PAUL BEN-HAIM'S SONATA IN G (1951):

HISTORICAL CONTEXT, STYLISTIC ANALYSIS,

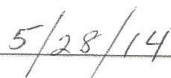AND A NEW EDITION FOR SOLO VIOLA

by

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A LECTURE-DOCUMENT

Presented to the School of Music and Dance
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
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INTRODUCTION

Paul Ben-Haim (1897–1984), born Paul Frankenburger in Munich, was a Jewish composer who emigrated from Germany in 1933 to the land then known as British Mandate Palestine. He became one of the most important composers of the new state of Israel and helped to shape the musical landscape that developed there directly after World War II. Ben-Haim's Sonata in G was composed in 1951 on commission from American-born violinist Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), whom Ben-Haim had first met after a recital in Tel-Aviv. Ben-Haim later recalled this initial encounter with Menuhin as follows:

> Menhuin played a sonata for violin and piano by Walton, and then the sonata for solo violin by Béla Bartók, who dedicated the work to him. After the concert, there was a modest reception for him over tea and cakes at Hopenko's. I was invited too. Menuhin, gentle and amiable as always, told me that he had read favorable reviews of my *Psalms* in New York, and inquired if I had a work for him. I replied that unfortunately I had only some small and unimportant pieces for violin. He then asked me if I could write whatever I wished, and that only one thing was important, and it was that the work should be difficult to perform… Inspired by Menuhin's charming personality, I composed a solo violin sonata in about three days… Then my publisher, Dr. P. E. Gradenwitz, said that since he would soon be going to the U.S., I should give him the manuscript. He hoped to be able to deliver it to Menuhin in person. To our pleasant surprise, the opportunity was very quick in coming. Yehudi Menuhin was about to give a recital in New York at that time. Gradenwitz attended the recital, and after it was over, he went, together with a large and enthusiastic crowd, backstage to the artist's dressing-room. With great effort, Gradenwitz succeeded in reaching Menuhin, took a few seconds to congratulate him and then handed him the sonata. Menuhin glanced at it hastily, and promised that after he had had a chance to study and play it, he would write his answer. I hadn't expected more than that. A few weeks later, I received a telegram from Menuhin informing me that he had found the sonata excellent. This was for me, as a composer, a tremendous success.[1]

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[1] Jehoash Hirshberg, *Paul Ben-Haim: His Life and Works* (Jerusalem: Israeli Music Publications, 1990), 281–282.

Menuhin went on to premiere Ben-Haim's Sonata in G on a recital at Carnegie Hall in February of 1952, after having the manuscript for only two months. Following its premiere, the Sonata in G was soon performed by other leading violinists of the day, including Zvi Zeitlin (1922–2012) and Zino Francescatti (1902–1991); Francescatti in particular made this piece a fixture of his concert repertoire. German violinist Ernst Glaser (1904–1979), concertmaster of the Oslo Philharmonic from 1928 to 1969 (except for three years of exile in Sweden, 1942–1945), was so eager to perform the Sonata in G that he refused to wait until it was published. Instead, Glaser learned the piece from a "hastily prepared" manuscript copy, and was therefore obliged to write to Ben-Haim with a request for corrections.[2] Glaser eventually performed the work in Oslo to great success. Thus, within the course of a year the Sonata in G had been performed in both New York and Norway to much acclaim.

In his review of the Carnegie Hall premiere, American critic Olin Downes (1886–1955) praised both the piece and its performance, though he suggested that Menuhin may have performed the first movement too fast.[3] In the opening line of his review, Downes asserted, "The Ben-Haim Sonata is a work Hebraic in character: rhapsodic and energetic […]."[4] The question of what specifically defines "Hebraic character" in music was at the forefront of the minds of many composers who immigrated to Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, for this generation of immigrant composers, the concept of national identity became a key issue and source of much discussion. The goals of this paper are to discuss Ben-Haim's Sonata in G within the historical-cultural context of musical life in

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[2] Ibid., 287.

[3] Ibid., 285–286.

[4] Ibid. 285.

postwar Palestine (later the state of Israel), to offer an analysis of the piece, and to present a new edition transcribed for viola.

Chapter II of this paper examines what it meant to be a Jewish composer in Palestine in the years immediately following World War II. By comparing the Jewish composers who immigrated to Palestine with those who immigrated to the United States, this chapter explores the effect of place on the immigrant composer. Additionally, this chapter surveys a brief history of the Jewish experience in Germany, with particular attention to how this history helped to shape Jewish composers' identity and sense of home.

The analysis portion of this paper, Chapter III, examines the Sonata in G as a product of the mid-twentieth-century "Eastern Mediterranean" style that Ben-Haim helped cultivate, and of which he is the best known proponent. The Sonata in G thereby demonstrates how Ben-Haim's Eastern Mediterranean style blended his Jewish roots and burgeoning Israeli national identity with his European cultural inheritance of Western art music. Elements considered in this analysis include form, harmony, and the influence of Jewish folk and sacred music.

The principal contribution of this lecture-document is its presentation of the first transcription of Ben-Haim's Sonata in G for solo viola. This transcription adds a major twentieth-century solo sonata to the advanced violist's repertoire. Transcriptions are an important part of the viola repertoire, since historically the viola has not been considered a solo instrument to the same degree as other string instruments such as violin and cello. Most common are transcriptions from the violin repertoire, due to the similarities in timbre, range, and technique between the violin and the viola: two examples of standard

violin works that have been transcribed for solo viola are the Six Sonatas and Partitas by J.S. Bach (1685–1750), the Twelve Fantasies by Georg Phillipp Telemann (1681–1767), and the *24 Carpices* of N. Paganini.[5] Lionel Tertis (1876–1975), a violist who helped to promote the viola as a solo instrument, was famous for his many transcriptions. Although these transcriptions are seldom performed, several of these transcriptions were from the violin repertoire, including works by W. A. Mozart (1756–1791), Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960), John Ireland (1879–1962), Frederick Delius (1862–1934), and Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962).[6] More recently, Alan Arnold has published numerous transcriptions through Viola World Publications. These publications include transcriptions of pieces by Fritz Kreisler, Ceasr Franck (1822–1890), and Vittorio Monti (1868–1922), among others. Additionally, many of the etudes taught by today's viola teachers were originally written for violin and later transposed down a fifth for viola. Prominent examples include editions of etudes by Rudolph Kreutzer (1766–1831), Franz Wohlfahrt (1833–1884), Jakob Dont (1800–1873), and Pierre Rode (1774–1830).[7] Though the repertoire for solo viola expanded a great deal during the twentieth century, the viola's solo sonata repertoire remains limited compared to the volume of work that exists for violin. Therefore, this new edition of Ben-Haim's Sonata in G provides a substantial

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[5] J.S. Bach, "Six Sonatas and Partitas," ed. Joseph Vieland(New York: International Music Company, 1951); Georg Phillipp Telemann, "12 Fantasias," in *Mcginnis & Marx Music Publishers*, ed. Louise Rood(New York: 1960); Niccolo Paganini, "24 Caprices; Op. 1," ed. L. Raby (Kalmus).

