Eid event had been held as a separate event in Trafalgar Square, in central London, and one might also speculate that the financial savings made by the festival organisers and Mayor's office also prompted the amalgamation of these two celebrations.

entirety of the city's Muslim *Ummah*, in reality the event has a very strong Algerian flavour. Many of those who attend are members of the Algerian diaspora, and stalls offer pennants and key-rings bearing images of the Algerian flag.

Similarly, there is a strong Algerian musical presence on the Eid stage. The 2012 edition of the festival featured west London-based *rai* singer Cheb Nacim and the group Seeds of Creation, who are led by Algerian singer Seddick Zebiri, a long-term resident of the city who combines Berber musics with non-Algerian styles. Other Islamic cultures were represented by performances of music and dance, including *Qawwali* music from Ustad Ali Hafeez Khan, Egyptian Sufi *Tanoura* dancing, and a set from London-based Moroccan DJ U-Cef.

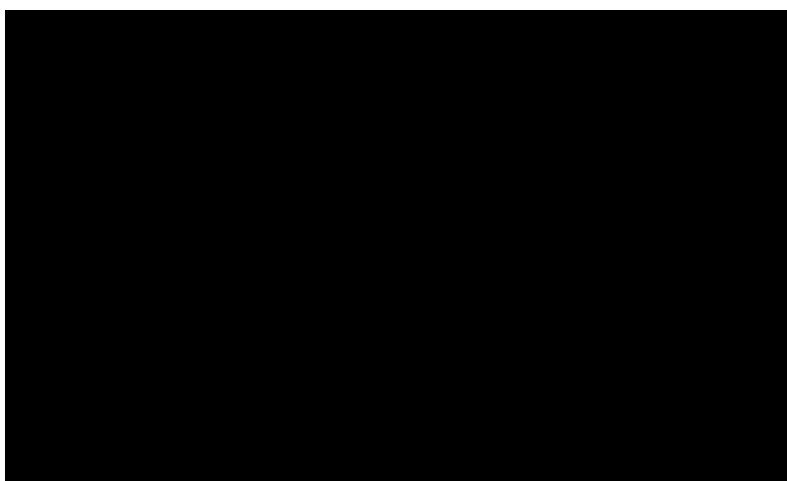
Many of those in the crowd that gathered in front of the stage were members of the local Algerian diaspora, with a significant number of younger listeners. In this context, where the musicians were performing for a predominantly Algerian audience, the ways in which they made explicit their Algerian identity varied notably. Seddick has spoken of his own pride in his Berber heritage, but also of a desire for his music to be recognised more widely, and to engage with non-Algerian listeners. In a 2005 interview he stated that,

I'm proud of being Berber and Algerian. However I've also been accepted by other cultures because I've been honest about my Berberness through my music. I have no fear of racism because of music – that's why I'm interested in playing music – I'm also converted to English living but with Berberness. I'm an ambassador for my culture but I also give, in order to learn about this [British] culture. (Pugh, 2005: 33)

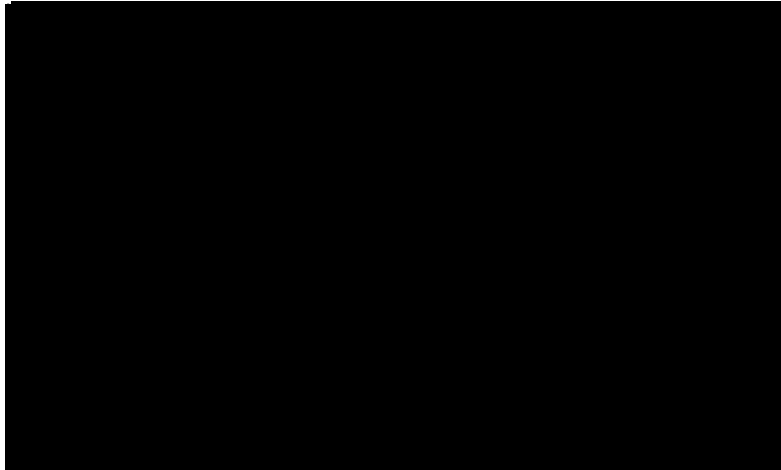
Whilst Seddick wore traditional Berber dress on stage there was little other explicit reference to either his Algerian or Berber identity. And although those familiar with Algerian Berber music might recognise certain rhythms and melodic patterns as having been drawn from Berber traditions, this was not obvious to many in the audience. It was also notable that far fewer Algerians were actively present in the audience than during Nacim's performance. Many of those sat in front of the stage listening were not members of the local

diaspora, and the Algerians at the Mela only fleetingly engaged with the performance.

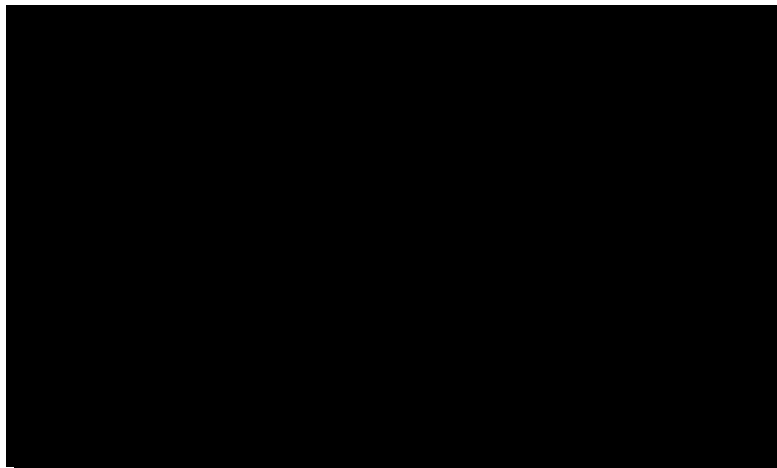
In contrast, Nacim unequivocally displayed his Algerianness, appearing on stage clutching a small Algerian flag, before draping a large flag around his shoulders during the performance. The vast majority of those in the audience were Algerian, and Nacim spoke directly to them between songs, in a mixture of French, English and *Darija*. He performed a selection of repertoire drawn from the canon of commercial *rai* hits that were popular during the 1980s and 1990s. These songs instantly acted as symbols of Algerianness, recognisable hits for those familiar with Algerian *rai*, and the diasporic audience responded accordingly, cheering, clapping, dancing, and ululating throughout. More Algerian flags appeared and members of the audience posed in front of the stage for photographs whilst Nacim performed behind them. There was an undoubted sense of celebration and pride in Algerian culture being performed, not only on stage but also in the interactions between musicians and audience members, and the responses of listeners to the music. As one young woman told me during the performance, 'it is amazing to hear Algerian music here at the Mela, to see our music on stage'.



2.4: Seddick Zebiri (seated, centre) and the Seeds of Creation performing at the London Mela 2012.



2.5: Cheb Nacim, holding Algerian flag, on stage at the London Mela 2012.



2.6: Algerians, proudly displaying an Algerian flag, in front of the Eid stage at the London Mela 2012, during Cheb Nacim's performance.

The Eid stage at the London Mela was therefore a site of both Algerian musicking and of the performance and public negotiation of Algerian identities. Algerianness was both explicitly stated and visibly displayed (by Nacim), and downplayed (by Zebiri and Seeds of Creation). Musicians like Abdelkader Saadoun alter their performances, and displays of their Algerian identity, depending upon context and audience. However, the Mela included different Algerian acts, which either accentuated or obscured their Algerianness from listeners. The reactions of the Algerian component of the audience were telling: the flag waving nationalism of Cheb Nacim was clearly more warmly received than the more restrained performance by Seeds of Creation. I argue that for Seddick Zebiri and Seeds of Creation, artistic intentions superseded the desire to publicly communicate Algerianness: in other words, it was deemed more

important to play music than to explicitly perform Algerianness. In contrast, for Cheb Nacim, these two aspects are inseparably intertwined: performing *rai* songs for an Algerian audience necessitates a direct and emphatic display of Algerianness. In his interactions with audience members, Nacim reifies understandings of what it means to be Algerian in contemporary London, through music, language and visual symbols, such as flags. Seeds of Creation, in contrast, present a much broader and open interpretation of Algerianness, one that embodies musical ideas and other Algerian cultural elements, but which is far less explicit. As such, these two performances, particularly within the context of a celebratory public festival like the London Mela, serve to evidence the ways in which musicking embodies and presents different forms of Algerianness within contemporary London.

2.5 Conclusions

The increasing recognition within scholarship that diasporas cannot accurately be conceived of as unified communities, constructed upon essential characteristics, has necessitated new ways of understanding contemporary diasporic identities. Performativity provides a way of comprehending and elucidating the fluidity of diasporic identities, and of understanding the ways in which such identities are continually mediated and shape both individual and collective perceptions of cultural belonging.

H. Adlai Murdoch's (2007) study of Caribbean diasporic identity builds upon the work of Stuart Hall, and describes the importance and applicability of theories of performativity. Diasporic Caribbeanness, as Murdoch describes, is a complex and heterogeneous category, enduringly unstable and open to negotiation, particularly within contemporary urban metropolitan contexts, and reliant upon processes of performance. Murdoch calls upon scholars to acknowledge the relationship between cultural heterogeneity and performativity, and writes that,

If we adopt the performative as the new enabling framework of migrant postcolonial metropolitan identitarianism...then the sort of discursive performance...may need to be read as embodying the primary paradox of identitarian representation. If, as several critics and theorists have shown, identity as a category is inherently unstable and unfixed, and if this instability is exacerbated and undermined even further by the asymmetric intersections arising from the migrant encounter with the metropole, then the ultimate paradox that sutures identity to performance here is that while a discourse of migrant subjectivity may indeed be performable, it will be inherently multiple and fragmented in nature, and indeed will be materially different in appearance and articulation upon each successive occasion. (Murdoch, 2007: 586)

Algerian culture in contemporary London might be understood within this paradigm, as something rooted in a shared sense of cultural identity, but reliant upon performative processes of negotiation. Music, and musicking, offer a way of comprehending this performativity, of understanding Algerianness as a shared cultural identity, but one that is fractured and fluid. Whilst nationalistic and cultural pride is sufficient to produce collective musicking, such practices are reliant upon context for their meanings. Music is a way of enacting and performing Algerian identities, and of communicating Algerianness to diasporic and non-diasporic audiences in the city. The varying ways in which Algerianness is performed through music in different contexts, whether in a café or at a festival, evidences the material differences in appearance and articulation of which Murdoch writes.

Performativity is therefore reliant upon both context and intent, in shaping the representation of Algerian culture and the relationship between musician and audience. In the case of the city's Algerian cafes, Algerianness is both produced by bringing members of the diaspora together for collective musicking practices and by evoking memories of the *bled*. Performances of *chaabi* are simultaneously a shared physical process of music-making involving interaction between London's Algerian musicians, and a recreation of cultural practices from the homeland. The café is itself the stage for such performances, providing a context within which a distinct form of Algerianness (masculine, metropolitan, working class) is produced and negotiated.

Larger public events expand understandings of Algerianness, providing a more inclusive context within which performance and negotiation can take

place. Such events draw a wider cross-section of the local diaspora, and those like the Algerian Cultural Festival bring together musicians and audiences from throughout the local diasporic population, evidencing Algerian cultural diversity through music. Music becomes a way of socially enacting a shared Algerian identity, of bringing individuals together and enabling a degree of cultural reconnection and pride that cuts across notions of tradition and modernity. Nevertheless, these public events can also serve to reify cultural conventions: *andalusi* music at an art exhibition reinforces a particular aesthetic and invokes certain associations for Algerian listeners. These events, whilst ostensibly public representations of Algerian culture, are in effect a stage for the collective performance of Algerianness by members of the local diaspora.

The intention of broader public performances of Algerian music, which engage far more widely with non-Algerian listeners, is markedly different. These musical performances are intended both to increase the exposure of individual musicians and to communicate Algerian culture outside the constraints of local diasporic networks. Within such contexts, performances of music are also visible performances of Algerianness, visual and sonic depictions for those unfamiliar with Algerian culture. In the face of relative cultural anonymity within London, such events are one of the few opportunities for Algerians to engage with a wider public, and to display a sense of collective cultural pride.

The ways in which Algerian musics in London are performed and mediated according to context highlights the importance of both their symbolic capital and function in shaping wider awareness of Algerian culture in the city. A sense of cultural legitimacy emerges from artists and audiences within the local Algerian music scene, and renders this music as what Pierre Bourdieu might term a 'symbolic good' (1985). This is not to deny the financial desires of local Algerian musicians, nor to disregard their involvement in professional and semi-professional musicking activities, but rather to note the symbolic value of their performances in shaping public appreciation of Algerian culture. Abdelkader Saadoun, a successful professional Algerian musician who lives in London, explains that,

We are bringing this music to other people, by talking about this art and culture. Rather than just leaving this music in Algeria, it is about sharing it with other people. And to bring this culture outside of Algeria and share it with other people, I think that is very, very important.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, large public events and festivals, designed to encourage cultural integration and public understanding, provide a further stage on which Algerian music embodies and reproduces symbolic values for non-Algerian audiences.

It is this symbolic value, I argue, that is shared across various contexts, and which provides a sense of unity to the musicking practices of the city's Algerian diaspora. In other words, music is symbolic of national and cultural pride, and through its performance, mediates Algerianness amongst musicians and audiences. Music is therefore both an outward-facing representation of Algerian culture, and a symbolic good that is meaningful in specific ways for London's Algerian population, enabling a shared sense of Algerian identity.

I suggest therefore that Algerian musicking in London is a performative process, whereby the mode of representation is formed of interactions between Algerian and non-Algerian musicians and audiences. The 'cultural legitimacy' of which Bourdieu writes comes from a sense of shared Algerian identity which, whilst enduringly fluid and open to contestation, provides the fundamental connections between the multiple contexts within which music-making takes place. Algerianness, however complex and heterogeneous, remains meaningful, and music provides a platform through which to communicate and mediate Algerian cultural identities to both diasporic and non-Algerian audiences. This Algerianness, to return to Butler, is produced '*on the surface of the body*', both as symbols of Algerian identity mediated through the musicking practices of individuals, and in, or on, the collective body of the local diaspora, in the shape of shared performance practices (1990: 136). Musicking as a process, as suggested by Christopher Small, is itself a form of performance, which generates not only sonic materials, but also symbolic goods, which are used by Algerians in London to produce, mediate and reify their own sense of

¹⁰⁴ Interview, 7th May 2013

Algerianness, and to transmit their culture to those outside of the city's Algerian diasporic networks.

Chapter 3: Three Public Performances of Algerian Musics

This chapter examines three public performances by celebrated Algerian musicians and ensembles in London during the summer of 2013. These include a concert by the popular singer Hamidou, a performance by celebrated *chaabi* orchestra the El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers, and an event featuring both singer-songwriter Souad Massi and the renowned, and often outspoken, performer Rachid Taha. Whilst none of these musicians are resident in London, they have gained varying degrees of fame and commercial success, and therefore attracted the attention of both Algerian and non-Algerian listeners.¹⁰⁵ However, whilst each event consisted of a performance of Algerian music, there were significant differences between them in terms of their organisation and venue, and the meanings that they produced for their respective audiences.

I focus specifically upon two areas. The first is concerned with the ways in which these performances were marketed and promoted, and considers what this elucidates about the circulation of Algerian music within London, and the meanings and values that are ascribed to it. The second concerns the musical performances themselves, and the experiences of Algerian and non-Algerian listeners within these events. The objective is to consider who each of these events was intended to benefit, and to investigate the ways in which they shaped not only wider public appreciation of Algerian culture, but also mediated how members of the local diaspora understand their own Algerianness and their place within the city.

These events all took place within a short period of time (six weeks), in the same city, and were thus accessible to the same audiences.¹⁰⁶ The promotional campaigns for the three concerts therefore overlapped, and

¹⁰⁵ Although none of the leading musicians were resident in London, some of those who performed in Hamidou's band were members of the local Algerian diaspora, and a London-based group (El Andaluz) performed on a separate stage as part of the El Gusto Orchestra event.

¹⁰⁶ The dates and locations of the three events were: Hamidou - Saturday 11th May 2013, Cargo; El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers – Monday 3rd June 2013, Barbican; Rachid Taha and Souad Massi - Saturday 22nd June 2013, Barbican.

discussions amongst my Algerian co-workers during the summer of 2013 often included comparison of these events. However, there were also marked distinctions between the performances. Whilst Hamidou and the El Gusto Orchestra reside in Algeria, Massi and Taha now live in France, and the perceived differences between music from the *bled* and that from the diaspora was evident in the reactions and opinions of Algerian listeners. The contrasting musical styles and repertoire of each performer was also notable, and particularly apparent to Algerian audiences at the three events.¹⁰⁷ These musicians have also experienced varying degrees of commercial success, and as a result have differing levels of familiarity for Algerian and non-Algerian listeners.¹⁰⁸ These differences illuminate the distinct contexts within which the events took place, and explain the varying expectations and experiences of Algerian and non-Algerian audiences.

3.1 Theories

As will become clearer, the musical performances discussed in this chapter provide the context for encounters between Algerian and non-Algerian musicians and audiences, and help to shape concepts of Algerianness within London, both amongst members of the local diaspora, and throughout city's wider general public. The events discussed here also highlight the complex relationship between the local and global, and the theories employed in the subsequent discussion therefore address this issue. In the ensuing section, I

¹⁰⁷ The El Gusto Orchestra primarily perform *chaabi malhun*, maintaining this musical tradition. Massi, who writes her own music, is considered a Berber musician, although she also embraces influences from outside Berber (Kabyle) culture. Hamidou is noted as a performer of *chaabi aasri* and *andalus* music, amongst others, but is not considered a traditional performer. Taha has often been associated with *raï*, perhaps due to his commercial successes in the 1990s, but he now performs various styles, many of which are not easily identifiable as 'Algerian'.

¹⁰⁸ Both Taha and Massi are well known amongst Euro-American world music audiences, having developed their careers over a number of years; the El Gusto Orchestra have gained the support of the music industries more recently, and this has generated a significant level of commercial success, particularly in Europe; Hamidou is renowned and successful within Algeria, performing on television and radio and developing a career as a famous and respected wedding singer, but has never gained acclaim from non-Algerian audiences.

discuss notions of glocalisation, before explicating my adoption of Mark Slobin's tripartite theoretical model, and highlight the how this relates to Arjun Appadurai's work, and concepts of a 'world stage'.

In the preceding chapter I employed the terms 'Algerian' and 'non-Algerian' to describe musics, musicians and audiences. Whilst such broad and fluid categorizations can be problematic, they provide a succinct way of describing the mediation of musics and meanings between the local diaspora and the city's wider public. Furthermore, the label 'Algerian' remains important as a marker of cultural identity, and is employed by members of the diaspora not only as a form of self-identification but also as a stimulus for the organisation of musical events. Therefore, in order to examine how music functions within local diasporic networks, and how musical performance shapes public understandings of Algerian culture, I once again adopt these broad labels throughout the following discussion.

The use of such terms to describe the expectations of audience members is not unique to Algerian music in London. John Baily (2010), for example, examines the differences between recordings made for Afghan and *Khareji* (non-Afghan) audiences, writing of 'the two largely separate worlds of audio-recordings of Afghan music made for the Afghan market and Afghan music recordings that find their way to the 'world music' market' (2010: 69). Baily suggests that this dichotomy results from discourses of authenticity, exoticism and modernity, concluding that,

The new Afghan popular music produced by Afghans in compact disc (CD) format, privileging the use of electronic keyboards with their programmable percussion libraries, is of little interest to the world music audience, which seeks the exotic timbres and 'authenticity' of non-Western instruments. Conversely, recordings of traditional music made by ethnomusicologists and others represent an Afghan culture that Afghans have moved away from in the quest for modernity.' (2010: 70)

Unlike Baily, however, I suggest that Algerian music in London is not always intended for discretely Algerian or non-Algerian audiences. Whilst certain events may be directed primarily towards the local diaspora, there are also performances of Algerian music that attract both Algerian and non-Algerian

listeners, but which produce very different understandings for these two audiences.

I also employ the terms 'local' and 'global' extensively, in order to consider the relationship between local London audiences (both Algerian and non-Algerian) and professional musicians visiting the city in order to perform. This does not ignore the concerns of Thomas Turino (2003), who argues that,

The word *global* is used widely in the mass media and is becoming common in cosmopolitan conversation...Processes once conceptualized as "international" relations, specific types of economic-power relations, and cultural interchanges between specific sites and groups of people, are now glossed as "global cultural flows", "local-global relations", the "global economy" and "global culture". (2003: 52)

He adds that,

The terms we use and the way we use them matter – both for the acuity of thought and politically. At the present time, the terms global and global culture seem so deeply entrenched in the discourse naturalizing capitalist expansion that their very use by academics may contribute to the process.' (2003: 57)

Whilst acknowledging these concerns, my work attempts to bridge the gap between locally sited forms of diasporic cultural production, and transnationally shared cultural practices. The term 'local' is used to refer to musical interactions between Algerians and non-Algerians in London, shaped by the specific conditions of the city. In contrast, much of the 'global' music-making described in this chapter is framed by the sense of transnationalism and capitalism underpinning the world music industries. In other words, the networks within which world music artists circulate simultaneously produce capital (for musicians, venues, promoters, record labels, etc.) and shape shared 'local' understandings of musical cultures, without necessarily engaging 'local' musicians. Therefore, the terms local and global provide a way of describing these encounters, and of examining the ways in which the local Algerian diaspora engage with public performances of their own culture.

3.2 Glocalisation

In expanding upon this local-global nexus, I also draw upon theories of glocalisation, a term that emerged from Japanese economics and was introduced into scholarship by Roland Robertson (1992). Robertson proposes glocalisation as an alternative to globalization, and suggests that ‘we must thus recognize directly “real world” attempts to bring the global, in the sense of the macroscopic aspect of contemporary life, into conjunction with the local, in the sense of the microscopic side of life in the late twentieth century’ (1992: 173). He contends that theories of glocalisation are necessary because of ‘an inability, or unwillingness, to transcend the discourse of “localism-globalism”’ (1992: 174).

Glocalisation theories therefore seek to examine the relationship between local cultures and global capitalism, attempting to move beyond binary notions of cultural detachment and transnational homogeneity. George Ritzer (2003) provides a lucid definition of the term, writing that,

Glocalization can be defined as the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas. This view emphasizes global heterogeneity and tends to reject the idea that forces emanating from the West in general and the United States in particular are leading to economic, political, institutional, and – more importantly – cultural homogeneity.’ (2003: 193-194)

He suggests that glocalisation offers an alternative to out-dated modernization theories, arguing that,

One of the reasons for the popularity of theories of glocalization is that they stand in stark contrast to the much hated and maligned modernization theory that had such a wide following in sociology and the social sciences for many years. Some of the defining characteristics of this theory were its orientation to issues of central concern in the West, the pre-eminence it accorded to developments there, and the idea that the rest of the world had little choice but to become increasingly like it (more democratic, more capitalistic, more consumption-oriented, and so on). (2003: 194)¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ See also Peter Beyer’s (2007) work, which reinforces the role of glocalisation theories in challenging modernization.

Glocalisation theories have become increasingly popular with scholars whose work focuses upon the changing conditions of music-making in the twenty-first century. Timothy D. Taylor (2003), for example, locates globalization within histories of human migration and cultural encounter, and the transnational economic exchanges that underpinned twentieth century imperialism. He suggests that, in contrast, theories of glocalisation offer something new, writing that,

Capitalism in this global/information economy is finding new ways of splitting sonic signifiers from their signifieds and from their makers in the process Steven Feld has called “schizophonia”. This new phenomenon of “glocalization” helps us understand the ways that there may be at the same time new forms of resistance to this process. (2003: 84)

Glocalisation is, for Taylor, a form of resistance, a way for local cultures to ensure that their musics (their ‘sonic signifiers’) remain intrinsically connected to culturally specific contexts and meanings. Other scholars have used the term to examine examples from both particular musical cultures, and within wider global contexts. Andy Bennett and Kevin Dawe (Bennett and Dawe, 2001; Dawe 2013) employ glocalisation to examine the transnational popularity of the guitar, and suggest that the instrument exists ‘as part of the dynamic interplay between global and local forces, which, it is claimed, keep notions of cultural identity and difference in a constant state of flux’ (Dawe, 2013: 8).¹¹⁰

Such works consider the introduction of external musical elements (instruments, repertoire, performance practices, etc.) into specific cultures, and in the process, often maintain the distinctions between local and global. Whilst there are moments and contexts in which this is applicable to Algerian musicking in London, in others the situation appears more complex. For

¹¹⁰ Other works that deal with the relationship between music and glocalisation include Yang Mu’s (2012) description of the introduction of Western instrumentation into funeral internment rituals in the Chinese region of Fuzhou; Nicholas Ssempijja’s (2012) discussion of Christian music festivals in Uganda; and Joseph Oduro-Frimpong’s (2009) study of Ghanaian *hiplife* (an amalgamation of hip hop and highlife). Oduro-Frimpong adds that ‘such processes are neatly summed up in the Akan proverb about creative adaptation that says, “*ɛmere dane a, na woadane wo ho bi,*” — When time changes, you change with it’. (2009: 1101)

example, performances by non-resident Algerian musicians in London are not only heard by non-Algerian listeners (where the local-global distinction is perhaps clear), but also by locally-based Algerian audiences, who are familiar with the repertoire and cultural traditions of these performers. The ways in which Algerian listeners understand the meanings embodied in such performances must surely be considered as significantly different from those outside of the local Algerian population. It is therefore imperative that a more nuanced interpretation of glocalisation is used to consider Algerian music in London, which attends to the layers of complexity contained within such musical performances and musicking practices.

Victor Roudometof (2005) attempts to move beyond a simplistic global-local binary, and instead presents a model of glocalisation based around the relationship between transnationalism and cosmopolitanism, on what he terms the 'cosmopolitan-local continuum' (2005: 128). Roudometof suggests that the term transnationalism has conventionally been used to describe processes of physical movement and travel (migration, diaspora, etc.), whilst cosmopolitanism has been suggestive of an attitude (often urban and middle-class) that has commonly displayed a welcoming attitude to non-local cultures.¹¹¹ In contrast, for Roudometof, the 'local' position is one often concerned with conservative traditionalism, and may be less welcoming to external cultural influence. The result of this relationship is, Roudometof argues, that,

Cosmopolitanization brings forth the pluralization of borders, whereby the simple fact that two individuals live in the same state does not necessarily mean the same social borders bind them, that they inhabit the same 'life-world'. On the contrary, people from within the same state can inhabit markedly different 'life-worlds' and be closer to or farther from people who live outside the borders of the state they live in.' (2005: 116)

This model of cosmopolitan glocalisation therefore attempts to move beyond the idea of an antagonistic relationship between the local and global. The idea that

¹¹¹ As Beck suggests, transnationalism is not restricted to immigrant groups.' (2005: 118-119)

two or more cultures can happily coexist within the same physical space, whilst retaining a sense of cultural distinction, is particularly appropriate to this investigation of Algerian musicking, whereby two audiences (Algerian and non-Algerian) share a location (London), but do not necessarily share the same 'life-worlds'.

3.3 Slobin's Tripartite Model

In order to investigate these processes I employ the tripartite model introduced by Mark Slobin in his book *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (1993a), which considers the power dynamics inherent in the relationships between the local and global within Euro-American musical cultures.¹¹² In highlighting the changing patterns of musical performance and interaction brought about by contemporary transnational factors, such as the world music industries, Slobin is concerned with finding an appropriate ethnomusicological methodology for locating the place of micromusics (such as diasporic 'non-Western' musics), and for explicating the relationship between local musicians and the international circulation of musics and musicians. He asks, 'in surveying a scene, what are the *units* of analysis and what are the *levels* on which one works?' (1993a: 9). He questions how an ethnography that is focussed upon the local scene or culture might deal with the relationship of this 'micromusic' to broader global musical flows, and argues that limiting the scope and understanding of ethnographic study to the purely local is methodologically inadequate.

Slobin's tripartite model is composed of the sub-, super-, and interculture: the subculture includes the local or micromusical; the superculture the state or dominant mainstream culture; and the interculture the transnational, 'the far-flung expansive reach of musical forces that cross frontiers' (1993a: 61). The

¹¹² Slobin initially published his thoughts in an article in the journal *Ethnomusicology*, entitled 'Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach' (1992), and this was later developed into his 1993 book. Whilst there is a great deal of similarity between the article and book, I predominantly reference the latter as this seems to have been refined by Slobin.

intercultural therefore incorporates the Euro-American commercial music industries (the 'industrial interculture'), including transnational networks of music and musicians, and whilst 'this may just be the old industrial octopus with a new suit on, the ramifications for world musical sensitivities and the role of local music-makers might be profoundly changed' (1993a: 63). The term is also employed to refer to the '*diasporic interculture*, which emerges from the linkages that subcultures set up across national boundaries' (1993a: 64). Whilst, as Slobin acknowledges, this terminology might appear somewhat nebulous, his model attends to the complex power relations between localised musicking practices and global capitalism.

This interculture therefore both mediates relationships between the sub- and superculture at the local level, and shapes transnational cultural flows, through what Arjun Appadurai terms the 'scapes' of the 'global cultural economy' (1990).¹¹³ Slobin is thus cognisant of the transnational nature of contemporary culture, and writes that,

Music is woven into the cultural fabric Appadurai presents as one of the most scarlet of threads, created by ever-evolving technologies, transmitted by media, marketed through high and low finance, and expressive of private and public ideoscapes of autonomy and control for shifting populations. (1993a :16)

However Slobin's approach also attends to localised relationships, and seeks to understand how diasporas understand the reception of their culture outside transnational diasporic networks, and how, in turn, this shapes their own place within the societies in which they reside. As such, his model seeks to neither remove the agency of local musicians and diasporic cultures, nor to dismiss the influence of transnational capitalism upon diasporic musicking practices.

Slobin is certainly not without his critics: Veit Erlmann (1993), in particular, suggests that Slobin's categories are too indeterminate, and argues for a more systematic model for understanding the relationship between local and global. He implies that Slobin is constructing a binary relationship between

¹¹³ Appadurai's own theoretical model is formed of ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, and ideoscaples (1990).

local and global musics, and writes that ‘I see homogenization and differentiation not as mutually exclusive, antonymous features of musical globalization that can be lamented, reprehended, or demanded as needed, but as integral constituents of culture in the advanced countries of the West’ (1993: 265). My own reading of Slobin is not one of disjunction between the super-, inter-, and subculture, but rather of a model that acknowledges interaction without assuming that global capitalism has the pervasive power to dictate music-making at the local level. I find more problems with Erlmann’s denial of difference and agency (individual or collective), and his argument that ‘a complex system such as the global economy (or world music) thus gains integration not only on the basis of common values, norms and power relations, but simply by providing an ordered environment to its subsystems’ (1993: 266).

Ingrid Monson (1999) dissects the positions of both Slobin and Erlmann, and suggests that scholars require a framework that acknowledges the influence of capitalist globalisation, but does not rely entirely upon systematic determinism. She suggests that Erlmann’s work, influenced by the postmodern Marxist writings of Frederic Jameson, has ‘productively used some of Jameson’s ideas to raise several key issues relevant to the problem of globalization, systemacity, and music.’ (1999: 47). In addition, she writes that ‘Mark Slobin’s vision of global musical circulation, in contrast, tends to emphasize the indeterminate way in which the multiple levels of global musical culture interact’ (1999: 47). She concludes that ‘if there is utility in thinking about repetitions and their combination as metaphors of relationality I believe it lies in articulating an intercultural level of analysis that takes hybridity as a given but does not take its combination of elements as unsystematic’ (1999: 47).

Whilst recognising Monson’s call to attend to the influence of global capitalism, I concur broadly with Slobin’s fluid model, and suggest that the relationship between the super-, inter- and subculture are enduringly unsettled and subject to reconfiguration. I agree with Slobin’s statement, in response to Erlmann’s criticisms, that,

I do not see an avoidance of single-answer systematic responses to complexity as being merely “postmodern”, a word I hope will soon

vanish to the museum of terminological curios. I think it is the responsibility of ethnomusicology to imagine that answers to what makes societies and subcultures tick are not only not easy, but are *musical*, that is, multivoiced, contingent, improvisatory, and contextual. I am not afraid of the possible analytical dissonance that might result. (1993b: 268)

3.4 The World Stage

Jonathan Shannon (2003) examines representations of 'non-Western' musics within Europe and North America, and his study of performances of Syrian Sufi music produces the concept of the 'world stage'. This stage is formed of a transnational network within which, we might conceive, Slobin's micromusics circulate, with musical meaning and representation intrinsically connected to both Euro-American ideas of 'non-Western' musical style and aesthetic, and capitalist concerns with profit. As Shannon explains,

The concept of the world stage as a representational practice and staging principle for the production of authentic local musical cultures helps us to understand the interface between small agents and culture brokers such as world music journalists, concert promoters, and artists, and the transnational circuits in which their diverse musical repertoires and performance practices are stylized and categorized. (2003: 275)

Drawing upon the theories of Michel Foucault, Shannon argues that the world music industries, and the musical performances that they facilitate, create multiple layers of meaning and complex power relationships, and he writes that,

Rather than promoting certainty about the world, this example reveals the sites of performance and consumption of world music to be "heterotopic", that is, fraught with disjunctures between the competing authenticities and realities promoted and consumed by artists, audiences, and culture brokers operating within the shadows of the transnational music industries. (2003: 266)¹¹⁴

Whilst Shannon's work initially appears to offer a systematic interpretation of global capitalist frameworks, his interest in 'disjuncture' and 'competing

¹¹⁴ The term "heterotopic" is taken from Foucault's 1986 work 'Of Other Spaces: Diacritics'.

authenticities and realities' highlights the type of complexity of meaning that world music concerts create for their audiences. Similarly, Susan Rasmussen, in her study of touring Malian Tuareg musicians, employs the notion of a 'world stage', and her work aims to assess,

The extent to which, and in what manner meaning, cultural identity, and memory are constructed in performance dialogically – though not always in equal or dyadic terms – and how these processes of intentional meaning-construction and negotiation impact the performers' self-presentation and cultural representation to the outside world. (2005: 794-795)

Touching upon issues of globalization, performance context and artistic agency, she suggests that,

While these international performers' verbal art and musical performance are undoubtedly affected by globalization, nonetheless, performers are not passive "sponges" in that process. They shape and re-shape their performances selectively from constantly emerging cultural memories and challenges to them. (2005: 797)

She also attempts to move beyond reductive notions of hybridity, and summarises her objective as,

A more nuanced understanding of representations of culture and memory that move beyond mere "hybrids" in transcultural flows. These representations, I argue, reflect meta-messages in which there is a shock of not only "the Other," but also shock of "the Self," in new worlds at home as well as in the borderlands. (2005: 794)

The 'world stage' that Shannon and Rasmussen identify is a fluid space that serves the intercultural, forming connections and mediating musical flows between the subculture (Algerian musicians and audiences in London) and the superculture (the dominant British mainstream audience). This facilitates the transnational circulation of musics and musicians, connecting venues around the globe and crossing national borders, but is also an interstitial space in which Algerian culture is disseminated to a local non-Algerian public, and in which the

city's Algerian population shape their sense of identity within contemporary London.

3.5 Hamidou

In May 2013, the popular Algerian singer Hamidou performed at Cargo, a music venue and nightclub in the Shoreditch area of east London. Unlike the concerts discussed later in this chapter, the event was coordinated by members of the local diaspora, and was intended primarily for the benefit of their fellow Algerians. The event's main organiser was Rachida Lamri, who is well-known locally as a musician, concert promoter, and political activist. Despite her reputation within local Algerian circles, she elected not to include her name on publicity materials, and I only discovered her involvement in the event shortly before it took place. Rachida explains that this decision resulted from the responses she expected from Algerians, and recalls that,

It was very funny to see the reactions, how people react. I kept getting calls, people thinking I was certainly not Algerian. It is nothing to do with my English, it was definitely to do with the fact that the flyer was so well done and that tickets were sold online, that "it can't have been organised by Algerians, because Algerians are not that well organised!" The reactions were just shocking. "Oh my god, are you Algerian? So who is organising this?" And then as soon as you say "it's me", or "I'm an Algerian organising it", immediately they mistrust, they almost don't want to buy the tickets online anymore. Or they don't come on time because it is Algerian. A lot of people came at nine o'clock. I was like "we said start at eight". And they were like "but it is Algerian!"¹¹⁵

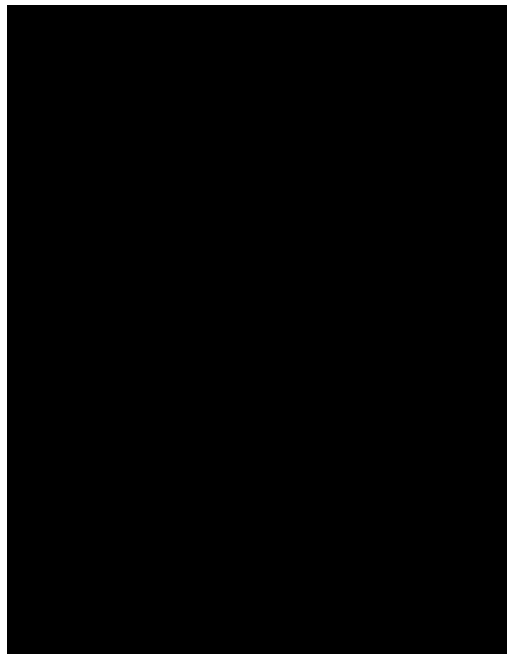
Whilst complaints about the lack of direct action by their fellow Algerians are common, it is equally customary for members of the local diaspora to exhibit a sense of negativity towards those events organised by Algerians. The clear misgivings about Rachida's involvement might also be explained by the enduring suspicions and conspiracy theories prevalent within Algerian societies, which is something that often re-emerges in contemporary London (see Silverstein, 2002). This, in turn, alters audience reaction and behaviour, due to

¹¹⁵ Interview, 26th July 2013.

the event being conceived of as identifiably ‘Algerian’ (rather than Algerian music promoted by non-Algerians). Rachida uses the subsequent concerts at the Barbican (discussed later in this chapter) as a point of comparison in this regard, and suggests that,

There were a lot of liberties taken. If this was organised by the Barbican, nobody would even ask. I got emails telling me off about the venue, before the thing happened. “It is not a venue for families, can you change it please!” If it was the Barbican, would you even dare to dispute the location?¹¹⁶

Rachida promoted the event primarily online, employing social media and making use of her network of contacts within the local Algerian diaspora. She produced a poster (see figure 3.1), but no physical copies were printed and this was circulated instead through Twitter and Facebook. Details of the event also appeared in the online listings of major London-based media outlets, such as NME and Time Out London.



3.1: The flyer and poster for the Hamidou event, produced by concert organiser Rachida Lamri, and distributed exclusively online.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Although the performance was therefore openly publicised, Hamidou's lack of prestige outside of Algeria meant that few non-Algerians would attend, and Cargo, which is not a venue typically associated with world music, was unlikely to attract the type of audience that would patronise the later events at the Barbican. In contrast, it proved extremely popular amongst the local Algerian diaspora, and online discussions made more frequent reference to this event than to either of the concerts scheduled to take place at the Barbican. The palpable excitement amongst the city's Algerian population resulted in an almost exclusively Algerian audience and the clear sense that this was an event produced by, and for the benefit of, Algerians in London.

Cargo is located in Shoreditch, an area of east London that was traditionally one of the most impoverished areas of the city, but had experienced significant financial investment and urban regeneration in recent years. It is one of a large number of bars, nightclubs and music venues that attract a predominantly young, fashionable clientele to the area from across the city. The venue functions as a multi-purpose space, and includes a restaurant, bar and music venue, hosting both club nights and live musical performances. On this particular Saturday night the majority of Cargo's patrons were there for a club night, and the main room, with DJ booth, dance floor and raised seating area, was busy and noisy throughout the evening. An adjoining room, with a stage at one end and bar at the other, would host Hamidou's performance, whilst an outside bar area was used for socialising before and after the event.

The venue, it transpired, was far from ideal for a performance such as this. Rachida asked myself and two colleagues to film the event, and to conduct an interview with Hamidou beforehand. However, it proved impossible to find a suitably quiet space within the venue to conduct this interview. Even the space in which Hamidou was due to perform was filled by sound spilling from the adjoining room, and the clearly dismayed sound engineer informed us that 'this will go on all night. This is not a place for live music on a Saturday night'. There was a discernable sense that Hamidou's performance was considered less important than the club night taking place in the venue's main room. The curtain that acted as a barrier between these two rooms demarcated separate physical

spaces, but sonically the club night overpowered the performance of live music. Unlike the later concerts at the Barbican, it was clear that Algerian music was not the main priority of the venue on this particular evening.

In selecting the venue, Rachida was clear that she did not 'want to mirror what someone else does...because I want to bring people to different areas [of London]', and she was able to attract a diasporic audience from across the city. She also noted a degree of interest amongst non-Algerians, recalling that 'people were like "what is this music? What is this?" And it wasn't everybody's cup of tea, of course, because it started off slow and everything. But I think it was totally a success'.¹¹⁷ Therefore, whilst Hamidou's performance was physically separated from the other activities taking place in Cargo that night, there was nevertheless a degree of interest and interaction between Algerians and non-Algerians.

The Algerian audience was evenly split between men and women, mostly aged between their mid-twenties and late-thirties, a typical demographic for the city's Algerian population.¹¹⁸ There was also a wide socio-economic demographic, although apparently few of the city's *harraga* population attended, possibly due to the cost of tickets. A large number of those active on the local Algerian music scene were present. There was some physical division within the audience, with notable separation between a group of conservatively dressed women, the younger men dancing in front of the stage, and the more affluent members of the diasporic community, who stood at the back of the room, but nevertheless danced and ululated throughout. However, there was also a sense of celebration of Algerian cultural unity and broader social integration, and Rachida notes that,

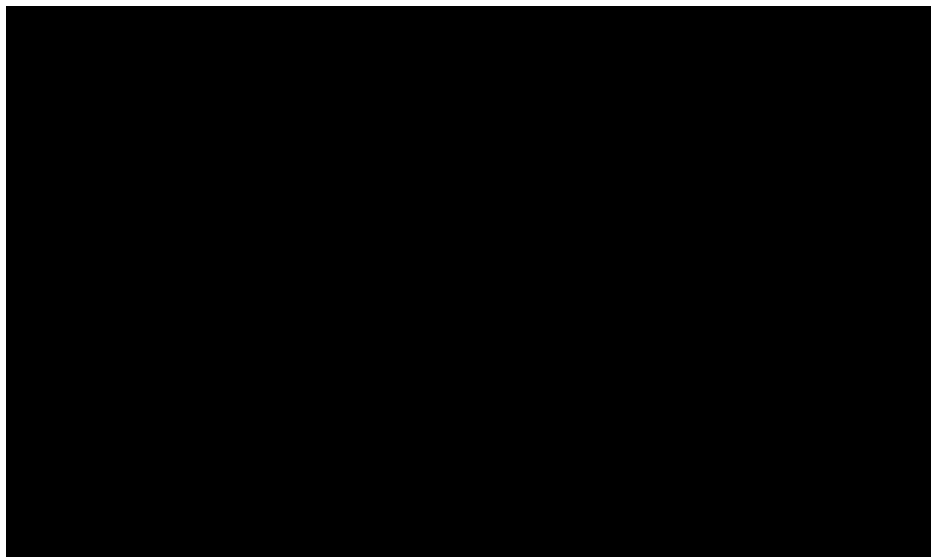
The Hamidou gig, it attracted everybody. I mean, I know it is because of him and his music, because it is a mixture of everything, and he is so cool that he attracted everybody. But there was no divide, it was all fine....it was still very much an English venue. It was in Shoreditch, it

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ A significant number of Algerians moved to London in the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s as a result of the effects of their country's civil war. A large percentage of these individuals emigrated in their early to mid-twenties, and were therefore in their mid to late-thirties by 2013. (Algerian Mapping Exercise, 2007: 13)

was full of English girls. It was a club, so they remained focussed, kind of thing, but then the music was also cool. And I think the music changes the behaviour of the people.¹¹⁹

The event began with an introduction from Rachida (in English), before Hamidou took the stage and spoke directly to the audience (in French), thanking them for their attendance. A keyboard player who had also travelled from Algeria, as well as London-based percussionists Samir and Farid, provided accompaniment. Although the performance initially suffered from poor sound quality, this gradually improved, with Hamidou becoming increasingly relaxed, and engaging more with his audience. The listeners responded positively with applause, dancing and ululating. Their appreciation was heightened by regular references to Algiers and Kabylia in his dialogues between songs, and particular audience approval was evident for his re-worked version of the Cuban song *Guantanamera* (for which he is well known in Algeria), and a cover of Algerian *chaabi* singer Dahmane El Harrachi's hit *Ya Rayah* ('Oh Traveller'). As Hamidou left the stage to applause and ululating, the audience moved forward, and awaited his return to sign the CDs that they had purchased earlier in the evening



3.2: An audience member records Hamidou's performance on their mobile phone.