[6] Forbes Watson, "Tertis, Lionel", Oxford University Press <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27716> (accessed April 29 2014).

[7]Rudoplh Kreutzer, "42 Studies," ed. Walter Blumenau(Milwaukee, WI: G. Schirmer Inc, 1950); Franz Wohlfahrt, "60 Studies, Op 45," ed. Joseph Vieland(New York: International Music Company, 1966); Jakob Dont, "24 Etudes and Caprices, Op. 35," ed. Max Rostal(New York: Schott, 1971); Pierre Rode, "24 Caprices in Form of Etudes for Viola Alone, in All 24 Keys," ed. Max Rostal(New York: Schott, 1974).

contribution to the advanced viola repertoire, while at the same time bringing increased

attention to the music of Israeli composers.

CHAPTER II

GERMAN-JEWISH COMPOSERS AND THE EXODUS TO PALESTINE

In the years following World War II, Jewish composers and musicians living in British Mandate Palestine developed a musical culture and style markedly different from the style cultivated by Jewish composers living in the United States. In this postwar era, composers wrestled with what it meant to have a national style that would define Jewish music. Despite the efforts of critics and immigrant composers such as Paul Ben-Haim, Erich Walter Sternberg (1891–1974), Hanoch Jacoby (1909–1990), and Josef Tal (1910–2008), no single musical style became the voice of the Jewish people in Palestine.[8] Instead, the music composed during this period was diverse, drawing on a plurality of compositional styles.

Four main influences shaped immigrant Jewish composers' respective musical voices. First, audiences in Palestine preferred the more traditional repertoire of Western art music and shied away from twentieth-century modernist or avante-garde music.[9] This attitude encouraged a compositional style that tended to be conservative. Second, synagogue music and klezmer music (which means secular music) became more influential. The music from the synagogue was not based on the conventional diatonic scale, but was based on particular melodic formulas.[10] This music was often named after different prayers and varied according to the season, time of day, or country of origin.

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[8] Phillip V. Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel* (University of Illinois Press, 1989), 187.

[9] Ibid.

[10] David Conway, *Jewry in Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19.

Klezmer music was heavily influenced by synagogue music and featured many of the same harmonic techniques.[11]

Third, composers of the nascent Israeli state sought ways of describing their new homeland in the context of Western art music. Fueled by pressure from critics who wanted to establish a national Israeli identity through music, many immigrant composers adapted their musical language to evoke this nationalist vision. The music of Paul Ben-Haim emblematizes this trend among German-born Jewish composers in Palestine. Responding to critics' call for a national Israeli musical style, Ben-Haim developed a musical idiom that he described as "a new original Palestinian creation" informed by his acquaintance with "oriental folklore."[12] Ben-Haim's new musical idiom was representative of Eastern Mediterraneanism, a style of music that developed in Palestine during the 1930's as immigrant composers sought to recreate the sounds heard in their new environment.[13]

Fourth, a vibrant classical music scene rapidly developed in Palestine as an increasing number of trained classical musicians settled there after fleeing Germany. These performers' high level of artistic accomplishment enabled their fellow émigré composers to write technically demanding works. Moreover, this influx of accomplished performers elevated the classical musical culture of Palestine: indeed, when Paul Ben-Haim arrived in Palestine, he was initially horrified by the deficiencies of the musicians

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[11] Ibid., 23.

[12] Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism, Images and Reflections* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 283.

[13] Bohlman, 198. Eastern Mediterraneanism was heavily influenced by the musical traditions of Palestinian Arabs,Yemenite Jewish music, and the Sephardic tradition. Ralph Locke claims that this music even went so far as to emulate the music composers heard on the radio from countries such as Egypt and Turkey. See again Locke, 283.

there. On his first visit to Tel-Aviv in 1933, Ben-Haim visited the opera house and gave

the following review:

> Last night, I attended what passes here for opera… Among the singers, at least
> those who were not already beyond their prime, there were quite a few good
> voices. Chorus good, but uncultivated. Conductor most mediocre… Orchestra
> unspeakable (a la Jewish Chamber Orchestra in Munich). Staging and décor are
> impossible and the most antiquated cardboard kitsch. Here everything is still stuck
> in the most primitive beginnings and it is a big question whether anything can
> develop in the foreseeable future. I believe that it cannot! For these things and for
> a symphony orchestra too, the main lack is money.[14]

The quality of performances changed quickly after the arrival of Bronislav

Huberman (1882–1947). Huberman was a well-known violinist from Poland, but

redirected his energy toward building the Palestine Orchestra after immigrating. After

the founding of the orchestra in 1935, Huberman was able to establish a high level of

musicianship in a short amount of time by bringing in highly trained musicians from

Central Europe.[15] This not only improved the orchestra dramatically, but saved a large

number of Jewish musicians from the Nazis.[16]

Homecoming or Exile? German-Jewish Composers in Israel and the United States

The development of a strong musical community among German-Jewish

musicians in Palestine was related to a sense of homecoming. Indeed, exodus to Palestine

during the 1930s and '40s was more than an escape from Nazi Germany: it also signified

a return to the Jewish homeland. Among German Jews in particular, the idea of

immigration to Palestine had originated long before the rise of the Third Reich. After all,

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[14] Hirshberg, 110.

[15] Michael H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 107.

[16] Bohlman, 142–143.

despite having lived in Germany for over a thousand years, Jews were plagued by suspicions of their non-assimilation, and for many centuries had not been accepted as truly German.[17] Therefore, when British Mandate Palestine was created in 1920, many Jewish families saw an opportunity to return to *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel), their historical and religious homeland.[18] By the same token, the composers who emigrated from Central Europe to British Mandate Palestine also described their experience in terms of homecoming.[19]

This concept of homecoming might at first seem an overly romanticized response to the Jewish exodus from Europe. After all, immigration to Palestine was no mere nostalgic journey home—rather, it was a matter of life or death. Furthermore, immigration to Palestine was not a viable option for all who needed refuge: many Jews had difficulty even attaining passports and visas to be allowed into the country, and others lacked the means to travel. Once within Palestine's borders, German-Jewish musicians faced challenges of acclimation. Palestine lacked the infrastructure that composers who immigrated to the United States would take for granted. This included reliable plumbing, electricity and other basic services. As indicated above in Ben-Haim's account, composers and performers arrived in a land without a strong classical music tradition in place. Jewish composers in Palestine also lacked established arts organizations, and funding sources that composers who immigrated to the United States

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[17] Pierre James, *The Murderous Paradise: German Nationalism and the Holocaust* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 94.

[18] Bohlman.