¹¹⁹ Interview, 26th July 2013.

The responses of the audience members were clearly celebratory and served to emphasise a sense of collective cultural pride. This may be explained by the fact that the event not only provided a relatively rare opportunity to hear a performance of Algerian music in London, but also by Hamidou's fame in Algeria, where he regularly appears on national television and radio.

However, alongside his profile as a mainstream commercial musician, he is also renowned for performing at wedding parties in Algiers, where he entertains guests with a variety of *chaabi* and *andalus* repertoire.¹²⁰ A career as both a commercial artist and wedding singer is not unusual for musicians in Algeria. Whilst renowned professional musicians would rarely perform at weddings in Britain, this is not the case in other cultural contexts, particularly in Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries. Gregory D. Booth (1990) also highlights the important role of brass bands in Indian wedding ceremonies, and whilst he draws attention to the socially-stratified nature of these ensembles (and the variation of the financial earnings of the musicians), he shows that a career as a wedding musician in India can be both prestigious and financially profitable for a musician.

Similarly, the position of the wedding musician in Algeria is often considered more prestigious than their counterpart in Britain. Whilst in certain contexts, such as in more rural societies, Algerian weddings continue to rely upon local lowly-paid musicians, in larger cities, such as Algiers, it is not uncommon for people to employ a professional singer for their wedding celebrations. Rachida explains that,

Wedding singers [in Algeria] are not the same concept as wedding singers here [in Britain]. Here it is just a lame band that will go and sing. For us, to be a wedding singer, you have to be very, very good. And you

¹²⁰ A brief Internet search provides numerous examples of video clips (of varying quality) of Hamidou's performances, both on television and at weddings. These clips, on websites such as YouTube, garner numerous comments from Algerian listeners, including statements of adoration and respect for his musicianship, as well as personal memories ('I remember when Hamidou played at my sister's wedding...') or desires ('I wish Hamidou would play at my wedding').

have recordings, you have been to school and stuff, because the music is very classical.¹²¹

She suggests that it is not unusual in Algerian society to fulfil both the roles of professional performer and wedding musician, and she highlights the requisite skills and subsequent financial benefits, arguing that Hamidou,

Plays all instruments, he is very talented, he has got a beautiful voice. He started at like the age of, I don't know, five? He is a big star. But the wedding business pays, that is the thing. He makes £2000 a night, literally. People get married. So wedding singers are different. And he is really well off because of that. People spend money!¹²²

Following Hamidou's performance, an Algerian friend described the event as 'just like a wedding back home', whilst another suggested it was 'a wedding where no one gets married'. These feelings clearly linked Hamidou's status as a wedding singer with the sense of collective celebration that the performance embodied, and enabled these individuals to frame their own experiences of the event within Algerian cultural practices. As such, the concert produced another example of a collective performance of Algerianness within London, a shared form of social participatory engagement amongst members of the local diaspora that served to reify their own sense of Algerian cultural identity. It both brought together Algerians from across London, constructing a transient form of 'community' within the physical space provided by Cargo, and demarcated a particular form of shared Algerianness, which was embedded in contemporary Algerian popular culture, urbanity, and the country's wedding practices.

Whilst the event was publicly promoted and openly accessible to all, it remained almost exclusively Algerian, confined primarily to the city's diasporic community. It provided another opportunity for social interaction amongst Algerians, bringing together individuals from across the city. It was somewhat unique in having been organised by members of the local diaspora, but having also drawn a high-profile musician from the *bled*, rather than featuring Algerian musicians based in London. The interactions between a local audience and a

¹²¹ Interview, 26th July 2013.

¹²² Ibid.

non-local performer, who share a musical culture, serve to problematise accepted understandings of local-global encounters. In contrast to conventional models of globalization, this event was not about the imposition of Western global values onto another culture, but rather the re-imagination of Algerian cultural traditions within contemporary London. And the performance, which drew little interest from non-Algerian listeners and typical world music audiences, stood in stark contrast to the two concerts at the Barbican, which I now move to examine.

3.6 The Barbican Centre

The two concerts that I will now focus upon were both held at the Barbican centre, which is one of the largest performing arts venues in Europe, and is located at the heart of the City of London.¹²³ Built between 1955 and 1971, the Barbican typifies the Brutalist style of architecture that was popular in Britain at this time, and is surrounded by a high-rise housing estate in the same style (Harwood, 2011; Sharp, 1971; Barbican website).

The centre was built, in part, to provide a home for the London Symphony Orchestra, and despite hosting a variety of artistic forms, has become associated primarily with musical performances, particularly of Western art musics.¹²⁴ It is considered a highly prestigious venue, and its benefactors include major financial institutions and banks, international cultural organisations, and national embassies, as well as numerous individuals with knighthoods and peerages. As such, the Barbican embodies a sense of respect

¹²³ The 'City of London' (also called 'The City' and the 'Square Mile') is an area at the heart of the metropolis commonly referred to as 'London'. The 'City', based in central-east London and home to many of the capital's financial services, has its own local authority called the City of London Corporation, which is headed by the mayor of London. The other areas of 'London' are formed of thirty-two local 'boroughs', which form 'Greater London'.

¹²⁴ Sharp writes that 'it is interesting to note that there are to be no ceremonial (or other) boxes, the sense of unity in the centre being of great importance. The links at various levels eliminate the idea that any of the arts should dominate' and adds that 'music lovers may regret that their art does not dominate, as it does at present on the South Bank and in the Lincoln Centre, but the benefit to the City community as a whole is indisputable. (1971: 236)

and a high degree of cultural capital due to the concerts by internationally renowned artists that it regularly hosts. Alongside the Southbank Centre, it is the venue that attracts the most high profile musicians to visit London (spanning various musical styles), and this produces an internationally recognised reputation that bestows all events taking place there with a sense of esteem.

The Barbican also regularly programmes performances of world music, and openly asserts that it 'exists to serve its wide and diverse audiences - engaging with arts lovers through our unique and inspiring artistic events at the Centre'.¹²⁵ Musicians from around the world, performing various styles of music, regularly appear at the Barbican as part of their transnational touring schedules, and it therefore functions as an example of what Shannon and Rasmussen term the 'world stage'. This is not simply a physical stage upon which musicians perform, but rather a space that connects global flows of music with local audiences. In other words, it acts as an importance location for Appadurai's ethnoscape, offering a platform for transnational flows of culture, and mediates these cultures to London audiences through musical performances.

However, whilst both the Barbican and Southbank Centres have previously hosted performances of Algerian music, venues of such scale are atypical of the contexts within which Algerian musicking usually takes place in the city.¹²⁶ Programming Algerian music at such a venue therefore shapes wider public perceptions of Algerian music, and radically alters the experiences and responses of audience members drawn from the local diaspora. Both the physical space of the Barbican, and its reputation as a leading concert hall, are imposing, particularly for those unfamiliar with the venue. Whilst, as Rachida noted, there was a some degree of reverence amongst Algerian audience members at these two concerts, there was nevertheless quite a clear demarcation between the Algerian and non-Algerian audience. Similarities

¹²⁵ Barbican website. See: < <http://www.barbican.org.uk/about-barbican> > [Accessed 8/6/2015]

¹²⁶ Concerts by famous Algerian musicians at London's large concert venues are infrequent, but both the Barbican and Southbank centre have hosted such events. Previous examples include Cheb Khaled and Rachid Taha (Shepherd's Bush Empire, 2005), Iness Mezel (Southbank, 2011), and the El Gusto Orchestra's previous appearance in London (Barbican, 2007).

might be determined with the observations made by Jonathan Shannon (2003) in his work on performances of Syrian Sufi music in New York, whereby musicians and diasporic audiences display different expectations and responses to musical performances than those of the 'local' (i.e. non-diasporic) listeners (2003: 267-269).

There is therefore clear complexity to the processes occurring at such events, with the Barbican both providing Algerian music with a sense of prestige and cultural capital, whilst simultaneously removing it from its usual performance contexts within the city. The apparent opportunities for the public dissemination of Algerian music that the venue offers promotes the notion of multiculturalism that is at the heart of cultural discourse within contemporary London, with Algerian culture provided with a public stage to engage new listeners. However, as will become apparent, the Barbican also removes some of the agency of the local Algerian community in programming and performing their culture on their own terms, and allows for a degree of reinterpretation and misrepresentation on the part of the events' organisers. As such, these two events at the Barbican throw into question the power relationships between the world music industries, musicians, local diasporic audiences, public understandings of diasporic culture, physical venues and cultural organisations.

3.7 El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers

On a Monday evening in early June 2013, the Barbican hosted a concert by the acclaimed Algerian *chaabi* ensemble the El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers. The orchestra has risen to prominence in recent years, both in Algeria and internationally, as a result of the recordings that they have made with world music record labels, and a documentary film (Safinez Bousbia's 2012 film *El Gusto*), which charts the ensemble's long and complex history.

It is this history that explains the renewed interest in El Gusto. The orchestra was founded before national independence, and the ensemble still contains a number of more senior musicians who played with the group in the 1940s and 1950s. This has produced a historical narrative, suggestive of

cultural tradition and authenticity, which is central to both the documentary, and the promotional campaigns that support the orchestra's international tours. In an early scene in her film, Bousbia visits accordion player Mohamed Ferkioui (an original member of the ensemble) in his carpentry workshop in the *Casbah* area of Algiers (from where *chaabi* purportedly originated). As Ferkioui shows Bousbia black and white photographs and reminisces about the ensemble's past, the viewer is presented with a romanticised depiction of colonial Algiers, devoid of the violence and repression that characterised the build-up to independence. This, in turn, allows the film to present a narrative whereby Bousbia rediscovers the orchestra, and viewers are invited to experience their music through commercially-released recordings and live performances.

The other feature of the orchestra that is regularly emphasised is their inclusion of both Muslim and Jewish musicians, something which was not historically uncommon amongst *chaabi* ensembles.¹²⁷ It is therefore possible to frame the orchestra (and Algerian *chaabi* more broadly) within the complex discourses surrounding Judeo-Islamic relations, and suggest that they exemplify the possibility of religious understanding and cooperation. The migration of much of Algeria's Jewish population after independence, and the subsequent severing of personal and musical ties within the orchestra, is foregrounded in El Gusto's story, and commonly produces empathetic responses amongst non-Algerian audiences. These ideas of cultural reconnection and religious tolerance have been employed to produce a promotional narrative for El Gusto that attracts interest from European and North American world music audiences.

The promotional description of El Gusto's performance that appeared on the Barbican's website drew upon *chaabi's* shared Muslim and Jewish heritage. Despite the repression, violence and socio-political tensions that characterised French colonial rule in Algeria, the Barbican evocatively portrays a sense of peace and calm during this period, and frames this within a depiction of Judeo-Islamic harmony;

¹²⁷ Jewish musicians have been prominent figures in a number of Algerian musics, including *chaabi* and *andalusi*, and the encounters between Muslims and Jews prior to independence are often used to explicate the richness of Algerian culture.

Algeria, 1950s. A blend of Berber sounds, Andalusian melodies, jazz and chanson rises amongst the walls of the historic Casbah in Algiers. The music is called *chaâbi* - meaning 'of the people'; and it's played by groups of Jewish and Muslim musicians. Algeria's war of independence a decade later breaks these two communities apart, burying the memory of a part of the Franco-Algerian history which is still not fully known today.¹²⁸

Philip Sweeney, in the programme notes that were distributed at the concert, further reinforced this image, writing that,

An additional political element makes the El Gusto story more complex. This is the group's role in symbolic reconciliation with the departed Jewish population of Algeria, via the inclusion of expatriate Jewish *chaabi* musicians. Once, Jewish and Arab musicians played together in *chaabi* and other bands, a result of many centuries' mingling of Jews and Arabs, which far predated the arrival of the French. (Sweeney, 2013)

The relationship between *chaabi* and Judeo-Islamic religious tolerance is therefore central to the ways in which El Gusto are presented to non-Algerian audiences. The orchestra, and *chaabi* more broadly, is depicted as having the potential to contribute positively to modern day Judeo-Islamic relations, and given the enduring religious tensions that characterise the contemporary Middle East, such portrayals appear reassuringly optimistic for the typically liberal British world music audiences. However, such concerns seem removed from the understandings of Algerian audiences in London. Whilst political and religious discourses (particularly pertaining to the Middle East) are regularly debated by the local Algerian community, *chaabi* is not part of such dialogues. The role of Algeria's Jews in the development of *chaabi* and *andalus* is openly acknowledged, even by those critical of Israel, but these musics are more broadly conceived of as representative of national and cultural pride, rather than being symbolic of religious tolerance.

¹²⁸ See Barbican website: <http://www.barbican.org.uk/music/event-detail.asp?ID=14195> [Accessed: 11/6/2015]. It is notable that this description talks about Algeria in the 1950s and the war of independence occurring a 'decade later', despite the widely accepted historical dates for this conflict being 1954-1962.

When, in 2007, the orchestra produced their first commercial world music recording, Abdel Hadi Halo, the son of the legendary El Hadj Mohamed El-Anka, led the ensemble and Halo's name appears prominently on the album's artwork.¹²⁹ By the end of 2007, the orchestra was finding success in Europe, which included a concert at the Barbican and an appearance on the British television programme *Later with Jools Holland*, with accompanying coverage in the British print media (Denselow, 2007; Male, 2007). Halo led the ensemble during both of these performances, which included a re-working of his father's song *Win Saadi* ('Out of luck'), with the added lyric 'I miss El Anka, Allah yallah'. A recorded version of the song also appeared on the album, alongside the song *Mal Djifni* ('What's wrong with my eyes'), which contained the lines 'and a special dedication to the North African master, the blessed El Anka, to whom I owe my knowledge and expertise' (Abdel Hadi Halo et al, 2007).



3.3: The covers of the El Gusto Orchestra's two recent, commercially released albums. Right: Abdel Hadi Halo and the El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers (*Honest Jons*, 2007). Left: *El Gusto* (Quidam Productions *El Gusto*, 2011)

A second album, entitled simply *El Gusto*, was released in 2011, as a soundtrack to the documentary film, and includes recordings made in Paris, Marseille and Algiers. The album features El Anka's *Soubhane Allah ya L'tif* and *El H'mam*, as well as the song *Ya Rayah*, originally performed by *chaabi* star

¹²⁹ The album was recorded in Algiers by the British record label Honest Jon's, and was the first recording to be made commercially available to a European audience.

Dahmane El Harrachi, However, whilst the album maintained the link between this modern ensemble and *chaabi*'s prestigious heritage, the orchestra was now simply referred to as El Gusto. The connections to Al Anka (through his son) and the history of *chaabi*, and to the ensemble's home city (and birthplace of *chaabi*) were subsequently lost.

There are therefore a number of themes running through the promotional narrative that surrounds the orchestra, including the notion that they embody religious tolerance and understanding, and that their story can be connected to a particular cultural history. Whilst *chaabi* is not a sacred form of music, the ways in which religion is employed to frame El Gusto, and the sense of 'purity' expressed in these representations of the ensemble, is evocative of Jonathan Shannon's claim that 'world music entrepreneurs and agents market and promote sacred music as a purer style distinct from other (nonsacred) styles of world music, which tend to celebrate hybridity' (2003: 270). In other words, it is the positioning of El Gusto, and *chaabi* more broadly, as somehow 'pure' and 'authentic' that facilitates the promotion of the orchestra to a commercial world music listenership. In contrast, the ways in which an Algerian diasporic audience in London understand the ensemble is shaped by a more informed and nuanced appreciation of *chaabi* music, and Algerian culture more broadly. This diasporic comprehension of the music and orchestra connects El Gusto to place (the Casbah of Algiers), socio-cultural context (the music's working-class urban identity), and the prestigious legacy of *chaabi*, as evolving from the early works of El Anka. As such, both *chaabi* and El Gusto were approached very differently by Algerian and non-Algerian audience members preparing to attend this event in June 2013.

The event began with an early evening performance by El Andaluz, a London-based group who appeared on a small stage in the bar area of the Barbican. The trio are well established and include Algerian musicians Yazid and Karim, and describe themselves as 'the leading exponents in London of classical Arabic and Andalusian music'¹³⁰. They were joined by dancer Beatrice Parvin, who specialises in North African dance, and were warmly received by a

¹³⁰ See: <http://www.konimusic.co.uk/portfolio/el-andaluz/> [Accessed 11/6/2015]

small audience, composed of both Algerian and non-Algerian members. On the one hand, this provided a local Algerian ensemble with a rare performance opportunity within a major venue. However, it also highlighted the disconnection between El Andaluz and the orchestra playing in the main concert hall. Unlike Hamidou's performance, which incorporated and embraced local Algerian musicians, this event established a clear physical divide between the performance of local musicians in the bar and foyer area, and that of the orchestra appearing on the Barbican's main stage. Whilst this is not uncommon for events of this nature in such large, prestigious concert venues, it nevertheless underscores one of the many contrasts with Hamidou's performance a few weeks earlier.

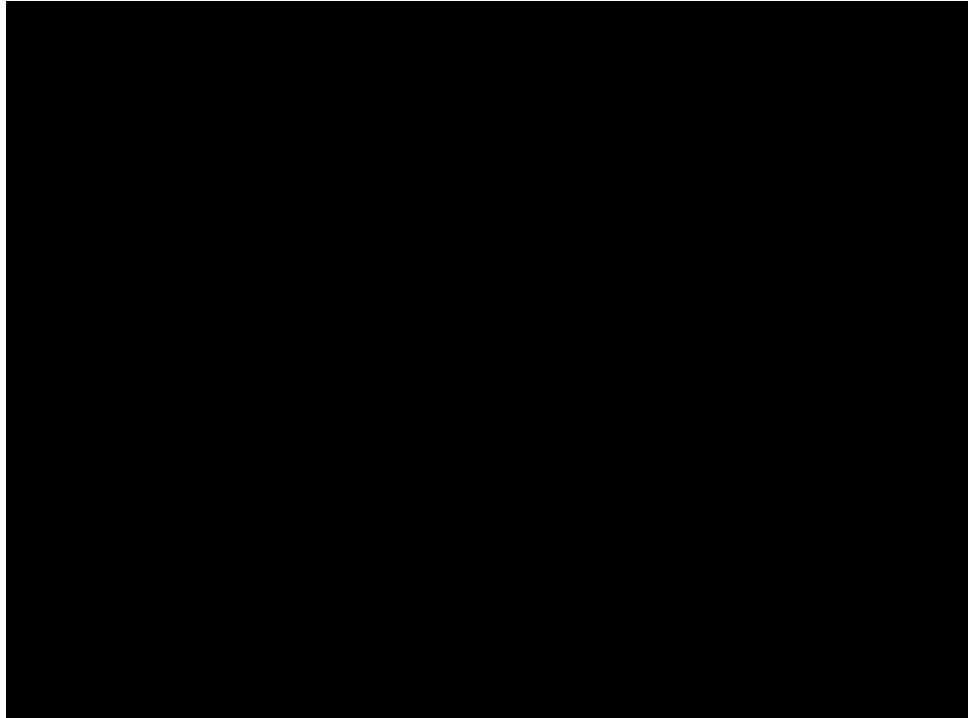
Following El Andaluz's performance, I walked out onto the Lakeside Terrace at the rear of the Barbican, where audience members were enjoying the summer sunshine before the concert. Members of El Gusto appeared and were surrounded by Algerian fans, requesting photographs and autographs. Mohamed Ferkioui, the charismatic accordion player featured at the beginning of Bousbia's documentary, was particularly popular, and he joined the crowd in singing a song about local football club Mouloudia.¹³¹ Mouloudia, like *chaabi*, is widely recognised as a symbol of Algerian pride, and in particular of the working class identity of the Algiers Casbah. The team wear red, white and green (the colours of the Algerian flag), play at the *Stade 5 Julliet 1962* (which commemorates the date of Algerian independence), and were originally named *Mouloudia Chaabia d'Alger* ('the people's team of Algiers'). An Algerian friend who had witnessed this scene, asked,

Did you see all the Algerians in their *Chaanga*, the blue suits with the stripy tops? That's the *Bahara*, the fishermen, who play *mandole* on the beach and on the boats and stuff. The traditional ones, that is what they wear, the sons of the Casbah' (Interview, 26th July 2013).

¹³¹ Mouloudia Club d'Alger, known as MC Alger or simply Mouloudia, are the most popular football team in Algeria, and traditionally gain much of their support from the working classes of Algiers, and in particular the Casbah district.

This collective act of musicking, which brought together local Algerian audience members with a renowned Algerian musician, further reinforced the specific meanings of the event for London's Algerian diaspora. In singing songs about Mouloudia that evoked the Casbah, and embodied a sense of urban working class identity of both the area and its famous football club, these individuals were actively and collectively performing a type of Algerianness, which expressed particular cultural meanings that were inaccessible to non-Algerians. This single act of music-making, shared between musician and audience, therefore served to further highlight the different understandings of the event for Algerian and non-Algerian audience members.

A free pre-concert talk had been arranged back inside the Barbican, prior to the orchestra's performance, and was intended to educate audience members about *chaabi* and the ensemble. BBC Radio 3 presenter Max Rheinhardt led the session, discussing the history of *chaabi* and directing questions to the members of the orchestra present. Many of those in attendance were Algerian, and Rheinhardt's questions, clearly intended for a less educated audience, often appeared overly simplistic. He continued the sense of orientalism apparent in the event's publicity materials by evoking a mystical and alluring Casbah. As the session progressed, many of the Algerians in the audience became increasingly frustrated, and Rheinhardt's comparison of El Hadj Mohamed El Anka and Elvis Presley were met with cries of derision and disagreement. An Algerian friend, who prides himself on his knowledge of Algerian musics, became particularly frustrated, and berated the increasingly flustered presenter every time that he felt that *chaabi* has been misrepresented. The El Anka-Presley comparison led him to shake his head and mutter angrily that 'this guy knows nothing about Algerian music'.



3.4: Members of the El Gusto Orchestra in discussion during the pre-concert talk. From left to right: Liamine Haimoune, Rachid Berkani, Luc Cherki, Philippe Darmon. (KM Live Music, 2013)

The good intentions of the Barbican and presenter are not in question, but the problematic, and often erroneous, ways in which this session dealt with *chaabi* and El Gusto is further indicative of how the event was presented to the public. The framing of this session might also be reflective of the Barbican's wider attitude towards world music events, and the assumption that such concerts will not attract an informed local diasporic audience. Rather than engaging in a meaningful conversation about the orchestra, and the complex history of *chaabi*, this pre-concert talk relied upon clichés and, in certain cases, misrepresentations, which only served to alienate the majority of the Algerians present.

When the concert began, the orchestra arrived on the venue's main stage amidst low lighting and dry ice, evoking a popular music concert and providing further evidence that this was an event targeted primarily at a world music audience. They were met with polite applause and then reverent silence. Whilst staged performances of *chaabi*, at music festivals in Algeria, are not uncommon, the response of the audience was very different from the informality

of the cafes in which *chaabi* is commonly performed in Algiers and London (see chapter 2). The vociferous applause and ululating that often accompany Algerian musical events, and which were evident throughout Hamidou's performance a few weeks earlier, were, at least initially, absent. These reactions seemed far more in keeping with those of audiences at the performances of jazz and Western art musics that regularly take place at the Barbican. Jonathan Shannon, whose research examines performances of Syrian *tarab* music in New York, notes similar audience responses within American concert halls, writing that,

Indeed, for most educated Western audiences, however appreciative of Middle Eastern musical genres, a default co-performance rule might just (as) well be what in the context of European classical music is often a principle of nonparticipation out of respect for the performances and other audience members, as opposed to a rule of respectful applause and shouting associated with the Arab *tarab* culture. (2003: 269)

The orchestra began with a duet between two members of the ensemble, Muslim *Muezzin* Mohamed Touzan and Jewish *Rabbi* Philippe Darmon, who sang in Arabic and Hebrew respectively, and were accompanied by Smail Ferkioui on piano.¹³² The notion of *chaabi* enacting Judeo-Islamic religious understanding and tolerance was immediately brought to the fore, and the audience warmly received the piece. The other members of the orchestra appeared on stage and proceeded to perform a range of *chaabi* repertoire, which, whilst receiving polite applause, did not elicit the enthusiastic responses that had been evident at Hamidou's performance. Certain songs (particularly those by El Anka) were met with shouts of encouragement from the Algerians present, whilst a friend with whom I was sat added personal comments, such as 'we hear this one all the time at home'. However, it was the performance of a medley of songs by Lucien Cherki that sparked the most enthusiastic response

¹³² The *Muezzin* is the individual for leading and reciting the *adhan* (the call to prayer) at Islamic mosques. Within the Jewish tradition, the *Rabbi* is a teacher of the Torah and religious leader who often sings during religious ceremonies.

from the Algerians present.¹³³ The piece that proved most popular was *'Ili hab yelaab sport'*, whose Arabic lyrics make reference to the Mouloudia football club, and many of those who had sung and danced with Mohamed Ferkioui prior to the concert got to their feet, dancing and ululating.¹³⁴ During a subsequent song, Ferkioui put down his accordion and danced across the front of the stage, provoking more Algerian members of the audience to get to their feet and join him, shouting their encouragement in a mixture of French and *Darija*.



3.5: Left: Philippe Darmon and Mohamed Touzan performing *'Duo Rabbin/Muezzin'*. Right: Mohamed Ferkioui dancing on the front of the Barbican's stage. (KM Live Music, 2013)

¹³³ Lucien 'Luc' Cherki is a Jewish musician who moved to France after Algerian independence, and found fame and commercial success with his song *'Je suis un pied noir'*. *Pied noir*, meaning 'black feet', was the name given to the non-Muslim population of Algeria during French colonial rule, and included both French Christian colonists and the country's Jewish population. Following independence, many emigrated to France, where they often found themselves unwelcome. The title of Cherki's song translates as 'I am a pied noir'.

¹³⁴ Within the context of musical performances, it is often men rather than women who show their appreciation for the music by dancing. There are a number of distinctively male dances that, for Algerian audiences, are associated with Algiers.

The reactions of Algerian audience members, and their interactions with the musicians onstage, appeared to captivate many of the non-Algerians in attendance. Many of those sat at the front of the concert hall turned away from the stage to watch the Algerians dancing and ululating behind them, and this demonstrated a somewhat exoticising fascination that differentiated Algerian and non-Algerian audience members. The most fervent audience reactions were produced by the orchestra's rendition of Dahmane El Harrachi's celebrated *chaabi* hit *Ya Rayah*, a song that had been performed by Hamidou the previous month, and evocatively reminds Algerians of what they have left behind in the *bled*. Algerian musicians, including those in London, regularly perform *Ya Rayah*, and El Gusto's version generated typically euphoric responses amongst the Algerians in the audience.

Ya Rayah is perhaps more well-known and regularly performed than any other Algerian song, and is extremely popular with musicians and listeners both in the *bled* and diaspora. It has been covered by a number of performers, and most famously by Rachid Taha, for whom it was a commercial hit in Europe, and one of the highlights of the '1, 2, 3 Soleils' concert in Paris in 1998, where he appeared alongside Algerian stars Cheb Khaled and Faudel. It has also been translated in numerous languages, and performed by a number of non-Algerian artists.¹³⁵ The song is particularly evocative for members of the Algerian diaspora as El Harrachi's lyrics implore those leaving the *bled* to reconsider their decision. The lyrics in the chorus of the song ask;

Oh traveller, where are you going?
Eventually you must come back,
How many ignorant people have regretted this decision
Before you and I?

¹³⁵ Examples of artists that have covered *Ya Rayah* include Greek singer Georgios Dalaras and Yugoslav world music star Goran Bregović, who included the piece under the name *Ki An Se Thelo* on their 1997 album 'Thessaloniki – Yannena with Two Canvas Shoes' (EMI), and Indian Bollywood composer Sanjeev-Darshan who employed the piece in his soundtrack of 1999 Bollywood film 'Mann', employing the title *Kali Nagin Ke Jaisi*.

The song acts as a warning against the perils of leaving Algeria and highlights the challenges that may be faced on the other side of the Mediterranean, through lines such as ‘why is your heart so sad? And why are you staying there feeling miserable?’. El Harrachi’s version was originally released in France in 1973, at a time when Algeria was enjoying relative peace and prosperity, but Algerians in France faced discrimination and low wages. The accompanying video for the song features El Harrachi stood on the shoreline of Algiers, gazing across the Mediterranean and appearing to sing directly to those who have left the bled. This is interspersed with clips of a young man boarding a ship seemingly bound for Europe. Over the subsequent decades the song has remained remarkably popular and poignant for Algerian listeners, and for many in London it is seen as a musical symbol of the homeland. It is striking that the song is usually performed with a sense of celebration, and accompanied with dancing and ululating, in spite of the melancholy lyrics questioning the choice of individuals to leave Algeria.

A video posted on YouTube in the days following the concert shows audience members turning away from the stage to watch the reactions of the Algerians in the audience, and the owner of the clip voices his own reflections on what is happening, commenting;

Look at that, so many people. It’s just happiness, delirious happiness. It’s the English, not just the Arabic (sic), everybody’s dancing. It’s crazy. This guy (*pointing to someone dancing behind him*) is not Algerian, I’ll tell you that much! There’s no nastiness, people fighting, it’s just fun. This is something you don’t see enough, all you see is rioting. They (*the non-Algerian audience*) don’t even know what this song is about, they’re just happy.

As the song finished, Algerian audience members moved down from their seats and ran on stage, embracing the musicians and posing for photographs. This sense of celebration and of a close interaction between Algerian listeners and musicians framed the entire event, and served to underscore the sense of collective Algerianness being enacted within the concert hall. The concert was therefore framed by a shared collective performance of Algerian culture and identity through musicking, and was characterised by the complex and

multifarious interactions between the musicians onstage, and the Algerian and non-Algerian listeners in the audience.

Upon leaving the concert hall I spoke with Algerian friends (many of them performing musicians based in London) who praised the orchestra and commented favourably upon the vocal and instrumental virtuosity of the ensemble's musicians. Discussions subsequently continued online, where members of the local diaspora shared their experiences of the concert. A prominent and highly respected musician reflected that,

I believe that the new orchestra conductor (Mohamed Abdenour aka *Petit Moh*) has brought in his touch. They are good arrangements, they are very colourful. In 2007 (their previous appearance in London), I didn't attend, I just watched on videos. Musically I think that they have improved, however they have less [*sic*] musicians.¹³⁶

A few months after the performance I met with the individual who had been so critical at the Barbican's pre-concert talk. Our discussion of music led him to reflect upon his own experiences at the concert, and he expressed his opinion that the ensemble had succumbed to commercial pressures and was no longer as musically proficient or inspiring as it had been previously. The event therefore had both immediate significance and a lasting impact for the local diaspora. I engaged in a number of discussions with Algerians about the event over the following months, with those who had attended frequently praising the orchestra. The event seemed to provide somewhat of a landmark for Algerian culture in the city, and was mentioned with similar regularity to previous performances in London by acclaimed Algerian musicians, such as Cheb Khaled (in 1995) and, more recently, Kader Japonais (in 2012). The concert itself provided an space within which Algerian audience members were able to engage in interactive musicking processes, and to perform their collective sense of Algerianness. This constituted not only a feeling of nationalistic pride but also a more nuanced sense of Algerian identity, constructed upon *chaabi's* traditional urban working class character, and embodied in the meanings found in *Ya Rayah* and Mouloudia football club. Amongst the local diaspora, the

¹³⁶ Personal correspondence, 7th June 2013.

concert served to encourage dialogue around Algerian music, which was shaped both by the experiences of those present, and by broader understandings of Algerian culture in general, and *chaabi* music in particular. With performances of *chaabi* in London so infrequent, and because the music plays such an important part in the urban cultural consciousness of Algerians, the event provoked strong reactions for members of the local diaspora, particularly around memories of Algiers. In contrast, the non-Algerian members of the audience were excluded from such understandings, and their experiences of the event were shaped by the problematic representations of *chaabi* propagated by the Barbican.

Although El Gusto's concert may initially appear less explicitly 'Algerian' than Hamidou's performance a few weeks earlier, which engaged much more directly with the local Algerian community, Algerians in the audience were clearly able to infer particular meanings through the event. However, whilst the ways in which the orchestra was promoted helped to attract a non-Algerian audience, some within the local diaspora were far more critical, accusing the ensemble of 'selling out' to commercial interest. One local musician drew a clear distinction between Hamidou and El Gusto, suggesting that the former are considered far more 'authentic' amongst Algerian listeners, and arguing that 'El Gusto are "home", but it's different. I guess it is partly corporate now, do you know what I mean?'¹³⁷ As such, it is possible to discern the varying experiences embodied both with the event itself, and the wider representations of *chaabi* music through El Gusto. Whilst the orchestra are undeniably capable of evoking passionate responses amongst diasporic audiences, and of enabling a form of collective musicking, the promotional narratives that make them appealing to world music audiences in London also serve to draw criticism from some Algerian listeners. Therefore, it is clear that the experiences of those in attendance at this concert were far more varied than those at Hamidou's performance, and that the responses and understandings of the Algerian and non-Algerian audiences were conspicuously different from one another.

¹³⁷ Interview, July 2013.

3.8 Rachid Taha and Souad Massi

Three weeks after El Gusto's performance, the Barbican hosted a concert by popular Algerian singers Rachid Taha and Souad Massi, two of the country's most famous musicians. Both were born in Algeria (Taha in the town of Sig in western Algeria, near to Oran, and Massi in Algiers, to Berber parents), but have subsequently relocated to France, where they have established successful commercial careers. Taha has been described as 'an icon of multiracial France' (Silverstein, 2004: 167), whilst Chris Elias and Andy Morgan, a world music journalist who has conducted a number of interviews with Massi, offer the following description;

Souad Massi (who has Kabyle roots but doesn't speak *Taqbaylith*) abandoned a musical career in Algeria and fled to exile in France where her *Darija* (Algerian-Arabic) and French original songs caught the world's ear and opened many hearts. Her vulnerable yet determined voice and steady acoustic guitar (plus a cast of excellent sidemen) produced her hit debut *Raoui* (Storyteller) in 2001. (2006: 24)

Both musicians have been supported and promoted by the Euro-American world music industries, and whilst Taha has attracted some mainstream success in France, they remain predominantly associated by British audiences with the world music scene.

Massi and Taha are renowned and celebrated in Algeria for their international successes, yet there was a notable lack of interest in the concert amongst the local diaspora in London. Whereas online social media forums had been filled with discussions of Hamidou and El Gusto's impending performances, this particular event produced little dialogue amongst Algerians. However, the concert was heavily promoted to world music audiences, with a clearly commercial desire to sell tickets, and generated significant media interest for an Algerian music event in London. The publicity campaign for the event was highly evocative, and focussed upon placing both musicians within a political context, suggesting that, alongside the commercial, there were additional agendas in operation. This politicisation of the concert is notable as it

not only contradicts the apparently apolitical motives of the festival of which the event was part, but also reinforces the recurring notion of music in the Arab world as enduringly a form of protest. This politicised agenda was, in itself, arguably part of a commercial imperative, and built upon the expectations of non-Algerian world music audiences in London. Although El Gusto's concert had drawn upon politics through notions of Judeo-Islamic religious understanding in the Arab world, the relationship between music and politics was far more prominent in the promotional narrative of this particular event. This was apparent in the concert's programme notes, written by world music journalist Jon Lusk, which observed that,

Tonight's concert presents two very different faces of modern Algerian pop music. Even so, Rachid Taha and Souad Massi do have certain things in common. Both have lived life on the edge and sung honest, personal songs that have sometimes got them into trouble. So of course, neither of them is a stranger to politics. (Lusk, 2013)

Unlike the previous two performances, this concert was not a single standalone event, but the opening of *Shubbak 2013*, an artistic and cultural festival that promoted itself as 'a window on contemporary Arab culture'. The festival's website promised a 'programme [that] spans free outdoor family days and large-scale concerts, thought-provoking talks and the latest films, with special late-night gallery openings and a wonderful closing party', and suggested that,

Shubbak 2013 is a festival of discovery. We are proud to present new talent and new works from some of the most exciting young artists originating from the Arab world – wherever they may be residing – in your neighbourhood in London, in Brussels, or in cities like Beirut, Jerusalem, Cairo, Dubai or Marrakech.

Shubbak is also a festival to discover or re-discover artists who have been pioneers in their fields for many years but have yet to receive the international platform which they so rightly deserve.¹³⁸

The festival was therefore intended to simultaneously publicise Arabic culture, challenge negative stereotypes, and build connections with artists from within

¹³⁸ See <http://shubbak.co.uk/>

London's diasporic networks. This cultural agenda seemed quite distinct from the commercial and political intentions previously identified. A review of the concert in *The Guardian* endorsed this position, claiming that 'this concert kicks off *Shubbak*, a new London-wide festival challenging stereotypes of extremism in Arabic culture, and Taha shared the bill with another outspoken French-Algerian star, Souad Massi' (Lewis, 2013). The promotional messages surrounding the festival were similarly positive, with the Mayor of London's office proclaiming that 'this biennial event will return to London with a stunning programme'.¹³⁹ The daily *Metro* newspaper reported that,

There's a strong double-bill of Algerian talent at the Barbican tomorrow: wiry and grizzled punk rocker Rachid Taha, whose latest album, *Zoom*, was released in March (his Arabic-language cover of The Clash's 'Rock The Casbah' is always a trusty, fiery favourite), and singer/songwriter Souad Massi, whose brooding, soulful melodies are backed with acoustic guitar and *oud*. (Haider, 2013)

Other media sources focussed upon the festival's other objectives, with the *Evening Standard* newspaper claiming that 'its organisers hope to show an alternative side to the troubled [Arab] region. [It] kicks off this weekend with free family events in the Lyric Square in Hammersmith and Algerian music at the Barbican' (Evening Standard, 21/6/2013). In another *Guardian* article, festival organiser Omar al-Qattan claimed that *Shubbak* aimed to educate the British public about Arabic culture, and again placed this within the context of contemporary North African and Middle Eastern politics by suggesting that,

These are troubled times to be putting on a festival celebrating a culture that is, on several levels and in different regions of its rich geography, tearing itself apart. Three "cradles" of our many regional civilisations – Iraq, Syria and Egypt – are riven by conflict, the former two torn apart by civil war. (al-Qattan, 2013)

Al-Qattan goes on to outline three groups that the festival is claiming to represent: those living in North Africa and the Middle East; artists from the Arab

¹³⁹ See <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/arts-culture/festivals-events/shubbak>

world, described as ‘global wanderers [who] carry their pain with them wherever they go, creating work against the odds’; and members of diasporic populations from Arab countries living in London, for whom, it is suggested, ‘the experience of Arab immigrants, whether they chose to live here or were forced by tragedy at home, is a universal one that can be shared with many other groups in this country’ (al-Qattan, 2013).

The political agenda at the heart of this promotional narrative were certainly not coincidental, but rather a result of the context within which the festival, and the concert, took place. British media reports on North Africa and the Middle East at this time were characterised by stories of political and social unrest, and contemporary events in these regions included the ‘Arab Spring’, the on-going conflict in Israel and Palestine, and both domestic and international concerns about the situations in Iraq, Iran and other countries in the area. This media coverage fuelled a predominantly negative public impression of North Africa and the Middle East, and it is understandable therefore that *Shubbak* would attempt to portray Islamic and Arabic culture in a more positive light. There was also a more immediate motivation for the festival adopting this narrative. Exactly one month before the concert was due to take place, a British soldier was killed on the streets of Woolwich, an area of south London, by two men who identified themselves as Muslim, and who claimed that their actions were carried out in retribution for the deaths of Muslims at the hands of the British military.¹⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, the killing produced extensive media reports and discussions about Islam in Britain, with politicians warning of the potential for anti-Islamic repercussions. Over the subsequent days and weeks, a number of British mosques were attacked, particularly in London, and there were widespread concerns voiced about hostility towards British Muslims.¹⁴¹ Whilst *Shubbak 2013* had been planned and programmed long

¹⁴⁰ Lee Rigby was a Drummer (Private) in the British Army and was stationed at the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich. His killing, in the streets of Woolwich in broad daylight, proved particularly shocking. Two men, Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, were arrested at the scene and charged with Rigby’s murder.

¹⁴¹ An article in *The Guardian* a week after the attack suggested that there had already been almost two hundred Islamophobic attacks in Woolwich following the killing (Taylor and Siddique, 2013). A report in *The Independent* newspaper at the end of 2013

before this attack, this particular event therefore occurred at a moment of particular social tension, with Islamic culture subjected to heightened public scrutiny.

However, this narrative is not without problems. Of particular concern is the notion that such a festival could represent an all-encompassing portrayal of 'contemporary Arab culture', and this was highlighted by the inclusion of Souad Massi in this concert. Massi is proud of her Algerian Kabyle heritage and is recognised by many as a Berber, as well as Algerian, musician. Nevertheless, this concert, which launched *Shubbak*, made no reference to her Berberness, and whilst the festival's promotional narrative played upon political themes, no mention was made of the situation of Berbers in Algeria or of the history of tensions and violence that have been witnessed in Kabylia in recent decades. The notion of a Berber musician being representative of 'Arab culture' is, for many Algerians, highly objectionable, and risks ignoring the realities and complexities of contemporary Algerian society.

Such concerns were debated in the comments section that accompanied al-Qattan's *Guardian* article, with readers questioning the cultures chosen for selection in the festival's programme. Some contributors noted the lack of any acknowledgement of Jewish culture at the festival, and whilst there may have been political reasons for such a decision, it would be difficult, for example, to accurately conceive of Algerian *chaabi* or *andalusi* music without recognising Jewish involvement in these two musical traditions. Furthermore, the choice of Algerian music at the launch of *Shubbak* was curious given the apparent focus on the 'Arab Spring'. Whilst Algeria has not remained untouched by the violence that has spread across the region during this period, it has certainly not been at the heart of these events, and the juxtaposition of Algerian music with political unrest across North Africa and the Middle East therefore appears problematic and erroneous, and seems only to reify generalisations about Arabic culture and the association of Algeria with violence.

followed up on this and reported over five hundred anti-Muslim crimes in Britain that year, which was an increase of almost forty percent (Jivanda, 2013).

The similarities with the promotional narratives employed to publicise El Gusto are clear, and once again appear removed from the understandings of Algerian audiences. During discussions, in person and online, both prior to and following the concert, there was no mention within the local diaspora of these political themes. Whilst both Taha and Massi are recognised as engaging with political issues, particularly in France, the notion that their music might serve to positively represent broader Arabic culture was absent from the local diasporic discourse surrounding the festival. The often contrasting political, commercial and cultural agendas that formed the promotional characteristics of *Shubbak* all appeared to be disconnected from the ways in which Algerians perceived the event, which conceived of the concert as entertainment and a representation of their country's popular musics.

As with El Gusto's performance at the same venue, the audience for the concert contained a large proportion of Algerians, drawn from across the city's diasporic population. In his Guardian article, al-Qattan is keen to acknowledge local diasporic groups living in London, writing that,

We know how damaging displacement can be, particularly on children from families without the resources – financial, but most of all cultural – to survive happily here...*Shubbak*, with collaborators from all over the world, many of whom are based here, is a small testimony to both the tragedies and the triumphs of being exiled and offers an alternative way for us in Britain to relate to the Arab region, based on understanding and respect. (al-Qattan, 2013)

The author's positioning of diasporas as disadvantaged groups, who have often been forced to leave their countries in traumatic circumstances, is inconsistent with the experiences of many Algerians in London, who have commonly moved to Britain for educational or employment opportunities. Whilst the legacy of their nation's civil war endures within contemporary Algerian societies, this notion of 'tragedy' and 'exile' is not only an erroneous representation of the city's Algerian diaspora, but also serves to portray Algerians in London as victims. This underscores the problems of homogenous concepts of Arab or Islamic culture and diasporic experience. Although *Shubbak* apparently intends to further British public understanding of the cultures that it represents, by embedding

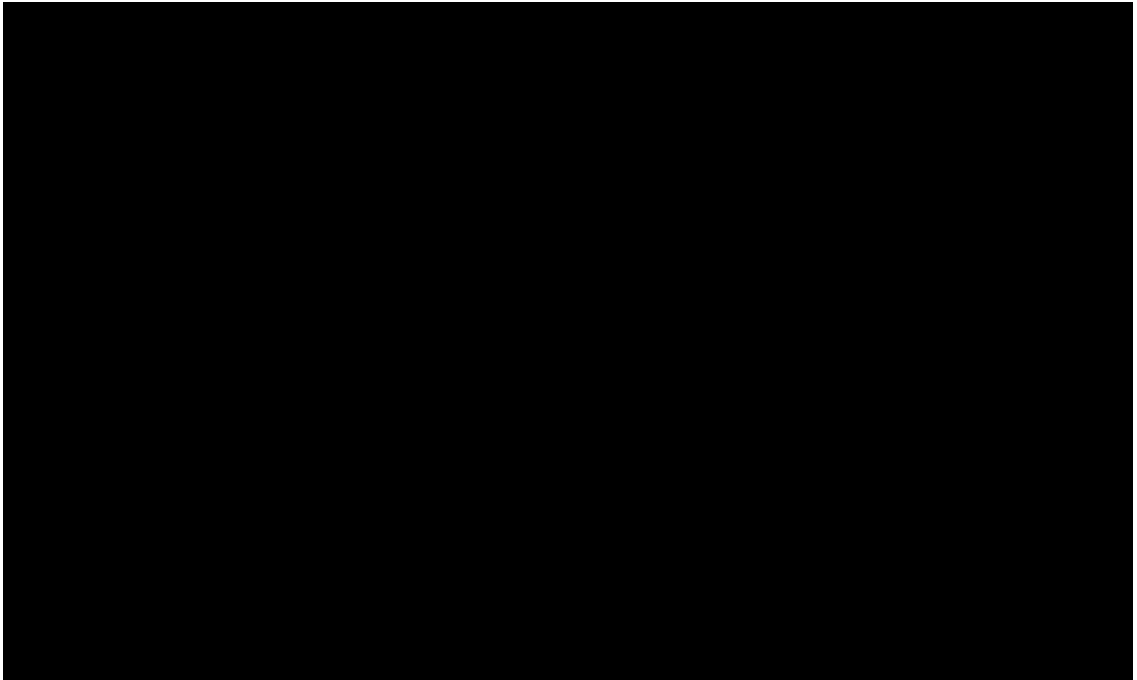
Algeria within broader notions of an ‘Arab region’ through the programming of this musical event, the festival risks not only misrepresenting Algerian culture, but adding to the harmful stereotypes and misconceptions that have blighted the diaspora in London. As such, whilst presenting Massi and Taha through the showcase opening event of the festival, and appearing to promote Algerian culture, *Shubbak* also inadvertently reinforces some of the negative stereotypes that Algerians in the city aim to avoid.

The claim that *Shubbak* actively engaged with diasporic populations in London is also questionable. The organisers of this particular event made no attempt to involve Algerian musicians living in the city, and whilst some were involved in the wider programming of the festival, at least one Algerian singer was booked by the festival’s organisers to perform at the same time as Massi and Taha, but on the other side of the city, not only stopping them from attending the launch event, but also significantly diminishing their audience. There was also little attempt to reach out and publicise the concert within local diasporic networks, and many Algerians only heard about the event through word of mouth.

For many of the Algerians at the concert, the combination of Taha and Massi on the same programme was also somewhat strange. Although both musicians are promoted in Europe and North America under the broad rubric of world music, their musical styles, and their reputations as performers, are significantly different.¹⁴² Taha is renowned as a controversial and outspoken character, is sometimes labelled as a punk musician, and his music has increasingly made use of technology and an electronically synthesised sound world. In contrast, Massi is known as an acoustic guitar-playing singer-songwriter, and whilst she addresses political issues, she is considered a much less controversial character amongst Algerian audiences. Whilst *Shubbak* attempted to represent the diversity of Arabic culture, for many of the Algerians

¹⁴² Although Rachid Taha is often labelled as a world music artist in the UK, in the programme notes for the concert he argues that ‘my music always has the smell of Algeria, but that’s only one of many things. And it’s certainly not world music. That for me is a nonsense term’ (Lusk, 2013).

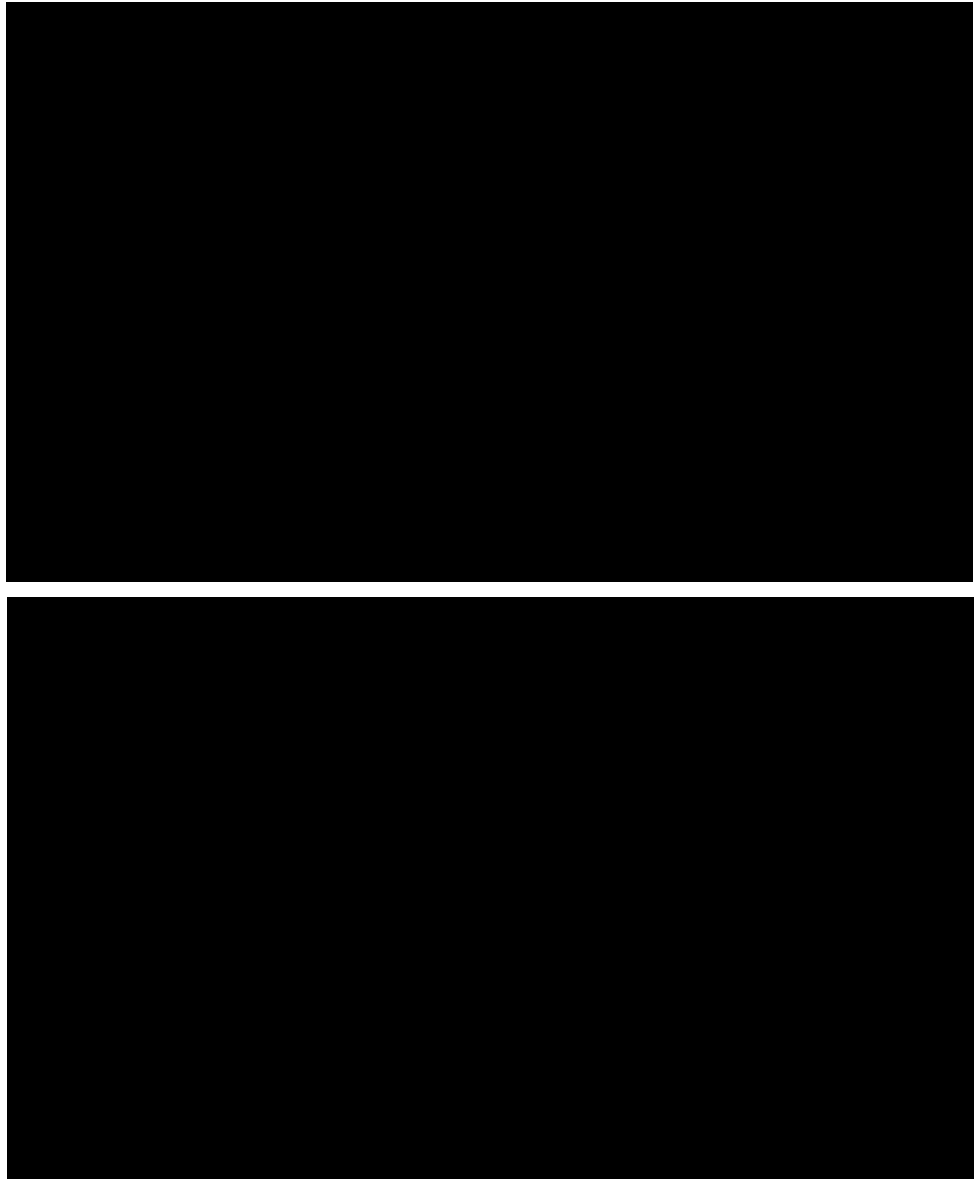
that I spoke with, this particular combination of performers simply seemed incongruous.



3.6: Souad Massi on stage at the Barbican.

A group consisting of a drummer, electric bassist, and electric guitarist, as well as a darbuka player who appeared mid-set, joined Massi on stage for her performance. Her songs, with lyrics in French and Arabic, were warmly received by the audience, with whom she communicated (mainly in French) between songs, having previously apologised for her lack of English. As the performance developed, she played more pieces from her earlier albums, with which the Algerians in the audience were clearly more familiar, and this produced cheers of encouragement as well as dancing and ululating. Some Algerian members of the audience moved forwards from their seats, dancing in front of the stage, and shouting song requests in French and *Darija*. The non-Algerians in the audience responded in a similar manner to those at the El Gusto concert, and the reactions of the Algerian listeners became as much of a focal point as the musicians on stage. As her set drew to a close she left the stage to applause and cheers from members of the audience. After the concert, an Algerian friend

extolled the virtues of her musicianship and songwriting, enthusiastically exclaiming that ‘she’s fantastic, what a show!’¹⁴³



3.7: Rachid Taha performing at the Barbican.

The differences between the musical and performance styles of Massi and Taha were immediately apparent when the latter entered the stage. Although Taha has developed a reputation as a controversial musician and outspoken public figure, there appeared surprise, particularly amongst the Algerians present, when he emerged amid low lighting and dry ice, dressed, like his band,

¹⁴³ Interview, July 2013.

entirely in black. Taha began with songs taken from his more recent albums, which feature an electronically synthesised soundworld and quadruple metre dance rhythms, and are more evocative of Euro-American electro and industrial musics than traditional Algerian styles. Strobe lighting flickered from the stage, and Taha's vocals were heavily manipulated with reverb and other sound effects. However, as with Massi, it was when Taha performed his earlier repertoire that he received the most positive reactions from audience members, both Algerian and non-Algerian, and those songs with strong Algerian stylistic influence (with elements drawn from *rai* and *chaabi*) and instrumentation (such as *'ud*) appeared most popular. Like Massi, he addressed the audience in French in between songs, and there was a sense that he was speaking directly to the Algerian diaspora present at the concert. Taha's cover of *Ya Rayah*, and his hit song *Rock el Casbah*, were particularly well received, and many of the Algerians who had remained within the concert hall were moved to dance, clap, sing and ululate to signal their appreciation.¹⁴⁴

Not all audience members had reacted so positively however. When Taha had initially taken to the stage amid strobe lighting, the response of many Algerians in the audience was to stand up and immediately leave the concert. A family with small children, who had moments earlier been praising Massi's performance, shook their heads, and after a short discussion, led their children from the concert hall. An Algerian friend and musician, who voiced his respect for Taha's earlier work, also left after the first song, and later suggested that,

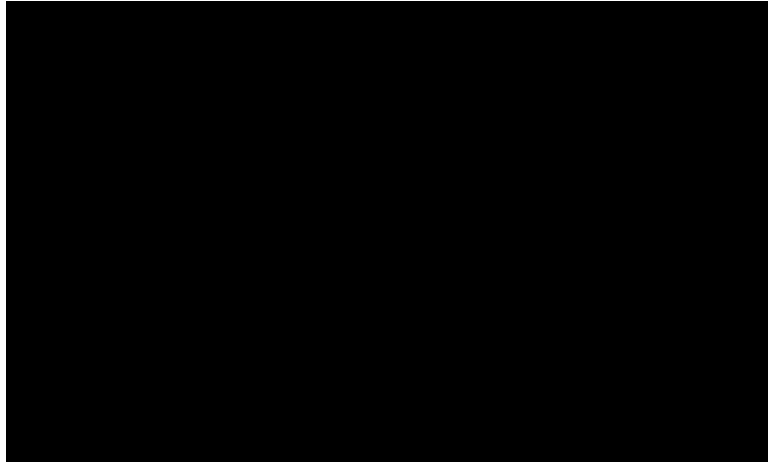
This is not for Algerians, Algerians don't want to listen to this. He's all about promoting drugs, promoting cocaine and these things. You don't want your kids listening to this, seeing this. I wouldn't want my kids to see him.¹⁴⁵

This was not a universal response from all of the Algerians in the audience, and other friends told me after the concert that they had enjoyed it. But Taha's

¹⁴⁴ *Rock el Casbah* is Taha's cover of the hit song *Rock the Casbah* by British punk band The Clash. He was joined on stage by Clash guitarist Mick Jones, who played on this song and throughout the rest of his set.

¹⁴⁵ Interview, July 2013.

performance certainly divided opinion, and provoked more negative responses than any other Algerian music event that I have attended in London.



3.8: Rachid Taha on stage at the Barbican (Getty Images)

The reactions amongst Algerians after the concert were certainly extremely mixed, and the lack of consensus amongst those who had been present was particularly significant. One French-born Algerian friend, whose attitudes and musical preferences are typically quite conservative, said that she thought Taha's performance had been 'amazing', and recounted how she had enjoyed dancing with friends in front of the stage throughout his set. In contrast, an Algerian musician who usually has much broader musical tastes, was highly critical of Taha, arguing that,

He should leave it alone. He can do his fusion stuff, he can still do that and be famous. But leave the Algerian scene, it's not for him any more'. Did you see him at the start, asking the drummer when to start? Asking for a cue? He didn't know what he was doing or when he was starting.¹⁴⁶

He went on to express the opinion (which seemed widely held amongst Algerians) that the combination of Massi and Taha at the same event had been ill judged on the part of the festival's organisers, stating that 'it doesn't work, you can't put the two of them together. You have Souad Massi play this great show,

¹⁴⁶ Interview, Jul 2013.

and then Taha comes on and does that. It doesn't work, it's not a good concert'.¹⁴⁷

The concert proved more controversial amongst Algerian listeners than either of the other events discussed in this chapter. One explanation that was presented for this suggested that as artists living in the diaspora (in France) themselves, neither Taha nor Massi were able to provide the sense of reconnection with the *bled* that Algerians in London crave. In other words, as both musicians were themselves part of the transnational diaspora, they were considered to be disconnected from life in contemporary Algeria, and therefore somehow less 'authentic'. One musician was keen to state, 'don't forget, Souad Massi and Rachid Taha are in France. Therefore people detach themselves from them'. She went on to frame this with reference to the performances by El Gusto and Hamidou, arguing that in the case of the latter, Algerian audiences,

Know he's more fun. He's more home!...[with the *El Gusto Orchestra, Rachid Taha and Souad Massi*] you can't feel as close. With Hamidou, he was there, he was close, you can talk to him. At the Barbican you couldn't. And also because it's organised by one person who is part of the community, it becomes more of a family affair. So people will come, and you've seen them queuing to get things signed and to give him a kiss. So it becomes more familiar, immediately, and everybody is asking 'when's the next one?'¹⁴⁸

This description, which was repeated by a number of people who had attended these concerts, neatly summarises the reactions of many Algerians in London. Whilst the three events all involved performances of Algerian music, the responses of Algerian audience members varied significantly, and the ways in which members of the local diaspora were involved or excluded from each concert helped, in part, to shape these reactions. The promotion of this particular concert, and the *Shubbak* festival more broadly, was clearly divorced from the understandings of many Algerians, and the programming of these particular artists at the same event was, as far as many Algerians were concerned, an apparent misjudgement on the part of the concert's organisers.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Interview, July 2013

Large-scale public performances of Algerian musics in London remain rare, and this means that when such events take place they are able to attract a high level of attendance from within the city's local diaspora. The scarcity of these performances also heightens their potential impact, both shaping the ways in which Algerians perceive themselves as underrepresented and marginalised within the city, and significantly influencing understandings of Algerian culture amongst a non-Algerian public.

3.9 Conclusions

These three public performances of Algerian music in London highlight discrepancies in the ways in which such events are programmed and promoted, and require us to consider the types of interaction and involvement that members of the local Algerian diaspora have with such concerts. These events are significant for the city's diaspora as they offer a site for social interaction and cultural reconnection, provide a physical space within which Algerians are able to collectively perform their Algerianness, and supply an opportunity to showcase Algerian music and to shape wider public understandings of Algerian culture in the city. However, it is clear that such performances are shaped not only by members of the diaspora, but by other parties, who mediate Algerian culture within the public sphere, and whose interests are often focussed outside of local diasporic networks in London.

In attempting to interpret these relationships, I return to Mark Slobin's tripartite theoretical model for understanding 'micromusics' within contemporary Euro-American cultures. Slobin identifies micromusics as those existing outside of the mainstream, placing them on the periphery, and describes them as 'the small units within big musical cultures'. He goes on to suggest that micromusics 'are proliferating today as part of a great resurgence of regional and national feeling and the rapid deterritorialization of large populations, particularly in the Euro-American sphere' (1993: 11). Algerian musics in contemporary London certainly appear to meet these criteria, with their apparent marginalisation from the mainstream offset by their enduring importance for the local diaspora, for

whom they act as a symbol of national and cultural pride. Algerians and Algerian culture is thus 'deterritorialised', not only through the fracturing and separation of the diaspora from 'homeland', but also in the lack of defined physical spaces for Algerian culture to inhabit in contemporary London. As such, identifiers of culture, and in particular music, become important in shaping a shared sense of localised Algerianness. Algerian music finds itself as a 'small unit' within a 'big musical culture', and is at the heart of collective feelings of regional and national pride for the local diaspora.

This situation enables us to consider Algerian music in London as a micromusic, with its status as such substantiated by both broad public understandings and by the subsequent acceptance of marginalisation amongst members of the diaspora. Whilst it is undeniably problematic to conceive of a single 'mainstream' of British society, I suggest that the wider 'public' (by which I mean non-Algerian society in the city) might form the superculture, which is juxtaposed with the subculture of Algerian music in London. This relationship, I argue, is formed of essential power relations, with the superculture evidencing the dominant hegemonic position, which Slobin suggests includes 'the quiet agents of ideology that define the everyday [and] circumscribe the expressive' (1993: 33). In other words, it is the values and beliefs of the superculture that marginalise the subculture (Algerian music) in London, and shape the ways in which a non-Algerian public conceives it. This is not intended to suggest a lack of agency on the part of Algerian musicians and audiences in the city, but rather to note that Algerian culture remains peripheral, even in comparison to other diasporas residing in London.¹⁴⁹

Given this position, it is necessary to consider the ways in which this relationship is mediated, and who is involved in facilitating such mediation. In the previous chapter I showed the variety of musicking activities within the Algerian diaspora in London, and the intentions of such performances, from circumscribed contexts (such as cafes) to public arenas (such as 'multicultural'

¹⁴⁹ I am thinking here of the place of, for example, Indian, Japanese, and South American diasporic cultures in London. Whilst each of these diasporas remains outside of the mainstream of the superculture, they are nevertheless more widely acknowledged and understood than the culture and musics of Algeria.

festivals). Whilst these performance contexts varied significantly, the ways in which Algerian music was presented in each was prescribed (predominantly) by members of the local diaspora. The same might be said of Hamidou's performance at Cargo, which was organised and promoted by an Algerian, and was attended primarily by members of the local Algerian population. However, in the case of the two concerts at the Barbican, it is clear that the ways in which Algerian music was exhibited were dictated not by Algerians, but rather by the venue and events organisers, whose interactions with the local diaspora were minimal.

For Slobin, the interculture describes a form of mediating power that both shapes localised cultural interactions and also 'extends beyond the issues of the lively, charged, and even tumultuous interaction of parts of a "society" within nation-state bounds' (1993a: 61). The interculture is therefore at the heart of glocalisation, bringing together the local and global. The agents who programmed and promoted the events at the Barbican aligns most closely with Slobin's notion of the 'industrial interculture', for whom the commercial imperative is fundamental. This interculture might also include other elements, such as Safinez Bousbia's documentary film of *El Gusto* (as part of what Appadurai terms the mediascape), and the wider promotional narratives employed (Appadurai's ideoscapes) to promote the orchestra, Massi and Taha to non-Algerian audiences at venues throughout Europe and North America. As such, the interculture may function transnationally, shaping musical flows and cultural understandings that crosscut national boundaries as part of Appadurai's global 'scapes'. However, the interculture, within the context of such public musical performances, may also function more locally, acting as the primary agent in mediating Algerian culture between the subculture and superculture, and shaping understandings of Algerian music amongst non-Algerian listeners. Their intentions are not to directly improve the situation of Algerians living in London, nor to develop wider appreciation of Algerian culture, but are rather commercial interests, in the shape of ticket sales, and purchases of recordings and films.

If Slobin's model helps to explain the flows of Algerian music within London, then I suggest that musicking also takes place on certain 'stages', both physical (such as in concert halls like the Barbican and Southbank) and metaphysical (such as local and transnational public 'stages' or spheres within which music is mediated). Shannon's concept of the 'world stage' is based upon such an understanding, and his notion that this provides the 'representational practice and staging principle' for music helps to explicate the relationship between the different elements within Slobin's theory. On a global scale, the 'world stage' explains the flow of musicians and music between different venues in different cities, whereby El Gusto, Rachid Taha and Souad Massi may perform in a different country each night. In each of these locations, they might play to members of a local Algerian diaspora, but also attract world music audiences, for whom similar, apparently transnational, promotional narratives are employed. For example, in a piece about El Gusto in *The New York Times*, Elaine Sciolino ignores the vibrant *chaabi* scene that endures in both the *bled* and the diaspora, and writes that,

The musicians of the Casbah of old Algiers were bent and broken by history. The bars and cafes that flourished under French colonial rule were their livelihood, so the war that brought independence in 1962 meant the end of their way of life — and of their distinctive music. (Sciolino, 2012)

Garry Maddox, writing in the Australian *Sydney Morning Herald* about Bousbia's documentary film continues this theme, reporting that,

Chaabi — the effervescent popular music of the Casbah of Algiers — once brought both Muslim and Jewish musicians together in a unique orchestra. The 1954 War of Independence fractured this harmony, forcing many musicians to flee, while others joined the struggle.' (Maddox, 2012).

And in an article for *The National*, a daily newspaper based in Abu Dhabi, Saeed Saeed places the orchestra firmly within the category of world music, writing that,

World music is full of artists lost and found. From the chart-topping Cuban collective Buena Vista Social Club to the American folk musician Sixto Rodriguez, the genre holds numerous tales of artists reuniting to rekindle that old magic. For the El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers - also known simply as El Gusto - the big comeback began in 2007 when headlining a reunion concert in the French city of Marseilles. (Saeed, 2013)

These three examples draw upon the same ideas (tradition, 'authenticity', cultural loss, Judeo-Islamic understanding and tolerance, etc.) that were used by the Barbican to promote the orchestra in London, and this suggests that the meanings that have been attached to the ensemble and used to publicise them can be transferred from one context to another, following the orchestra's movement between cities around the world through what Appadurai terms the 'mediascape'.

As a space for representation and staging, Shannon's 'world stage' might also exist at a local level, not only as a physical entity within concert venues, but also as a space within which musics are publicly performed, and diasporic and non-diasporic audiences interact. It is here that a form of collective musicking is most evident, in the relationships and understandings between the performers on stage and the audience drawn from the diaspora, and in the performativity that such relationships embody. These performances produce localised meanings, both enabling Algerians to enact and reconnect with their sense of cultural identity, and by mediating the relationship between the diasporic (Algerian) and non-diasporic (world music audience) subcultures. This, I suggest, is a form of glocalisation, not simply as the introduction of global elements into a local culture, but as a far more complex and fluid process within which the local and global interact. The global here is formed of both the music (*chaabi*, *rai*, Algerian Berber musics, etc.) and the meanings that are attached to it (religious understanding, positive representations of Arabic cultures etc.), whilst the local constitutes a general public (the superculture), and subcultures in the shape of both a local diaspora and a world music audience. It is the relationship between these elements, and the multiplicity of meanings that their encounters produce, to which, I argue, Roudometof refers when he writes of the different 'life-worlds' of those living within the same cosmopolitan urban areas,

and of 'transnational social space' (2005: 116). As such, these musical events are themselves performances of glocalisation, through staged collective cultural acts, which mediate the local and transnational. Glocalisation then, within the context of such concerts, is not simply an abstract notion of the encounter between the local and global, but rather a fluid and performative negotiation of cultural identity through acts of musicking.

In the case of Hamidou's performance, the esteem bestowed upon him as both a respected musician and as a symbol of the *bled*, attracted a local Algerian audience, and enabled a collective performance of Algerianness. This 'stage' provided not only an opportunity for interaction amongst Algerians, but for a performance of collective identity and a reconnection with the culture of the homeland. In contrast, the two concerts at the Barbican provided a stage for the intercultural mediation of Algerian music, facilitating encounters and interactions within a public space. The complexity of musicking in such contexts was apparent, with multiple meanings and understandings produced for musicians and audience members alike. These were once again simultaneously local (enabling performances of Algerianness amongst the local diaspora, addressing issues of Islamophobia, etc.) and global (reifying transnational understandings of *chaabi* and Middle Eastern politics, etc.), and therefore provide further evidence of the complexity of contemporary glocalisation.

Whilst members of the local Algerian diaspora were actively engaged as audience members in each of these performance contexts, there remains an enduring sense that they were marginalised, and often disregarded, by the types of concert that took place at the Barbican. Whereas Hamidou's performance underscored the agency of Algerians in London in programming musical events for the benefit of the city's diaspora, both events at the Barbican made little attempt to engage with this diasporic community. The commercial desires of the interculture, in the shape of the venue and the *Shubbak* festival, superseded any effort to incorporate Algerians into the events, and the narratives employed to promote each concert were divorced from the understandings of those with a sense of culture ownership over the music being performed. As such, the stage for Algerian music that was provided by the

Barbican may have offered a public forum for performances of Algerian culture and identity, but did little to directly support or improve the situation of the marginalised local Algerian diaspora in London.

Laurent Aubert writes of the pivotal role that world music plays in cultural encounters, exchanges and dialogues in the cities of Europe and North America, suggesting that,

In a multicultural environment such as that of large Western cities, one notes that world music represents at the same time emblems valorising identities and communication links between communities; they constitute one of the rare domains in which the individuals' integration does not imply the assimilation of dominant models. (2007: 14)

There is certainly truth in the claim that such musics may reinforce identities and challenge models of cultural homogeneity, and I suggest that music is one of main ways in which Algerians demarcate themselves and their culture within London. However, in the case of the two events at the Barbican, the mediating narratives within which they were set were divorced from the understandings and realities of the Algerian diaspora living and working within the city. Although Hamidou's 'public' performance clearly remained circumscribed almost exclusively within local diasporic networks, the differences between this event and those at the Barbican, which made little effort to engage with Algerians in London, is starkly apparent. There is little doubt that in order to attract local non-Algerian audiences it was necessary for the intercultural to employ alluring promotional narratives, but when this remains so divorced from the understandings of those whose culture is being performed on stage, the ethical validity of such forms of publicity must be in question. The discord between mediation and performance, of both music and cultural identity, is therefore apparent in the differences between these three performances, and in the complex interactions between the local and global, and Algerian and non-Algerian, it is apparent that public performances of Algerian music in contemporary London form part of complex and fluid musicking processes.

Chapter 4: Music and Mediation

This chapter is concerned with the mediation of Algerian musics in contemporary London, investigating the ways in which various forms of mediation shape understandings of contemporary culture amongst the local Algerian diaspora and the city's wider public. In contrast with the previous chapter, this discussion considers the agency of Algerians within these processes, and examines how individual and collective acts of mediation contribute to the construction of Algerian identities and the production of an Algerian musical culture in London.

The chapter focuses upon three distinct examples drawn from my ethnographic fieldwork. The first two instances examine the role of technologies: first by exploring the role of the Internet, and particularly social media, in facilitating Algerian musicking in London; and then by analysing the city's only Algerian radio station, whose content is programmed for the benefit of the local diaspora. Here I focus upon how technologies have been adopted and employed by the diaspora, in order to construct and reify local diasporic musicking networks, and to shape the lives of Algerians in London. The final example of mediation considers issues of public representation by examining the promotional narratives employed by Algerian musicians in the city to publicise themselves and their music, and places these processes within theoretical discourses of mimesis, alterity and auto-exoticism.

4.1 Theories of Music, Media and Mediation

A number of scholars have considered the mediation of music, and have focussed upon both the dissemination of physical musical artefacts (scores, audio and video recordings, etc.) and the mediation of musical meaning. Carsten Lenk (1999), for example, examines the idea of folk music cultivation (*Volksmusikpflege*) in post-war Germany, focussing upon radio broadcasting and songbook publication, and highlighting how this helped to formalise the music of a local oral culture. Henry Johnson (2004) is concerned with the music of the Ogasawara islands of southern Japan, and he suggests that the

appropriation of the islands' music by commercially successful popular musicians has acted as a form of mediation between Ogasawara culture and the wider Japanese public. The success of these musicians' recordings is, for Johnson, partially explained by their representation as 'exotic' to Japanese audiences, and in this regard demonstrates similarities with the auto-exoticism employed by Algerian musicians in London (discussed later in this chapter). Karl Neuenfeldt's (1991) work also focuses upon the ways in which music can mediate cultural and political meanings for those existing on the fringe of society. Neuenfeldt examines how popular music recordings by indigenous musicians in Canada, Australia and Norway comment upon, and in the process mediate, political issues, and he argues that,

What are being mediated, nationally and internationally, are "public problems" - such as conflicting claims to land and resources, perceived inequities within legal systems, access to educational and social services, and the more basic issue of whose perspective will define the "problem maker" and the "problem solver". (1991)

This leads him to conclude that 'Western popular music as used by indigenous peoples is a medium and means of expression, not an end in and of itself; the medium is not necessarily the message but rather a site where inter-ethnic mediation and communication can take place' (1991).

Other writers see acts of musical performance as forms of mediation, through which meanings are constructed and negotiated. Christopher Small's (1998) influential concept of musicking, which broadens the definition of music-making beyond acts of musical performance, is employed throughout this thesis, and proposes a collective social process that shapes both performative acts and understandings of music. The introduction of the verb musicking, Small argues, enables us to see music as a process through which meaning is enacted, and he suggests that,

The fundamental nature and meaning of music lie not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do. It is only by understanding what people do as they take part in a musical act that we can hope to understand its nature and the function it fulfils in human life. (1998: 8)

My own use of the term mediation is formed around this concept of musicking, and I focus particularly upon human actions within processes of musical mediation. This is not to deny the importance of physical artefacts, such as recordings and instruments, in such processes, and my work here also examines the uses and functions of Internet technologies and the radio. However, my emphasis is upon the intentions and outcomes of human processes of mediation, and the ways in which these technologies are used by musicians and listeners to create and shape understandings of Algerian music and culture.

Georgina Born argues that music ‘favours associations or assemblages between musicians and instruments, composers and scores, listeners and sound systems – that is, between subjects and objects’ (2005: 7). She has identified ‘four orders of social mediation’¹⁵⁰, and suggests that these are,

Irreducible to one another; they are articulated in non-linear and contingent ways through conditioning, affordance or causality. While they are invariably treated separately in discussions of music and the social, all four orders enter into musical experience. The first two orders amount to socialities, social relations and imaginaries that are assembled specifically by musical practice. The last two orders, in contrast, amount to wider social conditions that themselves afford certain kinds of musical practice although these conditions also permeate music’s socialities and imagined communities, just as music inflects these wider conditions. In all these ways music is immanently social, as ethnomusicology has long demonstrated by testifying to those many musics of the world in which there is little separation between musical and social processes. (2010: 232-233)

¹⁵⁰ Born describes these ‘four orders’ thus: ‘The first order equates to the practice turn: here music produces its own socialities □ in performance, in musical ensembles, in the musical division of labour, in listening. Second, music animates imagined communities, aggregating its listeners into virtual collectivities or publics based on musical and other identifications.¹⁰⁵ Third, music mediates wider social relations, from the most abstract to the most intimate: music’s embodiment of stratified and hierarchical social relations, of the structures of class, race, nation, gender and sexuality, and of the competitive accumulation of legitimacy, authority and social prestige. Fourth, music is bound up in the large-scale social, cultural, economic and political forces that provide for its production, reproduction or transformation, whether elite or religious patronage, mercantile or industrial capitalism, public and subsidized cultural institutions, or late capitalism’s multi- polar cultural economy’ (2010: 232)

This description importantly highlights the complexity of musical mediation, and Born's insistence upon the enduring relationship between musical and social processes helps our understanding of Algerian musicking practices in London. Born also offers extensive critical readings of a number of prominent theories of mediation, including the works of Theodor Adorno and Tia DeNora. She places particular emphasis upon the work of anthropologist Alfred Gell, suggesting that he reveals 'music as a medium that destabilizes some of our most cherished dualisms concerning the separation not only of subject from object, but present from past, individual from collectivity, the authentic from the artificial, and production from reception' (2005: 8). She concludes that theories of musical mediation should 'trace the historical trajectories of musical assemblages, reconnecting them to analyses of the macro-dynamics of cultural history and technological change', and that 'through an analysis of its mediations, finally, music is revealed as the exemplary locus of diverse modes of creativity: social, distributed and relayed. In this way it offers unparalleled grounds for rethinking creativity itself' (2005: 34).

Nabil Echchaibi's (2011) work is immediately relevant to the subject of this thesis, and his study considers issues of mediation, diaspora and media, with an ethnographic focus upon the Berlin radio station Radio Multikulti, and Parisian station Beur FM. Whilst Beur FM, which serves France's large North African population, is clearly apposite to this study, it is the author's reading of the relationship between media and diaspora that proves most illuminating. Diasporic media is, for Echchaibi, not simply a mechanism for communicative broadcasting, but rather a space within which issues of identity are mediated and negotiated. He conceives of this as a relatively new phenomenon, writing that,

The upsurge of new communication through satellite technologies and the Internet has created media spaces where both the national and the transnational converge to inform and define the identities of the diaspora. These spaces are far from being monolithic, nor are they free of ideological tensions of belonging. Diasporic media, therefore, could potentially become a platform where diasporic groups are presented with a range of cultural options to choose or not to choose from. In their diversity, they propose belonging options beyond limiting binaries of

mainstream or minority and help forge subjectivities beyond the national.
(2011: 58)

As Echchaibi argues, the idea that diasporic media produce either cultural inclusion or exclusion is highly problematic, and he is therefore keen to demonstrate the diversity of diasporic media and its uses. The recognition that such forms of mediation are heterogeneous accords with my own experiences of the use of various forms of media by Algerians in London.

The transnational proliferation of media technologies, particularly the Internet, has radically altered the connections formed between diasporic populations around the world and their national 'homelands'. Emails, video calls, social media and file sharing have enabled almost instantaneous communication, and have shaped the ways in which music flows within diasporic networks, facilitating the online circulation of sounds and images between musicians and listeners. At the same time, national and transnational media channels make increasing use of the Internet in order to cater for diasporic populations abroad. Su Zheng suggests that the important role played by this media has become increasingly characteristic of diasporic life, and she writes that,

The mass media have become an essential constituent of every social and cultural system, and music transmitted by the media and consumed through indirect participation has dominated the soundscapes of contemporary musical life. It is no surprise then that, owing to the great distance between immigrants and their home countries, music transmitted by the media has formed a particularly great portion of the immigrants' musical world. (2010: 206)

Myria Georgiou (2005) examines various forms of diasporic media in Europe, and notes that whilst such media are sometimes accused of reinforcing insular, bounded notions of national and ethnic identity, most gain financial and infrastructural support from the countries in which they are based. This leads her to highlight the problematic nature of conceiving of diasporic media in Europe through binary notions of universalism and particularism (i.e. cultural integration versus cultural insularity), and she argues that,

The diffusion of such ideologies allows space for projects such as diasporic media, which are global in their reach but particular in their cultural role. In their vast majority, such projects celebrate particularism within universalism and rely on the assumption that they can function as particular, different and unique projects, because the present condition (of universalism) allows space for all different and unique projects to emerge and develop. (2005: 7)

Andrew Hammond's work considers some of the issues affecting the production and reception of popular culture in the Arab world, and the various ways in which this has shaped local and transnational identities. He suggests that for many people their sense of an Arab identity is as important as their nationality, and argues that 'in television, news media, music, cinema, sports and so many other aspects of popular culture, Arab identity is a living reality' (2007: 15). He brings together issues of identity construction and mediation, writing that,

The Internet is forming a mini-revolution, a version of the wider one that took place with Arabic satellite television. All sorts of repressed, hidden debates and socio-political groups have been afforded space, from arguments over who built the pyramids to Islamist politics to belly dancing. (2007: 121)

However, whilst there is a degree of pan-Arab unity evident amongst the Algerian diaspora in London, a sense of collective Algerian identity and cultural pride is more immediately apparent. Nevertheless, the types of spaces that Hammond suggests are created by media technologies are undoubtedly discernable in the forms of mediation that enable Algerian music to flow between musicians and audiences in the city. As such, the mediation of Algerian musical forms and meanings in London is both local, with particular meanings for members of the city's diaspora, and transnational, in sharing typical characteristics with diasporas elsewhere.

The Internet has become one of the primary forms of communication for Algerians living in London. For many, social media websites (such as Facebook) and video-conferencing platforms (like Skype) enable instantaneous interaction with those in the *bled*, maintaining contact with friends and relatives, and providing a platform for musicians to distribute their music amongst Algerian audiences. Given the cost and time commitments involved in travelling

from London to Algeria, it is unsurprising that Internet usage is so prevalent. The Internet is also an important space for social interaction amongst those residing in the city, and overcomes many of the issues of physical dispersal and cultural fragmentation that characterise much of Algerian life in London. Social media, in particular, offers not only a means for communicating information, but for meeting other Algerians, and Facebook groups (with titles such as ‘Algerians of London’, ‘Algerian Community in UK’, and ‘Algerian Women Diaspora’) attract members from across the city and throughout Britain. The topics of discussions within such groups range from requests for help and advice, and deliberations on life in the *bled*, to (frequently heated) debates about national and international political issues. Such interactions are usually closely entwined with physical interactions amongst members of the diaspora, and are often linked with cultural events taking place in the city.

Whilst the diffusion of Internet access is often associated with globalisation, and can lead to accusations of enforced homogeneity, certain scholars have highlighted the ways that the Internet can be utilised at the local level to enhance pre-existing relationships. Stefana Broadbent, for example, writes that,

The proliferation of new media channels for people’s everyday lives is not necessarily the extension of new social connections on a global scale or the cultivation of social capital, but rather the intensification of a small group of highly intimate relationships that have now managed to match the richness of their social connectedness with a richness of multiple communication channels. (2012: 131)

Such localisation disrupts binary notions of online/offline and virtual/physical, and evidences the ways in which the Internet is embedded within wider social practices, such as collective musicking processes. As Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller (2012) importantly state,

Online worlds are simply another arena, alongside offline worlds, for expressive practice, and there is no reason to privilege one over the other. Every time we use the word real analytically, as opposed to colloquially, we undermine the project of digital anthropology, fetishizing predigital culture as a site of retained authenticity. (2012: 13)

My use of the term mediation in this chapter therefore draws upon a broad body of literature in seeking to understand Algerian musical practices in London. I use the term mediation throughout the subsequent discussion to describe the mediating role of both technologies (the Internet and broadcast radio) and practices (auto-exoticism) in the consumption and appreciation of Algerian music, both locally and transnationally. However, I primarily conceive of mediation as a way of describing the relationship between musical and social processes, of the role played by music in simultaneously shaping and reflecting a particular diasporic culture. Mediation, I argue, is at the heart of the social relationship between music and people, and enables us to understand the important role that musicking plays in the lives of Algerians in twenty first century London.

4.2 Algerian Musicking, the Internet, and Social Media

The Internet has become for Algerians in London, like many of the city's other diasporas, a way of maintaining connections with their homeland. However, it also has important functions locally, facilitating music-making by overcoming the sense of dispersal and disconnection experienced by the city's Algerian population. Samir, a *darbuka* player and influential member of the local music scene, states his frustrations at the lack of Algerian events taking place in London, and the subsequent shortage of performance opportunities for musicians. Having lived in the city for a number of years, however, he also notes that the Internet and social media has changed things, making the promotion of music far easier, and he states that 'thank God that there are social things, on the internet, so you can communicate, leave a message, even share an event'.¹⁵¹

Social media is particularly popular amongst local Algerian promoters because it offers an effective and free platform for publicising events, and this is an important consideration given the limited income produced by most Algerian

¹⁵¹ Interview, 18th March 2014.

concerts in the city. Rachida Lamri, who organised the Hamidou event (discussed in chapter three), used social media to distribute virtual flyers, and the venue's online booking system for ticket sales. Although she notes the suspicions and reluctance of an Algerian audience to pay for tickets prior to the concert, she also acknowledges that using the Internet has allowed her to track sales and target her online promotional campaign, and suggests that this is important because of the limited market for Algerian musical events in London. Tia, a French-born Algerian music promoter, describes the Internet as 'the easiest way to promote an artist, to do it online. Everything is digital now'.¹⁵² Whilst social media is an increasingly common form of publicity for nearly all musical events in London, the specific challenges faced by promoters within the city's Algerian diaspora make it vital. Not only does the Internet enable events to be publicised to an Algerian audience spread across London, but it also overcomes some of the difficulties created by a lack of physical spaces for Algerians within London. With few sites provided for the diaspora to congregate, printed publicity materials such as flyers and posters are of little use, and Tia, recalling a recent event, explains that 'when I did the gig, I didn't even print flyers. I was like "you know what, it's a small venue, I don't need flyers, I can do that just using social media". And that is exactly what we did'.¹⁵³ This, she suggests, is due to the limited scope of many Algerian music concerts in London, and, drawing contrasts with other events, notes that,

For me, I will use flyers if I had an event in a venue that had a capacity of four, five, six hundred. Then you need flyers, but otherwise no. I know that the Algerian Cultural Festival, the committee, used flyers, but they had a bigger venue. It was a bigger event, a longer event, so you need it. And they wanted to attract as much of the Algerian community as possible, and to reach out to all different types of Algerians to bring them together.¹⁵⁴

Alongside postings on Facebook and Twitter, the Algerian Cultural Festival also used SoundCloud to host audio interviews with those performing and exhibiting

¹⁵² Interview, 16th May 2013

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

at the event, through which the artists both voiced their excitement at the forthcoming festival, and stated the need for more Algerian cultural events in the city. Many of those attending the event stated that they had heard about it via social media, and one of the festival's organisers later reflected that the posters and flyers they had printed had done little to increase attendance. Another spoke about a conversation he had had with a group of Algerians who had travelled from Manchester to London for the festival, having heard about it online, and suggested that 'they just wanted to be part of it, and that is social media working perfectly at the time'.¹⁵⁵

However, whilst larger events like the Algerian Cultural Festival obviously have greater resources than other smaller concerts, they still remain limited by financial constraints. The events staged by independent promoters like Tia and Rachida and small organisations like Culturama are usually personally financed, and they therefore rely almost exclusively upon social media as the only cost effective form of publicity. The only other form of financial support generally available for Algerian music events in the city is occasional sponsorship from independent businesses,¹⁵⁶ and as a result, many musicians are forced to perform at private venues, which are able to attract audiences from outside of the local diaspora but often pay poorly.¹⁵⁷ This lack of financial infrastructure is a common complaint amongst both promoters and musicians, and the Algerian authorities in the city (in the shape of the Algerian embassy and consulate) are regularly condemned for failing to support the local diaspora. One events organiser remembers talking to a senior figure from the embassy, who offered their support and stated that 'yes, we will continue to encourage you to do this. Because the community is always saying we don't help them and they hate us.

¹⁵⁵ Interview, March 2014.