[19] Ibid., 106.

would enjoy.[20] Nevertheless, the idea of returning home remained, even if it began as a utopian ideal.[21] The historical and cultural ties that the Jewish people felt toward Palestine helped to overcome the hardship. Indeed the hardship was part of realizing the New Jerusalem.[22]

Conversely, German-Jewish composers who immigrated to the United States often complained of a feeling of exile. As ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl explains, exiled people "expect to return home when conditions improve" and therefore "try to maintain certain central aspects of their traditional culture in their new home."[23] Nettl offers the case of his own father as an example: while on faculty at Indiana University, Nettl's father identified his "inner ethnicity" as Austrian and sought to socialize predominantly with other German-speaking faculty.[24] Nettl's father was not alone in his sentiments. Many Europeans who immigrated to the United States during the Second World War believed that they would return to Europe soon after the war was over.[25] Therefore, fully assimilating to the culture of the United States was not valued. In contrast, many Jewish composers who immigrated to British Mandate for Palestine did not consider return to Europe as a priority. This generation of composers, instead, adapted to their new circumstances and created opportunities from limited available resources. Though these

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[20] Irit Youngerman, "Immigration, Identity, and Change: Émigré Composers of the Nazi Period and Their Perceptions of Stylistic Transformation in Their Creative Work," *Nahariam* 3, (2009): 120.

[21] Phillip V. Bohlman, *Jewish Music and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 127.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Bruno Nettl, "Displaced Musics and Immigrant Musicologists, Ethnomusicological and Biographical Perspectives," in *Driven into Paradise*, ed. Reinhold Brinkmann and Christoph Wolff(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 55.

[24] Ibid., 58–61.

[25] Ibid., 57.

musicians were building a new tradition, they maintained some elements of German

culture, including the German language. These German-Jewish composers in Palestine

actively sought ways of adapting to their new country, a point discussed in greater detail

below.

This contrast of a feeling of exile by one group of immigrants to the United States

to the group in Palestine that sought to adapt to their new circumstances may not be as

discrete as it may at first appear. Nettl's account of his father's experience in America

suggests that the exiled person stubbornly persists in the language and customs of his or

her "home" country; however, philosopher and musicologist Lydia Goehr points to a

dynamic mediation between "old" and "new" cultural elements in the experience of exile:

> Essential to the exile's experience is the feeling of doubled kinship. Exiles always
> have two elements in mind – broadly referred to as the old and new – that share a
> common function. […] If exiles always experienced the old and the new as
> mutually exclusive, their choices would be straightforward. But because they
> more often experience the old and the new as interpenetrating or mediating on
> another, their tasks are complex. Mediation allows symmetric and asymmetric
> processes of transfiguration to occur in the relata, say, when the use of a
> secondary language in a new country brings changes to the dominant primary
> language, and/or vice versa, or when the mixing of two musical traditions or
> styles brings changes to one or both.[26]

As exiled artists negotiate this "doubled kinship," their creative output evinces the

mediation of old and new influences. Goehr notes two possible results: "One outcome

recognizes new products arising from the doubleness; here the 'two-tone' character is

preserved. The other outcome rests upon the doubleness's being overcome."[27] For the

second outcome, Goehr used the example of the development of a third language (one

different from both the language used in the old country and from the one used in the new

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[26] Lydia Goehr, *The Quest for Voice: Music, Politics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1998), 199.

[27] Ibid.

country). This doubleness influences musical elements as well. As an example, composers take new subject matter from the new land and adapt it for the old language. Examples of this include Eisler's *Lieder* (the Hollywood Songbook); Weill's *Down in the Valley* or *Four Walt Whitman Songs*, or Schoenberg's mixed-language *A Survivor from Warsaw*.[28]

This constant conflict between old and new existed for composers who immigrated to the United States. The struggle of adapting to a new language versus speaking in German serves as an excellent point. Similar to the case of Paul Nettl presented earlier, composers who immigrated to the United States sought to preserve their identity as Central European. Maintaining their native language, mainly German, was an important part of that identity. In addition, audiences did not always appreciate the work of these composers. Audiences in the United States tended to be more conservative than the audiences in Europe. The more dissonant and avant-garde music tended to be disliked by American audiences.

Though American audiences tended to prefer more conservative works, some composers were able to find appreciation in the university system.[29] The composer Ernst Krenek (1900–1991) found that his students lacked the same foundation in musical education of students in Europe, and thus did not harbor the same preconceived attitudes toward contemporary music.[30] Krenek remarked after a performance of his *Symphonic Piece,* op. 86, "The students did not feel at all harassed by the 'awesome' features of

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Claudia Maurer Zenck, "Challenges and Opportunities of Acculturation; Schoenberg, Krenek, and Stravinsky in Exile," in *Driven into Paradise; the Musical Migration from Nazi Germany to the United States*, ed. Reinhold Ed. Brinkman and Christoph Ed. Wolf(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[30] Ibid.

atonality and twelve-tone technique. Contrariwise, they are still coming to see me and to speak enthusiastically of the most thrilling experience they had in playing this unusual music."[31] This gave Krenek a place where he experienced the freedom to experiment and develop his compositional technique without worrying about writing to American tastes.

In a 1950 article published in the *Los Angeles Times*, Albert Goldberg interviewed several Jewish composers who were displaced from their native European countries about their experience. These included Arnold Schoenberg (Vienna, 1874–Los Angeles, 1951), Miklos Rozsa (Budapest, 1907–Los Angeles, 1995), and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (Florence, 1895–Beverly Hills, 1968). Their responses can be divided into three groups: no change, those who admitted some change due to the quality of the performing groups in the United States, and those who perceived continuity in the state of exile. [32]

Arnold Schoenberg may best fit the first group by asserting that external circumstances should have no effect on the composers work.[33] However, musicologist Walter Rubsamen (1911–1973) identifies Schoenberg's remarks as misleading. Schoenberg complained that critics did not appreciate his compositions and went on to write his *Suite for Strings in G major* (1934), which included his first key signature in twenty-seven years.[34] Furthermore, as Zenck points out, " Schoenberg's conviction that he should not teach dodecaphony to his American students and his frequent so-called return to tonality show that he did not want to make a point of blessing the conservative

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[31] As quoted in ibid., 179.

[32] Youngerman, "Immigration, Identity, and Change: Émigré Composers of the Nazi Period and Their Perceptions of Stylistic Transformation in Their Creative Work," 123.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 124.

American audience with his 'revolution' at all costs."[35] Despite what Schoenberg claimed about his compositional process, this work and his own attitude toward teaching may illustrate that he was more sensitive to audience's opinion than he was willing to admit.

Golberg identifies the film composer Miklos Rozsa as a representative of the second group of displaced musicians. Rozsa told Goldberg "something is missing on the musical scene of this country; something of the bubbling, fertile, and germinating artistic atmosphere of pre-war Europe."[36] Rozsa believed that American audiences were not interested in new compositions, complaining that it caused a lack of inspiration. In his conversation with Goldberg, he warned composers "of the pitfall of 'writing down to American taste' in order to achieve quick success."[37]

Finally, the third group, exemplified in Goldberg's article by the Italian-Jewish composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, perceived no change in their exile status, because they considered themselves exiled while still in Europe. Despite the physical change of location, this sense of exile was felt usually for artistic or religious reasons. Castelnuovo-Tedesco found that the key to his "adjustment was the separation of his 'true self' from external conditions."[38]

Similarly to those who immigrated to the United States, the issue of doubleness also existed. Though for the composers who immigrated to Palestine, the second outcome would be more of the norm. In this outcome, composers overcame their environment to

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[35] Zenck, 184-185.

[36] Youngerman, "Immigration, Identity, and Change: Émigré Composers of the Nazi Period and Their Perceptions of Stylistic Transformation in Their Creative Work."

[37] Ibid., 124–125.

[38] Ibid., 126.

compose a new musical language deeply affected by their surroundings and inseparable from the idea of returning to their ancient homeland.

Germany and the Jews

During the nineteenth century, Jewish communities in Germany changed in two closely related ways. First, Jewish communities changed from a traditional religious culture to a modernized secular society. Prior to the nineteenth century the community's religious, philosophical, and political life were largely synonymous.[39] The impetus for change stemmed from emancipation and from the economic benefit of an increasingly industrialized world.[40] These changes allowed for the second cultural shift among Jewish communities, so that widely rural communities changed to highly urbanized communities in a short amount of time.[41] Through emancipation and economic success, Jewish communities made inroads into all levels of society. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Jewish community became the most successful minority group in Germany.[42]

One of the ways the Jewish community was able to achieve such success was through secondary education. For example, in 1900 Jews made up only one percent of the population, but made up nine percent of the university students. A high level of education translated into important positions in the workforce, so that by 1933 forty-six percent of all Jews engaged in a profession were "employers."[43]

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[39] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*, 32.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., 39–40.

[43] Ibid., 40.

Despite their success in Germany and the rest of Central Europe, the Jewish community never fully assimilated, and despite modernizing, never abandoned their culture or religious background. [44] Instead of assimilating into German society, the Jewish community developed apart from the rest of non-Jewish society. This allowed for Jewish neighborhoods to develop strong social institutions, but further isolated them from the rest of society. Not all institutions were religious, but allowed for "a complex web of cultural activities and social cohesion."[45] These institutions succeeded in bringing the Jewish community closer together and strengthening their internal bonds. [46]

The Jewish community's isolation was a direct result stemming from the rise of nationalism in Germany during the nineteenth century. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Germany was less of a country in our contemporary definition and more of a collection of independent states.[47] During this period, there was little interest in a united German state and nationalism was only an idea confined to small intellectual circles.[48] This would change quickly after Napoleon's occupation of 1806. Nationalism became a populist movement with the execution of a number of German patriots by the French occupiers.[49] Unfortunately for the Jewish community, one of the ideals closely associated with the French occupation was Enlightenment philosophies. During the occupation of Germany by the French, a number of edicts went out granting Jews emancipation. These

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[44] Ibid., 42.

[45] Ibid., 40.

[46] Ibid., 40–41.

[47] James, 99.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 100.

edicts fueled the anti-Semitic ideology that was beginning to take shape in the rise of nationalism in Germany.[50]

German nationalism as it evolved over the course of the nineteenth century was complex and often paradoxical. Nationalism developed out of four areas. First, nationalism developed from the patriotism that came out of Germany uniting as a nation. Second, it developed from Pietism's own self-interest in the state as a means to an end. Third, it developed out of Enlightenment-era scholars' interest in the intellectual development of the state. Fourth, nationalism developed as Germans sought a unified ideology.[51] Of these four areas, Pietism and Enlightenment philosophies played important roles in the development of nationalism and the attitude toward the Jewish community living in Germany. Enlightenment scholars and Pietists were at odds throughout much of the eighteenth century and nineteenth centuries. German Pietists saw the world through traditional Biblical eyes, where miracles were important and continued to their present day. The Pietist often disregarded current scientific explanations of how the world worked and explained it as God working in the world. In contrast, Enlightenment scholars saw the world as a rational place that was able to be explained through scientific research. Enlightenment philosophers thought that through the unification of Germany all men could be emancipated and treated equally in the eyes of the law.

At first the German Pietists were skeptical of government intervention, but soon came to realize that they could use it to further their agenda of Christian religiosity. The Pietists sought to limit religious freedom through political power, so that Christianity

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 91.

would be the only acceptable religion in Germany.[52] By the end of the Napoleonic

occupation of Germany, the Pietists had gained more power and their philosophies

dominated the rhetoric of German nationalism. The ideas of the Enlightenment became

associated with the French occupation of Germany and lost popularity. As Germany

wrestled with what it meant to be German after the French invasion, Pietist' thought

dominated the thinking of the day, so that nationalism and Christianity became

synonymous.

What it meant to be German was not just a religious ideal, but also a question of

heredity. The idea of Volk, which had to do more with the superiority of the German race

and culture, became one the most important ideals of German nationalism.[53] Johann

Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) one of the most influential nationalists of the nineteenth

century insisted that German culture was declining, because of the foreigners, especially

the French. He went onto say that foreign impurities were undermining the Volk. Fichte

believed that Germany needed to return to the *Urvolk* or the golden age. According to this

philosophy the *Urvolk,* similar to the story of Adam and Eve from the Bible, were where

the true German and much of the rest of Europe descended. According to Fichte and

many of his contemporaries, the Jewish people descended from a completely different

lineage. For Fichte, it was impossible for Germany to return to the age of the *Urvolk* if

there were Jews present in Germany. Fichte said, "But to grant them civil rights, I see no

other way than in the night to cut off all their heads and put in their place other heads

without a single Jewish idea. To protect us from these Jews, I see no other way than to

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 101.

conquer their Holy Land and ship them all off there."[54] Fichte was not alone in his

beliefs, and was joined by the philosopher Frederich Hegel (1770 –1831) and the

theologian, pastor and professor Friederich Schleiermacher (1768–1834).[55]

Anti-Semitism was not new in Germany, but existed for many years. Early in the

Jews long history in Germany they were not considered "members" of the country.[56] The

Ahasverus myth, first articulated during the seventeenth, continued to influence

Germany's attitude toward Jews. This myth determined that Jews would forever remain

as Jews regardless of how long they may have lived in Germany and irrespective of how

well they spoke the language. For the Jewish community, this meant being eternally

excluded from becoming fully German, which was an important aspect of German

nationalism.[57] For Fichte, this idea meant that Jews could not convert to Christianity and

would forever remain Jewish. To allow Jews to convert to Christianity would undermine

the whole philosophy of the Volk. Fichte even went so far as to explain how Jesus was

somehow not Jewish. [58] Similarly, the idea known as the Immutable Jew developed

alongside German nationalism—the Jew whose character was fixed at birth and remained

unalterable throughout his life.[59] "Both this nationalist identity and anti-Semitism were

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[54] Ibid., 104.