¹⁵⁶ *Air Algérie*, for example, sometimes provides small amounts of financial backing, or free travel for performers from Algeria, for musical events. This is not a widespread or guaranteed form of sponsorship, and some promoters have informed me that they are unwilling to accept any financial support from private businesses, of whom they are apparently suspicious.

¹⁵⁷ Some Algerian musicians and promoters in London perform at private venues, including restaurants and, in one particular case, at a large casino. Whilst these venues are often located in central London, and therefore have a certain sense of prestige, they often take a significant percentage of ticket sale revenue.

We want to bring the relationship closer together.’¹⁵⁸ In the end, the promised financial support for the event was not forthcoming. As a result, attracting paying customers to events is vital for the on-going viability of Algerian music in London, and this explains the heightened importance of the Internet in facilitating promotion.

The Internet also allows Algerian musicians in London to connect with listeners outside of the city, and affords opportunities to distribute music amongst audiences in France and the *bled*. Websites that host audio and video content (such as YouTube, Vimeo and SoundCloud) are particularly popular, and have been embraced by a younger generation of musicians performing hip-hop and *rai*. Rapper Raouf Ahear, for example, had gained a degree of fame within the underground hip-hop scene in Algeria before he moved to Britain at the age of 17. Whilst he has worked with a number of Algerian and non-Algerian musicians since arriving in the UK, and has become increasingly popular with a young Algerian listenership, he accepts that his reputation in Algeria did little to help his career in Britain, and much of his audience is still based in the *bled*. He has been able to use the Internet to distribute his mix tapes, and social media to draw attention to his music, and this has allowed him to connect with a transnational audience, particularly in France and Algeria.¹⁵⁹ The Internet is therefore not only perceived as reaching a far wider listenership than was previously possible, but also provides a free (or low-cost) form of distribution, which is important for those unlikely to gain significant income from their music. For musicians involved in more ‘traditional’ musical styles, such as *andalus* and *chaabi*, these websites are more commonly used to access older recordings by established and respected musicians from their respective genres. The Al-Andalus Caravan, for example, use their ensemble’s private Facebook group to share videos of esteemed Algerian *andalusi* performers, and this forms an important part of their pedagogical processes and the development of their collective performance practices (see chapter five for further discussion).

¹⁵⁸ Interview, July 2013.

¹⁵⁹ Interview, 28th September 2012

Another explanation for the popularity of the Internet as a channel of distribution is the previous experience of many Algerian musicians, who have often encountered piracy in the *bled*. Musicians recall how their recordings, when sold in physical formats, have been copied and broadcast illegally, and with piracy still commonplace in Algeria, the idea of distributing music for free online is considered less problematic, as many performers have grown accustomed to receiving little or no financial compensation for their recorded work. One Algerian friend asked how I obtained recordings of Algerian music, and when I explained that most were sourced from online suppliers or record shops in London, she laughed and offered to purchase copies from a local market when she next visited Algeria. Acknowledging that piracy was widespread in the *bled*, she suggested that few Algerian listeners paid for legal copies of recordings, and informed me that ‘if you give me twenty pounds, I can buy you whatever music you want!’¹⁶⁰

Issues around copyright and piracy have been a concern for Algerian musicians for a number of years, and has been a theme that scholars have touched upon. Jane E. Goodman (2005) writes about music copyright in Algeria, and highlights the disputes that emerged from the ‘New Kabyle Song’ movement of the 1970s, whereby commercially successful musicians were accused of plagiarising Berber folk traditions. Goodman suggests that many of these problems arose from varying understandings of what constitutes the ‘public domain’ in Algeria (2005: 145-161). Tony Langlois (1996), in his work on the production of commercial *rai*, notes that even at the height of *rai*’s international popularity, many Algerian composers and musicians relinquished their copyright claims, and therefore failed to gain fair remuneration for their music. Given this legacy, and the on-going problems of music piracy in Algeria, the Internet is often considered a way of maintaining a degree of control over the distribution of music.

Karim Dellali has been involved in music projects in London over a number of years, and recalls his own experiences with piracy and copyright issues in Algeria. As a member of the group Fantazia, Karim remembers

¹⁶⁰ Personal conversation, June 2013

attempting to gain exposure for their music in the *bled*, and argues that ‘Algeria is the worst place for copyright’, stating that, ‘in the old days, musicians and record companies (in Algeria) used to bootleg their own records, when they wanted to get a gig. They would get some records bootlegged, and they would sell them in the market. It was just their marketing, their promotion’. In contrast, he sees the Internet as offering opportunities for Algerian musicians, suggesting that ‘with the modern media, you can bang it on YouTube and you get a better listenership’.¹⁶¹

Karim’s assertion that piracy and bootlegging has been considered a legitimate form of promotion in Algeria fits with Marc Schade-Poulsen’s (1999) observations about the complex system that surrounded the distribution of *rai* music in Algeria in the 1980s and 1990s, whereby publishers sold directly to individual retailers. Noting that this created a complex system that made it almost impossible to produce exact data on record sales, he records that whilst different publishers often formed alliances, some were also actively engaged in piracy. He reports that,

To some extent, alliances could prevent a similar product from being put on the market at the same time or prevent competing pirate versions from being released in the market within a few weeks of each other, but only to a certain degree. Thus one publisher was known to have pirated products of others for years without anyone being able to react. The story was that he had close relations with people in power in Algeria. (1999: 55)

Karim remembers encountering similar problems within the Algerian media and music industries, and recalls once specific instance whereby,

We did actually get a contract with one of the Algerian record companies, distribution-wise. We never got paid. I did an interview on Algerian radio and we were talking about this, me and the journalist, talking about copyright...And then they played our tune. As we left there, the thing I said to him was “look, you are a national radio station and are not going to give me a penny of any tune that you play. And I know for a fact that you play Fantazia’s music all the time. I hear it on air all the time”. We never got a penny from the Algerian radio show.¹⁶²

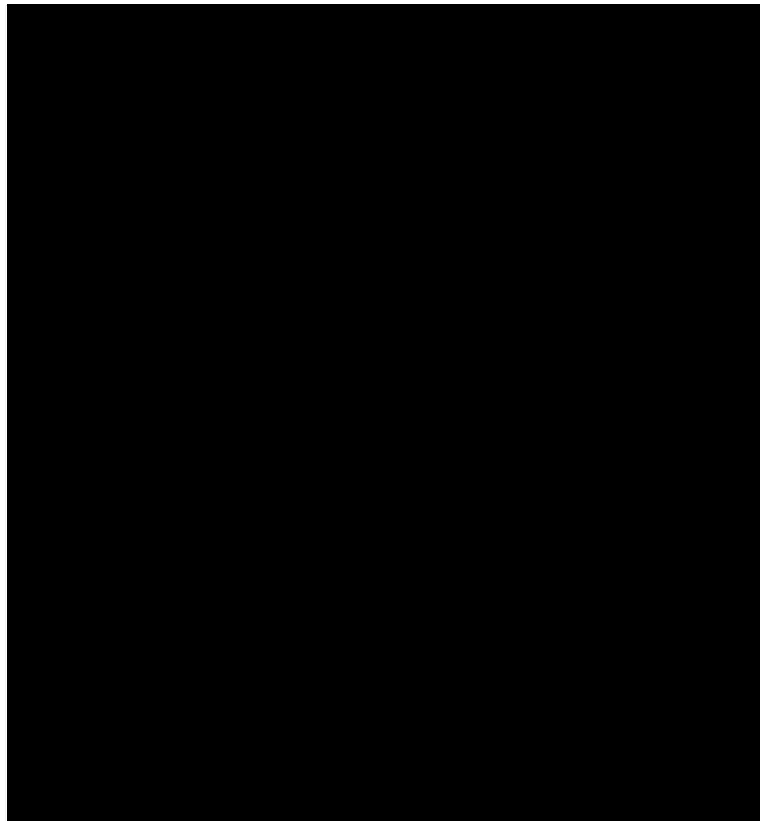
¹⁶¹ Interview 11th March 2014.

¹⁶² Ibid.

Given these experiences, it is unsurprising that musicians are often keen to employ the Internet to distribute their music amongst Algerian audiences, throughout both the diaspora and the *bled*. Although the Internet is an insecure platform that offers relatively little protection from piracy and copyright infringement, these issues are somewhat minimised by the realities of music distribution in Algeria, and the Internet is considered preferable to ceding control to radio stations or distributors in the *bled*. This does not suggest that Algerian musicians in London are ignorant of their legal entitlements, nor that they accept piracy, but rather that the Internet offers them as much security as releasing their music in a physical format in Algeria. For many of these musicians, they are afforded a greater degree of control over distribution through websites like YouTube, iTunes and Bandcamp, and with piracy rife in Algeria, they do not suffer a significant loss of earnings when compared with releasing their music on a physical format that is easy to copy. At the same time, the Internet continues to connote a sense of fashion and modernity for audiences in France and Algeria, and in employing digital platforms to sell and distribute their music, they simultaneously present the image of themselves as professional artists.

Online media also affords musicians in London greater exposure, to audiences throughout the diaspora and in the *bled*. One such example is an interview conducted by leading Algerian daily newspaper *El Watan* (The Homeland) with musician and promoter Rachida Lamri. In an article entitled '*Faire connaître la musique andalouse au Royaume-Uni est notre objectif*' ('Making *Andalus* music known in the United Kingdom is our objective'), Rachida speaks of her own musicking practices, and describes the efforts of musicians in London to raise the public profile of Algerian *andalus* in the city (Bsikri, 2013). She suggests that whilst there is enduring interest in *andalus* in the *bled*, the primary reason for the article was the fascination that Algerian readers have for news stories that do not focus solely upon the diaspora in France. Rachida argues that the piece was popular because it showed the efforts of Algerians to promote Algerian culture in Britain, and recalls the

journalist who interviewed her telling her that ‘we just like Algerians who represent Algeria well abroad’ (Interview, 26th July 2013). *El Watan* is a highly popular newspaper and source of information, with a daily readership of around 200,000 in Algeria, and is read widely amongst the diaspora in London. Rachida remembers the numerous phone calls she received after publication of the article, from both friends in London and family members back in the *bled*. As such, online media facilitates a two-way process, providing up-to-date news and information for Algerians in London, and offering occasional opportunities for musicians to publicise and promote themselves amongst Algerian audiences, both in the diaspora and in the *bled*.



4.1: An interview article with Rachida Lamri in Algerian newspaper *El Watan*, 14th July 2013. (Bsikri, 2013)

Alongside its function in enabling transnational interactions, Algerian musicians also use the Internet to facilitate local musicking practices in London. Social media is popular with the city’s diaspora, and also allows local musicians to attract non-Algerian audiences. An example of this is provided in the shape of *rai* singer Abdelkader Saadoun, whose commercial successes outside of local

diasporic networks is partly explained by his extensive online presence. Kader's own website includes his biography and listings of forthcoming events, whilst his YouTube channel includes videos of performances at a range of events, and an interview that he conducted with the BBC. It is through Facebook, however, that Kader most clearly promotes himself, with regular photographs, videos and details of future events distributed to a large network of 'friends'. The different locations of these 'friends' provide evidence of Kader's connections with a transnational network of listeners. Of his 2,600 friends, just over 500 list their location as London, whilst only 11 are from his hometown of Khemis Miliana. A large percentage comes from Algiers, with many others based in French cities, such as Paris and Lyon. He also has friends in other British cities where he has performed, such as Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool.¹⁶³ As such, he is able to maintain a transnational network of listeners, and to retain interest in his musical activities.

Whilst social media is a form of publicity commonly adopted by musicians, Kader remarks that his use of Facebook (and other online platforms) is vital for attracting audiences in London, and notes the differences with his performances in France and Algeria. He argues that,

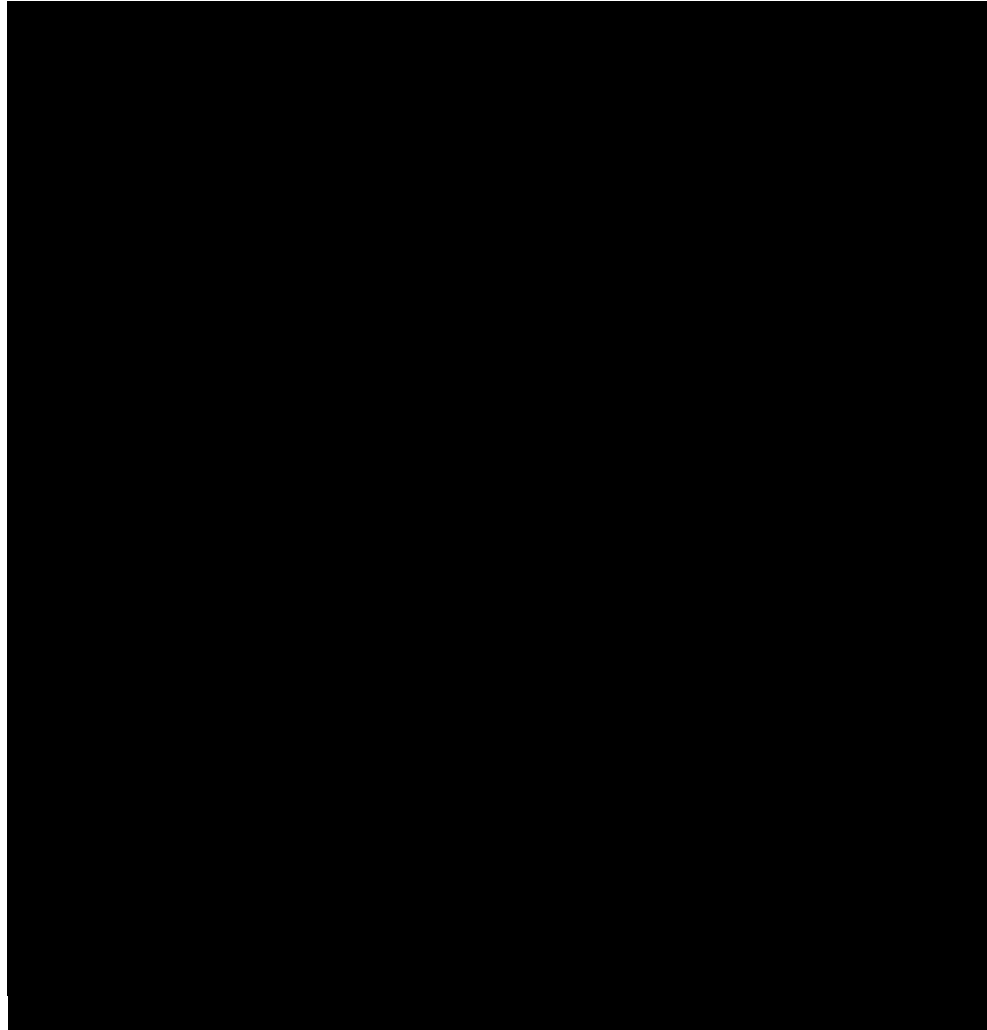
It is up to the media here [*in London*]. You can still pack the stage but you need to do a lot of work and a lot of advertising. But in France or Algeria you just say someone is singing and it just goes around, like word of mouth. Here, a lot of people need to find the news through the radio or the Internet, but in Algeria it is just word of mouth.¹⁶⁴

This reflects the perception amongst Algerian musicians that relying upon the Internet for promotion is a localised phenomenon, something that is necessary for publicising events in London but not elsewhere. For many, this is explained by a sense of a cultural marginalisation in Britain, and the feeling that Algerian music is simply not recognised outside of local diasporic networks, unlike in French society. Whereas their counterparts in France might be able to rely upon their Algerianness to attract listeners, Algerian musicians in London recognise

¹⁶³ Figures correct as of July 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Interview, 7th May 2013.

that their music does not embody the same cultural capital in Britain, highlighting another unique characteristic of the local 'secondary diaspora', and that the Internet is therefore vital for building their profile outside of local diasporic networks.



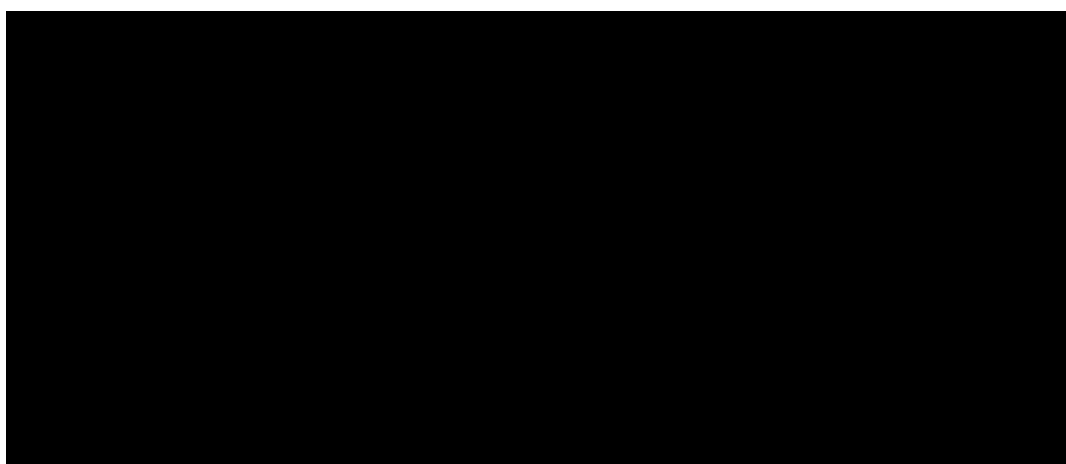
4.2: Publicity for upcoming events, and links to videos of previous performances, posted by Abdelkader Saadoun on his Facebook page.

The Internet also connects Algerians across the city, and allows younger musicians to stake their place within the local Algerian music scene. The Papers, a four-piece band formed in Reading and based in London, provide an example of this. The group contains Algerian brothers Massyl and Yazid Nait-Ladjemil, who are both of Berber extraction, and combines a range of musical styles, including hip-hop, soul and rock. Although the Algerian influences in their

music are difficult to detect, the group are keen to incorporate Algerian sounds, and Yazid recalls that,

We used to go to Bristol with Kader Saadoun. And at that stage we were learning a lot of different rhythms, a lot of different styles. Tewfik (Ouagueni) used to play and teach us a few things as well, (*but*) he's more like *chaabi* and *andalus*. But stuff like *rai*, or whatever, we're been aware of all different types (*of Algerian music*). There is definitely stuff that we want to incorporate, but without it being too thought out.¹⁶⁵

Although their music may not initially 'sound' Algerian, the brothers remain fiercely proud of their Algerian heritage. Massyl, who lives and works in Paris before returning to London for weekend rehearsals and performances, wears an Algerian football shirt whilst on stage. Yazid lives and works in London, and is an increasingly prominent and active member of the local Algerian music scene, regularly attending performances by other Algerian musicians and groups.



4.3: *The Papers* in the video for their song *Guerrizla Pt. II*, with brothers Yazid (second from left) and Massyl (second from right, in Algerian football shirt).

The group's increasing involvement with the local diaspora has led to greater recognition amongst Algerian audiences, and a pivotal moment came with their performance at the Algerian Cultural Festival in 2012. The festival embraced a broad range of music, and they appeared alongside other artists who had previously had little exposure to the diaspora, such as pop singer Yadi.¹⁶⁶ Yazid

¹⁶⁵ Interview, 19th October 2013.

¹⁶⁶ (Hannah) Yadi is a London-based singer who has gained some mainstream commercial success in Britain. Yadi's father is Algerian, and whilst there are few

recalls that ‘we played the gig at the festival, the cultural festival, and that was really cool. And we feel like we got a really good reception’.¹⁶⁷ He also suggests, however, that the group had found it difficult to translate this into longer-term engagement with local Algerian audiences, stating that,

The local Algerian community that we know, I’ve found is either students or have their own tastes. A lot of them are into politics, and musically it’s not really connecting just yet. Maybe certain tracks that are more political might work with them? But because it’s not specifically an Algerian style, it’s difficult.¹⁶⁸

For many Algerian listeners in London, the lack of distinctly Algerian musical references within the group’s songs is problematic. One Algerian musician suggests that The Papers are ‘their own kind, because when you take their band it’s formed from British people born here, and Algerians. That is the difference. It is totally British their music’.¹⁶⁹ This can be explained in part by the scarcity of opportunities to engage with Algerian music in the city. With a significant number of those living within the diaspora in London having been born in Algeria, these first-generation connections ensure that definably Algerian musics (such as *chaabi*, *rai* and *andalus*) remain popular, and Yazid acknowledges that his group’s music is ‘perhaps open to everyone except the Algerian community over here. Because they would want an Algerian thing. It’s like Cheb Nacim, even Yaz Fentazi, I guess they all cater to that’.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it is their own sense of Algerianness that makes the brothers keen to gain recognition from the local diaspora, and Yazid admits that,

I wanted the Algerians to be proud of us. We are Zidane, if you know what I mean?¹⁷¹ Even if it’s not necessarily your music, as long as you

Algerian musical references in her songs, she has employed North African iconography in her music videos.

¹⁶⁷ Interview, 19th October 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Interview, March 2014

¹⁷⁰ Interview, 19th October 2013.

¹⁷¹ Zinedine Zidane is a former professional footballer who famously won the World Cup with France in 1998. Although Zidane was born in France and played for their national team, his parents are both from Kabylia, and moved to France before he was

think it's good, it's cool and you like it, and then you see that we are Algerian. If I saw something and I was on the fence a bit with it, but then I saw that there was an Algerian flag, I'd feel like out of solidarity I should like it!

The Internet also allows the group to symbolise their Algerianness through visual images that are attached to their music, and Yazid adds that 'the whole online presence is another thing that we're learning as we're going... we'll have an Algerian flag in there in case we can push it to Algerians'.¹⁷² Nevertheless, although platforms like Facebook make it easier for them to connect with Algerians in London, the group have still experienced difficulties in engaging Algerian listeners, and whilst their videos on YouTube have built a significant fan-base, they have struggled when 'finding groups, Algerian groups, and trying to push it on that side, they weren't that receptive'.¹⁷³

The Papers have found a more favourable reception amongst audiences in the *bled*, and they believe that this is due to their music's perceived 'otherness' amongst listeners in Algeria. Algerian audiences are not only familiar with their country's musical traditions, but have also been exposed to other styles via the diasporic music scene in France, where a strong hip-hop culture, in particular, has developed. These listeners have also encountered a variety of popular musics with lyrics in English, from Europe and North America, and Algerians in London often speak of having listened to groups like The Beatles when growing up in the *bled*. The Papers believe their music can integrate all of these elements, and that it is perceived as 'Algerian', but markedly different from Algerian musical traditions or the musics emanating from the diaspora in France. Yazid explains that,

We actually tried to push it more in Algeria, back home, because we figured that they have their Algerian rap out there, *chaabi* or whatever, and ours is a bit of a different flip on things. It's European, it's Western music, but we're Algerian, there's Algerian in there.¹⁷⁴

born. He is thus often celebrated by Algerians, and held up as a symbol of the achievements of Algerians in the diaspora.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

The Internet is therefore a heterogeneous ‘third space’ for Algerian musicians, and one that fulfils multiple functions that enable musicking amongst the ‘secondary diaspora’ in London. Online interactions overcome some of the issues of physical dispersal, and encourage interactions between musicians and audiences locally, in what Carolyn Landau has called ‘intimate cyber social forums’ (2011: 46). At the same time, the Internet facilitates transnational connections, and provides opportunities for musicians to publicise themselves and their music amongst listeners in the *bled*. As such, these practices serve to problematise binaries of local/global and virtual/physical, and evidence the complex ways in which the Algerian diaspora in London employ the Internet to support and shape their musicking practices.

4.3 Algerian Radio in London

Radio broadcasting has played an important role in Algerian societies throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and continues to fulfil particular functions within London’s Algerian diaspora, providing a source of information and news, and mediating music amongst Algerian audiences.

A number of scholars have focussed upon radio broadcasting within a specifically Algerian context. Rebecca Scales (2013) provides a historical assessment of the beginnings of radio broadcasting in Algeria during the colonial period under the auspices of the French administration. She explains that Radio-Algiers, established in 1930, was intended to promote the benefits of colonial rule, and featured music from singers such as Mahieddine Bachetarzi, observing that ‘radio broadcasting and the emerging Arabic-language recording industry offered Algerians new spaces for cultural and personal expression provided they could navigate the strictures of colonial censorship’ (2013: 312-315).¹⁷⁵ She challenges Frantz Fanon’s (1959) claims that radio broadcasting served to further the oppression of the Algerian people by the French

¹⁷⁵ In a separate article, Scales records that Bachetarzi and his orchestra appeared alongside ‘Lili Labassi, Sassi, Mohammed El-Anka, and Cheika Tetma, playing a varied repertory of “classical” Arabo-Andalusian music and “popular” Algerian songs (la chaabi), Arabic covers of French chansons, and hybrid musical numbers that blended Arabic lyrics with fox-trots and rumbas’. (2010: 391)

authorities, and argues that 'far from becoming an oppressive instrument of colonial domination, radio and recorded sound, particularly when travelling from outside Algerian borders, consistently eluded the grasp of the colonial state' (2010: 415).

William A. Rugh (2004) shifts focus to postcolonial independent Algeria, and argues that the Algerian government, recognising its power as a tool of communication, 'gave high priority to making the radio facilities more effective and more controlled' (2004: 185). Paul A. Silverstein (2004) meanwhile is concerned with the Algerian diaspora, and examines radio stations in France, including the Marseille-based Radio Gazelle and Beur FM (originally Radio Beur) in Paris. He suggests that Beur FM has offered a public platform for Algerian musicians in France, and writes that,

Throughout the 1980s, Radio Beur served as the primary venue for the diffusion of North African musical production in France, launching the careers of a number of *Beur* musical artists and serving as an umbrella organization for more specific community-based radio programmes' (2004: 170).

The station lost its operating license in 1992, and was re-launched as Beur FM with private financing, taking control of a number of smaller stations such as Radio Berbère. Whilst Beur FM now programmes less political content, it remains widely popular, both in France and the *bled*, and is one of the principal broadcasters of Algerian music in Europe (2004: 170-172).

Whilst the radio has undoubtedly played a significant role in Algerian culture in recent times, it is not the only form of media that has shaped the reception of Algerian music locally and transnationally. Prior to widespread Internet usage, many Algerians in Britain, like those of other diasporic populations, relied upon satellite television to access news and music. Yazid Nait-Ladjemil remembers that during his youth satellite television exposed him and his brother to new music emerging from France and the *bled*, and recalls that,

We had Algerian satellite TV. We picked up one of the channels, Channel U. It's like a UK channel but they show a lot of local, unsigned,

underground artists. There was a French equivalent called something like 'Zik, as in '*musique*'. Channel 'Zik. That is where we discovered a lot of acts, and we started relating a lot more to that.¹⁷⁶

Georgiou notes the widespread popularity of satellite television amongst diasporas in Europe and North America, and she suggests that the Arabic-language news agency Al Jazeera helps to promote of sense of transnational Arab unity. She writes that,

On one hand, satellite television reflects the diasporic project of sustaining cultural particularity. On the other, diasporic satellite television has managed to develop because of the present climate of free communications, the promotion of technological innovation and of liberalisation of telecommunications. (2005: 20)

This reliance upon satellite television has gradually been replaced by the Internet, which now forms the main source of information from the *bled*. Although governmental control over the media has been apparent at times in Algeria (such as in the 1980s, when there was a broadcasting ban in place on *raï* music), there remains a range of news sources (based in Algeria and France) that members of the diaspora in London can access online, and the Internet has gradually opened up political discourse amongst Algerians. The Internet has also played an important role in radio broadcasting, with many stations now available online through live streaming and podcasts, and radio stations in both Algeria and France, including Beur FM, are more accessible to Algerians in London than they were previously.¹⁷⁷

Although various forms of communication have proliferated through the Internet, the radio remains an important source of music for Algerian audiences. Karim Dellali suggests that radio broadcasts remain popular in the *bled*, and, in drawing comparisons with mainstream radio stations in Britain, explains that,

¹⁷⁶ Interview, 19th October 2013.

¹⁷⁷ The 'WebRadio' section of Beur FM's website (beurfm.net) offers its audience a variety of Maghrebi-specific programmes, and includes links to shows with titles such as '100% Raï' and '100% Kabyle' that are clearly targeted primarily towards an Algerian listenership.

The radio in Algeria is very diverse. It is like (BBC) Radio 4, Radio 3 and Radio 1, all in one. And not even with one at a time. You are suddenly listening to classical andalusian music, and the next tune is Cheb Khaled. And it is like someone saying “I’m going to play some baroque music from (BBC) Radio 3”, and then the guy comes on from (BBC) Radio 1 and says “the next tune is the Arctic Monkeys”. (Interview 11th March 2014)

The diversity that Karim identifies in these broadcasts might go some way to explaining the multiplicity of Algerian musical styles and musicking practices evident amongst the diaspora in London. Karim also suggests that Algerians in the *bled* conceive of radio stations differently from British audiences, and illustrates this by arguing that,

They are used to listening to the radio in a particular way. They don’t have many radio stations; they have about four or five radio stations. And it’s not about the musical genre; it’s about the age group. That’s the way that they do it, even if you are going to listen to the new Jil FM radio or something. They are quite sporadic about what they play, and it shows you what the young people are listening to. And then you have Radio 1, Radio 2, which is a Berber channel, and it’s the same thing. You find old Berber songs, and then a very modern Berber-*raï* song. (Interview 11th March 2014)

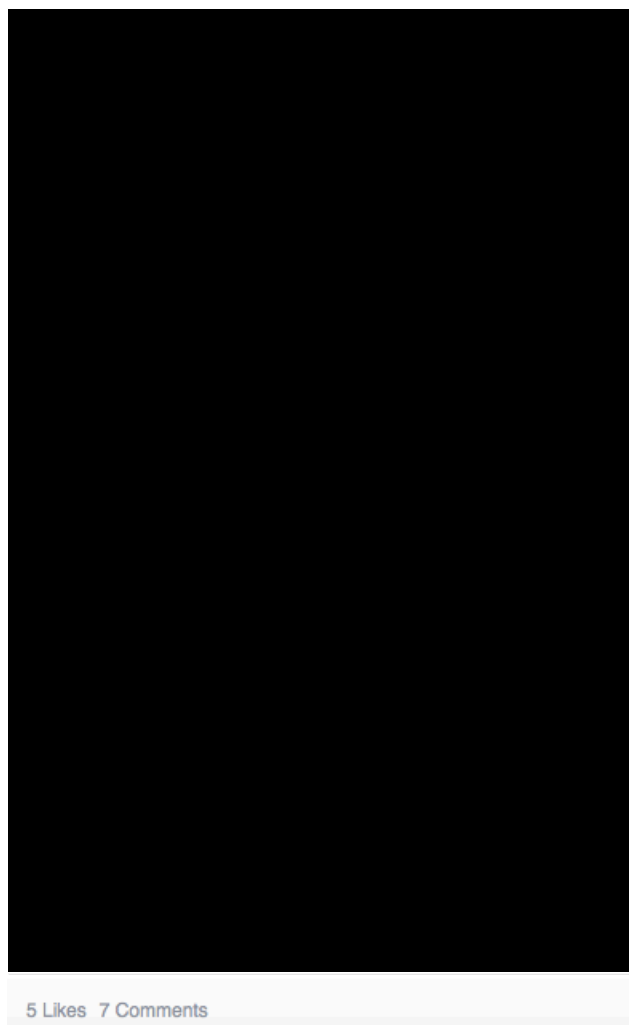
This diverse programming reflects Algerian cultural and musical heterogeneity, and this is also apparent in the music programmed by the single radio station that serves the Algerian diaspora in London.

In 2011, Djamel, a restaurant owner from Brixton, south London, set up the station Rihet Bladi, and began broadcasting online from a small room in a friend’s house, with live programmes airing for three hours each Sunday evening.¹⁷⁸ He created the station to promote Algerian culture in London, and because he believes that Algerians have been under-represented in the city and have consequently become increasingly detached from one another. Djamel explains that,

There are different communities here in the UK, in London specifically, and they are trying to integrate into British society. We are in England and we are in London, and I think that every community wants to

¹⁷⁸ ‘Rihet’ means radio, whilst ‘Bladi’ is a derivative of *bled*.

contribute to the society they live in. And unfortunately I haven't seen that with the Algerian community...it is there and it is working, just lately, maybe for four or five years. But the radio, when we did it, when we launched it, I wanted to liaise with the Algerians here in the UK. Plus to promote the Algerian culture, through the music and the shows we do, and to actually engage some Algerians.¹⁷⁹



4.4: Djamel's original post on Facebook, in March 2011, introducing Rihet Bladi. Whilst the title of the post is in English, the message itself was only published in French. The comment responses were in a mixture of French and Darija.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Interview, 18th February 2013.

¹⁸⁰ The message reads: 'Greetings from London. Our dearest hope is to see our radio station succeed and grow among all the other Algerian radio stations that exist here and there. First of all we are delighted to see the number of friends on our (Facebook) list. That just encourages us and gives us an even greater boost to give the best of ourselves. What we are interested in is to see all Algerians join together, in England and elsewhere, by giving them a point of focus, if I dare call it that, or perhaps a link with Algeria. And that will be our radio station Rihet Bladi. And, as our name suggests, we will try to bring you a breath of fresh air and lovely sunshine from where we are. As far as the success of our radio station is concerned, we have to tell you that your help, your commentaries and corrections, will be a great help. At this very moment we would

The station immediately attracted interest from potential listeners in London, France and Algeria, who were made aware of Rihet Bladi through Djamel's own social media presence, and were able to access its weekly shows through the Internet. He quickly gained a large transnational network of friends through Facebook, and gained messages of support from around the world. A number of individuals in Algeria stated their approval, including one woman who wrote (in French) 'we are all with you Djamel, from London to Algiers, and Algiers to London!'

Djamel has a remarkable knowledge of music and is keen to use the station to promote Algerian culture, but he further explains the motivations behind *Rihet Bladi* by stating that,

The main things were to concentrate on the Algerian community and to give them some sense of help, and if there is anything that we need to talk about, or we need to highlight something, like an event that is happening, we are there to broadcast it. And it gives another chance for others to say "I can do another radio or TV station, I can do this". It gives them this boost, like "Oh yeah, some people are working", and so they feel involved.¹⁸¹

Despite the apparent diversity of the Algerian population in London, Djamel is keen for the station to help build a sense of collective unity in the city, and he notes that 'I didn't want it to divide the community into certain names and labels. Every Algerian is welcome to listen to it'. He suggests that Rihet Bladi attempts to address the sense of cultural disconnection felt by many Algerians in London, and placing this within the historical context of the diaspora, argues that,

There is another issue, which is that the Algerian community, especially those who came in the '90s, if they came when they were 20 and now they are 40, they have built a family and are married and have kids and all that stuff. And some of them have brought wives from Algeria, some are married to British, non-Algerians. So those who are married to non-Algerians feel as though they are being left out because there is no

like to create a website for Rihet Bladi and we would need a web designer who would kindly invest their time to do that for us. We would be very grateful. Thank you to everybody.'

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

community. They've created small groups amongst themselves. But again they don't have places. So maybe they are listening to the radio, maybe they are listening to the experiences of others and they welcome work within the community. So I did that, and that was one of my goals, to get them together, and to communicate with others.¹⁸²

Djamel hints here at the sense of both cultural disconnection and personal marginalisation, and suggests that this results from the lack of physical 'places' within the city in which the diaspora are able to engage with one another. Djamel speaks of the scope of Rihet Bladi and its listening figures, and describes the ways in which Algerians engage with his station, explaining that,

We have thirty-five countries around the world listening to us. Overall, between six o'clock and nine o'clock, we have around five hundred to six hundred listeners. Some times it goes up to one thousand. It is very rare, that you sit there from six o'clock to nine o'clock. Some people listen for half an hour, or an hour. Or five or ten minutes. Maybe they listen to a song and then they switch off? There is space for the other ones. It's a good thing.¹⁸³

Although many people have been supportive of Djamel, and both his radio station and restaurant are at the heart of the Algerian community in London, he does have critics. For some, Rihet Bladi is seen as a promotional tool, and one individual dismissed his efforts by suggesting that 'he just wants more customers in his restaurant'.¹⁸⁴ Another person claimed that, despite the significantly large listening figures of the station, 'no Algerians in London listen to his station, it makes no difference.'¹⁸⁵ Although Djamel and Rihet Bladi are rightly not immune from criticism, these denunciations are perhaps reflective of the sense of rivalry and frequent negativity amongst Algerians in the city, and typify the sort of condemnation that frustrate those involved with launching and developing new cultural initiatives for the local Algerian community.

Whilst the station covers a wide range of subjects and issues pertaining to Algeria and Algerian culture, Djamel is reluctant to discuss politics, and he explains that,

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Personal conversation, August 2012.

¹⁸⁵ Personal conversation, May 2013.

In Algeria everyone has a different point of view about what is politics. Most people do not understand Algerian politics because we have never studied it. We never studied it at school, they never taught us about it. We know that there is a President, but we don't know what is going on inside. And when it comes to religion, again the same thing, so there is a differentiation in how we see things. But at least with religion, you know that it is sacred so no one can go in and change it. So it's safe. But of course we talk about religion and things. And you can't with politics, because if you say something you might piss off others. So that's why I said no. I'm not going to talk about politics, I'm going to be in the middle and not show my point of view and what I think about something.¹⁸⁶

Irrespective of how 'politics' might be defined, it is not a subject that Djamel believes his Algerian listenership would want to engage with via Rihet Bladi. This, he argues, is a result of both his country's troublesome and complex political situation in recent years, and of the political conditions in Britain in recent times. He suggests that,

Regardless of talking about Algeria, we are here (in London). We hear about recession every single minute. Recession, recession, recession. The last thing you need it after work is to go home on a Sunday, turn on the radio and they talk about recession. You will be hanging yourself.¹⁸⁷

As such, music takes precedence over political issues in Djamel's programming of broadcasts for Rihet Bladi. He suggests that music offers a way for his listeners to reconnect with their own sense of Algerianness by evoking memories of the *bled*, and that this is important because of the many challenges faced by Algerians in London. He remarks that,

I needed to give him (*his Algerian listener*) something to take his mind off everything and bring him back to memories of his family when he was little. We put on something that makes him go "oh this song reminds me of that, this reminds me of this". And the listener starts to go back. And it becomes, the radio, part of his childhood and his memories, and he will cherish it. So that is exactly my whole idea, to give them something to bring them back to where they used to be. Things that with being here in London, they forgot all about. So I try, with my station, to refresh their memories, and bring them back. At the same time, this is

¹⁸⁶ Interview, 18th February 2013.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

20 or 30 years after and they are still remembering themselves as kids.¹⁸⁸

Rihet Bladi's identity as a radio station that serves an Algerian diasporic audience in London sets it apart from other similar stations. Whereas Danielle Batist's (2010) research shows the ways in which the London-based Zimbabwean station SW Radio Africa broadcasts predominantly to audiences in Zimbabwe, bypassing governmental controls on the media, Rihet Bladi clearly asserts its Algerian identity but is focused directly upon a listenership in London, rather than in Paris, Marseille or the *bled*. Beur FM attempts to develop intercultural encounters and connections between those of North African extraction and other French citizens, and whilst the station has a clear Maghrebi character, it is committed to serving other 'minority' communities in France. The station's mission statement proclaims that,

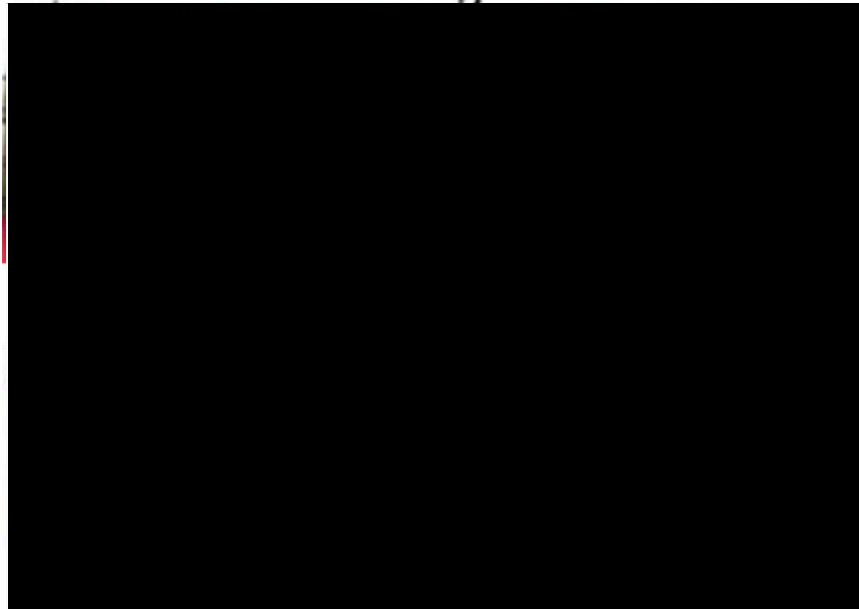
Beur FM lies in a Franco-Maghrebi space of people who are definitively rooted in France, irrespective of age and their "cultural color": Arab, Berber, Jewish, Pied-Noir, etc. Outside of the Maghrebi community, the radio also targets all minorities who make up the mosaic of French society. All projects emanating from a minority have to subscribe to a universalism where all can be recognized. Thus, all the programs, as well as the events organised by Beur FM carry in them signs of identification which allow a larger audience to gather. (Quoted in Echchaibi, 2011: 112)

Rihet Bladi, in contrast, makes little effort to engage non-Algerian listeners, and as such, is very much inwardly focussed upon serving the local Algerian community. And although the station aims to serve the entirety of the Algerian diaspora in London, even Djamel, who openly promotes the notion of Algerian collective unity, admits that his audience contains some degree of diversity. Djamel is highly knowledgeable about a wide range of Algerian musics, and concedes that it is important that everything that he programmes for Rihet Bladi 'represents a music, and a segment of the Algerian population, so you have to give them a share. That's very important'.¹⁸⁹ His selection of music for inclusion in broadcasts is therefore intentionally broad in terms of style and tradition, and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

he admits that ‘you can’t just play *chaabi*, you can’t just play *hawzi*. And I think every audience has to have its share, and sometimes there is a theme. So it’s themed music’.¹⁹⁰



4.5: An online advert for Rihet Bladi from 2012, posted on Facebook by Djamel, and encouraging listeners to engage with the station.

One way in which Djamel attempts to engage with the diversity of the Algerian diaspora is through the multiple languages that he is able to employ in his broadcasts. Georgiou’s account of the radio station London Greek Radio (LGR), which serves the Greek diaspora of the city, remarks upon the importance of language in diasporic radio broadcasts. LGR, Georgiou notes, is respected amongst the local diaspora because it broadcasts in Greek and ‘is considered as a source of information they trust and which speaks their own language’ (2005: 27). In the case of the Algerian diaspora in London, the situation is further complicated by the heterogeneity of languages employed by Algerians. One musician, born in Algeria and raised in Britain, explained to me that he is fluent in French and *Taqbaylit* but can not speak any Arabic. Another, who has lived in London for a number of years, had learned Arabic during his youth, but feels more comfortable speaking French as this was the language used by his parents at home. Therefore, whilst Djamel is keen to promote the notion of

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Algerian unity, he accepts that it is necessary to employ several languages in order to ensure that Rihet Bladi is accessible to a broad Algerian listenership:

When I say it in Arabic, I translate it into French, because every Algerian will understand French. I translate it into English, when it is very important...You see I was brought up with French, Arabic and Berber. So I think I speak more French...yes I speak Arabic, of course I do, but then sometimes with a radio (*show*) I do *Darija*, French, Berber, English, classical (Arabic).