[55] Ibid., 104-105.

[56] Ibid., 94.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., 104.

[59] Ibid.

based on the notion of hereditary and shared characteristics of race or Volk, thus

determining Germans and Jews by ancestry."[60]

Despite the anti-Semitism that existed in Germany, the Jewish community finally

achieved emancipation through the creation of two German-speaking states: the German

Reich led by the Prussian King in 1871 and the Austro-Hungarian Empire of 1867.

Michael Haas wrote that the creation of these new governments "guaranteed the rights of

confessional diversity and their new constitutions meant that Jews, long denied the rights

accorded to other German-speakers, could finally become fully active participants in the

culture, language and music of the German-speaking people."[61] Although the Jewish

community achieved emancipation in the eyes of the law, the reality was that many anti-

Semites viewed this new legislation as offensive and often worked tirelessly against

them. Many Germans, though happy to see the unification of Germany, were not pleased

with the multi-cultural tone that the new government had taken. For the Jewish

community this meant access to education and no theoretical barriers.[62] This allowed for

the quick success of the Jewish community, so that by the end of the nineteenth century

they had become highly influential in German culture.

Phillip Bohlman wrote, "The relationship of the Jews to Germans and German

culture forms a history replete with paradox and contradiction."[63] In one sense many Jews

believed that German-Jewish culture was, as Bohlman states, "the ultimate and long-

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[60] Ibid., 105.

[61] Michael Haas, *Forbidden Music: The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 11.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*, 31.

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awaited release of Jewish creativity."[64] Probably the best example of this comes from the middle of the nineteenth century when Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) and Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791 – 1864) became two of the most famous musicians in Germany. Both were Jewish and had a complex relationship with the religion into which they were born. The difference between how Meyerbeer's and Mendelssohn's families handled the difficulty of being Jewish in Germany is indicative of how many other Jewish families dealt with being Jewish. The Mendelssohns converted to Christianity prior to Felix's birth in order further enhance their social status in Berlin. Despite being wealthy, this would help to give the family an advantage in their status. This worked to a certain extent; however, in Carl Fredrich Zelter's (1758–1852) communication with Goethe (1749–1832) about his young pupil, Felix Mendelssohn, he would often refer to Mendelssohn's Jewishness.[65]

The other option for many Jewish families was through reform and that was the path the Meyerbeers chose. The Meyerbeers prominence in society was such that they had amassed a considerable amount of wealth and converting to Christianity would not have been an option, even if the desire to convert existed. Instead they helped to encourage reform in the synagogue. This reform affected the music of the synagogue so that it closely resembled the music of the Christian church. This would include the addition of choirs, of hymns sung with printed text that read from left to right, and of prayers sung in either German or Hebrew. Additionally, this reform also meant that sermons were often given in German.[66]

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Conway.

[66] Ibid., 155.

The attempt to fully assimilate, whether through conversion or reform, never fully

took hold for the Jewish community. As nationalism grew, so did the emphasis on the

importance of cultural identity, making the Jewish composer's relationship with the

country in which he or she lived more complex. On the one hand were Felix

Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, both Jewish, but both important figures in the

German musical and cultural scene. On the other hand are important composers, such as

Robert Schumann (1810–1856), Carl Friedrich Zelter, and most famously Richard

Wagner (1813–1883) who all expressed frustration with the quick rise of Jewish

influence on the musical identity of Germany.[67] The complexity of this relationship grew

as Jews were finding success as musicians and composers in Germany.

The stereotype that Jews were good musicians rose quickly during the nineteenth

century. Prior to the migration of Jewish people from rural areas to the city, the Jewish

people were not viewed as musicians. As David Conway wrote, "…the conventional

wisdom that Jews are especially musically gifted seems to have emerged fully formed

during the nineteenth century – it certainly did not exist, even among themselves, before

that."[68] The only trained musicians were in the synagogues and worked as cantors during

the service. With the rise of the new Jewish elite in Berlin, many Jewish children

received excellent musical training. This led to the exposure of a wide variety of Western

art music in the homes of their family and friends.

Despite the difficulties, Jewish influence on music in Germany quickly rose to

prominence. By the end of the nineteenth century the list of prominent composers who

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 1.

were Jewish included Felix Mendelssohn, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and Jacques Offenbach (1819–1880). There were also highly influential instrumentalists who helped to further the development of technique, including violinists Joseph Joachim (1837–1907) and Ferdinand David (1810–1837), to name only two. What makes this list even more astounding was that Jews made up less than one percent of the population of Western Europe.[69]

Jewish Settlement in Palestine and Musical Transculturation

With the creation of British Mandate Palestine in 1920 and the rise of Zionism toward the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of a possible Jewish settlement became feasible. Some families began planning for the move many years prior the Nazi rise to power. Many Jewish people viewed this only as idealistic and others started to realize that life in Germany was becoming too difficult. The Nazis' rise to power in 1933 confirmed the realization that the need to get out of Germany was fast approaching. This is not to say that the community as a whole came to this realization. For those who were already taking the steps to immigrate to Palestine, the Nazi rise to power was confirmation that it was time to relocate. Because of these small groups of Jewish people who were interested in immigrating to Palestine, several German-Jewish organizations were created to help create a bond between the two countries. These organizations were short lived, as support from Germany, became impossible after 1936.[70]

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*.

In order for immigration to be successful, the immigrant group involved in the movement from one country to another must be of a people who share a similar history. They will have already existed as a unified community prior to immigration and have some sort of sociopolitical structure, either strict or loose.[71] The Jewish community who emigrated from Germany already had developed these three important elements through centuries of exclusion. In their new homeland it allowed for them to develop into a robust community in a short amount of time.

Furthermore, they were able to change the cultural landscape of Palestine after immigration, because of three important elements. First, the culture became similar to the culture surrounding them in Palestine. Secondly, they were able to maintain and preserve their identity as a people group, both through cultural and religious bonds. Thirdly, the immigrant group and the culture of the host environment evolved and became a component of the larger society. The third example signals the emergence of a long-term ethnic community – like the one that developed in Palestine.[72]

Urbanization, according to Bohlman, is "the transferal to another venue of central components from an urbanized social structure to maintain the cultural life of a particular ethnic group."[73] One of the advantages the German Jews had over other immigrants to Palestine was an already established system of cultural and religious organizations from which they could draw. This allowed for the rapid development of a vibrant artistic community within Palestine. Furthermore, Jews who immigrated sought to transfer the cultural life they knew in Europe to their new home in Palestine. By the end of the

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[71] Ibid., 108.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 140.

nineteenth century, as Bohlman says, "The most pervasive ethnic music in the Central European Jewish community was Western art music."[74] He later says, "…the study of ethnic music in the Central European community of Israel entails the examination of the ways in which Western art music functions in the community."[75] Western art music became an important element of Jewish cultural life by the end of the nineteenth century. Bohlman even goes so far to say that Western art music became something of a folk music to the Jewish people.[76]

Chamber music was a vital part of this musical heritage that came with the Jewish people from Germany. In a sense this became a way of preservation.[77] The tradition of enjoying chamber music, particularly the chamber music of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, dates back to the time spent in the parlors of both the families of the Mendelssohns and the Meyerbeers. This continued after immigration and it was common to find chamber music concerts happening on Saturdays not long after the first immigrants came to Palestine.

One of the ways these chamber music concerts were able to take place so soon after immigration was the development of The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine by Dr. Salli Levi. The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine was originally created to bridge the gap between Central Europe and Palestine. Unfortunately, the organization was unable to garner the support that it would need to survive prior to 1936 when all support from Jewish communities in Germany would be cut off. Bohlman

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[74] Ibid., 100.

[75] Ibid., 101.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

said, "The WCJMP history from 1936 to 1940 illustrates the struggle between continuity and disruption that inevitably characterizes the first generation of all immigrant cultures; that struggle, nevertheless, proves vital to the shaping of new musical attitudes and activities."[78] In many ways this was indicative of all institutions created during the first few years of immigration to Palestine. Without the support of the outside world, these institutions could not function for more than a few years. With communication cutoff to Central Europe, the WCJMP changed their purpose and sought to promote the compositions of living Jewish composers. In addition, the WCJMP saw its role as an alternative to the already established musical organizations, such as the Palestine Orchestra, which many accused of only programming European standards. The organization also sponsored educational outreach and chamber music. The first concert that the WCJMP sponsored happened June 21, 1938 of Hugo Adler's (1894 – 1955) *Balak and Balaam.* Unfortunately, the WCJMP had lofty goals and was not able to continue, because of serious financial problems[79]

In addition to funding many concerts early on in the Jewish community of Palestine, the WCJMP established a newsletter called Musica Hebraica. Musica Hebraica sought to promote Jewish music in Palestine throughout the world. Subscribers to this newsletter lived all over the world, which became problematic as the war intensified. The newsletter relied on subscriptions and articles from people in Palestine and beyond, and the financial support could not always reach Palestine. Without support, the newsletter only existed by the effort of a few volunteers and could not continue. Musica Hebraica

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[78] Ibid., 117.

[79] Ibid.

focused on music in the Diaspora, music in Palestine, music of living Jewish composers and religious music. This also led to problems as the debate on how this music actually manifested itself and what was most important intensified. For the authors, a Jewish homeland was inseparable from their cultural heritage and its implicit connections to an ancient homeland. The debate happened over whether music in the Diaspora was interwoven with Jewish folk melodies or only religious music could truly sustain the tradition. The two newsletters that made it to print are important resources to understanding the musical world of the early Jewish community in Palestine and what the musical voice of this community would become over the next few years.[80]

Financial problems were not unique to only the WCJMP or other large organizations, but effected many musicians who had moved to Palestine. Without support from established institutions, many musicians had to leave to find more favorable conditions. For some musicians this lack of financial support prevented them from immigrating to Palestine in the first place. The best-known example of this was Ernest Bloch (1880 – 1959).[81] One of Musica Hebraica's most important subscribers, Ernest Bloch immigrated to the United States and hoped to eventually immigrate to Palestine. The financial support would never allow Bloch to immigrate to Palestine and he would remain in the United States. Despite this, Bloch's music remained closely tied to the music of Palestine. His works are rooted in a romantic aesthetic, but also feature melodic and thematic elements from Jewish religious music. Probably the best example of this is *Shelomo*, which is Hebrew for Salomon. In this piece, the solo cello represents King Salomon's voice.

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[80] Ibid., 122.

[81] Ibid.

In addition to Western art music being at the center of the Jewish musical tradition, the Jewish folk song became increasingly important to the community by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. There were two important moments in this rise of folk music in the Jewish community. First, the period from 1890 – 1910 called, *The Early Stage,* which included songs that tended to be more positive and romanticized Israel. One of the most prominent topics in the songbooks was *Heimatlied* or homeland songs. These songs typically romanticized Zion. Some of these songs were sung in Hebrew, but the majority of them were in German. The second period was from 1910 – 1925 and was known as *The Yiddish Stage*. The difference between the two periods really has to do with a shift in the location of the homeland. In *The Early Stage* the homeland was Israel, but changed to Eastern Europe in *The Yiddish Stage*. Either way, the interest in folk music was tied with the rise of Zionism. Zionism was seen as a possible way to establish a homeland, whether as an abstract concept of unity or as a literal political state.[82]

Of the musicians who immigrated to Palestine, a large number of them were composers, including many professionals, students and amateurs. With any group of composers who move to a new country change is inevitable. When composers arrived in Palestine, they were met with nationalist demands. The idea of finding a sound that truly represented Jewish music was important to many immigrants. The Jewish composer, however, was more interested in garnering support by relating to a wider audience. With ties to Europe cutoff, this would be their only funding source. In 1951, Max Brod articulated what Jewish music meant as,

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[82] Ibid.

One can first designate as Jewish music that which is created by the Jews. We would, nevertheless, like a tighter and more precise definition, so we would only call music Jewish when it exhibits a Jewish character. Or indeed many Jewish characteristics, a multitude. Thus from this point on one will not maintain that there is a single type of Jewish music or that one ought to be able to recognize a single archetype behind a variety of appearances.[83]

In many ways Brod is correct, there was not a single element or compositional style that made music Jewish or not Jewish. Bohlman pointed out, "An aesthetic of art music in Palestine based on Central European traditions hardly enjoyed a positive reception in the beginning. Whereas those who represented the tradition realized the impossibility of a single "Jewish" or "Palestinian" voice, their pioneering predecessors were wont to call for exactly such a unified voice."[84] What the public wanted was a style of music that could be identified as truly Jewish. This was a matter of national identity and many saw this as an opportunity to establish Jewish culture.[85] However, many immigrant Jewish composers did not share this same viewpoint. This allowed for a diversity of styles to immerge immediately after World War II. In 1938, Erich Walter Sternberg said:

Native of every quarter of the globe, product of the most diverse schools, he [the Jewish composer] has a public to deal with whose musical tastes and standards are of the most heterogeneous kind. Under these circumstances, so it seems to me, a composer has only one course to follow: to care naught for what is expected of him, be it Palestinian folklore, or synagogical music, or pieces in the Russian manner, but to go his own way, to speak his own tongue according to the dictates of his Music.[86]

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[83] As quoted in ibid., 185.

[84] Ibid., 186.

[85] Hirshberg.

[86] As quoted in Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*, 186.