Whilst Djamel's relative comfort in employing multiple languages in his broadcasts might seem remarkable, this type of linguistic code-switching is not unprecedented in Algerian music. Samira Hassa (2010) examines the role of code-switching between Arabic, English and Verlan (an argot of the vernacular language popular amongst the French youth, involving the transposition of syllables) in French rap lyrics, suggesting that 'code-switching plays the role of an identity construction tool and an identity marker for numerous hip-hop artists in France' (2010: 45). Hassa's work considers the use of Arabic (more accurately, *Darija*) by the Marseille-based group IAM (*Invasion Arrivée de Mars*, or Invasion from Mars), which contains members of Algerian origin. She suggests that the ability to code-switch between French and *Darija* enables the group's rappers to distinguish themselves from the 'mainstream', express nostalgia for the *bled*, and engage with French socio-political discourse (2010: 54-55). Whilst Djamel's broadcasts are certainly less politicised than the lyrics of IAM, his use of code-switching is still part of process of demarcating a distinct Algerian identity for the radio station. One result of this code-switching is that his programmes are accessible to a diverse audience, and reflect the polyglot nature of Algerian culture. Abdelâli Bentahila and Eirlys Davies (2002) address processes of code-switching in *rai* lyrics, and suggests that the combination of French and *Darija* can both demarcate a distinct Maghrebi identity and convey a sense of transnationalism that is in keeping with *rai*'s global popularity. They conclude that code-switching in *rai* songs 'can in fact reconcile these two apparently conflicting trends of globalisation and localisation' (2002: 206).¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ See also Bentahila and Davies (2008).

Similarly, I suggest, Djamel's own code-switching conveys a combination of British (through the use of English), European (French) and Algerian (Arabic, *Darija*, Berber) cultures, and linguistically symbolises the complexities and diversities of Algerian diasporic culture in contemporary London.

Djamel is certainly cognisant of the intricacies involved in programming broadcasts that are suitable for his Algerian listenership. He speaks of wanting to reach a family audience, suggesting that 'I do have a responsibility, and I know who listens to me', and nuances this by explaining that,

I have a lot of families listening to me on a Sunday. They have their dinner when the radio starts, they put it on in the background and listen. They are here in London, here in England. And they say to me that it just reminds them of home. So it's a good thing. I'm just keeping it that way and I don't want to destroy it.¹⁹²

This desire to target a family audience with his broadcasts directly influences Djamel's selection of music. He suggests that he refuses to play *rai*, a music that remains simultaneously popular and controversial amongst Algerians, stating that 'when it comes to *rai*, I don't play any *rai*', before accepting that 'I play clean *rai*, *rai* that people can listen to with their families'.¹⁹³ This argument is consistent with the narrative of *rai* that Schade-Poulsen (1999) identifies amongst audiences in Algeria when he notes that 'the problem of vulgarity in *rai* has constantly been at issue as well as the problem of the simplicity of texts and the absence of poetic advice' (1999: 26). Whilst *rai* remains in demand amongst some Algerian listeners, Djamel suggests that much of the music is not to his own tastes, and highlights the problems with playing this to a family audience;

Most of it is not what I want to listen to. Because when you read a book, you don't judge a book by its title, or by its cover. But with a song, you know. If you buy a cooking book, you know you're going to find recipes. If you're listening to *rai* music, you know what type of rhythm. But if you go deep down into it, you understand that there is a good *rai* and a bad *rai*. Bad *rai* is covered up with beautiful music, so sometimes you've

¹⁹² Interview, 18th February 2013.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

forgotten about the lyrics, it makes you dance. But if you listen to the lyrics it's horrible, disgusting.¹⁹⁴

Although Djamel remains conscious of serving an Algerian family audience, he acknowledges that a broad cross-section of the local diaspora listen to his shows. Whilst some Algerian families have lived in London for a number of years, and might therefore desire memories of the *bled* in the station's broadcasts, other members of the diaspora have arrived more recently, and often experience a more immediate sense of detachment from their homeland. Djamel points, in particular, towards the city's Algerian *harraga* population, whose presence often remains concealed even from other Algerians in London, but who also desire some form of cultural reconnection. He explains that,

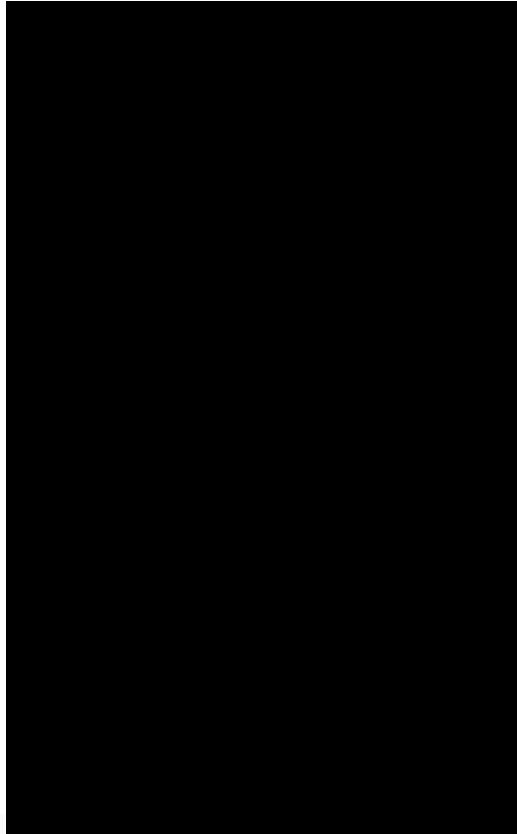
I think you have to bear in mind that there are people who have no papers here, who are illegal here, and it is quite a percentage. They can't go to Algeria, and they feel disconnected. They can only know what is going on in Algeria from what their family tells them, or from people who have been to Algeria and have come back. But to have a radio where it is based in London, and they are talking directly with people in Algeria, and they listen to the radio presenter who is based in London and speaks Algerian Arabic. If I was a person who did not have papers, I would feel more content. I can call (the station), or whatever.¹⁹⁵

The station is therefore set up to serve the various different sections of the Algerian diaspora in London, who each make their demands on the programming of broadcasts.

The opportunity to hear a fellow Algerian living in London speaking directly about Algerian life in the city and playing musics familiar from the *bled* offers an important way in which the local diaspora are able to directly reconnect with their culture within a localised context.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.



4.6: A post on Facebook, in which Djamel explains the ways in which listeners are able to access the station via the Internet.

Djamel explains his programming policy as follows,

It's a mixture of music, because you know that maybe there are five hundred people listening to you. And within that five hundred, with one song, maybe two hundred don't like it? Maybe three hundred people love it? Maybe fifty percent don't like it? But if you play a variety, they'll say "oh I don't mind this music". "Oh I love this music". "Oh this music reminds me of this". "Oh yes, I know this singer." And for the listener, without noticing, every song reminds him of something. And that is exactly what I play. I play *gnawi*, with a good rhythm, because I know that the rhythm will get them. I play some Berber music, because some Berbers will love it, and some non-Berbers love the sound of it. I play *staifi*.¹⁹⁶ They know exactly what to expect, everyone likes it. It doesn't matter if you're not Berber and you don't understand, you listen to it and the music and the lyrics combine and take you somewhere else, where you want to be. That's how I work.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ *Staifi* is a popular musical style, often performed at festivals and celebrations, which has its roots in the musical traditions of the city of Sétif, in northeastern Algeria.

¹⁹⁷ Interview, 18th February 2013.

This diversity is certainly borne out in the station's weekly broadcasts, with Djamel playing a wide range of musical styles. Listening to Rihet Bladi, it is immediately apparent that his musical choices are carefully selected, and appear to have been chosen to appeal to a discerning audience. The music that Djamel plays can quickly switch between different styles and periods of Algerian history, and he interjects between songs with his own comments, or with features and interviews, which can initially appear a little disconcerting to the listener. However, underlying the station's programming is both a sense of unified Algerian culture, and Djamel's own passion for the music that he broadcasts. And it seems clear that in the choices that he makes, he is not particularly concerned with appealing to popular taste. In the broadcasts that I have listened to, there were almost no musical choices selected from the styles popular with much of the contemporary Algerian youth, such as hip hop. Instead, it is clear that Djamel explores his own extensive music collection, and in part, appears intent on educating his listenership. This choice of repertoire is also more diverse than the music that is performed by Algerian musicians in London, and whilst his broadcasts include examples of *andalusi* and *chaabi*, he also plays more specialist musical forms, such as *staifi*. Rihet Bladi therefore partly fills a gap within the listening habits of Algerian audiences in London, providing the opportunity to hear recordings of musical styles that are not performed in the city, and which are often difficult to access via the Internet. However, whilst the station may expand beyond the limitations of London's Algerian music culture, it also embraces both local musicking practices and a sense of transnational Algerian culture. Interviewees appearing on the station include both local performers, such as Cheb Nacim, and musicians from Algerian and France, who are interviewed via Skype. In these cases, Djamel linguistic abilities are vital, with the interviewees' answers often translated in a summarised form into English, French or Arabic. He also uses both the station's broadcasts, and his Facebook account, to promote local musicians and upcoming events in London.

In selecting music for his shows, Djamel explains that he does not simply rely upon his own intuition of what Algerian audiences want, but engages and

interacts with his listeners. He suggests that this is one reason that he does not pre-record his broadcasts, stating that with such recordings ‘you are not listening to pure organic sound raw. You are listening to a recorded programme, and anyone can do that. So when I do my shows, my Skype is on, my Facebook is on, so I interact with people’.¹⁹⁸ Not only does this make Rihet Bladi’s shows more ‘real’ in Djamel’s opinion, but it also allows his audience to directly determine what music is played, and he adds that ‘I do take requests. The requests I put on Facebook, and if anyone has a song that reminds him of something, I get requests. The other day I made a list of maybe thirty five people who asked about songs, which is good’.¹⁹⁹

These interactions with the audience take place through social media both live whilst the station is on air, and throughout the week, between broadcasts. Djamel is a highly active user of social media, and in particular Facebook, and this allows him to garner suggestions for future shows. Such ideas may include listeners drawing his attention to forthcoming musical events in London, or to Algerian musicians living in the city who might be interviewed by the station, and he explains that people often ask him “‘why don’t you talk about this? Why don’t you do this?” Or “‘there’s this going on, why don’t you invite them?”²⁰⁰ He provides examples by stating that,

Maybe this Sunday, or the following Sunday, I’m going to invite Cheb Nacim, and interview him...I will interview him on the basis of how does it feel to be an Algerian singer in London? And recently I organised an interview with a guy from Algeria who does mixing...traditional music and dancing music. Which is fantastic, a very good job.²⁰¹

This highlights the ways in which Rihet Bladi connects London and the *bled* through music, using the station’s shows to mediate a sense of Algerianness amongst the local diaspora in London. As such, the Rihet Bladi functions as part of both Appadurai’s ‘technoscape’ and ‘mediascape’, employing the Internet to produce a type of media that forms transnational cultural connections between

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

the *bled* and the local Algerian population. The station acts as a conduit for the construction and mediation of a distinct London Algerian identity by linking Britain and Algeria, and the past and present, through the music that Djamel broadcasts. Whilst the station's existence online makes it accessible to listeners around the world, it remains focussed upon serving a British-Algerian diaspora, and is one of the few resources dedicated exclusively to Algerians in London. The music that Djamel plays evokes memories of the *bled* and enables a form of cultural reconnection amongst a local diaspora that feels fragmented and marginalised, whilst providing a rare form of agency for Algerians in facilitating interaction and allowing members of the diaspora to dictate the station's programming. Djamel believes that Rihet Bladi plays an important role in engaging with, and empowering, Algerians in London, and whilst he would welcome financial support, he is keen that the station remain independence. He states that,

I can't turn the radio into a charity where I ask people for money. That's not in my nature. I will never ask people for money. I do it for free, and it will stay free. And if people want to donate, they know where to go. Maybe one day someone will listen to it and say "yes, this is a good idea. Here's the money, let's work together". But no one came yet, so it stays as it is. I'm doing it for the community, and that is my main purpose, and it stays for the community. No personal gain at all. It is solely for the community.²⁰²

It is the station's promotion of this sense of community, which is often perceived as lacking amongst Algerians in London, that makes Rihet Bladi such an important resource for the local diaspora. Djamel's weekly broadcasts not only provide a public platform for local musicians, but also facilitate a performance of Algerianness within London, demarcating a distinct cultural space for Algerians in the city, and enabling an interactive form of musicking that draws together musicians and audiences.

²⁰² Ibid.

4.4 Algerian Music and Auto-Exoticism

The themes of orientalism and exoticism, which emerged within artistic movements during the nineteenth century, have been recurring concerns for those studying North African and Middle Eastern cultures. The notion of Algeria as a place of cultural encounter, located at the heart of trade routes between sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Arabic Mashreq, have often led to it being portrayed as a source of mystical and enticing otherness. The ensuing discussion focuses upon the perpetuation of such themes within the musical practices of Algerians in contemporary London, and considers the reasons and motivations that underpin such processes.

Whilst assumptions about the mystical allure of North Africa and the Middle East were well established before 1830, many of the exotic and oriental tropes associated with Algeria emerged from the period of colonial rule, during which they were disseminated and circulated amongst audiences in Europe. The French invasion of Algeria, and the subsequent establishment of colonial authority, enabled French writers and artists to travel widely within the *bled*, and their depictions of Algeria at this time fitted with exoticist understandings of North African culture. One of the most famous orientalist texts from this period was Eugène Fromentin's (1859) account of his travels throughout Algeria. Although Fromentin exhibits some sympathy with the conditions of ordinary Algerian citizens, his work is filled with the type of orientalist language and imagery that typified French attitudes at this time.

Issues of orientalism and exoticism have gained increased scholarly attention since the publication of Edward Said's book *Orientalism* in 1978. The 'Orient', Said argues, is not so much a defined geographical space as it is a supposition about an enticing, romanticised otherness, which emerged from Western colonialist imperialism, and has been perpetuated by leaders and governments across North Africa and the Middle East. He writes that 'because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action', adding that 'without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically,

sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively' (1978: 3).²⁰³

Although Said's work has been highly influential, he has not been without his critics. Some have noted historical and factual errors in his text, whilst others have responded to the criticisms levelled at them within Said's book. Bernard Lewis (1982), for example, attacks Said's construction of an East-West binary and his overriding focus upon Arab culture, and denounces the book's dismissal of a large body of historical scholarship for its supposed orientalist tendencies. Further critics of *Orientalism* have included both Aijaz Ahmad (1992) and Dennis Porter (1994), who identify some of the problematic contradictions in the amalgamation of Foucauldian and Gramscian theory within Said's work, and again critique his reliance upon a binary between 'West' and 'East'.

Nevertheless, despite the controversies of Said's work, the book has generated a wide interest in orientalism. Contemporary writers who have examined Algerian subjects through the lens of Orientalism have included Malek Alloula's (1986) study of depictions of Algerian women within the photographic postcards produced during French colonial rule, and Jennifer Anne Boittin's work on representations of gender within the Maghreb, in which she writes that orientalism 'was associated with two strongholds of European fantasies: the harem and the veil' (2010: 131).

Orientalism has also been a prevalent theme amongst studies of music. A collection of essays edited by Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (2007), for example, examine the relationship between British imperialism and music during the long nineteenth century, whilst Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh's (2000) edited collection brings together works that examine issues of orientalism and exoticism in twentieth century music. Jonathan D. Bellman highlights the problems faced by those writing on orientalism and music, and implores writers to 'fashion some critical approaches and vocabularies that do not disfigure their musical-cultural subjects by engaging them only in the context of a particular nonmusical agenda' (2011: 435).

²⁰³ Said makes few direct references to Algeria, but he does write of French plans to establish connections between their African colonies, including a railway between Algeria and Senegal (Said, 1978: 218)

One particular issue that has been identified in Said's writing is his apparent victimization of those outside of the 'West'. Orientalism, it is argued, denies agency and renders an absolute power relation, with Western oppression characterised by its reliance upon oriental and exotic depictions. Such erasing of agency not only disempowers and suggests primitivism amongst those that Said claims to defend, but also ignores the ways in which orientalism has been reappropriated and reshaped through processes of auto-exoticism. Auto-exoticism, the process of employing exotic depiction to demarcate one's alterity, has gradually emerged as a theme in a number of writings on music.

Ioana Szeman considers issues of exoticism in relation to contemporary Romani bands, and emphasises the ways in which their music and dance reinforce stereotypes amongst Euro-American audiences, concluding that,

As long as the "Gypsy" stamp remains a way to exoticize any music from the Balkans, concerts and videos...will continue to perpetuate the romantic Gypsy stereotypes, ultimately failing to bring either the Roma or the Balkans—in their diversity and complexity—closer. (2009: 114)

Anthony Shay and Barbara Sellers-Young, whose work focuses upon issues of auto-exoticism within performances of dance, suggest that exoticism is based upon a 'self-other dichotomy' leading to a 'discursive dialogue' that is 'imbued with stereotypical attributes that are consistently replicated' (2003: 31). Their study of auto-exoticism develops from a critical reading of orientalism, and they explain that,

The topic of self-exoticism is less often addressed and analyzed...Said neglects this sensitive area of the orientalist discourse. By self-exoticism, we mean a process in which individuals native to a dance's place of origin utilize Orientalist elements, often originating in Western sources, in their performances, both enunciated and embodied. (2003:18)

Marcus Cheng Chye Tan (2013) examines the role of auto-exoticism within Indian playwright Royston Abel's 2006 work *The Manganiyar Seduction*. The auto-exoticism evident in *The Manganiyar Seduction* is, for Tan, closely

entwined with the commodification of culture, and the ability of exoticising imagery and sound to appeal to global audiences, and he writes that 'placed in the context of a performance of cultural otherness, [they] accentuate and underscore the commodity value of the difference staged' (2013: 55). He locates that this type of staged alterity within the 'self-other dichotomy' that Shay and Sellers-Young identify, and states that,

The exotic is, consequently, a product of collaborative imagination between producers, performances and audiences. The spaces of imagination are filled by the sights and sounds of ignorance, misconstruction, decontextualization and profit-driven misappropriation. (2013: 56)

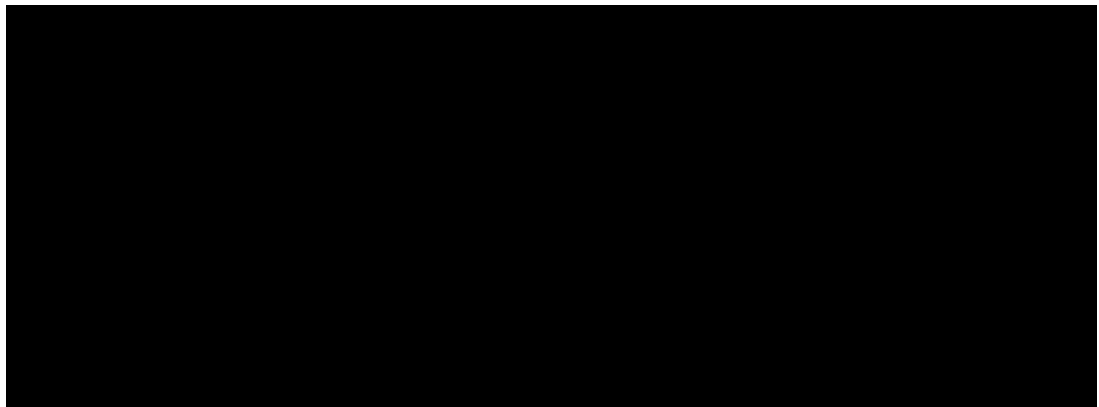
Marta E. Savigliano considers the proliferation and international popularity of Tango as a result of processes of globalisation, and shows the complex ways in which symbols of the exotic circulate amongst local and global practitioners, arguing that,

Exoticism and auto-exoticism function as aesthetico-political devices that allow artificially fixating the contours of a 'culture' by offering a 'tradition' (a stereotypical ethnicised and racialised referent) to explain otherness (the sameness of some and their difference with others). (2010: 136)

The types of auto-exoticism that these authors describe correspond with the ways in which Algerian musicians in London employ visual and linguistic symbols of Algeria and North Africa that are embedded within the history of orientalism. Although these processes vary dependent upon musical style and performance context, there are nevertheless numerous examples of auto-exoticism to be found within the musicking practices of Algerians in London.

Yazid Fentazi is a singer and 'ud player who arrived in London in the mid-1990s and has established himself as one of the most active and popular Algerian musicians in the city, performing with groups such as Fantazia, El Andaluz and the Yaz Fentazi Trio. His trio consists of himself alongside an electric bassist and drummer, and the group draws upon a number of musical influences, including *gnawa*, *chaabi* and *andalus*, as well as jazz and other non-

Algerian styles. Their promotional materials highlight the trio's efforts to integrate notions of tradition and modernity, and Algerian and non-Algerian culture (see figure 4.8). They assure audiences that 'the Yaz Fentazi Trio are kick starting our new season, playing wah-wah-tastic North African music for the 21st century', whilst simultaneously describing their music by suggesting that 'it's ethnic, it's traditional, it's groovy, it's electric, it's rock, it's jazz, it's chaabi, it's blues...and it is not to be missed'. This description therefore conflates apparent binaries, connoting both tradition ('ethnic' and 'traditional') and modernity ('electric' and 'for the 21st century') in a way that promises a sense of familiarity whilst simultaneously demarcating their alterity. Their self-description, with its hints of an auto-exotic rhetoric, is apparently intended for a non-Algerian listenership, and thus underscores both the accessibility and otherness of their music to those unfamiliar with Algerian culture.



4.7: A promotional post by Yazid Fentazi for an upcoming event in December 2013

A recurring orientalist trope within the promotional materials of Algerian musicians is that of a journey to, or through, the Sahara desert. Such narratives evoke the power of music to 'transport' the listener, and induce parallels with the post-colonial exploration of Algeria and the Sahara by the likes of Vernet and Fromentin. An example of this is found with the group Seeds of Creation, who are led by Algerian Berber singer Seddick Zebiri.²⁰⁴ Their promotional

²⁰⁴ The group's performance at the London Mela festival was discussed in detail in chapter 2.

narrative emphasises the singer's Algerian heritage, noting that 'Seeds of Creation pull on the lead man's Algerian roots, well-travelled background and experience along with his diverse collection of fellow musicians'. Like the Yaz Fentazi Trio, they imply that their music incorporates the traditional and contemporary, and drawing upon the orientalist trope of a supposed contrast between the physicality of African culture and the rationality of the West, suggest that 'the sound churned out by this outfit is irresistibly danceable with an urban edge deeply steeped in North African traditional vibes'. Furthermore, they explicitly claim that their music enables listeners to partake in a sonic voyage of discovery to the Algerian desert, claiming that 'Seeds of Creation brew an excellent blend of traditional Berber music fused with Afro-Blues, Jazz and raw Psychedelic sounds that will transport you deep into the heart of the Sahara'. Such description is not only reminiscent of Fromentin's accounts of his travels across the Sahara, but is also evocative of Joseph Conrad's great colonial novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899), which draws upon notions of the mystical appeal of African cultures. Conrad's writing includes vivid passages such as,

We penetrated deeper and deeper into the heart of darkness. It was very quiet there. At night sometimes the roll of drums behind the curtain of trees would run up the river and remain sustained faintly, as if hovering in the air high over our heads, till the first break of day. (1899 [2012]: 44)

El Andaluz, a group that also features Yazid Fentazi along with Algerian percussionist Karim Dellali, continue this theme. Their name clearly evokes the Maghrebi *andalus* traditions, which is just one of their many musical influences, and their publicity materials offer to 'take the audience on a wonderful journey around the southern shores of the Mediterranean, often beginning with a poetic and reflective Andalusian Nuba, then travelling on to the trance-like Sufi music of the Sahara'. The language that El Andaluz employ, and the imagery that they evoke for their audiences, serve to reinscribe the idea of Algeria as a country marked by two contrasting landscapes: a beautiful northern Mediterranean coastline, and a vast mystical southern expanse formed by the Sahara desert.

This binary is constructed through reference to two contrasting musical traditions. The Andalusian Nuba traditions are predominantly associated with the large cities of the north (Algiers, Constantine, Sidi Bel Abbès, Mostaganem, Tlemcen, etc.) and are bestowed with a sense of urban cosmopolitan sophistication. In contrast, Sufi traditions continue to be identified with a sense of exotic allure, which often verges upon primitivism. Jonathan H. Shannon (2003) has written about the ways in which Syrian Sufi music has been employed to evoke notions of the sacred for Western audiences, and shows how this contrasts with the contexts in which the music is performed in Syria. He suggests that Sufi musicians appearing on stages in Western concert halls often adopt and employ the auto-exotic imagery expected of them, including 'modern performance costumes rather than "traditional" garb. These and other markers of "authenticity", however constructed and reified by these practices, served to key the overall frame as sacred' (2003: 270). Similarly, the musical contrast that El Andaluz promote demarcates the traditional and modern, and utilises alterity to publicise the group to non-Algerian audiences.

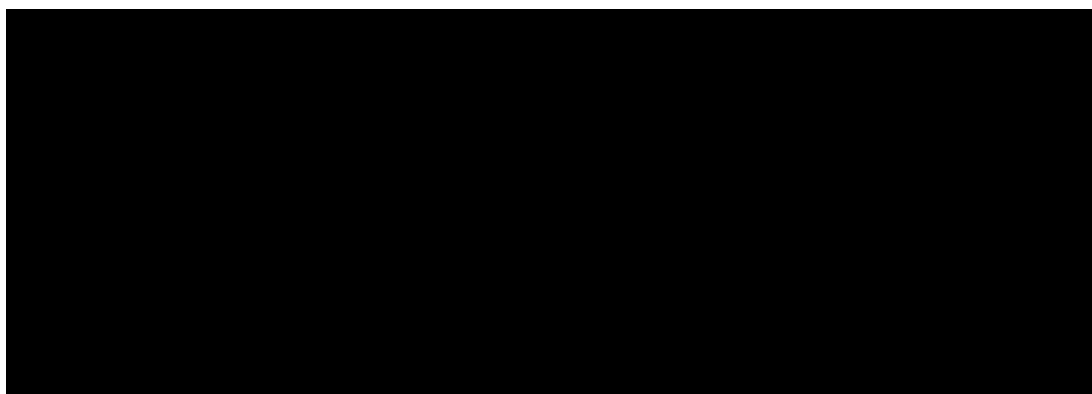
Furthermore, El Andaluz assure their potential audiences that 'they never fail to end the evening by getting the audience on their feet dancing to the celebratory *chaabi* music of Algeria, or to a classical Egyptian belly dance'. This description serves as a further promotional narrative, which guarantees entertainment but ignores the stylistic and performative contrasts between *andalus*, *chaabi* and Sufi musical traditions. In drawing upon belly dancing, the ensemble employs one of the most potent, and stereotyped, symbols of the Arab world. As Andrew Hammond writes of Western attitudes towards Egyptian belly dancing,

The Orientalist depiction of the belly-dancing East was an interpretation born of a particular historical moment...To Europeans, the belly dance typified the supposed fundamental differences between the rational West and the backward, emotional, and self-indulgent culture of the East. (2007: 190)

Whilst each of these groups integrates multiple musical styles, there are also examples of auto-exoticism within the practices of musicians performing

definably 'Algerian' musics. An example of this is *rai*, which is perhaps the only Algerian music to gain widespread recognition amongst British audiences, particularly with those old enough to remember the commercial successes of *rai* during the 1990s. *Rai* musicians in London continue to exploit this commercial potential, and it is therefore unsurprising to find auto-exoticism employed as a means of attracting non-Algerian audiences.

Abdelkader Saadoun, the self-styled 'Algerian King of Rock 'n' Raï in the UK', provides an example (see figure 4.9).²⁰⁵ The promotional materials for the launch of his 2013 album *Homage* relied upon the notion of a musical voyage for his audience, and promised that 'Saadoun will take you on a journey of music and dance performing original composition plus other well known music from North Africa, Spain and the Middle East. Blend of fusion, *rai*, jazz and dance music with special guest, DJ and belly dancers!' The imagery around his self-publicity include many of the tropes of orientalism: camels, North African/Middle Eastern lamps, and photographs of Saadoun and his band in 'traditional' costume, which bears little resemblance to the dress worn by contemporary *rai* singers in Algeria. This form of auto-exoticising appears to be a clear attempt to foreground Saadoun's cultural alterity to potential non-Algerian listeners for the purposes of commercial earnings.



4.8: Images used to promote forthcoming events by *rai* singer Abdelkader Saadoun.

There is a clear precedent for exotic imagery being employed by modern *rai* musicians, and this was often evident during the peak of *rai*'s commercial

²⁰⁵ See chapter 2 for further discussion of Kader's performance practices, and the ways in which he employs his Algerian identity as a promotional narrative.

popularity during the 1990s. *Rai* has humble beginnings as an underground music in Oran, but gained public favour in Algeria when musicians such as Messaoud Bellemou and Bouteldja Belkacem embraced sounds and instruments from non-Algerian popular musics in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, a generation of young Algerian musicians in France were producing a musical style that combined studio-production, synthesised sounds and electric instrumentation with lyrics sung in *Darija* and themes popular with the Maghrebi youth. This new *rai* sound would tread a fine line between Algerian popularism, social conservatism, and exotic appeal to non-Algerian listeners, and George Lipsitz writes that,

A product of cultural collision between Europe and North Africa, *rai* music has its defenders and its detractors in both places. Some factions in Algeria see *rai* as too French, too Western, too modern, too obscene. At the same time, there are those in France who dismiss *rai* as too foreign, too primitive, too exotic, too strange. (1994: 124)

Singers such as Cheb Khaled and Cheb Mami have attracted significant interest in Europe and North America, and whilst *rai* artists have sometimes attempted to move away from labels of nationality or ethnicity, exoticism has never been far from the public image propagated by *rai*.²⁰⁶ Khaled's breakthrough hit was 1992's *Didi*, which dealt with issues of unrequited love (a typical theme within *rai* lyrics). The song's video features Khaled's efforts to seduce a coy but alluring North African woman, in a representation of Algerian femininity that seems to mirror those found in nineteenth century Orientalist art, such as Eugène Delacroix's controversial 1834 canvas *Femmes d'Alger dans leurs appartement* (The Women of Algiers in their apartment). The implicit exoticism of the video is reinforced by the somewhat anomalous appearance of a half-naked man (an iconic 'primitive') who wears a headdress and apparently plays

²⁰⁶ Khaled's first successful album was famously promoted in France with the catchphrase "Ceci n'est pas un disque arabe" [This is not an Arab record]. This was a clear attempt on the part of Khaled and his record label to escape exoticising tropes and move beyond bounded notions of Algerian nationality or Arab ethnicity. It may also be read as an effort to promote the album to a wider audience, and to circumvent anti-Arab sentiments within French society (Warne, 1997: 144)

the *ghaiïta*²⁰⁷ (although the sound that he is supposedly playing was in fact created in a recording studio). Khaled's 1996 single *Aïcha*, his most commercially successful hit, is also supported by a video in which he attempts to woo a mystical North African woman, who is replete in headscarf, ornamental jewellery and kohl-smearing eyes. Three years later, Cheb Mami appeared on Sting's song *Desert Rose*. The accompanying video establishes an exoticising binary: Sting appears in daylight, clutching a video camera in a chauffeur-driven car, whilst Mami is constrained to the stage of a dark and sweaty nightclub. As such, Mami embodies the sense of heightened physicality and emotionality that has typified orientalist depictions of African 'otherness', whilst Sting is able to access this alluring world of 'the other' without engaging with it. His video camera collects visual representations of this otherness for his own benefit, evoking the type of colonial orientalism that Peter Mason (1998) suggests have characterised European encounters with non-European cultures since the sixteenth century, and which Krista A. Thompson describes as 'tropicalization', the construction of meanings and understandings of place and culture through appropriated and stereotyped imagery (2006: 5). The video is therefore formed of bifurcated contrasts, between dark and light, and modernity and raw, primitive alterity. Clearly, at the height of *rai*'s popularity, renowned and celebrated artists like Khaled and Mami were happy to embody and perpetuate exoticism. Chris Warne, writing of the world music scene in 1990s France, suggests that 'the category (world music) can be justifiably criticized as a perpetuation of colonial-era relationships, whereby non-Western music is marketed indiscriminately and indistinctively as an exotic "other"' (1997: 135). Philip V. Bohlman agrees that this pop-*rai* of the 1990s openly employed exoticism to attract non-Algerian audiences, and he writes that 'in the mediated world imagined through worldbeat, the producers of *rai* have succumbed to the allure of full-blown orientalism' (2002: 62). In contrast, Tony Langlois suggests a form of reverse exoticism, which inverts Said's East-West power binary, and argues that *rai*'s adoption of a modern synthesised sound evoked a sense of

²⁰⁷ The word *ghaiïta* refers, in North African cultures, to a double reed aerophone which is strikingly similar to the Turkish zurna.

alterity to those in the *bled*. *Rai*, Langlois argues, offered something different from traditional Algerian sounds, and he comments that,

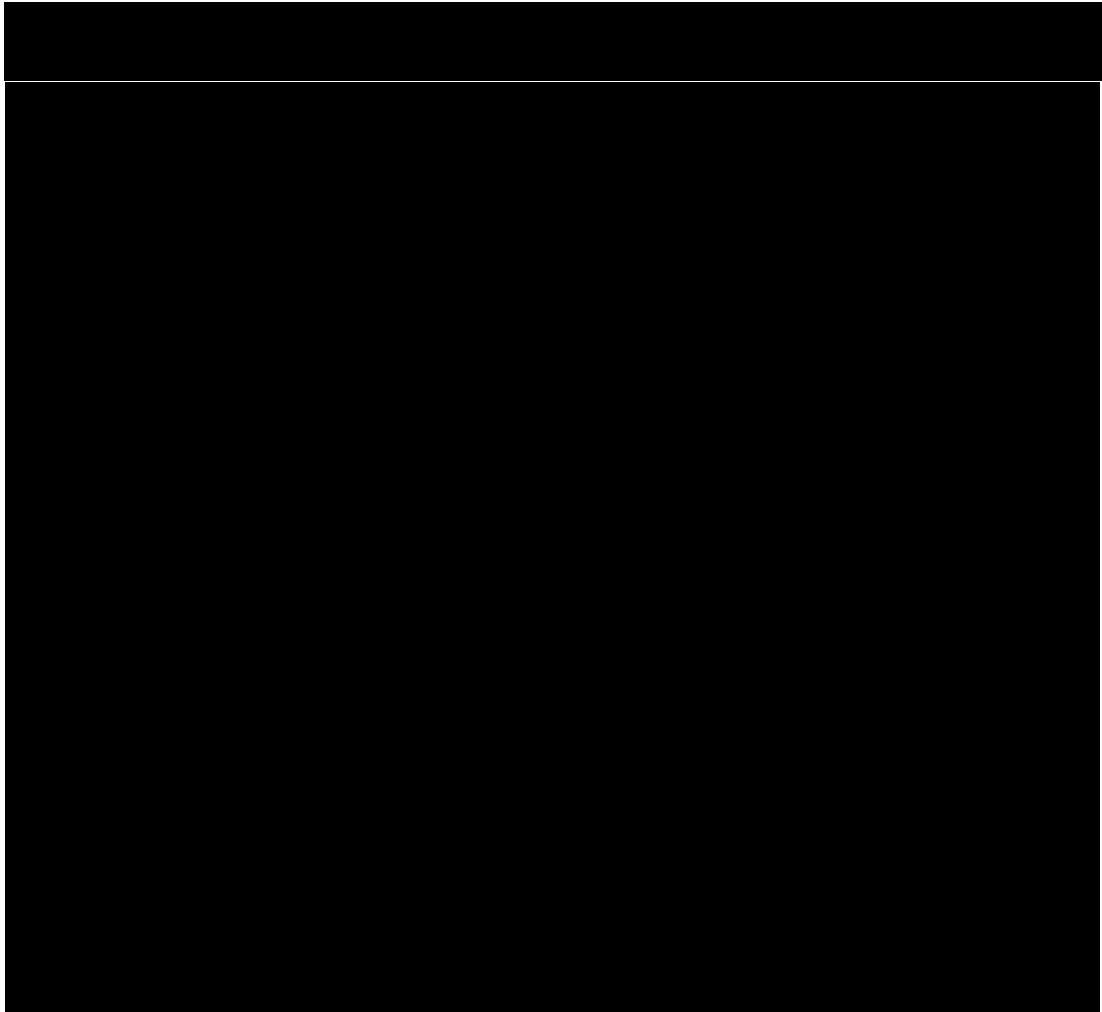
It was discovered that in *rai* there was a market preference for the modern sound over the traditional, even if this would not have been to the personal taste of the *editeur* himself. Likewise, Western concert flutes, or pan-pipe sounds were employed in preference to the indigenous *gasbah* or *ney*, because the latter sounded 'too close to home' and 'old-fashioned'. Clearly the synthetic 'voices' were considered more exotic and sophisticated than those with regional connotations. (1996: 264)

A similarly complex picture emerges amongst Algerian musicians in London who employ auto-exoticism but whose audiences are drawn predominantly from the local diaspora. Cheb Nacim, a *rai* singer who, along with Abdelkader Saadoun, is one of the most successful Algerian musicians in the city, exemplifies this. Nacim draws much of his audience from the Maghrebi diaspora living in west London, and although he performs across the city, he often appears at venues in and around Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush. Nacim's performances incorporate explicit displays of his Algerianness, in the shape of public flag-waving nationalistic pride, and he styles himself upon the *rai* superstars of the 1990s.²⁰⁸ However, whilst the majority of audiences at Nacim's concerts are Algerian, he employs orientalism and exoticism in the promotional materials for his performances. This publicity often incorporates typical orientalist imagery, such as sand dunes and North African lamps, and photographs of the belly dancers that appear alongside Nacim often adorn posters and flyers (see figure 4.10). Whilst the amalgamation of belly dancing and *rai* is certainly not without precedent, the controversial legacy of both within Algerian societies underscores the point that many of Nacim's performances are intended for a young, male audience. Belly dancing in this context is not being employed to appeal to non-Algerian audiences, as in the case of El Andaluz or Abdelkader Saadoun, but rather to present a sexualised image of femininity that is designed to attract young Algerian men in London.

²⁰⁸ See chapter 2 for a discussion of Nacim's performance at the London Mela.

However, Nacim also varies his promotional narrative according to context and intended audience, to present a degree of contradiction. Alongside these performances with belly dancers, Nacim also organises events that target a much wider cross-section of the local diaspora and which move beyond many of the cultural conventions associated with *rai*. A poster for an event at a café in Shepherd's Bush warns that alcohol is strictly prohibited, whilst another, for a performance in Streatham Hill (south London) is promoted as a 'special family' event, with 'no alcohol' (see fig. 4.10). These apparent contradictions, between performer of controversial repertoire and mainstream family entertainer, are not uncommon within *rai*, and Marc Schade-Poulsen, writing of contemporary pop-*rai* music, argues that 'each song line basically tells its own independent story, and that as such a song line imploring help from God followed by a song line praising the pleasures of the bottle is not necessarily contradictory' (1999: 192). The promotional materials for these, and other similar family performances, are notable for retaining their exoticising depictions of Algerian music and culture, despite their clear attempts to attract members of the local diaspora living in London.

A further example of auto-exoticism is found in the publicity for an event held in Finsbury Park in early 2010. The area is renowned as being home to a large Maghrebi and North African population, and the event, which featured both Cheb Nacim and Abdelkader Saadoun, was intended for members of the local diaspora. Nevertheless, the event offered audience members the opportunity to 'step into the culture and discover the rhythms of North Africa', and promised that they would 'enjoy the magic of oriental music'. Alongside typical orientalist imagery, this publicity clearly employed a sense of the exotic appeal of Algerian culture to attract audience members, despite the fact that the majority of those attending were drawn from the Algerian community in London.



4.9: Online adverts (above and below) promoting events by Cheb Nacim.

Clearly, such processes of auto-exoticism cannot simply be dismissed as resulting from commercial aspiration, and a belief in the capacity of orientalism to attract non-Algerian listeners. Whilst they remain framed by the historical trajectories from which they emerged, such processes move beyond the simplified East/West and oppressor/oppressed binaries of Said's work, and highlight the cultural currency of orientalism, not only amongst non-Algerian listeners, but also amongst Algerian audiences. Such reappropriation and reworking of orientalist iconography is, I suggest, a means of subverting the very oppression that was at the heart of French colonialism, and embedded in the works of Delacroix, Fromentin, Vernet and others.

Roswitha Zahlner-Casmier examines exoticism and auto-exoticism in the works of three North African female writers, including Algerian novelists Assia Djebar and Leïla Sebbar, and she concludes that,

While North African Francophone writers struggle against the remnants of their oppression, their writing also originates in the tradition that produced this oppression. It thereby incorporates some of its discourses, if only then to mimic and subvert them. Most writers successfully negotiate this double bind of the exotic tradition and reduce to shreds the ties to the traditional exotic. Yet, traces of a more contemporary exotic of marketable differences still seep through to European consumers of the exotic. (2005: 238-239)

This reading of auto-exoticism and acknowledgment that the remnants of orientalism remain evident in contemporary Maghrebi cultures helps to frame our understanding of the ways in which orientalist language and imagery re-emerge in the promotional materials of Algerian musicians in London. Such processes also fit with notions of mimesis and alterity, and serve to highlight the complex relationship between the two. Michael Taussig shows how these apparently binary positions are in fact closely entwined. It is the close relationship between the two, Taussig suggests, that makes them meaningful, and he writes that,

It is the artful combination, the playing with the combinatorial perplexity, that is necessary; a magnificent excessiveness over and beyond the fact that mimesis implies alterity as its flip-side. The full effect occurs when the necessary impossibility is attained, when mimesis becomes alterity. Then and only then can spirit and matter, history and nature, flow into each others' otherness. (1993: 192)

Taussig argues that mimesis and alterity are shaped by, and against, one another, and that understandings of culture are formed through their interrelationship. He states that,

What remains is unsettled and unsettling interpretation in constant movement with itself – what I have elsewhere called a Nervous System – because the interpreting self is itself grafted into the object of study. The self enters into the alter against which the self is defined and sustained.' (1993: 237)

This approach might help to explicate the ways in which auto-exoticism is employed by Algerian musicians in London. What appears on the surface as an example of mimesis, in which musicians adopt and mimic the very tropes of a

historically established, orientalising cultural ‘otherness’, is in fact also a process of alterity, demarcating a distinct notion of Algerianness that helps to stake a place for Algerian culture within the public sphere in London. Within a local diasporic culture that perpetually struggles to attain cohesion and public visibility, alterity facilitates a sense of collective Algerianness. Algerian musicians and audiences, fully cognisant of the historical processes underpinning orientalism, are therefore able to embody this otherness, and to use its iconography and language as symbols of their own Algerian identities. This is not mimicry of Algerian and Maghrebi culture, but rather of orientalism itself, and of the stereotyping depictions that orientalist practices have established. In reappropriating orientalism through auto-exoticism, Algerians in London use musical and cultural alterity as means of understanding their own place within contemporary London.

4.5 Conclusions

Music forms one of the principal ways in which Algerian culture is mediated in London, establishing encounters between Algerians and non-Algerians, and constructing relationships between the local and global. Music circulates both within local diasporic networks, and outwards, to a wider public in London, and to transnational audiences, evidencing the complexity of Georgiou’s universalism-particularism continuum. The Internet, for example, provides an open platform for musical mediation amongst Algerians in London, between Algerian and non-Algerians in the city, and transnationally, connecting London, France and the *bled*. At the same time, the Internet is employed to serve the needs of Algerians living in the city, and allows Rihet Bladi an affordable and widely accessible medium to transmit music to listeners across London. Similarly, the mediation of meanings and understandings through the auto-exoticism that appears in promotional materials simultaneously produces cultural capital for musicians within a public sphere, and facilitates the construction of a sense of collective Algerian culture within the city.

Algerian musicking in London therefore problematises binaries of local and global, and universal and particular, and highlights the complex,

heterogeneous nature of contemporary Algerian diasporic culture. Georgiou writes of the relationship between orientalism, universalism and particularism, and argues that,

Thinking of cultural difference and ideologies of particularism as interweaved in universalistic ideologies can help us understand cultural tensions and conflicts as the inevitable struggles that take place in the process of surpassing exclusive and Orientalist universalisms and exclusive and insular particularisms. (2005: 8)

Particularism and universalism, she suggests, are framed by the type of blurred complexities that are characteristic of the relationship between local and global, and mimesis and alterity, and can only be understood by accepting their interdependence. She suggests that,

Diasporic communities sustain and partly depend for their communal shared sense of identity on transnational communications. But the national and local context where diasporic populations live is equally important for the construction of meanings of community and identity, especially as inclusion, exclusion and participation in the broader societies are largely grounded in the national and local space: nation-states and locales have some distinct historical, cultural and political characteristics. (2005: 18-19)

Whilst Georgiou does not dismiss the importance of transnational cultural flows for diasporas, she draws attention to the significance of local contexts. This is evident in the ways that music is used to construct collective identities amongst Algerians in London, through radio broadcasts and the reappropriation of orientalism, and to establish a public and visible face of Algerian culture in the city.