This tended to be the prevailing thought among many of the first generation composers that a diversity of styles was crucial to the development of Western art music in Palestine. Many of the composers who immigrated to Palestine were in their twenties and thirties and had yet to develop their mature styles. The majority of these composers had to leave before they had completed their training. Despite this, they had good fundamentals in theory and in compositional techniques.[87] The development of the Palestinian Broadcasting Orchestra, under the direction of Karl Solomon (1897–1974) who was also a composer, gave these young composers the opportunity to have their works performed. This allowed for the young composer to develop quickly.[88] Eventually in 1947 from November through December, the Palestine Broadcasting Service organized a "Month of Jewish Music."[89]

There were limits to what the audiences of Palestine would entertain. As was stated previously, the audiences tended to prefer more traditional compositions. The Palestinian Broadcasting Orchestra was unique in their promotion of new music under Solomon's direction. In contrast, the Palestine Orchestra was often accused of only performing the standard orchestral repertoire.[90] Perhaps the best example of audience's rejection of the avante-garde or dissonant music is in the case of Stean Wolpe (1902–1972). Wolpe was a student of Anton Webern (1883–1945) and had developed an interest in serialism. In Palestine, he found a resistance to his music and eventually left,

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[87]Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Peter Gradenwitz, *The Music of Israel; Its Rise and Growth* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1949), 262.

[90] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*.

frustrated.[91] The composers who did find success found it through their training in tonal

harmony and larger forms. This included classical harmony, as well as the advanced

tonality and chromaticism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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[91] Ibid., 193.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF PAUL BEN-HAIM'S *SONATA IN G*

First generation Israeli composers fell into two stylistic groups. The first group consisted of composers who followed the broad compositional shifts that occurred directly after World War II. The second group of composers was more conservative and not ready to abandon their pre-immigration style. Paul Ben-Haim became associated with the first group, because his compositional style changed dramatically after immigrating to Palestine.[92] According to Bohlman, "By the mid-1940's, the interest in a sound characteristic of the region had fully manifested itself in a new style, Eastern Mediterraneanism."[93] It is within the context of Eastern Mediterraneanism style that Ben-Haim composed the *Sonata in G.*

The "Eastern Mediterranean School" developed in the 1930's as a way to create a sound ideal many Jewish composers thought typical of that geographic region.[94] As Bohlman says:

> At its broadest, the new aesthetic encompassed elements of musical style from Greece, Turkey, and Arab areas of the Middle East, as well as the music of Oriental Jewish communities. More specific, however, was the focus on Sephardic and Yemenite musics, especially the latter, which symbolized for many the most ancient Jewish traditions.[95]

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[92] Hirshberg, 149.

[93] Bohlman, *The Land Where Two Streams Flow: Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel*, 197.

[94] Ibid., 188.

[95] Ibid.

This style was created primarily by central European Jewish composers and supplanted the predominance of the Eastern European pioneer aesthetic.[96] One of the hopes of this movement was that it would create an Israeli national school and thus create a national musical style of Israel. This never happened and Eastern Mediterraneanism became only an aesthetic gesture. Despite this, Eastern Mediterraneanism became an important bridge between the first and second generation immigrant composers. Many Central European composers, including Ben-Haim, were able to achieve this aesthetic by relying on a Hindemithian concept of harmony with colorations borrowed from impressionism.[97]

Ben-Haim worked as an accompanist and arranger for the famous Yemenite-Jewish singer Bracha Zephira (1910 – 1990). Zephira commissioned a number of Yemenite and Sephardic songs by prominent Israeli composers during the 1930's and 40's.[98] These commissions had a profound impact on the Eastern Mediterranean style. Many believed that the Yemenite religious music had the closest stylistic resemblance to the music of the synagogue before the destruction of the temple.[99] This belief helped composers to establish a connection to the past in their compositions.

Other important influences existed for the composers inspired by Eastern Mediterraneanism. The radio, which often played music from other Middle Eastern countries like Turkey and Egypt, had an impact on the Eastern Mediterranean style.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 189.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Irene Heskes, *Passport to Jewish Music; Its History, Traditions, and Culture* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994).

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Composers sought to emulate the sounds that they heard on the radio in their works by using the compositional techniques they had learned in Europe. In order to achieve this sound, composers of the Eastern Mediterranean style borrow many of their compositional techniques from the *alla turca*. The *alla turca* became very popular toward the end of the eighteenth century as a way to depict the Middle East. This falls into what Ralph Locke described in *Musical Exoticism* as the "Exotic-Style paradigm." "The Exotic-Style Paradigm assumes that music is, by compositional intent, exotic – if (and often, only if) it incorporates specific music signifiers of Otherness."[100] These signifiers can range from simply a drone to an elaborate set of rules. In the case of *alla turca*, Locke identified a long list of signifiers, of which I will only include a few that fit within the style of Ben-Haim's *Sonata in G.* The signifiers that Locke identifies as *alla turca* are sudden shifting from one tonal area to another, repeated notes, specific repeated rhythmic patterns, extensive use in the melody of a scalar descending line decorated with neighbor or escape notes, melodic motion that either moves rapidly stepwise up or "hops" back and forth between two notes, and modal touches in the melodic line, especially the raised fourth degree.[101]

In the majority of the works that incorporate the *alla turca* style, the depiction is negative. As Locke said, "More often the portrayals were ridiculous, though with an undertone of menace: platoons of waddling Turkish guards in puffy trousers, conniving merchants, and lascivious government officials."[102] During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the *alla turca* depicted the Middle East as a strange, yet scary caricature.

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[100] Locke, 48.

[101] Ibid., 119-121.

[102] Ibid., 116.

Despite this negative association, many of these same compositional techniques were incorporated in the Eastern Mediterranean style. Furthermore, the first generation immigrant composers from Germany would have known the *alla turca* style simply by knowing the cannon of Western art music. There are many famous examples from the literature, from the Janissary music in the fourth movement of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* to Mozart's use of *alla turca* style in *Die Zauberflöte* for the character Monostatos.

> All of this suggests that exoticism arises, for both the makers and users of art as soon as a work plays upon what we know (or "know") about some real yet distinctively "Other" place and the people that inhabit it. Thus a crucial tension is at work in the phenomenon of musical exoticism: the tension between a real location and an imagined one.[103]

In the case of Jewish composers in Palestine, this tension became a reality. Because Western art music was the tradition within which they received their training, immigrant composers used the compositional techniques from the *alla turca* to express what they heard on the radio or to sonically describe where they were now living. For the composers in Palestine, this no longer was used as a technique to depict the "Other," but to depict the reality, and what was quickly becoming home. Locke also points out that another aspect of exoticism is to have yearning for another place, a utopia.[104] I would argue that the *alla turca* as a compositional technique is not exploiting a stereotype of another culture, as it so often did in centuries prior, but became a way of expressing a utopian ideal that was Israel; the promised land.

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[103] Ibid., 69.

[104] Ibid., 68.