Echchaibi also highlights the complex heterogeneity that lies at the heart of contemporary diasporic cultures, and suggests that 'diasporas are constructed around multiple narratives and discourses. Their survival depends to a large extent on their ability to provide a space for conflicting claims of belonging and their willingness to reconcile those differences' (2011: 4). It is these multiple diasporic narratives and discourses that lie at the heart of Algerian musicking in London, and connect mediation to the production and

performance of Algerian identities. The broadcasts of Rihet Bladi, for example, may propagate an idea of collective Algerian culture, but in the process of Djamel's shows, they produce a distinctive form of Algerianness within a diasporic 'third space' that is clearly demarcated from that found in France or the *bled*, further underscoring the unique nature of this 'secondary diaspora'. The inclusion of music in these broadcasts serves not only to evoke memories of an Algerian homeland, but constructs a sense of cultural unity, which brings together a diaspora that is physically dispersed across the city. Similarly, the Internet functions in multiple ways, and whilst it overcomes logistical issues and feelings of cultural detachment, and forms transnational connections between London and elsewhere, it also provides a 'viable space' for the discursive negotiation of Algerianness amongst those living in the city.

The mediation of Algerian music in London is therefore characterised by the competing desire to connect with Algerians elsewhere through transnational cultural flows, and to define a clear and distinct London Algerian identity. This identity not only connects multiple places (Britain, France, and the *bled*), but also cuts across time, reshaping cultural traditions for the needs of Algerians in contemporary London. Echchaibi calls upon scholars to examine diasporic cultures and identities within historical discourse, but also to attend to the specificities of local culture, suggesting that whilst,

Liminal, alternative sites such as diasporic media can be effective interventions in hegemonic constructions of nation and identity...in order to understand the significance and degree of this kind of potential disruption, our research needs to be embedded historically and geographically. (2011: 171)

Such historical and geographical appreciation is crucial to understanding Algerian culture in London, and the ways in which music is mediated amongst musicians and audiences forms a 'liminal, alternative site' for the construction and performance of London Algerianness. The flows of music, across the city and throughout transnational networks, are evidence of the complexity and heterogeneity of Algerian musical culture in London, and are employed by

Algerians in the city to discursively negotiate their own sense of Algerian identity.

Chapter 5: *Andalus* Music in London

This chapter examines the role of *andalus* music within the Algerian diaspora in contemporary London, and focuses upon the ensemble the Al-Andalus Caravan. The musicking practices of this ensemble are framed by the long and complex historical development of this musical tradition throughout North Africa, but are also shaped by a number of contemporary concerns and factors, locally, throughout the diaspora, and in the *bled*. The ensuing chapter examines how the Al-Andalus Caravan engages with, and embodies, a number of themes discussed in the preceding chapters, including the use of music to construct and perform individual and collective forms of Algerianness, and the mediation of Algerian culture to audiences, both within and outside of London.

5.1 The Origins of *Andalus* Music

Andalus music has a long and elaborate history, and evidences the centuries of cultural encounter that have occurred in Algeria, and throughout North Africa. Algeria has always offered a route for travel and trade between Europe and Africa, and, as a result, has historically been home to a multitude of cultures; the raids of pirates from the Barbary states (in particular from Algiers) brought north European slaves to the country up until the early nineteenth century; religious tolerance encouraged the development of a significant Jewish presence, particularly in the larger cities;²⁰⁹ and colonialism brought settlers to Algeria throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, from Spain, Italy and Portugal, as well as from France.²¹⁰ One of the most significant large-scale migrations into Algeria was the arrival of the Muslims forced out of southern Spain as a result of the *Reconquista*.²¹¹ These migrants brought with

²⁰⁹ JaFran Jones notes the important role played by Jewish communities in the Maghrebi in maintaining *andalusi* music, and writes that 'They were also significant in the restoration and revitalization of the Andalusian repertoire and may be credited, along with the Sufi brotherhoods, with having preserved it from eclipse' (2002: 434)

²¹⁰ Alistair Horne writes of colonial Algeria in the early twentieth century that 'there came Spaniards, Italians and Maltese in their thousands; so much so that by 1917 only one in five of the non-Muslim population were said to be of French origin (2006: 32).

²¹¹ The term *Reconquista* is commonly used to refer to the military actions by Christian nation-states between the eighth and fifteenth centuries CE in expanding and

them a rich cultural heritage that had developed over centuries of Muslim rule in Spain, Portugal and southern France, and it was the region from which they relocated that provided the name for a style of music found in contemporary Algeria: *al-andalus*.

The resulting encounters between these newly arrived immigrants and the local population produced various cultural syntheses, which included the integration of music with the body of Arabic poetry that had evolved in Muslim Spain over previous centuries. Mahmoud Guettat writes that ‘several influences fashioned Andalusian-North African music, including ancient traditions from throughout the Mediterranean world and, later, a gradual synthesis of more heterogeneous eastern, western, northern and southern elements’ (2002: 441). He records an ‘artistic flowering’ between 796-1027CE, during which a body of poetry and music began to develop that would provide the foundations of *andalusi* musical repertoire. Habib Hassan Touma connects contemporary musical practices with the music’s historical evolution throughout North Africa and the Middle East, and argues that,

Today, the *andalusi nūbah* is an important authentic music tradition in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, a tradition that came to Córdoba and Granada from Baghdad in the ninth century, and with the expulsion of the Arabs from Spain during the thirteenth, fifteenth, and seventeenth centuries, and found a new home in North Africa. (1996: 68)

As Touma notes, *andalus* music is not restricted to Algeria but is found, in various forms, throughout the Maghrebi countries of North Africa that became

‘(re)conquering’ areas of southern Europe (in particular Spain and Portugal) that had previously been under Islamic rule. The area during this period is known by its Arabic title *al-Andalus* (which gave its name to the modern-day region of Andalusia in southern Spain), and is often celebrated as a place in which Muslims, Christians and Jews lived in relative peace. Barton (2011) suggests, however, that the collapse of the Islamic *Umayyad Caliphate* (the second *caliphate*, or period of Islamic state-rule via a state leader [*caliph*]), following the death of the Prophet Muhammad) in the early eleventh century fractured Andalusian society and produced competing cities across the region, which in turn threatened Islamic rule in the region and empowered Christian opposition in what is now northern Spain (2011: 518). Marin-Guzman (1992) argues that it was at this time that a unified armed Christian resistance to Islamic rule in the region arose, replacing previous peaceful opposition from some Christians, and this would in turn lead eventually to the wars which forced the Islamic population from *al-Andalus*, with many migrating and settling in North Africa (1992: 287).

home to migrant populations arriving from southern Europe.²¹² These regional variations are evident in the different ‘schools’ that teach *andalus* music, and they are associated with particular cities, regions or countries through the Maghreb.

5.2 The *Ṭabʿ* and *Nūba* in *Andalus* Music

The concepts of *ṭabʿ* and *nūba* (plural, *nūbāt*) are the foundations of *andalus* music, and are the basis from which all musical performances are constructed. Guettat describes the *ṭabʿ* as ‘essentially modal’ and notes the importance of the aesthetic that underpins it, writing that,

The term *ṭabʿ* is generally accepted as meaning innate character, nature, or temperament; characteristic human reactions to and feelings toward other beings and things; and also an impression, stamp, or imprint. Less mystically, *ṭabʿ* refers to a modal scale, its characteristics, and its potential effect on the listener. (2002: 446)

Ruth Davis reinforces the importance of the aesthetic elements of the *ṭabʿ* and draws attention to their continuing significance for contemporary musicians, noting that,

Each *ṭabʿ* was associated with particular cosmological and other properties including hours of the day, natural elements, colours of the spectrum, and human emotional and physical attributes, and each had corresponding therapeutic properties. Many of these associations are still acknowledged by North African musicians, even if they are no longer respected in practice.’ (2004: 2)

Tewfik Ouagueni, Musical Director of the London-based Al-Andalus Caravan, reinforces the enduring importance of this relationship between the structural elements of the music and its aesthetic, and observes that,

²¹² Langlois reinforces this understanding of the history of *andalusi* when writing that ‘the Muslim nobility and their Jewish retinue settled along the coast from Morocco to Libya, bringing with them the court musics of the city states of Córdoba, Granada, Valencia and Seville. These repertoires were probably quite distinct by this date, although they are often all mythically ascribed to a single composer, Ziryāb, a 9th-century exile from Baghdad’ (Langlois, Grove Music Online).

You have some *nūbāt* that are played in the morning. And some of them are played in the evening, when the sun sets. So when you read the lyrics, it talks about the sun setting. And the other one talks about the sunrise. And then you have the song of the birds. It matches, if you see what I mean?²¹³

A correlation between performances of music and certain periods of the day, and the incorporation of aesthetics relating to concepts of beauty and serenity, are not unique to *andalus* and can be found in other musical traditions, such as the classical Indian *rāg*. Laura Leante, for example, writes that the *Śrī rāg* is ‘traditionally performed at sunset’ and ‘emotions associated with it include those of an authoritative, calm and graceful figure, such as a sovereign, a hero, a warrior, or a yogi. This seems to be closely related to the meaning of the word ‘*śrī*’, an honorific prefix, often used for deities or men’ (2009: 188-189).

Davis describes the *nūba* as ‘essentially a song-cycle characterised by unity of mode, or melody type, and diversity of rhythmic-metric elements’ (2004:3), whilst Jürgen Elsner suggests that it ‘refers to a distinct cycle of various instrumental and vocal pieces gradually increasing in tempi’ (2002: 470). Jonathan Glasser provides a lucid and informative overview of the musical construction of the *nūba* when he writes that it,

Draws on a set repertoire of rhythmically-defined movements; each *nūba* is based in a dominant melodic mode drawn from roughly a dozen canonical modes; voice and string instruments dominate the melody, and they are accompanied by percussion; the governing aesthetic is one of heterophony, rather than either unison melody or harmonic progression; the song texts are strophic, and roughly follow the form of the classical Arabic *muwashshah* with its introduction of a new rhyme in each verse and a constant return to a set rhyme in the chorus. (2008: 11-12)

Davis asserts that ‘united by their common Andalusian identity, these traditions share certain music structural and linguistic characteristics, and aspects of performance practice, which distinguish them as a whole from the music of the Arab east, or Mashreq’ (2004: 2). She notes that *andalus* music throughout Tunisia, Libya and eastern Algeria is known as *ma’lūf*, whilst Touma records

²¹³ Interview, 25th April 2012.

that the *andalusi* repertoire in Morocco is known as *āla* and is found in three separate ‘schools’ in the cities of Fez, Tatouan, and Rabat (2002: 455-457).²¹⁴ In Algeria there are three distinct *andalusi* schools, found in particular areas of the country: Constantine in the east, where it shares the name *ma’lūf*²¹⁵ with nearby Libyan and Tunisian traditions; Tlemcen in the west, where it is known as *gharnāṭī* and shares similarities with the music of Morocco; and the capital city of Algiers, where the music is known as *ṣan’a*²¹⁶ (Guettat, 2002: 449). Guettat notes that ‘within each of these different schools, cultural specificity and socio-political context have always influenced the *nūba* repertoire and performance styles. But all these names...nevertheless designate a single thing: the traditional North African *nūba*’ (2002: 449-450).

Whilst the conservatism and traditionalism that frequently characterise *andalusi* musics ensure that alterations to the repertoire are kept to a minimum, the body of *nūbāt* available to musicians has gradually shrunk, with *nūba* ‘lost’ throughout history. Touma notes that whilst there are believed to have been twenty-four original *nūbāt*, ‘as early as the nineteenth century, only eleven *nūbāt* were still known in Morocco, fifteen in Algeria, thirteen in Tunisia, and merely nine in Libya. During the twentieth century, the repertoire has shrunk even further’ (1996: 70).²¹⁷ This sense of cultural loss, sometimes blamed upon the arrival of colonialism in North Africa in the early nineteenth century and a subsequent marginalisation of local musical practices, remains central to the efforts of contemporary musicians to preserve their music. Tewfik Ouagueni states that,

With music, if people stop writing new songs in any music, you can expect it to disappear right? Unless you copy it somehow. So this is what happened for the Andalusian music. Theoretically it was packed,

²¹⁴ The Moroccan *nūba* is formed of five main vocal sections, each of which is known as *mīzān*, meaning ‘balance’ or ‘measure’ (Touma, 2002: 455-457).

²¹⁵ Meaning ‘usual’ or ‘traditional’ (Guettat, 2002: 449).

²¹⁶ Defined as ‘elaborate’ or ‘artistic’ (Guettat, 2002: 449).

²¹⁷ Poché notes that scholars working in Algeria identified nineteen *nūbāt* in 1886, whilst in 1879 another researcher had only been able to identify fourteen distinct *nūbāt* (1995: 79).

and wrapped, and closed. But people could only lose it, because you don't have new songs from anywhere.²¹⁸

The twelve *nūbāt* that remain in existence and are performed by contemporary Algerian *andalus* ensembles are,

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Nūba al-dhīl</i> | 7. <i>Nūba zīdān</i> |
| 2. <i>Nūba mjenba</i> | 8. <i>Nūba rasd</i> |
| 3. <i>Nūba al-husayn</i> | 9. <i>Nūba mazmûm</i> |
| 4. <i>Nūba raml al-mâya</i> | 10. <i>Nūba sîkâ</i> |
| 5. <i>Nūba ramal</i> | 11. <i>Nūba rast al-dhīl</i> |
| 6. <i>Nūba ghrîb</i> | 12. <i>Nūba mâya</i> |
- (Poché, 1995: 79)

In addition to these, there are four further partially-known *nūbāt*, but these remain incomplete. There are also seven *nūbāt al-inqlābāt*, which Guettat calls 'a kind of abbreviated *nūba* of recent origin' (2002: 450).²¹⁹

Guettat describes the traditional Algerian *ṣan'a* ensemble, and provides details of instrumentation and the arrangement of the musicians, noting that this typically consists of seven instruments arranged in a semi-circle: from left to right these are *darbūka* (goblet drum), *kwītra* (four-stringed lute), *ṣnitra* (mandoline), *rebāb* (two-stringed instrument), *ūd 'arbī* (four-stringed lute, similar to *kwītra*), *kamanjā* (spike fiddle), and *ṭār* (tambourine) (2002: 453-454). Over time, certain instruments have been replaced in many ensembles by more modern alternatives, such as the *mandole* (a small plucked chordophone, which is commonly used in modern Algerian *chaabi* music), and some groups have even introduced Western instrumentation, such as cello and piano.

5.3 *Andalusi* Music in Contemporary Algerian Society

An important feature in the evolution of *andalus* music has been its changing social position within North African societies. Over-simplified representations have depicted *andalus* as elitist and exclusive, and have likened it to 'classical' Western art musics, but such portrayals fail to adequately illustrate the complex

²¹⁸ Interview, 25th April 2012.

²¹⁹ Elsner notes that the word *inqlābāt* refers 'to a folklike, musically simple vocal form' (2002: 470).

social and cultural conditions that frame the music. Elsner notes that historically *andalus* was popular with the ruling classes, but was also performed in ritual contexts (such as marriages and circumcisions), and was a feature of early twentieth century café society. He concludes that ‘despite considerable changes in its social context in the course of history, it lost neither its prestige nor its effectiveness’ (2002: 469-470).²²⁰ Tony Langlois suggests that prior to Algerian independence in 1962, the music was socially derided, and records that,

During the colonial period, *ma’lūf* in particular was associated with hashish smoking and other immoral activities that took place in *fanādiq*, hotels where profane musics were played. The young nationalist movement in the 1950s founded a system of associations that created a better moral climate in which the traditions could be learnt. (Langlois, Grove Music Online)



5.1: A private concert of Andalusian music in Algiers in 1889 (Poché, 1995).

Since independence, *andalus* has established a more privileged position and is now often associated with, and supported by, the wealthier sections of contemporary Algerian society.²²¹ Although not as popular as other musical

²²⁰ Davis argues that, in the case of Tunisian *andalusi* music, ‘although the *ma’luf* was unknown to large sections of the population, it was in other respects relatively well qualified for its privileged status. As an urban musical tradition it was common at least to many communities, unlike the rural traditions, which were considerably more varied’ (2004: 71).

²²¹ Glasser writes that ‘if we begin to think about who the active listeners and producers of this music are, we start to deal with a much narrower slice of society...*Andalusi*

styles amongst modern Algerian audiences, *andalus* has had a significant influence upon other musics, such as *chaabi*. The post-independence Algerian government, who promote it as a symbol of national cultural pride, has increasingly supported *andalus*.²²² Langlois adds that,

Andalus is promoted in schools, urban conservatoires and broadcast on state television on radio broadcasts, particularly at times...when a sense of national solidarity is invoked. Such top-down efforts to influence taste are, however, seldom completely effective and on the whole it has been the educated middle classes who have identified most with *Andalus*. (2005: 103)

L. JaFran Jones also connects the music with nationalist political policies across North Africa, writing that *andalus* 'has subsequently been rescued and restored, put on a pedestal, and clad in the robes of national pride, but not made more measurably palatable to popular taste' (2002: 436). Martin Stokes writes of efforts during the colonial period to distance *andalus* from the disreputable hashish dens and Sufi lodges with which it had become associated, and states that 'French orientalist lamented these signs of decline and sought to purify it. Following closely in their footsteps, North African intellectuals appropriated it as national art music' (2011: 28).

Whilst *andalus* does not hold the same widespread popular appeal as other Algerian musics, it is nevertheless held in high esteem. Glasser argues that *andalus* music,

Occupies a privileged position in Algerian musical discourse. It is not only a badge of authenticity, aural proof of a national essence that, in

music's active community of performers and listeners derives from a particular sector of society, even though the music is often spoken of as a national patrimony...members of these kin networks tend to be professionals (such as businessmen, doctors, university professors), though there are some of more modest means, including skilled artisans, teachers, and low- to mid-level government clerks' (2008:17).

²²² Schade-Poulsen notes that 'after independence, Algeria was endowed with national institutions such as l'Institut national de musique (1968) and l'ONDA (l'Organisation des droits d'auteur), not to mention national radio and television. In 1964, *andalus* was declared the national classical music of Algeria, and after independence a number of official festivals featuring different musical styles were held all over the country, with music becoming an integrated activity in the party-controlled youth centres'. (1999: 189)

the phrasing that is often used to speak of identity in post-independence Algeria, succeeded in “remaining itself” throughout the long night of colonial rule; for it is also widely asserted that the Algerian *nūba* is the basis for all other urban styles, including the various forms of *qaṣā'id* and *Chaabi*. (2008: 27)

Parallels might therefore be drawn between *andalus* and other musical traditions. Portuguese *fado* bears some noticeable similarities to *andalus* in the ways in which it engenders a particularly powerful sense of nationalism, through a glorified, but contested, history, and stimulates memories of the music’s political repression (Gray, 2007). Similarly, the Iranian *radif* also shares some similar features with *andalus*, maintaining links to the past and being positioned as representative of the Iranian nation (Nettl, 2005).

Amongst Algerians in London, *andalus* is often advocated as their country’s most valuable musical tradition, even if it does not form part of the daily listening habits of many members of the diaspora. This reflects the fact that many Algerians living in the city were born in the *bled*, and grew up during a period of heightened nationalism following independence, during which *andalus* was widely promoted. It also accentuates the unique position of *andalus* music amongst contemporary Algerian audiences, whereby it is simultaneously a deeply conservative (and sometimes elitist) tradition, it is closely linked to a revered period of Maghrebi history, and yet it continues to attract significant interest and support despite its limited listenership. Glasser describes *andalusi* culture in the Maghreb as ‘a complex, vibrant practice based in a close-knit, far-flung community; it is a practice that lives at the interstices of public and private, a learned and deeply social pursuit that enjoys high prestige and an abiding link to urban identity and memory’ (2008: 5).

5.4 The Al-Andalus Caravan

Although a number of London-based Algerian musicians draw upon ideas from *andalus* music, the city’s leading proponents of an ‘authentic’ and traditional *andalus* sound are the Al-Andalus Caravan, an ensemble formed in the city during the summer of 2011. The group is composed of members living and working throughout London and the surrounding areas, and the ‘association’

provides a rare opportunity for music-making and social interaction.²²³ The association's name simultaneously identifies the ensemble with this particular musical style and denotes a historical link to the Andalusian region, whilst also invoking a sense of movement (through the word Caravan), which might refer to either the movement of a diasporic population (journeying either from Spain to North Africa, or from Algeria to London), or to a group of musicians for whom travel is a necessary part of their music-making activities. There are therefore multiple meanings embodied within the name of the association, and as Stephen Cottrell, in discussing classical ensembles in London, writes,

This works at several levels, because of course this name not only iconically references that particular collection of musicians for society at large, it also symbolically represents a shared identity through which the individuals involved in part conceive their relationship with the group. (2004: 100)

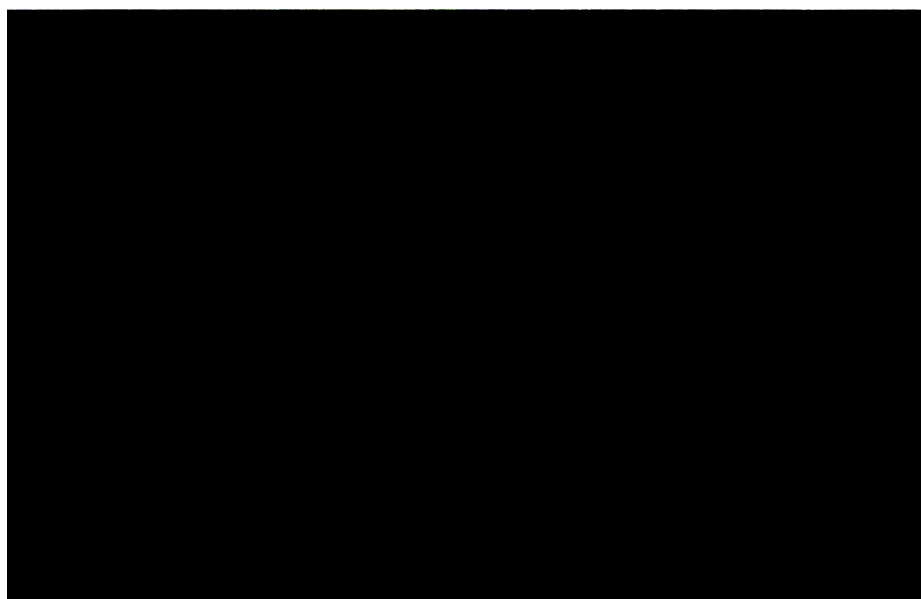
The Caravan is composed of individuals working across a broad range of professions, including business, IT and catering, with many members holding qualifications at degree level or above, often obtained during their time in the UK.²²⁴ Many are amongst the more highly-educated and financially prosperous members of the Algerian diaspora in London. Given the typical social profile of *andalus* music within contemporary Algerian society, this might explain their desire to perform *andalusi* repertoire. Ali Aït Si Larbi, a percussionist who plays the *darbūka* and *ṭār*, admits that 'to be honest, this music is not for everyone, even in Algeria...(it is a music) mainly from the upper classes. And the people

²²³ The concept of the *andalus* music association and its central role in contemporary *andalusi* musical culture is described in greater detail later in this chapter. A lexical distinction might be drawn between the notion of 'ensemble' or 'group' (the collection of musicians who perform the music) and the 'association' (the organisation as a whole, which incorporates teaching and promotion of *andalusi* music alongside performances). However, for the members of the Al-Andalus Caravan, these words are employed synonymously, and the term association is the most commonly used, whether referring to performances (of the musical ensemble) or the wider organisation. The use of alternate terminology (ensemble, group etc.) here is only intended to avoid repetition within the text.

²²⁴ The number of members has varied throughout the Caravan's short existence. At the time of my fieldwork, the ensemble's membership was usually between 15 and 20 people, although this number regularly fluctuated.

who play it, are mainly from the upper class as well'.²²⁵ Ali performs both *andalus* with the ensemble, and *chaabi* in cafes around London, and draws a distinction between the two musics that is rooted in class consciousness. 'Chaabi is my pleasure', he explains, 'because I'm not rich. When I was growing up, I was born in a middle-class family, with my dad going to work from the morning to the evening. And I feel like this is what I belong to'.²²⁶ In contrast, he states that '*al-Andalus* I look at as an obligation, as something I need to do to keep it going' and despite the fact that he does not feel the same sense of connection as he does to *chaabi*, he adds that 'I feel like I need to keep it, I don't want it to go in my lifetime'.²²⁷

He also reflects upon the importance of maintaining this heritage, suggesting that 'it's a tradition. I mean I live in this country, I'm more than likely to stay here for another twenty, thirty years, I don't know? I'm more than likely to have kids here. But I would like them to learn it, or at least to know about it'.²²⁸



5.2: A picture of the Al-Andalus Caravan, taken outside their rehearsal room in Pimlico London in 2011.

Singer and 'ūd player Yasmine Ali also notes the reverence for *andalus* music in Algeria, and suggests that 'it has that status, in the sense of "posh music". Or

²²⁵ Interview, 10th February 2012.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

the people who tend to learn it (are). They are not necessarily from the highest class, but it is associated with the bourgeois'.²²⁹ She believes, however, that her mother's encouragement to learn and play *andalusi* music at an early age was not about issues of 'class', observing that,

I think the reason was because that type of music is more accessible for children than other types. So classical music...I don't think my parents would have loved to see us play rock and roll, or rap music at the age of six. So you direct your children to more classical, docile music that is preferable I think for children.²³⁰

The Caravan's membership fluctuates but Music Director Tewfik Ouagueni provides the association with leadership, continuity and extensive musical knowledge. Ouagueni was born in Algiers in 1972 and undertook formal training as an *andalus* musician during his youth. His biography, which appears in the programme for the group's concerts, notes his training with established and respected teachers, and records that at the age of sixteen,

Tewfik joined the prestigious Andalusian Musical Association "El Soundoussia", where he was under the direct tutorage of some of the most renowned names in Andalusian music in Algiers like Beihdja Rahal and Mohamed Sabaoui, who in turn were students of the great Master "Abderezak Fakhardji". (Bateman, Maragh and Ray, 2012: 4)

He left Algeria in 2000 and, after a period of international travel, arrived in Britain and took up residence in Reading.²³¹ He works as an IT specialist and his music-making activities with the Caravan have to be made to fit around his working life. The lack of financial support and performance opportunities for Algerian *andalus* musicians in Britain partly explain his on-going work commitments, and, given his expertise and knowledge, it seem likely that if he were to live in France or Algeria (where there are larger musical networks and greater support for *andalus* musicians) he would gain much greater financial remuneration for his music-making activities.

²²⁹ Interview, 1st March 2013.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ The city of Reading is located approximately thirty-five miles west of London, and it a popular location for those community to the capital for work.

Whilst other members of the group have taken responsibility for various aspects of administration and organisation, Tewfik remains the central figure in the musical decision-making processes of the group, selecting repertoire, teaching the other musicians, and leading both rehearsals and performances. His motivations for performing *andalusi* music, and for dedicating a large amount of time to the Caravan, stem from both a desire to maintain its musical heritage, and to gain a sense of well-being in his own life. He suggests that *andalus* music is,

A good way for relaxation, definitely. And it's made a lot of changes, not only for myself, but for the other guys as well... This type of music just reminds you how life can be beautiful. Of all the beautiful things in life. And you will say 'yes, work is important, but we work to live, not live to work'.²³²

Andalus music therefore plays an important role in the individual and collective activities of the Caravan's members, and enables them to sonically evoke connections with the *bled*. Through their musicking practices, the ensemble's musicians are able to take established Algerian cultural practices and traditions, and reshape them in ways that support and enhance their own lives within contemporary London, and allow them to present *andalusi* music to Algerian and non-Algerian audiences within the city.

5.5 The *Andalusi* Musical Association

The Al-Andalus Caravan are organised as an 'association', which is the conventional formation of *andalusi* groups throughout North African and the diaspora. Associations are amateur organisations, based upon a democratic organisational structure, that foster both the teaching and performance of *andalus* music. Whilst the association is founded upon egalitarian principles, the most experienced members still provide leadership for the organisation, and in the case of the Caravan, Tewfik fulfils this in his role as Musical Director. Stephen Cottrell's notion of 'directed democracy' within musical ensembles, which he employs to discuss Western classical string quartets, provides a

²³² Interview, 25th April 2012.

useful comparison with the ways in which *andalusi* associations are typically organised, and he writes that,

The most successful groups had a form what I call directed democracy, in that one person, the first violin, would lead and take certain musical and pragmatic (rehearsal) decisions, but not in such a way that the others felt excluded or that their views were not taken into account. (2004: 87)

Despite Tewfik's authority in directing the activities of the Caravan, the group nevertheless endeavours to maintain these concepts of egalitarianism and democracy. Yasmine, for example, was elected as the association's treasurer in early 2012 and manages the finances of the association, and she suggests that 'perhaps in the future I could help out Tewfik a bit more, with tuning the instruments and all that sort of stuff'.²³³ Tewfik adds that he wants the ensemble's members 'to be responsible in the association. I want them to be able to run it if I'm not here, or if I decide to move somewhere else. I'm not building this thing around myself. I want it to be something that will be able to run without me. I want that'.²³⁴

Glasser suggests that the *andalusi* association emerged from French colonialism, and a propagated desire to keep alive the egalitarian ambitions of the 1789 revolution (2008: 264-265). *Andalus* musicians adopted the concept, and, antithetically, the association became a locus for Algerian nationalism, fostering anti-French sentiments amongst musicians and audiences.²³⁵ Tewfik locates the Caravan within this historical-political narrative:

Look at these associations that exist now, basically leading the training and the show scene with Andalusian music, (they) were actually born in the '20s and '30s, when there was a big international movement for having associations. And at that time, Algeria was under the French occupation and there was this new wind of change that came from all over the eastern colonies. People were getting back to their roots. The

²³³ Interview, 1st March 2013.

²³⁴ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²³⁵ Evans (2012: 62-64) describes the growth of sporting organisations, particularly football clubs, throughout the 1920s and the role that they played in stimulating nationalist anti-colonial politics, and the increase in *andalusi* musical associations was another element in this socio-political movement.

way was through having associations. Schools were also a part of it. If you look at it, if you chart to see when these associations started, these schools or even political associations or parties, it was all the same time.²³⁶

In designating their ensemble an association, the members of the Al-Andalus Caravan therefore locate the group within a particular tradition, drawing upon cultural and political histories, and promoting democratic and pedagogic intentions. This also connects them with transnational networks of *andalusi* associations, linking London to both France and the *bled*. Glasser suggests that the association,

Is the institution through which virtually all major performers pass, and the members of the association – whether or not they are musicians themselves – form the backbone of the larger *Andalusi* musical community in the Algerian *nūba* traditions...the associative movement (*le mouvement associatif, al- ḥaraka al-jam ‘iyya*) today accounts for the bulk of activity in Andalusi musical circles. (2008: 264).

Yasmine draws attention to the ways in which the activities of the Caravan enable them to construct and connect with networks of *andalusi* music-making, noting that,

There are a lot of them (*the videos on Caravan’s Facebook group*) that are of associations in Algeria, which is good because it kind of creates a community across borders, on one page...What’s good about it is that with the people who are in the associations in Algeria or France, we could exchange ideas or videos of what they think is good, and we can go and talk about it. It’s a good way of sharing information about that music on the net.²³⁷

Yasmine also wants physical interactions with other associations (alongside those that are facilitated by the Internet), and highlights the flows of music and musicians that transnational networks embody. She reflects upon the movement of individuals between London, Paris and Algeria, and contends that,

²³⁶ Interview, 25th April 2012.

²³⁷ Interview, 1st March 2013.

People travel a lot more now. So if someone is coming to London to stay for three months, if they don't want to stop their music, or they already have a contact, then they could join the group. Likewise, if someone was going from London to Paris. I think that would be a good network to build for the music.²³⁸

The transnational network of *andalusi* associations with which the Caravan interacts forms not only a musical matrix, but also a social one. In physical terms, as Yasmine highlights, this allows opportunities for musicians to travel and perform with other *andalus* musicians in different locations around the world. But there is also a wider sense of collectiveness that is embodied within the transnational proliferation of *andalusi* associations. Glasser explains that,

The term “associative movement” is telling for our understanding of the association as a social form. The key word is movement, which underlies the notion that associations do not exist as disparate formations, but are parts of a larger whole that is moving in a particular direction. It is not a stretch to draw a parallel between the associative movement and the idea of a political movement: *Andalusi* music is a cause that stirs tremendous loyalty among its devotees. (2008: 267)

Glasser's work focuses on associations in Algeria, particularly in and around Algiers, but there are certain parallels that might be drawn from his description of the notions of collectivity that underpin the association network. Firstly, a broad comparison might be made to the notion of Islamic *ummah*, or community, whereby adherence to Islam is considered to supersede locality, and is suggestive of collective identity. In addition, the *andalus* association network might be juxtaposed with notions of diaspora: both operate at both micro and macro levels (i.e. are formed of localised communities that form a wider, transnational diaspora), and exist as interlinked formations, functioning as part of a larger whole. They both also remain inherently connected to a particular physical location through the imaginations and activities of their members, and this 'place' retains a strong symbolic significance: a comparison might be made between the enduring importance of the diasporic 'homeland' and the on-going veneration of the medieval *andalus* of southern Europe within *andalusi* musical networks.

²³⁸ Ibid.

The Al-Andalus Caravan therefore combines multiple forms of identity, simultaneously embodying a sense of nationalistic cultural pride in the distinctly Algerian *ṣan'a* music that they perform, with a sense of pan-Maghrebism through this shared North African musical tradition. They also combine the historical and contemporary, evoking the complex history of *andalusi* music and culture in the Maghreb whilst connecting with contemporary networks of musicians and associations, which form transnational relationships between the *bled* and the Algerian diaspora.

5.6 Heritage and Tradition in *Andalus* Music

The Caravan's status as an *andalus* association, and the musicians' interactions with performers outside of London, is tied to their stated desire to maintain the music in its traditional forms, and the ensemble's members are often critical of any attempts at modernisation. The group publicly state their belief in the importance of historical representation and cultural preservation, and their biography (which is included on their Facebook page²³⁹ and appears in programmes at their performances) informs the reader that,

On the track of these devoted artists and their families, the musical association "Al-Andalus Caravan" dedicates its activities to the preservation and the perpetuation of the *Andalusi* Music tradition, and that by providing the environment and the means to artists from different background to learn and practice this Music and its variants.
(Bateman, Maragh and Ray, 2012: 4)

The foregrounding of history, tradition, and preservation found in this self-identity is typical of traditional *andalusi* associations, and is contrasted with the use of *andalus* within contemporary (i.e. non-traditional) contexts and musical projects. For conservative musical traditionalists, such as Tewfik, it is important to maintain links to the historical development of *andalus*, and adherence to the *nūba* and *ṭab'* remains fundamental. He complains of cultural loss, highlighting the disappearance of *nūbāt* over time as an example, and suggests that

²³⁹ The association use a 'group' on Facebook to which members of the association with their own Facebook accounts are added. Whilst non-members are unable to actively engage in online discussions, or post messages and videos, they are able to see a list of members and to read the ensemble's biography.

associations in Algeria ‘are trying to innovate, which has always been the case with the tradition’ and, questioning desires to alter and modernise *andalus*, implies that ‘many people [think] that doing that will make it open to a bigger public. I think I’m not reinventing the wheel. This is a thing that has been going on all over the world for different classical musics’.²⁴⁰

As the Musical Director of the Caravan, Tewfik has openly encouraged the ensemble’s musicians to reengage with traditional practices. A book by revered *ṣan’a* musician and teacher Sid Ahmed Serri (2006), which provides historical and musical information and lyrics, has been shared amongst the group’s members, and Tewfik and other individuals have collected sources on their visits to Algeria. Tewfik explains the Caravan’s intentions by declaring that,

What I’m doing here, I’m just going back. In the opposite direction...It’s what I wanted to do. I want to sit on the floor in the Moorish way, and we will not accept the (new) instruments.²⁴¹ It’s just going to be medieval instruments. We’re looking for that sound, that taste, looking for that quality. I don’t know if I’m going to succeed, but I’m doing my best.²⁴²

He acknowledges that some gradual changes to musical practices are inevitable, but argues that,

I want to keep to the tradition. During the four-hour rehearsals we do, I am just boiling all the time. I’m boiling about the rhythms, whether they’re above a certain speed. I do my best to keep it as I know it. Obviously as human beings, and as a fact of history, nothing stays the same. But there is a difference between changes when we really want them to happen, and when they happen naturally. Something is inevitable. You are going to sing your way. Listen to opera singers, you cannot find two the same.²⁴³

Yasmine supports Tewfik’s view and states that,

²⁴⁰ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁴¹ Tewfik is describing the introduction of non-traditional instrument, such as the *mandole* (a guitar-like lute used in *chaabi*) in place of the ‘*ud*, as well as the adoption of Western instruments, such as the piano.

²⁴² Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁴³ Interview, 25th April 2012.

I personally think it's a brilliant idea, because it's true that people are moving away from the tradition, and I feel that tradition is more exciting...well you have modern things that are exciting, but you also have traditions that you can't find anywhere. It's unique about his (*Tewfik's*) idea, because he wants to take us back to how they used to play.²⁴⁴

In response, the Caravan have made a concerted effort to reintroduce traditional instrumentation, and this has been a gradual process, reliant upon musicians travelling back to Algeria to purchase them from traditional instrument-makers. Ali returned from a trip to Algeria with a *darbūka* made from traditional materials, formed of a clay body and fish-skin drum head, and Tewfik exclaims that 'you should listen to it, it's different you know? A subtle sound, a medieval sound...the sound is quite different'.²⁴⁵ Tewfik also notes that he 'went to Algeria and I brought back with me a *rebāb*, which is a medieval instrument. It's an incredible instrument. With two strings, one of them tuned to D and that's it, the other one is just for ornaments, to keep the bridge in its position, to prohibit it from moving'.²⁴⁶ He argues that an 'authentic' performance of *andalus* is only possible with such instrumentation, declaring that,

Rebāb is a very strong, loud instrument, probably the strongest in the past. But look at the new instruments...violins, electric violins, people play with all sorts of things! Some of them are just playing a keyboard...dum dee dum dee dum...come on man, it's a big difference! You're going out from that music. And what bothers me is that there are certain things that are elementary for me.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Interview, 1st March 2013.

²⁴⁵ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. Poché writes that 'whereas the lute has kept many privileges and freedom to interpret all kinds of repertoires, the *rebāb* remains integral to the Arab-Andalusian art and cannot be employed in a piece outside of this context. But we remain amazed by the sound of this strange instrument so strange which produces a purr, a snort, a serious grunt' (1995: 107) (*My translation*)

²⁴⁷ Ibid.



5.3: Two images of Tewfik's rebab, purchased during a visit to Algeria.

The revival of musical practices and instrumentation has been identified in a number of cultures. Caroline Bithell notes that whilst traditional Corsican instruments 'were displaced in the 18th and 19th centuries by the accordion (known locally as *urgenettu*), fiddle, mandolin, and guitar, copies made by instrument-makers on the island often feature in performances by contemporary groups' (2007: 18). Timothy Rice (1996) examines Bulgarian music in the late 1980s, drawing attention to the use of traditional instruments and noting their relationship to nationalist historical discourse. He suggests that 'the contrast between traditional instruments and Western instruments generated meanings centered around whether folk music performance should present an idealised version of the nation's past or a dynamic version of its present' (1996: 190-191). In the case of the Caravan, it is clear that they align themselves to the former position, employing practices and instrumentation that evoke an idealised representation of North African *andalusi* culture and tradition.

Alongside the instruments that they use, the Caravan also look to reintroduce other elements that contribute to this traditional aesthetic, including the clothing that they wear for performances and their resolution to play whilst sitting on the floor. The musicians have gradually purchased traditional costumes, often on visits to Algeria, and Tewfik reflects that 'we want it to be really complete. Obviously this is something secondary, it's not the main thing. We are working on voices, on rhythms. But there is this will to have that perfected...to have proper instruments, and proper voices, and proper clothing'.²⁴⁸ Performing whilst sat on the floor is the orthodox posture for

²⁴⁸ Interview, 25th April 2012.

traditional *andalusi* musicians, and Tewfik believes that this enables them to reconnect spiritually with the earth, and to avoid any distractions emanating from their physical surroundings. Like the connections between *nūbāt* and certain periods of the day, this is part of an established *andalusi* culture of spirituality, and Guettat writes that ‘the mysterious, magical, mystical, and religious side of the music, as well as its expressive and therapeutic aspects and its effects on the human soul (its ethos), are part of the foundation of the Andalusian-North African musical edifice’ (2002: 448). Yasmine constructs a binary between the traditional practices of the Caravan and notions of modernity, and supporting Tewfik’s ideas, suggests that,

You have modern things that are exciting, but you also have traditions that you can’t find anywhere. It’s unique about his idea, because he wants to take us back to how they used to play. He has a philosophical view around that, that sitting on the floor reconnects to positive energy. But I think it’s a very good idea to be honest, and I was definitely on-board. We don’t know how our backs will cope with it, but it’s a very good idea!²⁴⁹

She notes that there might appear to be a contradiction between their efforts to maintain traditional practices (the association’s musicians often describe *andalus* as a ‘medieval music’) and their presence in twenty-first century London, but suggests that the two are not mutually exclusive. Rather than engaging in ‘fusion’ projects, she argues that,

We don’t want to lose the charm of *andalusi* music. And I think part of it is using on traditional instruments. So we want to bring that back. We wanted to move to thinking about how we integrate *andalusi* music with the European world. We want to say it doesn’t need to (change), it can stay as it is, and it’s beautiful that way. So we don’t want to fuse it, because it’s a medieval music.²⁵⁰

The efforts of the Caravan and other associations to protect and maintain traditional musicking practices are certainly not unique. Bithell writes about music-making amongst Corsican *confréries*, ‘Catholic lay brotherhoods’, which

²⁴⁹ Interview, 1st March 2013.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

‘function as popular institutions with a strong local identity’, and the reasons for their increasing popularity from the 1980s onwards presents clear analogies with the aims of the Caravan (2007: 49). She suggests that this resurgent popularity was,

Inspired by the impulse to reengage with now neglected rituals that, in the past, had lent meaning to the lives of both individuals and communities. Part of the unexpected appeal of the *confréries* to the younger generation in an unashamedly secular age can be attributed to their status as democratic, relatively autonomous bodies rooted in the ancestral traditions...Many also view the confraternities as guardians of ancient knowledge and specialized vocal techniques. (2007: 149).

Whilst the Caravan attempts to retain what the members conceive of as *andalusi* traditions, Tewfik is keen to note that they do not dismiss the artistic choices of others, whether associations abroad engaging in more contemporary practices or Algerian musicians in London producing ‘fusion’ musics. Tewfik himself has performed other musical styles, such as *chaabi*, with Algerian musicians around the city, and he reflects that,

It’s fine. I believe in every musical spectrum. But I see myself in that bit that is conservative. We need people in different parts. People who are avant gardist, some who are very conservative, and so on. I see myself in the classical way. I love the old instruments, I love the old ways for using the voice. Because at the end of the day, it’s old isn’t it? It’s old music, that came through centuries, so why go and change it. It’s thanks to a lot of people who tried to keep it as it is, that we have what we have today. I’m not saying we have exactly what it used to be six hundred years ago... I know people used to be very keen at keeping it like it was. And even doing that it changed, we have evidence that it changed.²⁵¹

The Caravan uses both written and recorded sources (made by ethnographers and record companies from the early twentieth century onwards) to reproduce what they believe to be an ‘authentic’ *andalusi* sound, but are also keen to ensure that the music remains part of a vibrant, living culture, both in London and transnationally. In their rehearsals and performances, they shape these

²⁵¹ Interview, 15th February 2013.

inherited cultural practices for their own intentions and desires, and as Laurent Aubert writes,

Every artist adapts the received inheritance, developing and valorising it according to personal taste and current style. Not being a simple imitator, the artist is the living incarnation of tradition, as well as its depository and guarantor. The artist also has the duty to transmit as much of it as possible, to teach the following generation, including his or her own personal contributions. (2007: 19)

The Caravan's aesthetic and soundworld are therefore grounded in this sense of tradition, which shapes contemporary *andalusi* music-making practices across national borders and throughout transnational Maghrebi diasporic networks. Whilst this aesthetic partly reflects a backwards-looking sense of nostalgic revivalism, it is also about grounding the music and musicians in the present through their relationship to the society in which they live. Jonathan Holt Shannon has examined *andalusi* musical cultures in Morocco, Syria and Spain, and writes that contemporary *andalus* music 'is intimately tied to the production and circulation of social memories not only about the Andalusian past but also the present and future of Middle Eastern, North African and Mediterranean societies' (2015: 11).

An interesting comparison can be made between the Caravan and the activities of *andalusi* musicians in Granada, Spain. Shannon writes of the Al Tarab Ensemble who perform in the city, and describe themselves as 'made up of musicians who are following a path of different musical styles, which means that their interpretations are extremely rich, colourful and nuanced'.²⁵² The group clearly embody a similar traditional aesthetic to the Caravan in their public image and presentation at performances, and Shannon records conversations with the ensemble's director Uzman and fellow musicians Yussef, in which they highlight the role that *andalus* plays in positively promoting Arabic Maghrebi culture within the city. Of particular resonance are the competing narratives that Shannon unpicks in his discussions with the musicians, and the suggestion that Spain is both a place of opportunity and cultural ignorance

²⁵² Translated from Spanish, and available on the ensembles website via <http://altarabensemble.blogspot.co.uk/p/trayectoria.html>

(2015: 138-139). This clearly aligns with the aims of the Caravan, for whom *andalusi* music is a way of both continuing and promoting Algerian culture within London.

However, Uzman and Youssef's discussion also addresses whether local Spaniards are more interested and intrigued by their music than members of the city's Maghrebi communities. They suggest that there is relatively little support from the local North African diaspora, and Shannon records that,

I half expect him (Uzman) to defend the "pure tradition" of Arab-Andalusian music, the music of Ziryab, but instead he says, "our audience is mostly Spaniards and tourists, so we have to mix our music...The Moroccans and *conversos* usually don't come to hear us." They all agree. Their music is enjoyed mostly by those outside their own community, even if there are a few diehard North African and Arab fans who come along to their shows. (2015: 139)

Such claims are also evident on the promotional materials that appear on their website, in which they suggest,

These musicians have undergone academic training in Andalusian, Sufi and Oriental schools of music. Over time, this has allowed them to develop their own musical style and to combine this with other musical styles. As a result, they have managed to fuse Sufi spiritual themes with Andalusian music, bringing in delicate *Samai* or exquisite *Mawawil* (sung poetry) themes of the Middle East, embracing genres such as flamenco or Afro-Arab rhythms such as Berber music.²⁵³

There is a clear contrast here with the ways in which the Al-Andalus Caravan approach their music. Whilst there are undoubtedly attempts by the Caravan to engage non-Algerian listeners in London, there is an enduring respect shown towards *andalusi* heritage and a clear desire to maintain this tradition. The ensemble may attract both and non-Algerian listeners to their performances, but there is never any suggestion of moving away from the orthodox practices of the *ṣan'a* tradition. This perhaps highlights the differences between *andalusi* music in Granada and London. Whilst Andalusia is home to a large North African diaspora and retains strong trans-Mediterranean linkages, *andalusi*

²⁵³ Ibid.

music and culture is almost unknown in London. Disconnected from the *bled*, the Caravan clearly place more importance on the need to maintain their musical traditions in their original form, and to embody a music-making aesthetic that they believe reflects a distinct cultural heritage.

5.7 Teaching and Learning *Andalus*

The members of the Caravan participate in collective music-making principally within two contexts: during their weekly rehearsals, which take place each Sunday, and through the public performances that they have intermittently given during their short existence. As well as engaging in musical performance, the rehearsals and concerts provide the association's members with an opportunity for social interaction, which is particularly important given their close friendships but dispersal across the city throughout the week.

The ensemble rehearses each Sunday afternoon in St Gabriel's Halls in Pimlico, central London, an unassuming red-brick building that was built in the early twentieth century as a centre for the local community (a function that it continues to fulfil). Music and theatre groups, in particular, are regular users of the hall, and the sounds bleeding from adjoining rooms into a shared kitchen area are a regular feature of the Caravan's rehearsals. These sessions are paid for by the subscriptions of individual members of the association, and by any revenue that is generated by public performances.

During their first year, the association was formed of a single ensemble, composed of all the members of the Caravan, who rehearsed and performed together. However, in September 2012 the association launched their beginner's classes, which, through the teaching of *andalus* to those with no previous experience, fulfils the Caravan's objective of expanding appreciation of the music. Since the introduction of this additional group, Tewfik now teaches repertoire and technical performance skills to these beginners, before conducting a full rehearsal with the main ensemble.

One of the primary functions of an *andalusi* association is to teach music, maintaining a long practice of pedagogical instruction, and the Caravan sustains

this through these beginner's classes.²⁵⁴ *Andalus* is taught orally, and with no musical score the musicians are reliant upon the expertise and guidance of their teacher, which reinforces Tewfik's position of power and authority within the Caravan.²⁵⁵ The aims of the classes are twofold: to advocate and teach *andalus* music, whilst, as Tewfik notes, enabling 'everyone coming to the association to get the culture and the love for this music'²⁵⁶; and, in the process, preparing these musicians to progress and join the Caravan's main ensemble for future performances. Yasmine suggests that there is also a wider significance to these classes, both providing something positive for the Algerian diaspora in London, and increasing the association's visibility amongst the local Algerian population, and she states that,

I think it's a very nice thing to have for the (Algerian) community (in London). It's not that this is important for the association, but that this is important for the community. People who have started from scratch and have someone like Tewfik to teach them from scratch, to teach them about Andalusian music. And that's where I think the importance of that class is. Where it's going to take the Caravan, I think (...) giving more of a community status, I think that's one way to help.²⁵⁷

During these classes the musicians sit in a semi-circle facing Tewfik and play an assortment of instruments, including those not traditionally associated with *andalus* music (such as cello and piano). At one typical rehearsal I witnessed three of the musicians playing the *mandole* (a plucked chordophone, commonly

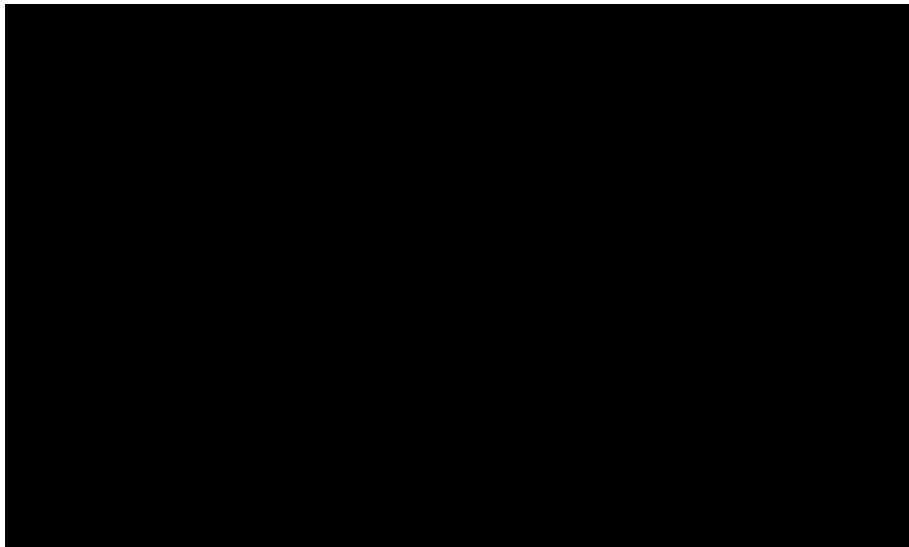
²⁵⁴ Guettat notes that formal systematic learning has been a long tradition within *andalusi*, and he writes that 'since the ninth century, interest in musical training has been characteristic of the Andalusian school...its pedagogical procedures were designed to give practical training in vocal and instrumental music and took place in stages' (2002: 445).

²⁵⁵ The Caravan's musicians are provided with lyrics in Arabic, although these contain no melodic guidance. The members of the association all speak Arabic, but given that some Algerians in London only speak English and French, this could potentially prove problematic if the association expands. Guettat writes that 'direct contact (is) indispensable: by listening to a true master, we learn to enter the modal universe; and by practice, we come to communicate with the *rūh* 'soul' of the *ṭab'* and assimilate its laws. This is why notation abstracted from sound – for example, a note on a scale – is not enough to transcribe this music faithfully, for the function of a sound within the scale depends not on its absolute value but on its value relative to the chosen register and on the interval that separates it from its neighbour' (2002: 447).

²⁵⁶ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁵⁷ Interview, 1st March 2013.

used in *chaabi* music, amongst others), three playing the *banjo* (a small chordophone, which bears little similarity to the type of banjo associated with North American folk musics), one playing the cello, one the piano, and Tewfik leading the class, performing on the *kamanjā* (spike fiddle). Despite the association's claimed interest in perpetuating tradition, there is little anxiety about musicians using 'inauthentic' instruments at this stage of their education, and Tewfik's priority is introducing the members of the classes to repertoire and musical ideas. The classes begin with an extended period of instrument tuning, which, for these beginners, consists of Tewfik moving around the semi-circle of musicians and tuning their instruments to the upright piano in the corner of the room (despite its own dubious tuning). Once again, Tewfik is placed in a position of authority, with the musicians reliant upon his expertise to tune their string instruments.



5.4: Tewfik (left) leading one of the Caravan's beginners' classes.

Tewfik's primary teaching method is Solfège, which has practical benefits when teaching beginners with little or no previous experience or musical training.²⁵⁸ The Solfège system is also used during the rehearsals of the main ensemble, and is often employed in contemporary *andalusi* pedagogical practices. Tewfik describes his approach to teaching new musicians by explaining that,

²⁵⁸ Solfège is a system for teaching music that focuses upon learning through pitch recognition and sight singing. It does not require formal musical training, or an ability to read musical notation on the Western staff, and is therefore used as an oral teaching method.

I get someone new and I tune their instrument for them, and then I will write the notes, like A, B, C, D, E on little stickers, and they put them on the fingerboard. I just choose one octave only, for that instrument. And I take a sheet of paper and I draw it for them, I show them where the notes are. Very simple, very practical. Straight to the point. And I'm explaining to them 'look, I'm going to teach you to play with this instrument this music. Nothing else. I'm not going to make you someone who can play all musics. But I can teach you how to play Andalusian music, and how to sing it'.²⁵⁹

He also gives the beginners exercises to work on between rehearsals. Sweeping and problematic comparisons have often been made between *andalus* and Western art musics, due to their supposedly enhanced cultural importance. Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, for example, writes that 'in the Maghreb we find the terms *san'ah* or *'alah* used for the classical Andalusian tradition, which some equate with "art music" (1980: 62). However, despite Tewfik's own comparisons between *andalus* and Western Early Music, he suggests that his pedagogical practices align more closely with the teaching of Western popular musics, and he notes that,

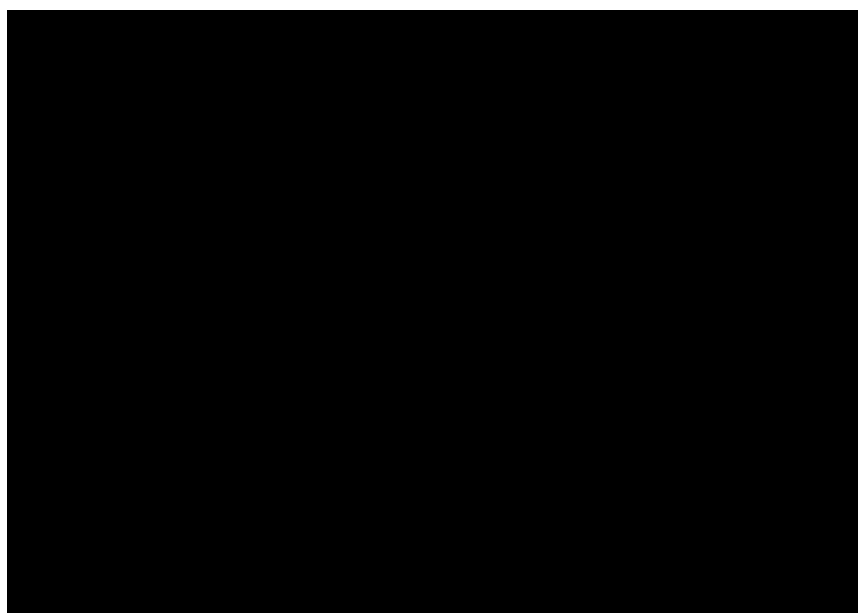
Once they learn it we give them exercises for them to practice at home. The same principle. Yes, do scales. I give them a scale, and then I'll make it more complicated next time. (Sings a scale, showing developing complexity). They develop their fingers and the way that they use the plectrum. It's closer to how people are learning to play rock guitar.²⁶⁰

There is a sense of contradiction in Tewfik's description of his teaching methods, with the suggestion that learning and practising scales (something associated with traditional forms of musical education for Western classical musicians) is typical of learning to play rock guitar. It is notable that when an opportunity arises to draw valid comparisons between *andalus* and Western art musics, he elects instead to juxtapose his own methods with those of popular music education. This is perhaps indicative of Tewfik's desire to avoid the schematic comparisons often made between these two musical traditions, and

²⁵⁹ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

to present *andalus* as something that is open and accessible to new musicians, rather than closed and exclusive, as it is often depicted amongst Algerians.



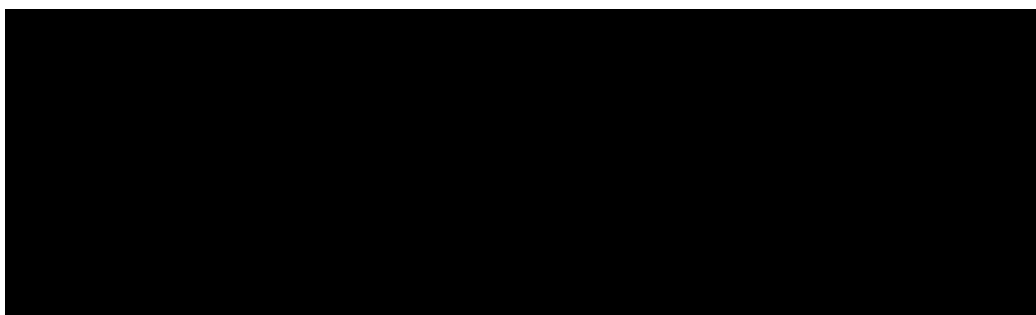
5.5: During one of the beginners' classes. The text on the music stand (in Arabic script) contains the lyrics of the piece being taught.

The rehearsal of the main ensemble (described as 'class A' by Tewfik) is less formally didactic, with the musicians tirelessly practising repertoire together. These sessions appear more relaxed than the beginner's classes, due to both the greater musical expertise of those involved (with less anxiety about making mistakes), and their long-standing personal friendships. Traditional instrumentation takes precedence, and a typical rehearsal involves musicians playing *darbūka*, *ṭār*, and *'ūd*, with Tewfik performing on both *rebāb* and *kamanjā*. The musicians tune their own instruments, sometimes relying upon electronic tuning devices, but they occasionally call upon Tewfik to assist them, and there is little doubt of his authority. He dictates which pieces will be performed, in what order, and he will insist upon repetition of sections that he is unhappy with. There is general approval of his teaching methods amongst the ensemble, and Yasmine explains that,

I think the way Tewfik wants us to learn it is to hear it, by ear and to feel the music. He's very passionate about the music and wants to transfer that to us, and I think that's what his teaching style is all about. You

need to do it by ear and appreciate it, and then it will come and you will sing it better. I think that's how he approaches it.²⁶¹

The Caravan's rehearsals are multilingual, with members of the ensemble communicating in French, Arabic (*Darija*) and English. The choice of language is dependent upon the preference of speaker and listener (some members are regular users of Arabic, whilst others are more comfortable speaking French), and the ability of the person speaking to conjure up the necessary words or phrases, meaning that conversations often rapidly switch between languages. Musical terms, such as those describing instruments or pieces or repertoire, are often in Arabic, although not exclusively. This linguistic complexity, and the difficulty of following multilingual conversations, is one reason why the ensemble believes it is difficult to attract non-Algerian members, even though they aim to teach *andalus* to a much broader, non-Algerian audience.



5.6: A rehearsal of the association's main ensemble, in March 2013, with Tewfik playing the rebāb.

The Caravan's members are selective about where and when they perform publicly, and as a result, their concerts are infrequent. Tewfik is keen that high standards of performance are maintained, and this pressure emanates, in part, from the expectations placed upon an *andalusi* ensemble. Whilst the transnational network of associations that the Caravan engages with enables the sharing of music and expertise between musicians and groups, it also promotes a sense of competitiveness, and ensembles are expected to preserve the eminent status of *andalus* through their performances. With greater levels of formalised training than other Algerian performers, the *andalusi* musician is required not only to prove their knowledge of repertoire, but to also exhibit their

²⁶¹ Interview, 1st March 2013.

expertise as an instrumentalist and proficiency as a singer, whilst maintaining the demeanour and poise that is expected of them. The *andalusi* musician therefore faces pressures and expectations perhaps greater than performers of any other Algerian music, and their recitals are closely scrutinised, by both their peers and informed audiences. Glasser, describing a female singer performing an improvised *istikhbar* at an *andalusi* music festival, highlights these pressures and writes that this is the,

Moment of truth, when a singer might momentarily break free from the group and from the conservative demands of the *nūba* proper to display her or his vocal and dramatic prowess. But doing an *istikhbar* is like walking a tightrope: one must display uniqueness while following strict stylistic and form rules. (2008: 4)

Even amongst those Algerian listeners without the musical training to understand the nuances of what is being performed, there is a pressure placed upon the *andalusi* musician to present an appropriately earnest and respectable image, which is in keeping with *andalus* music's venerated history and esteemed social position.

The Caravan's performances are shaped by their relationship with both local audiences and the wider *andalusi* community. They speak of a desire to play concerts outside of London, in perhaps Paris or Algeria, and Yasmine considers this possibility and reflects that 'if we were to play in Algeria, for example, it would be very interesting to know what sort of reaction we would have. Especially if we were to play in Algeria, it's a very competitive scene. That would be a very big challenge'.²⁶² A comparison might be made here between *andalusi* networks and the English brass band scene. *Andalusi* associations, like brass bands, are scrutinised by their listeners and fellow musicians and are charged with maintaining a strongly identifiable musical tradition. Ruth Finnegan writes of 'the enthusiasm of brass band players both for the "brass band movement" as a whole and for their strong identification with their own bands' in Milton Keynes during the 1980s (2007: 52). She draws attention to the pressures faced by these musicians as representatives of both a musical

²⁶² Ibid.

tradition and their community, noting that ‘this sense of belonging to an integrated distinctive world, the inheritors of a proud and independent tradition, was further enhanced by the continuation of the long tradition of brass bands performing a public function for the local community’ (2007: 56). Similarly, the Caravan embody this sense of strong identification and cultural pride, whilst, as Yasmine suggests, also facing pressures to preserve their musical tradition and perform a public function for the local Algerian community in London by presenting a positive expression of Algerian culture on stage.

Whilst the Caravan are aware of the pressures that come with performing *andalus* music, they remain relatively unknown within wider transnational networks in comparison to larger, established associations in France and the *bled*. Their audience is composed of friends and family drawn from the local diaspora, as well as non-Algerian friends and colleagues who often have little knowledge of *andalus*. They therefore escape some of the pressures of performing publicly, and are relatively unlikely to experience criticism from their listeners. However, this is counterbalanced by the increasing influence of social media (discussed in greater detail below), which mean that video and audio recordings of the association’s performances can be shared and distributed publicly online. Following performances in July and October 2012, photographs and videos of the Caravan were posted on websites such as Facebook and YouTube, and the ‘tagging’ of individual members into social media postings meant that these recordings were shared with a potentially large transnational network of individuals and groups. Comments appeared on these videos from Algerians across Britain, France and the *bled*, and whilst these were almost exclusively positive and supportive, this nevertheless altered the context of these concerts (see figure 5.7).



5.7: Video clips of the Caravan's performance at Putney Methodist Church, with comments from friends and family.

Given that many of the Caravan's members have only been playing for a relatively short period of time, and have comparatively little experience of giving public concerts, it is unsurprising that the association are cautious of public performances, and limit the number of recitals that they play. Tewfik and other members of the group have significant experience as performing musicians, but some only began playing music seriously when they joined the Caravan. This meant that knowledge and competence varied significantly within the association, and there was a sense of caution around performing publicly too early in the group's existence, with the potential to damage their reputation both locally and internationally. The creation of the beginner's class has provided a safer context within which musicians can learn and make mistakes, and some members have been moved to this class in order to further develop their skills

as performers. This has, in turn, allowed the association's main ensemble ('class A') to take on more public performances.

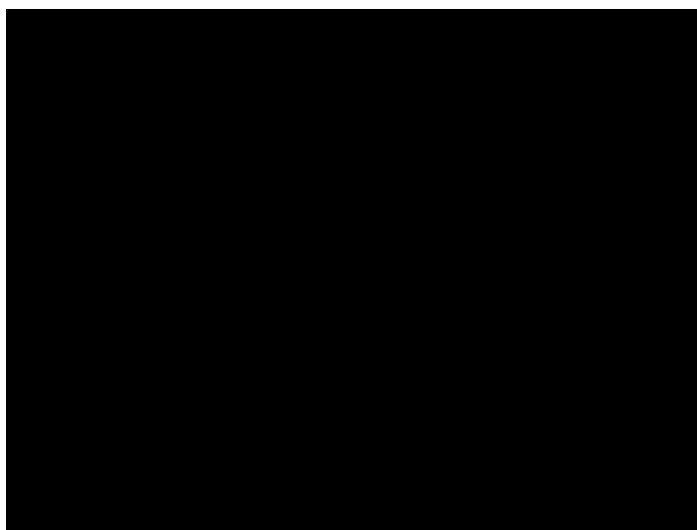
This raises the issue of the Caravan's collective position on what Finnegan terms the 'professional/amateur continuum', and highlights the complexities of understanding 'professionalism', in terms of both financial remuneration and levels of musicianship (2007: 18).²⁶³ Financially, the association is dependent upon subscription payments from members (all of whom have non-musical professional careers) and the small amounts of money generated by public concerts. The musicians might be considered amateurs (although some are occasionally involved in paid performances with other musicians and ensembles), whilst the Caravan itself is located further along the spectrum towards professionalism (or semi-professionalism) in the sense that it generates a degree of income. Alternatively, if the term professional is used to describe levels of musicianship and technical ability, defining the association is no less problematic. The musical proficiency of the ensemble's members varies widely, from the highly trained and accomplished Tewfik, to individuals with only a year or two of experience. Whilst most musical ensembles contain a variety of experience and abilities, the Caravan appears to have a particularly wide range of skills, making it difficult to place the group on Finnegan's continuum. Noting the problems inherent in attempts to define notions of professionalism, she writes that,

The 'problem' of distinguishing these apparently key terms is not just a matter of terminology. It alerts us to the somewhat startling fact that one of the interesting characteristics of local music organization is precisely the *absence* of an absolute distinction between 'the amateur' and 'the professional'. (2007: 15)

²⁶³ More detailed discussions of the problems that binary notions of 'professional' and 'amateur' musicianship entail can be found in, amongst others, Cottrell (2004: 8-15), Finnegan (2007: 12-18), and Merriam (1964: 124-130).

5.8 Performing *Andalus*

The two performances referred to above help to further illuminate the performance practices of the Caravan. The association's first major public performance took place at Putney Methodist Church in July 2012, and featured the ensemble performing alongside a Western choir in a concert that was raising money for the Umoyo Orphan Project (see figure 5.8).²⁶⁴ The Caravan performed in two separate sections of the concert: in the first, they played several *nūbāt inqlābāt*²⁶⁵, whilst in the second, they performed an *istikhbār*²⁶⁶, a *ḥawzī* piece, and a final *khlāṣ*.²⁶⁷ These performances were interspersed between the choir singing pieces by Edward Elgar, Johannes Brahms, and Giuseppe Verdi, alongside a number of more recent, well-known songs by groups such as the Eurhythmics.



5.8: *The Caravan performing at a concert at Putney Methodist church in July 2012.*

²⁶⁴ The programme for the concert provided the following details about the charity: 'Umoyo Orphan Project is a UK registered charity which funds specific projects in a dedicated area in Northern Malawi'. (Bateman, Maragh, & Ray, 2012)

²⁶⁵ Guettat writes that 'to these (the main *nūbāt*), some isolated pieces have been added, as well as seven *nūbāt inqlābāt* (singular, *inqlāb*). These are a kind of abbreviated *nūba* of recent origin'. (2002: 450)

²⁶⁶ The *istikhbār* is 'an improvised vocal prelude'. (Guettat, 2002: 451)

²⁶⁷ Guettat describes the *khlāṣ* as 'the last vocal piece...in 6/8 – an alert, dancing tempo, sometimes moderato, which ends in a generous free-rhythm phase that displays the final signature of the *ṭab*'. (2002: 451)

The concert was promoted as ‘A Musical Journey’, and the programme informed the audience that the musicians would be ‘taking you from England, through France, Italy, Spain and North Africa before touching down in Malawi’ (Bateman, Maragh, & Ray, 2012). The event’s compere encouraged audience members to imagine themselves traveling by aeroplane, transported by music, although this concept was somewhat redundant given the inaccurate order of countries and continents ‘visited’ throughout the evening. There were clear parallels to be drawn with the notions of exotic exploration and travel that emerged during French colonialism in Algeria, and which have been continued in the auto-exoticising promotional materials of contemporary Algerian musicians in London (see chapter four).²⁶⁸ The Caravan was presented as representatives of North Africa, and any mention of Algeria was absent from both the programme and the compere’s introduction. Whilst the association were reluctant to identify themselves as Algerian (notwithstanding that they wrote their own biography for the programme), preferring to draw attention to the *andalusi* culture that they wished to represent, there is nevertheless a suspicion of auto-exoticising intent here. Algeria, an identifiable place but of which many people in London are relatively ignorant, was replaced by North Africa, which is perhaps more recognisable to British audiences. The alluring exoticism that has characterised historical representations of the Maghreb is continued in the posters found around London that attempt to entice the city’s inhabitants to visit Marrakech and Fez, and there is little doubt that many Britons are more familiar with Moroccan culture than Algerian. John Hutnyk (2000) observes something similar in representations of South Asia, noting that it too ‘remains a site of mystery, aroma, colour and exotica, even when it appears in the midst of Britain’ (2000: 33). Similarities might be drawn with the positioning of the Caravan at this concert, whereby the exoticism of North Africa was evoked for the British audience. Furthermore, the cultural encounters that took place through the event, between performers and audience members,

²⁶⁸ The first six pieces, performed, by the choir, were all by British composers, before the Caravan performed ‘North African’ music. Following their performance, the ‘journey’ involved music by (in order) French, German, Italian, Spanish, North African (the second performance by the Caravan), Welsh, and South African (Zulu) composers.

were uncomfortable, and appeared to be built upon uneven power relations. Whilst the Caravan is formed of members of a locally based diaspora, and openly propagates the intercultural foundations of *andalus* music and culture, they remained separated from the choir performing the Western pieces. The programme ensured that the two ensembles remained distinct from one another, and their respective audiences sat on opposite sides of the church. Whilst individual members of the association were somewhat critical of the event in hindsight, accepting that it failed to support the ensemble in engaging the non-Algerians in the audience, they appeared unsurprised by this representation of Algerian *andalusi* culture, and were resigned to such depictions for audiences in London.

Although the Caravan and the choir were well received by both Algerian and non-Algerian members of the audience, there was a clear power dynamic enacted throughout the concert. And whilst the *andalus* musicians displayed as much musical proficiency as their counterparts in the choir, there was a suspicion that those organising the event considered the Algerian musicians of less importance. After only ten minutes of their first set, the Caravan was interrupted when the lights in the church were turned on and the compere encouraged audience members to purchase refreshments before the choir returned. Prior to this moment, the audience had been attentive to the performance, listening intently, and many people in the crowd seemed surprised by this interruption. Those who had attended the event to support the Caravan (including Algerians from the local diaspora, and non-Algerian friends and colleagues) were both shocked and annoyed. For those familiar with Algerian culture and the conventions surrounding *andalus* music, it was clearly surprising that the ensemble were being denigrated in this manner. Whilst such events, which combine musics from a number of traditions and cultures, often exhibit a degree of cultural misunderstanding, it was clear that this particular concert served to further marginalise Algerian music. Although the Caravan were offered a public stage on which to perform *andalus* music, and were exposed to non-Algerian listeners, it was apparent that their music was not afforded the

same respect as the choir, and the event did little to encourage a positive representation of Algerian culture in London.

This sense of disempowerment and marginalisation was particularly notable as the members of the Caravan were the only African musicians performing at a concert that intended to raise money for orphans in Africa. Despite the apparent irony, this North African tradition was apparently employed as background music during a drinks interval. The fact that the event was held in a Methodist church, and that the Caravan is composed exclusively of Muslims, only served to further position the association's musicians as outsiders. The Caravan seemed to be being used as exotic decoration, providing a sense of cultural alterity for those in attendance, without receiving the respect or admiration that *andalus* attracts in Algeria. The concert appeared tinged with orientalism in the ways in which the group were presented and treated, and as Edward Said writes, 'Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand' (1978 [2003]: 7).

The Caravan's second performance, at the Algerian Cultural Festival in October 2012, took place in a very different context (see figure 5.9). The event was intended both to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Algerian national independence, and to promote Algerian culture in Britain.²⁶⁹ The association performed during the evening session of the festival, which also featured a number of Algerian musicians and ensembles playing a variety of musical styles.²⁷⁰ The ensemble was well received by the predominantly Algerian audience, who were more familiar with the cultural conventions surrounding *andalus* performances, although the musicians later suggested that they had been hampered by technical difficulties and time constraints. It was notable that

²⁶⁹ The festival's programme suggests that it was 'born out of a desire to both commemorate a momentous anniversary in Algerian history (the fiftieth anniversary of independence), an important date little talked about in Britain, and to promote the country's rich cultural heritage, under-stated, under-covered and often misunderstood abroad' (Algerian Cultural Festival programme, 2012).

²⁷⁰ The afternoon session was made up of political debates and film screenings, whilst the evening session featured performances by a dance troupe and seven musical ensembles, covering a broad range of genres of Algerian music.

the musical programme for the festival included rappers, *chaabi* musicians and *raï* singers, each of which was performing musics that generally prove more widely popular with Algerian audiences than *andalus*. However the Caravan's performance was met with respectful silence and attentiveness from the majority of the audience, and Yasmine later reflected that 'it's nice that people actually sat down and listened, and it seems that there was a very young audience there, and *andalus* music is not really popular among the young people. So it was nice to see that'.²⁷¹



5.9: Tewfik during the Caravan's performance at the Algerian Cultural Festival in October 2012.

Whilst the Caravan's performance three months earlier had placed the ensemble in a new context, where *andalus* music was unknown by much of the audience, those attending the festival were certainly more familiar with the music that they were hearing. The musicians faced both the pressures of representing *andalusi* culture and meeting the expectations of their listeners, but also benefitted from the respect that they were shown by those in attendance. The association's members suggested that their performance evoked memories of the *bled* for this Algerian audience, and that even those who would not consider themselves enthusiastic admirers of *andalus*, were

²⁷¹ Interview, 1st March 2013.

reminded of their homeland. Tewfik claims that,

Talking about the Algerian community (in London), they miss certain flavours from back home...People will find exactly the same taste and flavour from back home...So those guys, when they were in the festival, have seen something they missed.²⁷²

The two concerts therefore emphasise the two main positions and functions of *andalusi* musical performances for Algerians in contemporary London. On the one hand, the music is used to try and gain recognition for Algerian culture, promoting *andalus* to new, often non-Algerian, listeners. On the other hand, the musicians benefit from the respect that they are shown by Algerian audiences, but also face the pressures created by *andalus* music's esteemed position within contemporary Algerian society.

5.9 The Al-Andalus Caravan and Social Media

The members of the Al-Andalus Caravan are, like the wider Algerian diaspora in London, dispersed across the city and its surrounding areas. The association provides its musicians with a space in which music-making takes place, produces social interaction and negotiates the construction of collective identities. However, in practical and logistical terms, this physical separation can prove problematic, and might hinder the development of a proficient musical ensemble. Tewfik believes that in order to,

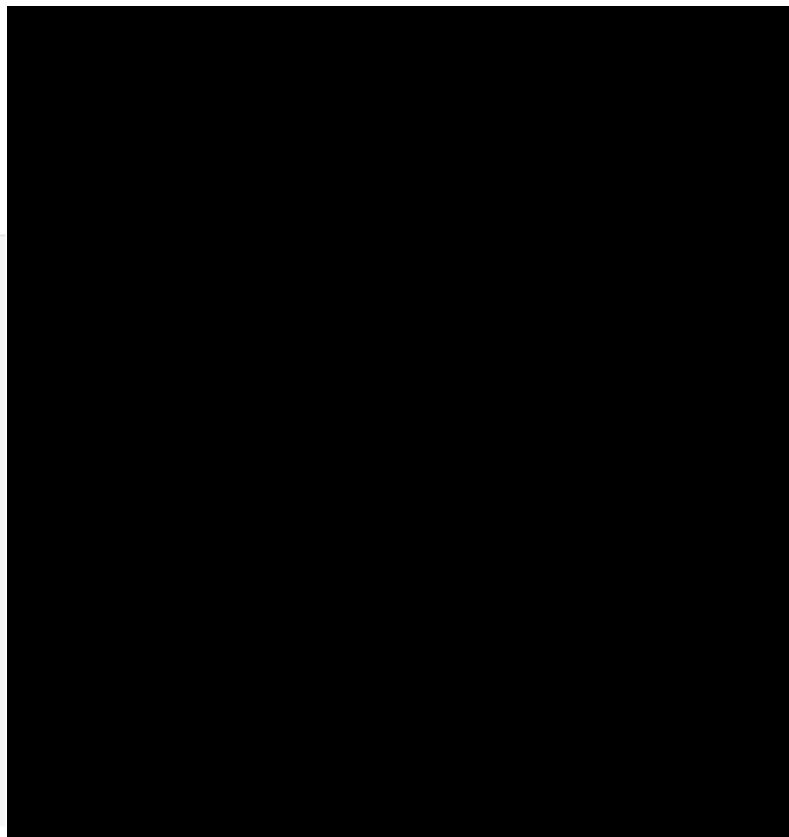
Really reach a good level you need two or three rehearsals a week, of an hour and a half, up to two hours each. And this is spread over a few years and you get results. People start playing at home and practising. So for us, meeting once a week is quite a challenge.²⁷³

One way in which the Caravan addresses this problem is through the use of social media, and in particular their 'group' on Facebook. The Internet is particularly important in maintaining connections amongst the ensemble's musicians between rehearsals and performances. Posts on the ensemble's

²⁷² Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁷³ Interview, 25th April 2012.

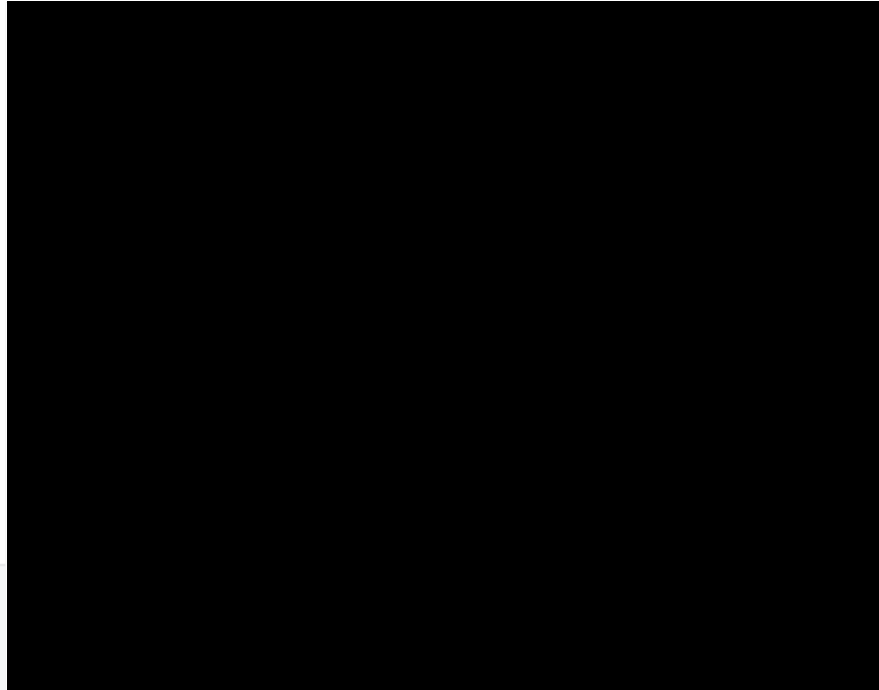
Facebook 'wall' often provoke comment and discussion, in a mixture of English, French and Arabic (see figure 5.10). The personal relationships and friendships that exist between the musicians are initially established during their Sunday afternoon rehearsals, through their collective music-making processes, and the social interactions that these incorporate. However, these personal ties are maintained by their online interactions, in the virtual space afforded by social media.



5.10: One of Tewfik's posts on the association's Facebook wall.

Conversations, whether concerning daily working lives or the intricacies of *andalusi* performance techniques, can begin at rehearsals and continue online, and vice versa. As such, the distinctions between the 'real' and 'online' worlds begin to collapse, with each dependent upon the other. Jonathan Sterne (2006) writes of the unbreakable connection of these 'real' and 'virtual' worlds and argues that 'music culture is not "purely" online culture. It systematically violates the "online/offline" distinction upon which much Internet ethnography is still

based' (2006: 255).²⁷⁴ He suggests that musical cultures are always dependent upon sound as a mode of communication and understanding, and he notes that sound must always eventually exist within the physical world, whether it is performed on an instrument or produced on a computer.



5.11: A video clip posted on the Caravan's Facebook wall, which Tewfik suggests offers an excellent source for learning and istikhbar.

Tewfik posts much of the content that appears on the association's Facebook wall, and he reflects that,

It is possible in fact to use the technology for what we do. So Facebook, it is very important. It's a very important point of contact. To look at pictures, and listen to records, spread messages, inform people of what's going on and what's happening. I think it's a good practice. At the end of the day, technology was intended to help people, was meant to help people to do their things.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Sterne is arguing that the Internet, as a form of musical culture, should not be considered as something that could exist discretely and be divorced from the physical world, in the ways that an online computer game might.

²⁷⁵ Interview, 25th April 2012.

As well as sharing media and information regarding the association's activities, social media also supports the pedagogical activities of the association (see figure 5.11). Whilst Tewfik is careful to note the importance of learning technique and repertoire through physical interaction within a rehearsal setting, he suggests that the videos can prove valuable in providing the musician with a broader 'feel' for the music. He reflects on ways in which the members of the beginner's class might employ the videos and suggests that,

I don't expect them to go and understand it quickly. You need some experience to know what it is, to know the rhythm and the scale. In some of the videos there are transpositions...It changes the way with your fingers. For a beginner this would be complicated, but for someone with some experience it's not a problem. But what I want them to do is to listen to this music because by listening to music, you will record it and you will have that flavour. I focus so much on the flavour. There's no point in playing music without giving the flavour of it. It has to come with its flavours and spices.²⁷⁶

Yasmine also notes the practical functions of these videos for the members of the association's main ensemble, and draws attention to their adherence to the teachings of the renowned *andalusi* musician and scholar Sid Ahmed Serri.²⁷⁷ She states that,

Do I try to learn it off the records?²⁷⁸ I try to avoid that, because we are trying to follow specific school, a specific Master, who is Sid Ahmed Serri. So we are trying to learn it as he sings it and plays it. So if we were just to listen to records and try to learn it like that, we would be moving away from that.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Interview, 15th February 2013.

²⁷⁷ Serri (1926-) is a revered performer of *andalusi* of the *şan'a* school of Algiers, and was born in the renowned Casbah district of the city. He has recorded widely (with many videos of his performance available on the Internet), has authored a number of textbooks on *andalusi* music, and has taught at the *Conservatoire d'Alger*.

²⁷⁸ Yasmine is referring here to the recordings and 'records' that have been uploaded to YouTube as videos, often featuring images of famous musicians and historical performances.

²⁷⁹ Interview, 1st March 2013.



5.12: Sid Ahmed Serri, a renowned performer of *Andalusi* music, whose teachings strongly influence the Caravan.

These videos and photographs, often depicting the most acclaimed Algerian *andalusi* musicians, also provide a sense of reconnection with the *bled*. Not only do they evoke recollections of Algeria, acting as sites of individual and collective memory of the homeland, but they also connect these London-based musicians with the venerated history of *andalus*. Learning music and appreciating *andalusi* culture comes not only from their classes and rehearsals in London, but also from the wider context of *andalusi* musical history, in the images and sounds embedded in videos, photographs and audio clips. At the same time, this media enables the musicians to construct and negotiate their own sense of Algerianness. Like other members of the diaspora in London, the musicians of the Caravan grew up in a strongly nationalist post-independence Algeria, and were surprised to move to Britain and discover a general sense of ignorance about their country and culture. Their lives in London, like those of other Algerians in the city, are frequently characterised by dispersal and a subsequent sense of cultural disconnection. *Andalus*, like other Algerian musics, therefore provides the members of the association with an opportunity to reengage with their own culture, and the use of social media reinforces this sense of reconnection. The Internet therefore provides a space in which the association's members collectively construct a sense of Algerianness, a shared identity that is based upon their passion for *andalus* music, and which is fashioned through the sharing of media. Writing of the use of online music videos amongst the Moroccan diaspora in London, Carolyn Landau notes that, 'as this intimate "cyber social forum" provides a platform for the consumption of these different genres of music, so are ethnic, national, pan-Arab, and pan-

Maghrebi identities articulated and renegotiated communally' (2011: 46). Although the Al-Andalus Caravan are only concerned with a single musical tradition, they nevertheless collectively articulate and renegotiate their Algerian identity by sharing these videos, and locate their own music-making within both the cultural customs of their own country, and within a venerated pan-Maghrebi musical culture.

Whilst keen to engage in intercultural activities, such as music festivals, the association also wish to protect *andalusi* culture, and promote it as authentically as possible to non-Algerian audiences. The frustrations of the musicians at the lack of awareness or understanding of *andalus* is clear, and Ali suggests that 'in England people don't know. People don't know anything (about Algeria)...there are people from the old generation, they go "oh Algeria, it's a part of France". They go like this, "It's a part of France!"'²⁸⁰ Yasmine reflects that for her,

I never found it frustrating, but I find it a lot more frustrating when people think they know about the country, some idea of what the country is. But when people don't know anything at all, it's great and an opportunity for you to talk about something. And tell them about Algeria.²⁸¹

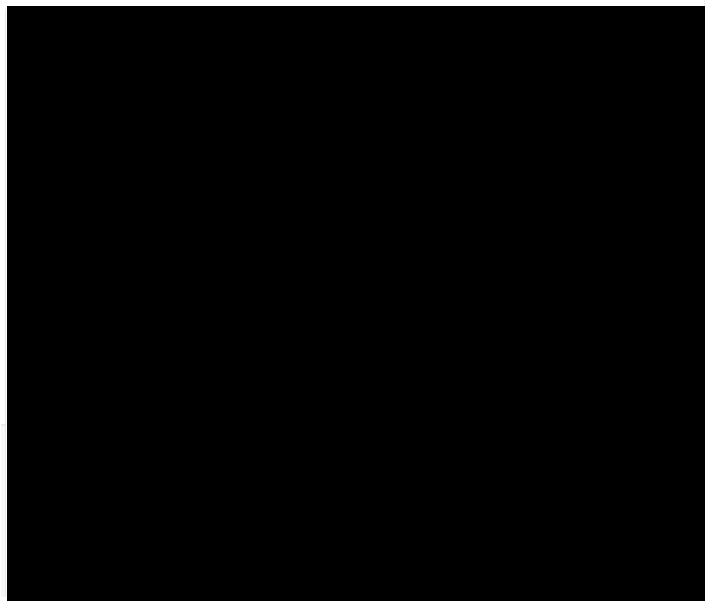
The videos shared amongst the Caravan also highlight the transnational connections between themselves and other *andalusi* associations, linking London to France and the *bled*. These videos feature not only renowned musicians and teachers, but also performances by contemporary associations, often performing that same *ṣan'a* style as the Caravan. For those members who did not experience the same formalised musical education as Tewfik, these clips provide a valuable source of information regarding repertoire and technique, and enable the musicians to engage with contemporary *andalusi* practices without needing to travel abroad. The ensemble also occasionally shares videos of associations playing other *andalusi* styles, from Algeria and the wider Maghreb, and this helps to reinforce the notion of a single, inter-connected *andalusi* culture. Other clips feature Algerian musical styles with

²⁸⁰ Interview, 10th February 2012.

²⁸¹ Interview, 1st March 2013.

strong historical links to *andalus*, such as *ḥawzī* and *chaabi*, and these reinforce the idea of national cultural unity, whilst also highlighting the influence that *andalus* has had upon musics across the country.

These videos therefore accrue meaning both individually and collectively. They are shared on the association's Facebook page and elicit responses and comments from the Caravan's members, providing both educational benefits and a form of social interaction through music, whilst also enabling the musicians to feel part of a shared *andalusi* cultural heritage. However, they also produce meanings for individual members of the association, reconnecting the musicians with their own memories of the *bled* and their life there. Through this process the videos problematise notions of physical and temporal distance, simultaneously collapsing and reinscribing them. On the one hand, they allow a visual and sonic experiencing of Algeria that, while providing a sense of reconnection, simultaneously underscores the musician's physical presence in London and their separation from friends and family in the *bled*. On the other hand, the videos assemble multiple points in time, bringing together the moment of performance with both the present and the memories of the individual, whilst never fully overcoming the knowledge that these exist as discrete moments in time.



5.13: A video of Algerian singer Meriem Abed, posted on the association's Facebook wall.

An example of these processes can be found in a video of the popular Algerian singer Meriem Abed, performing on Algerian national television in 1957, which was shared on Facebook by Tewfik in early 2013 (see figure 5.13). Having watched the video, Yasmine responded with the comment ‘ahh I was watching this with my mother recently’. Yasmine had recently returned from a trip to Algeria, and had spoken about a sense of missing her mother whilst remembering her childhood in the *bled*. In the process of watching this video, Yasmine was therefore re-experiencing both a musical performance from the mid twentieth century and her recent visit to Algeria. Her memories connected a television studio in Algeria in 1957 with her childhood and the places that she had recently visited in the *bled*, as well as with her home in London. The memories that this music evoked were not related to performing *andalus* music, but to her personal experiences, and served to link the past and present, and the *bled* with London. Landau (2011) writes of these processes that the Internet produces, noting the,

Particularly powerful role that digital technologies (as opposed to previous forms of mass media, such as the radio and cassettes) can play in not only facilitating, but also accelerating and heightening the experience of this “becoming of self”. Music, mediated through global digital technologies, can locate the consumer in numerous times and places in rapid succession, often simultaneously. (2011: 94)

These videos of musical performances therefore connect multiple places and moments in time, and through the memories of members of the association, construct individual and collective identities that are entwined with Algerian *andalusi* music. As such, they become what Pierre Nora terms *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), those spaces, physical or metaphysical, ‘where memory crystallizes and secretes itself’ (1989: 7). Nora suggests that a modern sense of the ‘breaking’ apart of history is problematised by these sites in which memories remain embedded. The musicking practices of the Al-Andalus Caravan remain deeply rooted in the past, through their acknowledgement of the music’s venerated heritage, their desire to reintroduce traditional practices, and their use of historical recordings. However, the ensemble’s members are

also concerned with the present, both in the representation of *andalus* music to audiences in contemporary London, and through their awareness of the temporal and physical distance between themselves and the recordings from Algeria that they share. Through their passion for *andalus* music, they attempt to join these multiple moments or periods of time (the medieval Andalus, the Algeria of their youth, and their lives in contemporary London), and to reconnect with the Algerian homeland and diaspora. These videos, images and sounds therefore form part of complex musicking processes, which also include the association's performances and rehearsals, and constitute *lieux de mémoire*, acting as sites in which individual, collective and cultural memories and histories are embedded. This multimedia functions not only practically, supporting the learning processes of these musicians, but also help the Caravan's members to make sense of the complexities of both *andalusi* culture, and their own lives and identities within contemporary London.

5.10 Conclusions

Contemporary Algerian *andalus* music plays an important role in the construction of identities and the mediation of meanings between performers and audiences, both in the *bled* and throughout the diaspora. It remains embedded within strict musical structures (the *ṭabʿ* and *nūba*) and a historical discourse that venerates the medieval pre-*Reconquista* Islamic Andalus, whilst maintaining its privileged position within modern Maghrebi societies. This historical legacy ensures that the term *andalus*, and the musical culture that it embodies, confers a prestigious status throughout modern North African societies.²⁸² JaFran Jones discusses the arrival of migrants from the Andalus during the *Reconquista* and, noting their continuing legacy within the contemporary Maghreb, suggests that,

²⁸² Hammond writes that 'Morocco has families who trace their origin back to Muslims who were forced to flee Andalusia when Spanish armies ended seven centuries of Arab-Muslim culture in the Iberian Peninsula in 1492...Endless television programs are dedicated to celebrations of Andalusian, Arab-Islamic culture. "Andalucia is not limited to a geographical area, we are all Andalucia," one Moroccan musician said of North Africa'. (2007: 27)

They had a generally higher level of culture and technology than the Maghreb – which was already stagnating – and their innovative contributions were admired, to the extent that even today anyone who claims Andalusian descent is asserting a certain nobility. (2002: 433).

This sense of respect and esteem continues to shape perceptions of *andalusi* music within Algerian societies, and the Al-Andalus Caravan benefit from this form of cultural reverence. Despite only performing as musicians part-time, and playing concerts infrequently, they attract the approval of many within London's Algerian diaspora, who support their desire to provide positive representations of Algerian culture within the city. This respect comes not only from *andalus* music's social position, but also the high regard in which the association's members are held individually: Tewfik is widely admired for his skills as a performer and teacher, whilst other members, such as the percussionists Ali and Farid, regularly perform with other Algerian musicians and ensembles across London.

The *andalusi* musical associations (and the transnational network of associations with which the Al-Andalus Caravan engages) play a fundamental role in maintaining and upholding the status and heritage of *andalus* culture. Within Algerian societies *andalus* connotes prestige, and for the Al-Andalus Caravan, there is little to be gained from labelling themselves as Algerian, given the general lack of awareness or interest in Algerian culture in Britain. The association's name clearly denotes their *andalusi* musical identity, and their biography includes reference to Andalusia and Spain, but not to Algeria. This notably contradicts the Algerianness of the ensemble's members (all of whom were born in Algeria or are of Algerian heritage) and their choice to perform the *san'a* style that is closely identified with Algiers. Whilst the Caravan's members are never reluctant to identify themselves individually as Algerian, they recognise that the cultural capital associated with *andalusi* culture confers a sense of cosmopolitan prestige that is instantly recognisable to the city's Algerian population. Rather than engaging with the type of overt Algerian nationalism that occurs during performances of other musics, the group prefer to collectively self-identify as an *andalusi* ensemble in the knowledge that this intimates refinement and a proud cultural heritage.

By presenting themselves as an *andalus* association, they are also able to firmly position themselves in transnational *andalusi* networks, which are sometimes formed of pan-Maghrebi musicians. The association's members are keen to promote *andalusi* culture to non-Algerian listeners, but recognise that their Algerianness provides comparatively little cultural capital. However, they hope to attract new audiences by underscoring the European heritage of the music, and presenting it as part of a North African musical tradition, and often speak of 'returning' the music to Europe. Tewfik explains his thoughts on this by suggesting that *andalusi* music,

Came to Algiers anyway from Spain. I was going to say 'it was born in Algiers', but no it wasn't born in Algiers. But as you know, it evolved into that in Algiers. So basically people just travelled with their music, with their culture, and they brought it to Algiers. And we also travelled back to Europe, because it came from Europe at the end of the day, from the other side of the Mediterranean.²⁸³

He goes on to position the music as 'international', suggesting that the group would like to encourage participation from non-Algerian musicians in London,

So our objective is to have people from all over the world. We want them to come over and start playing this music, which we think of as Algerian, but it's not. It came from Europe, from southern Spain, and it's an international thing. So it's something we would really be proud to have, having British musicians and Indian musicians, and Chinese musicians.²⁸⁴

He concedes that 'it's sung in Arabic, and that makes it difficult for other nationalities to join in', whilst Yasmine acknowledges that,

It is more attractive to the North African community, it's something they know and it's part of their tradition. So obviously we will attract a lot of North Africans, but it would be good if we can attract others as well. Other nationalities, people who are not interested in it, but that we can get interested.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Interview, 25th April 2012.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Interview, 1st March 2013.

The musical activities of the Caravan therefore attempt to move beyond labels of national identity, whilst retaining many Algerian characteristics, including the shared nationality of its members and its adherence to the *ṣan'a* tradition of Algiers. Through their performances of *andalusi* music, the association's members negotiate their individual and collective identities, and tie these into their music-making, both attempting to serve the local Algerian diaspora and promoting *andalusi* culture to non-Algerian audiences. Their activities therefore integrate multiple places and periods of time, and the ensemble is simultaneously shaped by the historical legacy of *andalus* (promoting this history and retaining traditional instrumentation and performance practices), and the group's location in contemporary London (introducing and performing this 'European' music to non-Algerians). At the same time, the Caravan engages with musicians and audiences in London, France and Algeria, and their artistic choices are informed by the integration of these three places. Martin Stokes, writing about the relationship between *andalus* music and identity, states that it is 'music that has passed through many hands. It has sparked complex and intense fantasies of belonging wherever it has travelled' (2011: 29).

In their desire to protect and maintain *andalusi* musical traditions, the Caravan draws on its cultural capital amongst Algerian and non-Algerian listeners. The ways in which the group mediates understandings of Algerian and *andalusi* culture are shaped by this heritage, both exploiting the music's venerated position amongst Algerians, and positioning *andalus* as an important tradition, with strong ties to Europe, for non-Algerian audiences. As such, their performances and other musical activities do not simply conserve a sense of cultural heritage, but also directly shape understandings of Algerian music and culture within contemporary London. This ensures that *andalus* remains a living, vibrant culture,

Whilst the ensemble's members make clear their desire to preserve cultural traditions, they also employ social media to interact with one another and to connect with musicians and associations elsewhere. The videos that they share also contribute to their learning and appreciation of *andalusi* music. At the same time, these forms of multimedia, acting as *lieux de mémoire*, tie

together their personal experiences and memories with wider *andalusi* culture and history, producing new and complex identities that problematise, and often collapse, notions of space and time. Similarly, through the video recordings made by audience members at their concerts and shared through social media, these performances are no longer confined to the physical spaces of London, in the shape of Putney Methodist Church (in south west London) and Rich Mix (in east London), but can be heard on mobile phones and computers in Paris, Marseille and Algiers. They are also no longer transient or chronological, and individual pieces or sections of the performance can be replayed and analysed by listeners around the world.

The Al-Andalus Caravan therefore positions itself as a guardian of Algerian *andalusi* musical traditions, whilst also ensuring that it remains relevant to the lives of the Algerian diaspora in London. Laurent Aubert notes that,

The nature of a tradition – musical in this case – is not to preserve intact a heritage from the past, but to enrich it according to present circumstances and transmit the results to future generations. Just like a spoken language, a music is an idiom and, as such, a living organism in constant mutation. Therefore, a musical tradition constitutes at one and the same time both a normative setting and a chain of transmission'.
(2007: 10)

The Al-Andalus Caravan are therefore shaped by both the past and the present, and the local and the transnational, and they mediate multiple meanings amongst Algerian and non-Algerian listeners through their music-making. Rather than simply preserving this musical tradition, the association ensures that *andalusi* remains closely connected to Algerian culture in both Britain and the *bled*, and refashions the music to present it to Algerian and non-Algerian audiences within contemporary London. The Caravan therefore exists within an interstitial space between the past and present, linking tradition and modernity, and connecting Europe and Africa, and presenting a form of *andalus* music that remains in 'constant mutation'.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

This thesis has examined musicking practices amongst members of the Algerian diaspora in contemporary London, and has considered the multitude of functions that music fulfils for Algerians and the multiple contexts within which music-making takes place. At the heart of my work is the argument that music plays a vital role in constructing and mediating a form of London Algerianness, a shared cultural identity that is shaped by fluid transnational notions of Algerian culture, but is also rooted in the city and formed by the realities of life for Algerians within twenty-first century London. Music, I argue, is an essential central component of Algerian society within the city, simultaneously bringing members of the local diaspora together socially, enabling collective performances of their shared cultural identity, and enabling public displays of Algerianness that stake a place for Algerians within London. As such, Algerian musicking exists within an interstitial space between the local and global, and functions both as a way of reinforcing localised diasporic networks and enabling Algerians to integrate into the wider city in which they live and work.

This focus upon Algerian culture within London not only addresses a lack of scholarship on Algerian life in contemporary Britain, but also shifts the focus away from the established nexus between Algeria and France, a relationship that has gained the attention of many writers. As such, my work investigates a form of 'secondary' diaspora, the construction of a diasporic community and culture that is shaped by, but significantly different from, the cultural flows between France and the *bled*. This form of London Algerianness, which is so often enacted and negotiated through musicking, builds on and maintains cultural traditions, but also forges new identities for a local Algerian population through the activities and spaces in which music-making takes place. These spaces are both localised to London, and enduringly connected to transnational diasporic networks, and it is this perennial relationship that ensures musicking plays such an important function in the construction of a new form of diasporic Algerianness. This is not to deny the significance of transnational cultural flows: the connections that exist between Algerian musicians and listeners in London,

and those in France and the *bled*, are often shaped by the type of fluid circulation that Appadurai identifies in his notion of 'scapes'. However, I argue that Algerian music-making in the city is also an intensely local practice, which is vital for a disconnected, and often marginalised, diasporic population, allowing them to demarcate their own position within London. This complex relationship between the local and global is nowhere more evident than in the ways that Algerians employ the Internet, and particularly social media, to mediate music between Britain, France and the *bled*, establishing transnational connections but also facilitating music-making within the city. The Algerian musical culture found in contemporary London might therefore be considered as forming part of Bhabha's 'third space', linking the local and global, the past and present, and the physical with the virtual, to shape a distinct London Algerianness through musicking.

In chapter two, I considered the performativity at the heart of both Algerian musics and identities, suggesting that musicking is one of the principal ways in which the local diaspora enact and negotiate a sense of collective London Algerianness. I considered the varying functions of different performance contexts, from the culturally discrete Algerian cafes that host performances of *chaabi*, via larger diasporic events that bring together Algerians from across the city, to the large-scale public concerts that engage non-Algerian listeners and prominently display Algerian culture. I suggest that each of these contexts not only provides a site of musical performance, but also a space in which members of the diaspora perform this London Algerianness, whether amongst a small group of musicians in a café, or on the stage of the London Mela. Musicking simultaneously enables cultural reengagement in the face of physical dispersal, produces a public face for Algerian music in the city, and allows members of the diaspora to individually and collectively perform their cultural identity.

In chapter three, I explored a further three performances by Algerian musicians in London, but focused upon performers who are not resident in the city. My intention here was twofold: to further examine how musical performances shape public understandings of Algerian culture; and to consider

the relationship between these 'imported' performances of Algerian music and their reception by local diasporic audiences. I drew a distinction between Algerian and non-Algerian listeners, and employed Mark Slobin's tripartite model of the superculture, subculture and interculture to examine the role of cultural institutions, such as the Barbican, in mediating public understandings of non-Western musics, whilst highlighting the differences between such events and those organised by the local Algerian population.

Musical mediation was the focus of chapter four, and considered the role of music in shaping and transmitting the notion of London Algerianness both locally and transnationally. I examined three particular examples of musical mediation within Algerian London: the various ways in which the Internet, including social media, is employed by musicians and audiences in the city; the intentions and functions of a local online radio station; and the promotional narratives adopted by Algerian musicians in London, with a particular focus upon auto-exoticism and Orientalism. Emerging from each of these examples is a sense of the diversity and complexity of local diasporic musicking practices, and these forms of mediation, I argue, serve to problematize binary notions of the local and global, and universal and particular.

In chapter five I provided a case study of the Al Andalus Caravan, an *andalusi* 'association' based in London, which aims to preserve, perform and teach this revered musical tradition to Algerian and non-Algerians alike. This ensemble, I suggest, brings together the themes that emerged from the previous three chapters and evidences the various functions of musicking for members of the local Algerian diaspora: enabling social interaction through performance and attendance at events; allowing individual and collective reconnection with a shared cultural identity; and producing public performances of music which are both meaningful for members of the local diaspora and provide a public face for Algerian culture in the city. The Caravan epitomises the complexity of Algerian music culture in contemporary London, and highlights the connections that are formed between the past and present, and localised musicking practices and transnational diasporic networks of Algerian music-making.

6.1 The Social Function of Algerian Music

The most fundamental function that music performs amongst the Algerian diaspora in London is to facilitate social interaction. This can take place within many contexts, from small cafes to larger public events and festivals, and from physical concerts to radio shows and shared virtual media. Whilst it is perhaps axiomatic to note that music-making and social engagement are closely linked, I suggest that this function is of particular importance to the city's Algerian population because of the conditions within which this local diaspora has emerged and the situation in which it finds itself within contemporary London. Algerians are often physically distanced from one another, dispersed across the city, and have few dedicated spaces within which to socialise. Aside from a handful of cafes and restaurants, scattered across London, there are no venues within which Algerians can meet one another, and no areas of the city that are home to a strong and stable Algerian community. Furthermore, there is a perception amongst Algerians that there is little support forthcoming from either the Algerian or British authorities to support their cultural initiatives. This results, unsurprisingly, in shared frustrations, and a sense of disconnection from their own culture.

The response of the local diaspora is increasingly to find ways of programming events that bring Algerians together from across the city. This is most evident in those events that are explicitly constructed around the notion of a shared national cultural identity. For example, the Algerian Cultural Festival (in October 2012) and Nostalgically Algerian event (in December 2013) not only drew upon this shared culture, but also offered Algerians an opportunity to reconnect with it, and with one another. Music was not the only cultural element in either of these events, but was one of the main attractions, providing the basis for social interactions between members of the city's disparate Algerian population.

The Internet, and particularly social media, provides Algerians with further support in facilitating social engagement through music. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, enable connections to be formed and

maintained between musicians and audience members. Whilst this is not unique to London's Algerian population, it is nevertheless vital in helping to overcome some of the challenges that emerge from the dispersal of Algerians across the city, and the resulting sense of disconnection. The increasing use and accessibility of social media helps to partly explain the growth of public musical activities amongst the local diaspora in recent years, and this strengthens ties within the city's Algerian community. Furthermore, social media also helps to support existing networks of musicians, such as the Al Andalus Caravan, who use such media to develop their performance practices and to construct a collective sense of identity. These interactions, however, are not limited to local contexts, but also enable musicians in London to connect with Algerians in France and the *bled*. The distribution of media (videos and photographs) allows musicians performing a variety of musical styles, from *andalus* to hip-hop, to engage with a transnational listenership.

The Internet also provides a platform for the local Algerian radio station Rihet Bladi, which broadcasts music to Algerian listeners across the city. The station's shows not only enable local Algerian musicians to promote themselves and their music through interviews and features, but also to engage interactively with its listeners, allowing its audience to influence the choice of music that is played. Through these interactions, the station supports and strengthens the local Algerian community, whilst also providing a sense of agency and facilitating a degree of social encounter between Algerians through its shows.

It is because of the shared, collective nature of these musical processes that Small's notion of musicking is so apposite for describing London's Algerian musical culture. For Algerians in London, I argue, music is not just an opportunity for social interaction, but is itself a social process, infused with cultural meanings, and is vital for reifying community connections across the city. It is through the sharing of music, via performances, radio shows, and social media, that London Algerianness is constructed. Small would describe this as 'an ever-widening spiral of relationships, and each twist of the spiral can widen our understanding of our own relationships, of the reality that we construct and [*which*] is constructed for us by the society in which we ourselves

live' (1998: 210). Small also notes that musicking is an inherently social act, writing that 'we do not, of course, carry out our exploration alone; the responses of other people to performances in which we have taken part create also a reciprocal set of relationships', and he is keen to expand his definition of musicking beyond the traditional performance context, adding that,

Verbal discourses about musicking thus play an important part, not as substitutes for, but as adjuncts to, musical experience; talking about musicking and comparing musical experiences is not only an inexhaustible source of conversational and literary topics but can enrich the relationships which taking part in performances has created. (1998: 210)

Musicking amongst Algerians in contemporary London is a social process that not only embodies musical performances but also includes verbal (and nonverbal) discourse around experiences and understandings of culture. Through the many contexts in which Algerian music is performed and heard in the city, and beyond, and in the social functions that it serves for Algerians, it provides a sense of cohesion for a disparate diasporic population.

6.2 The Construction and Performance of Identities through Musicking

Whilst 'identity' is undoubtedly a problematic term, and one that has been debated at length within scholarly discourse, I employ it within this thesis to suggest a fluid process of collective cultural and national self-identification shared by members of the local Algerian diaspora. This 'London Algerianness' is indebted to the culture of the *bled* and the Algerian diaspora, and continues to be shaped by Algeria's complex and difficult history. However, it is also unique to Algerians in London, and is forged through the encounters and interactions between members of the local diaspora and non-Algerians. In order to unpick the fluidity and intricacies of this shared culture, I argue that such identities are enduringly performative, and in this regard I draw upon a body of literature that has grown out of the work of Judith Butler (1990) and others. Such theorists argue that identities are neither essential nor stable, but rather are socially constructed through shared understandings and power negotiations, and are

subsequently reified through repetitive performance. Such a theoretical approach to Algerian identities in London is particularly apposite, I argue, because of the repeated collective assertion of nationalist and cultural pride promoted through musicking, and this helps us to make sense of the varying forms that these performances take and the contexts in which they take place. From *chaabi* in local cafes and hip hop on festival stages, to *andalus* music in a church and *raï* in the headquarters of an international bank, Algerian music in London takes many forms, but repeatedly asserts this shared cultural identity, either explicitly or covertly. In the process, these musical performances are also performances of identity, which both allow Algerians to understand their own culture and enable them to share it with non-Algerian audiences.

Within certain contexts, these performances can be explicit and intended as a public display of Algerianness. Examples might include the flag waving celebrations of Algerian football fans during the World Cup of 2014, the public protests against the 2014 Algerian national elections, and large-scale events such as the Algerian Cultural Festival. In each of these examples, the performance of Algerianness is a public statement, intended to produce a sense of collective action amongst the city's Algerian population, and to make a statement of the local diaspora's place within the city. However, such performativity is also apparent in the *chaabi* music played in west London cafes, and in the collective singing of a football song with a renowned musician at an El Gusto concert at the Barbican centre. In these contexts, the performance of Algerianness embodies particular meanings that remain the preserve of members of the diaspora, and are intended to produce a reconnection with Algerian culture. These two particular examples also help to highlight the complexity of this London Algerianness: simultaneously constructed through a broad shared sense of nationalism, but also more subtly delineated as a particular urban, working-class identity from Algiers, which is reworked and reshaped within contemporary London. As such, it is clear that London Algerianness is both a unifying concept of national and cultural identity, but also a nuanced understanding of belonging that maintains particular meanings for members of the local diaspora.

Therefore whilst the notion of a shared national cultural identity is undoubtedly important to Algerians in London, and underpins much of the music-making amongst the local diaspora, this does not guarantee consensus amongst the city's Algerian population. There is a localised discourse amongst Algerians about the degree of unity to this London Algerianness, within which claims of nationalist homogeneity are set against suggestions of cultural diversity. One Algerian musician speaks of the city's Algerian community, and argues that,

It's not solid. You can see that when there is an event, they do turn out. But then again, you have two different communities. You've got the mobile community, the younger ones. The non-committed, the non-married, the non-family. They are the much more agile, and are moving around. They can go to a gig. And within that you have two categories. The successful ones, the ones who have done studies, have good jobs. Those ones are in a minority. And the majority are the workers. They work hard, the majority in catering. And the non-papers, the *harraga*. And those ones are not as mobile. They won't come in for a gig. "Fuck, why would I want to go to a gig? I'm looking for some papers, I don't have time for a gig." And then you have people who earn £6.31 an hour and work twenty hours a day. They are not going to spend fifteen pounds on a gig! "You're fucking joking? I would have to work all day for that!" They won't come. And then you have the families. They would like to come. But with this concept you have the modern family who can go to a gig. And then in Walthamstow and Finsbury you have a community where it is very traditional. The wife and the husband. They will go to places where there is no alcohol. They will go to places where people don't swear.²⁸⁶

Music can therefore be one way of explicating the diversity and multiplicity of identities that the local Algerian diaspora embodies, and highlights some of the tensions that cut across the city's Algerian population. Others, however, argue that there is unity, and that the notion of a shared Algerianness is enough to overcome any divisions that may be apparent. Another musician, who has lived in London for a number of years, suggests that,

I've met a few Algerians here who are completely different from me, that I would rather steer away from. And I've always thought 'if we were back in Algeria, I would never have to meet you. I would never have had to

²⁸⁶ Interview, March 2014

even talk to you, you're not even a factor in my life'. But because we're here abroad, we do become the same, because we're all Algerians here. That is what defines us. Being Algerian in England. But the class remains there, although we don't talk about it, because we're all here and we have something that keeps us all together.²⁸⁷

This quote highlights another important aspect of London Algerianness: its distinction from other forms of collective Algerian identity, which are found in France and the *bled*. As this musician explains, this sense of a shared London Algerianness often supersedes differences and antagonisms within the local diaspora, and helps to explicate the foregrounding of nationalist pride within many musical events in the city. Although diversity remains characteristic of London's Algerian population, it is often temporarily set aside in order to facilitate music-making. As such, events like the Algerian Cultural Festival and London Mela become spaces within which to enact, perform and negotiate this collective Algerian identity. London Algerianness is therefore characterised by the sense of surface-level unity that is attained through collective acts of musicking, but remains infused with the diverse realities of the city's Algerian population.

The ways in which this London Algerianness is performed and negotiated also bridges the disjunction between the local and global. Whilst Algerian culture in the city is shaped by local concerns, it remains simultaneously formed by pressures and expectations from the *bled*. Rachida Lamri (musician, organiser of the Hamidou concert [chapter 3] and interviewee for the article in *El Watan* [chapter 4]) reflects upon the newspaper interview in which she discusses *andalusi* music in London, and suggests that,

I was thinking, "what is my dad going to think?" But I wasn't worried because it's *andalusi*. You are sitting down, wearing a kaftan, which is traditional, and holding an instrument. It's not *raï*. You're not standing there with make-up and big nails and singing *raï* or *variété*. So it's very much because the music is classical, so therefore it's prestigious. Not anybody has access to it, so that's why it's respected. My dad would never have been happy for me to go on stage if it wasn't *andalusi*. If I said I wanted to sing *raï*, of course not. It's impossible.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Interview, July 2013.

²⁸⁸ Interview, 26th July 2013.

She goes on to argue that this is not simply about pressure from family members, but rather wider cultural expectations, and draws a further comparison between *andalus* and *chaabi*, stating that,

There are no female *chaabi* singers. Some of them will sing a *chaabi* song, but not on stage. And it's just not for women. Because *chaabi* is predominantly played in cafes, it's a male thing. I could sing it, but it would be very strange. There is one *andalusi* artist, her name is Nassima Chabane, she is the first female singer or musician to play the *mandole*. The *mandole* is very much a male, *chaabi* instrument. She broke the taboo and I love it.²⁸⁹

What is particularly remarkable here is the pressure and demands felt by Rachida, who does not normally feel intimidated by gender boundaries or cultural expectations. She has initiated a number of campaigns for Algerian women in London, including the International Women's Day event (see chapter 2), and has openly protested against British interests in Algerian gas reserves and the supplying of weapons to the Algerian government. The maintenance of these cultural boundaries through her musical choices is therefore important in helping us to understand the influence that broader transnational concepts of Algerianness have upon local diasporic practices, and some of the constraints experienced by London's Algerian population when constructing and negotiating their own identities.

Rachida's situation also highlights the ways in which individual and collective identities intersect through the notion of London Algerianness. Her musical choices, and music-making practices, are shaped both by her personal life (in the shape of family pressures) and by Algerian cultural expectations. Individual members of the local diaspora are active agents in the construction of their personal identities, and are able to make decisions about the music that they perform and listen to. This is borne out by the wide range of musical styles performed and consumed by the diaspora in London, and the varying degrees to which musicians engage with Algerian musical traditions. Nevertheless, much of the musicking that takes place within the city is simultaneously shaped by the

²⁸⁹ (Interview, 26th July 2013)

sense of a shared collective national culture, and Algerianness remains important to music-making within various performance contexts. It is the interdependence of individual and collective identities, and sometimes the tension between them, that forms this contemporary diasporic London Algerianness, and provides the rich diversity of Algerian culture within the city.

This London Algerianness is produced, I argue, through performativity, both as embodied acts and as mediated flows of culture. Music, whether performed on stage, shared online or heard via the radio, helps to form localised understandings of Algerianness, and becomes what Bourdieu calls a 'symbolic good'. Whilst music remains a commodity with a potential financial value, it is used primarily by Algerians in the city within Bourdieu's 'field of restricted production', whereby symbolic value exceeds economic desire. Music as an object, and musicking as a process, both become vital ways in which Algerians in the city can enact and negotiate their own localised understandings of individual and collective Algerianness. And it is through musicking that London Algerianness is most readily performed, as a collective act that shapes shared understandings of culture, and of the place of Algerians within contemporary London.

6.3 Public Displays of London Algerianness through Music

Music-making amongst Algerians in London takes place within a number of contexts that are either 'private' (the preserve of the local Algerian diaspora) or 'public' (outward facing displays of London Algerianness). Whilst the musicking that occurs within Algerian cafes and at certain events (such as the Hamidou concert) is almost exclusively reserved for Algerians, other events make explicit efforts to more widely publicise and promote Algerian culture. The Algerian Cultural Festival, London Mela, and the activities of certain musicians and ensembles are clearly intended to expose non-Algerian listeners to Algerian musics, and in the process both to increase appreciation of Algerian culture and to stake a place for the local diaspora within the city. Such public performances of London Algerianness are necessary not only because of a lack of interest and knowledge about Algerian culture, but also because of the negative

portrayals of Algerians within the British media over the past decade and a half. Music therefore offers Algerians a rare opportunity to present a positive depiction of themselves and their culture within the public sphere of London.

These public performances can take many forms. The most explicit displays of Algerianness often take place within public contexts that attract non-Algerian listeners without publicising their Algerian character, such as the London Mela and other large-scale events intended to promote multiculturalism. This involvement in events that are not markedly Algerian is necessary because of the lack of awareness around Algerian culture in the city, and they therefore offer a rare opportunity to reach large audiences beyond the local diaspora. Through the flag-waving nationalism evident during performances by the likes of Cheb Nacim and Abdelkader Saadoun, these events produce an immediate visual and sonic impact that increases recognition of Algerian culture within London. Other instances of musicking draw upon subtler, but no less explicit, displays of Algerianness, intended for non-Algerian audiences. The mimicry of orientalist tropes within the promotional materials of Algerian musicians, for example, produces a form of alterity that demarcates cultural differences and employs the resulting exoticism to attract new listeners. On the one hand this alterity provides a sense of diasporic unity through difference, whilst on the other it produces interest in Algerian culture amongst non-Algerian audiences. As such, Algerian music becomes something that is clearly distinct and identifiable within the public sphere, and this generates cultural capital and provides new performance opportunities for local Algerian musicians.

Whilst there is clear agency on the part of Algerian musicians and audiences within the contexts described above, they do not always have control over the ways in which their culture is publicly represented. The concerts at the Barbican by the El Gusto orchestra and Souad Massi and Rachid Taha (see chapter 3) draw attention to the ways in which musical meanings and understandings can be publicly shaped by non-Algerians. In these examples it is the commercial imperatives of the world music industries that take precedence over the needs and desires of the local Algerian population. The Hamidou concert (also discussed in chapter 3) evidences an alternative form of

public cultural representation, whereby Algerians themselves are able to programme and promote an event, albeit one which would be unable to reach the same public listenership without the resources and profile of a major venue like the Barbican. In order to unpack the power relations inherent within these musical events, I employ Mark Slobin's tripartite theoretical model. Through Slobin's framework we can begin to understand the role played by the intercultural (the venue and programmers) in mediating perceptions of Algerian music between the superculture (the mainstream British public) and subculture (the city's Algerian diaspora). This model returns us to the relationship between the local and global that is forged by Algerian musicking in London. Slobin's work allows us to see the localised interactions between diasporas, venues, and audiences, and how this shapes awareness of Algerian culture within the city, but it does not exclude the type of transnational flows of cultural understandings identified by Appadurai and others. These performances remain embedded within the global scapes of which Appadurai writes, and thus take place on the 'world stage'. However, I argue that this stage is simultaneously local and global, facilitating transnational flows of music, whilst also producing particular meanings for Algerians and non-Algerians within contemporary London. As such, these musical events take place within the interstices that exist between local and global representations and understandings of Algerian culture.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

The collective act of musicking plays a number of essential roles in the lives of London's Algerian population, and helps to construct and maintain local and transnational diasporic networks. Music, perhaps more than any other cultural form, provides a unique way for Algerians in the city to connect the local and global, private and public, and past and present. Underpinning many of the activities of this diaspora is a shared sense of cultural identity, a London Algerianness, which is continually negotiated through individual and collective performative acts.

The importance of musicking is heightened by the conditions of the city's Algerian diaspora, whose members are dispersed and disconnected and have

experienced both a sense of social marginalisation and damaging portrayals within the mainstream media. Furthermore, the often negative assumptions made about North African Muslim migrants arriving in twenty first century Britain serve to conceal both the abilities and skills of individuals, and the rich diversity of contemporary Algerian culture. In the face of these challenges, music simultaneously enables social interaction amongst Algerians, helps to construct a sense of collective cultural identity, and allows Algerians to project positive portrayals of their culture to London's general public.

The prominence of this shared Algerianness highlights the on-going importance of nationalism amongst Algerians. Although the extent of this diasporic solidarity is often called into question, and is challenged and negotiated through musicking practices, the idea of Algerian nationalism continues to underpin many of the activities of the diaspora within London. From festivals to radio stations, music provides a way of demonstrating the diversity of Algerian culture whilst couching this within a sense of nationalistic unity. This, I argue, results from the combination of Algerian historical and political discourse during the postcolonial period, and from the marginal status of Algerians within contemporary London. Displays of Algerian pride, often in the form of performances of music, both reinforce accepted notions of nationalism, and publicly project a sense of collective identity that establishes the place of Algerians within the city. In turn, this challenges concepts of multiculturalism and premature suggestions of the demise of national identities. Whilst many Algerians are keen to engage with those outside of the local diaspora, performing with non-Algerian musicians and for non-Algerian listeners, this collective identity demarcates difference, and to challenge ideas of cultural integration and the loss of identity. This is nowhere more apparent than in the use of auto-exoticism by Algerian musicians to publicly project their alterity. This is not to deny the agency of individuals, and the extent to which Algerians engage in shared music-making, and with notions of a collective cultural identity, varies significantly. However there remains a strong sense of shared culture, formed through Algerian nationalism, which provide the impetus for

many of the musicking practices of a large proportion of the local Algerian diaspora in London.

The apparent increase in musical activities amongst Algerians in London over the last decade, which is recognised by many members of the diaspora, results partly from the city's growing Algerian population. As the diaspora expands and becomes more established in London, there is greater opportunity for cultural activities and music-making, and this situation makes this study particularly timely. Throughout the four-year duration of this research, Algerians have often voiced their hopes for a more highly organised and publicly visible diasporic community. This growth of activity might also be attributed to the expanding use and accessibility of the Internet and social media. Whilst the local Algerian population employ the same technologies as others in London, the importance of social media in facilitating musicking should not be downplayed. The Internet not only allows social interaction and the sharing of musical media amongst a dispersed diasporic population, but also enables connections with musicians and audiences in France and the *bled*, and a sense of reconnection with Algerian culture. As these networks of music, musicians and listeners expand, it is possible for Algerian musicians in London to establish themselves more firmly within the city. Despite the limited opportunities to access performances of Algerian music, it is no longer necessary for members of the diaspora to travel to France or Algeria in order to access the 'home' culture; they can instead engage with online audio and video recordings. At the same time, these musicians can distribute their music through the Internet, and attract attention from new listeners almost instantaneously. As such, the transnational, fluid nature of the Internet, which is often asserted as reducing the sense of 'distance' between people, also produces an increasingly localised context for Algerian music. Shared video clips, web-based interviews with musicians, and online radio stations provide greater services to the city's Algerian population, and allow musicians to live and work in London but distribute their music more widely. The Internet therefore increases transnational connections, whilst also supporting localised culture practices, further reinforcing the complex relationship between the local and global that is

evident through Algerian musicking in London. As such, I suggest that the Internet also forms part of Slobin's interculture, connecting London's Algerian musicians with audiences from outside the city, and beyond the confines of local diasporic networks. It acts as an importance tool in mediating understandings of Algerian culture, and offers a space for the production and negotiation of this form of London Algerianness.

The notion of a shared London Algerianness also serves to highlight the endurance of localised understandings and meanings. Whilst Algerian identities and musics in London continue to be shaped by cultural traditions and connections to both France and the *bled*, this diasporic culture is also unique and is formed by the city within which it exists. The desire of Algerians to build a sense of community and to stake their place within contemporary London is at the heart of many cultural activities, and this duality, between internal diasporic cohesion and external public profile, highlights the importance of localised interactions and encounters. This is not to deny the significance of transnational cultural flows, and as I have described elsewhere, Algerian music spreads beyond the physical confines of the city, to form connections through what Appadurai terms 'scapes'. Nevertheless, this study of Algerian music in London attempts to redress the balance somewhat, and to attend to the question of whether, as Richard K. Wolf asks, 'the increasing humanistic and social scientific emphases on the so-called forces of globalization...disguise and undermine the on-going relevance of local music and local senses of music in the world?' (2009: 6). I am suggesting that despite discourses of multiculturalism and globalisation that, in Wolf's words, 'undermine the on-going relevance of local music', London Algerianness remains rooted in, and shaped by, its position within the city, and is distinct from the cultural identity of Algerians in France and the *bled*.

Algerian musicking in contemporary London is a complex performative process that constructs and mediates cultural identities within the city. The resulting shared sense of London Algerianness is formed within the interstices between the local and global, here and there, past and present, and internal and external practices of the city's Algerian diaspora. The collective process of

musicking is at the heart of contemporary London's Algerian culture, and enables personal interactions, establishes a shared identity, and demarcates a space for Algerians within the city.

Glossary of Terms

- Beur* A derogatory term for North Africans that is used in France, and based upon the French word for ‘butter’. In recent times, the word has been re-appropriated by the Maghrebi population. A popular and commercially successful music group of the 1990s, which included members of North African descent, called themselves *Zebda*, which is the Arabic word for ‘butter’.
- Bled* A colloquial Arabic (*Darija*) term meaning country, but with strong suggestions of yearning for a homeland that might be considered typical of established notions of diaspora. The word *bled* (or *bledi*) is often used by Algerian co-workers, and frequently appears in the lyrics and titles of popular songs (e.g. Cheb Mami’s ‘Bledi [Mon Pays]’ and Souad Massi’s ‘Bladi’). Scales, quoting Bachagha Smati, writes that ‘polemical phrases such as “my country” (*bledi*) or “homeland” (*al watan*) recurred in song lyrics while Arabic spoken-word recordings featured *hadith* and phrases from the Qur’an such as “you were the best people to appear on the surface of the earth”’. (2010: 399-400)
- Casbah* The walled citadel of Algiers, found in the heart of the city. The area has strong connections to pre-colonial times, and was an important area during the fighting in the Algerian war of independence. It remains symbolic of the city’s traditions and heritage, including *chaabi* music.
- Cheb* The title *Cheb*, meaning ‘kid’, became popular amongst a young generation of male *rai* singers, and continues to be used by the likes of London musician Cheb Nacim.
- Darbūka* A goblet drum that is used in a wide variety of Algerian musics, including *chaabi* and *rai*, and variations of which are found throughout North Africa and the Middle East.
- Darija* (Also often written as *Derija*), meaning ‘colloquial’, is the term used for the local Arabic dialects found throughout the Maghreb. *Darija* varies between these countries, and integrates words from a number of languages, including (in the case of Algerian *Darija*) Arabic, French, Spanish, Italian and *Tamazight* (the Berber language).
- Ghaïta* In North African cultures, a double reed aerophone that is strikingly similar to the Turkish *zurna*.
- Gnawa* *Gnawa* is a ritual form of music performed throughout Morocco and in Western Algeria. The music is highly strophic and used to induce trance as part of a religious healing ritual. In recent years,

gnawa has become particularly popular amongst world music audiences. One group that has found particular commercial success is the Franco-Algerian band Gnawa Diffusion, whose lead singer in the song of revered Algerian poet Kateb Yacine.

- Harraga* Taken from an Algerian Arabic word meaning ‘to burn’ or ‘to be burned’, and used to refer to illegal immigrants, who have usually travelled by sea to southern Europe, before making their way north to the United Kingdom. The name suggests that these individuals have burned their passports and other paperwork so that they are not identifiable to the authorities if arrested. Many of these people, almost exclusively young men, arrive in Britain with little knowledge of the English language and no paperwork that would allow them to work legally, and usually end up living on the periphery of society.
- Inqilabat* Shorter pieces drawn from the repertoire of *andalus* music, which are generally considered more sonically accessible amongst Algerian listeners.
- Maghreb The area of Northern Africa that comprises Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia is often referred to as the Maghreb (meaning the place where the sun sets i.e. the west of the Arabic world), and the term is commonly used in French writing. I use both the terms North Africa and the Maghreb (as well as the descriptions North African and Maghrebi) interchangeably, as they are both frequently used by my Algerians co-workers.
- Malḥûn* A colloquial dialect found throughout North Africa, which gives its name to a form of musical poem found in Algeria and Morocco that is associated with *andalusi* music.
- Ma’lûf* (Also often written as *Malouf*) A regional form of *andalus* music performed in eastern Algeria (particularly in and around the city of Constantine), as well as in Tunisia and Libya.
- Nûba*
(pl. *Nûbāt*) A type of song cycle unified by mode or melody, which is the foundation of *andalusi* music. There are believed to have been twenty-four original *nûbāt* but many have been lost over time, and there remain twelve *nûbāt* performed by contemporary *ṣan’a* ensembles.
- ṭab’* Similar to a musical mode, the *ṭab’* is one of the founding elements of *andalusi* music, and retains strong aesthetic links to nature and spirituality.
- Ṭār* A small frame drum with cymbals attached which is similar to the tambourine. During my fieldwork I have often heard it referred to

as a tambur, but it should not be confused with the long-necked string instrument used in Turkish music.

ūd (Also commonly spelled as *oud*) is a short-necked lute found in different forms across North Africa and the Middle East.

Verlan A vernacular language popular amongst the French youth that involves the inversion of syllables.

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