The *Sonata in G* serves as an example of Eastern Mediterraneanism. The *Sonata in G* was written in 1951 after Yehudi Menuhin (1916 – 1999) asked Ben-Haim to compose a piece for solo violin. Menuhin premiered the work a short time later and edited the first edition. This marked an important event for Ben-Haim, because Menuhin was the first person of high international fame to commission one of Ben-Haim's works.[105] During the period immediately after World War II through the creation of an Israeli state, commissions from outside of Israel were extremely important, because funding for the arts from within was limited. A commission of this magnitude was certain to boost Ben-Haim's clout. The only instruction that Menuhin gave Ben-Haim "was that the work should be difficult to perform."[106]

The *Sonata in G* is an unusual composition for Ben-Haim, because it demonstrates a shift from his usual compositional style that tended toward "richer and varied combinations."[107] Though Ben-Haim composed other works for solo instruments, his compositions tended toward larger scale works, such as cantatas, oratorios, and pieces for orchestra. Ben-Haim used J.S. Bach's (1685 – 1750) *Sonatas* and *Partitas* for solo violin and Bartók's (1881 – 1945) solo violin *Sonata* as models.[108] The Bartók *Sonata* was still fresh in his mind, as he heard Menuhin perform the work only a few weeks earlier. It is from the Bartók, which Ben-Haim gets his greatest inspiration. As Hirshberg said, "The first movement is quite close, in form and texture to the opening movement of Bartók's, the second movement parallels the *Melody* movement, and the finale is similar

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[105] Hirshberg, 282.

[106] Ibid., 281.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 282-283.

in its dance-like and motoristic character to Bartók's closing movement."[109] Ben-Haim

did stray from Bartók and Bach in that he did not write a fugue for the solo violin.

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[109] Ibid., 283.

Sonata in G, Movement 1

According to Hishberg, the first movement of Ben-Haim's *Sonata in G* is in monothematic sonata form, much like the first movements of symphonies by Haydn (1732–1809).[110] There are two main problems with this explanation. First, As Ratner points out in his book *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style*, "Classic theorists described the form of a long movement as a *Tour of Keys*."[111] In other words, the key areas in traditional sonata form were crucial to the form. For the *Sonata in G* to be monothematic sonata form, the first statement of the theme should be in the tonic key area and the second should be in the dominant key or at the mediant in the case of a minor key. In *Sonata in G*, the second statement of the theme should be in measure seven at the dominant. Instead, there is new thematic material in the tonic key (Example3.1).

Example 3.1. Mvt. 1, mm. 7–8. New thematic material in the tonic key.
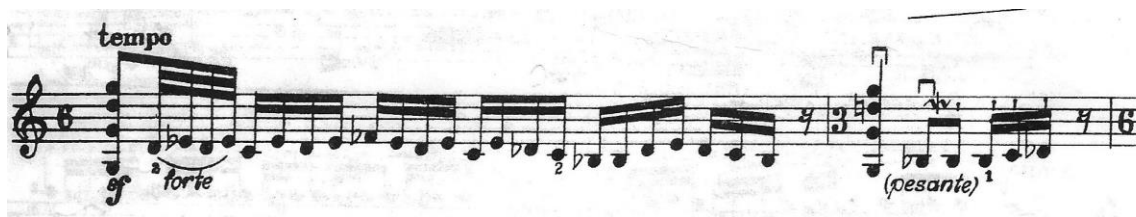
Second, suggesting that this piece is in a monothematic sonata form is problematic based on the rules that apply to the development. If this piece were in monothematic sonata form, Ratner explains that in order "to maintain unity, no new

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[110] Ibid.

[111] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music; Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 217.

material is to be introduced following the exposition; the development is dedicated to an intensive working over of the main themes, rearrangements of motives, etc., creating a heightened sense of melodic action."[112] Within this movement new material is inserted after every statement of the main theme, contradicting the rules for the development in a sonata form. The first movement of the piece is repetitive, which may have led to Hirshberg labeling it monothematic. Fitting it into the strict rules associated with sonata form impedes further understanding of this movement, rather than helping to understand its form.

Hirshberg is correct to say that the first movement could be analyzed using traditional forms, but not as a monothematic sonata form. In this case, the form of this movement closely resembles the nine-part rondo (Table 3.1). Typically, the rondo is either a five or seven part form. However, William E. Caplin points out that there are three examples of nine-part rondos from Mozart's oeuvre.[113] The nine-part rondo was similar to a seven-part rondo with an additional episode and refrain. According to Caplin, the most important element of a rondo is, "All *rondo* forms in Western art music display a basic pattern of formal organization. A principle thematic idea – the 'rondo theme' or 'refrain' — alternates regularly with two or more contrasting passages, termed 'couplets,' 'episodes,' or 'digressions'."[114] The first movement follows this most basic structural element of all rondo forms.

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[112] Ibid., 229.

[113] William E. Caplin, *A Theory of Formal Functions for Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[114] Ibid., 231.

Table 3.1. Formal Structure of Ben-Haim's *Sonata in G*, movement I.

A	Transition	B	A	C
tonicizes G		tonicizes G	tonicizes C	tonicizes F
(mm. 1-4)	(mm. 5-6)	(mm. 7-15)	(mm. 16–19)	(mm. 20–25)
A	**D**	**A**	**E**	**A**
tonicizes A	multiple key areas	tonicizes E	tonicizes A	tonicizes G
(mm. 26–29)	(mm. 30–43)	(mm. 44–47)	(mm. 48–58)	(mm.59–62)
Transition	**A (incomplete)**	**Coda**		
	tonicizes G	tonicizes G		
(mm. 63–65)	(mm. 66–68)	(mm. 69)		

The main theme has many of the characteristics of a rondo theme. One important element is the rondo theme's length. The theme was to be neither too long nor too short, and generally eight measures is a good length.[115] The theme of this movement is only four measures of 6/4, which, if rewritten in 3/4, would fit into the correct length (Example 3.2). Closely related to the topic of length, in this case, is meter. Rondos were typically composed in either 3/4 or even time.[116] This movement changes meter frequently, however every statement of the rondo theme is in six and lasts for at least four bars, except for one. In the third statement of the rondo theme in measures 26-27, Ben-Haim adds an extra beat to the first two measures. This extra beat acts as a pick up to the second beat and could be argued that it is ornamental. The 6/4 time signature could have also been written in 3/4 without changing the accents. In fact, the natural accents of the phrase fall on beats one and four. The reason for composing the theme in 6/4 helps to promote a longer phrase.

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[115] Ratner.

[116] Ibid.

Example 3.2. Mvt. 1, mm. 1–4. The rondo theme.

Another important characteristic of a rondo is the necessity for a cadence at the end of the rondo theme. Though the theme from this movement does not end with the traditional five to one cadence, the rondo theme clearly ends with a cadence. For example, at the end of the first statement, Ben-Haim tonicizes C by alternating between C major and C minor, a common element of Jewish folk music.[117] The cadence to a C chord on the downbeat of measure three in the following example is by way of chromatic passing tones (Example 3.3).

Example 3.3. Mvt. 1, mm. 3–6. Resolution to C by way of chromatic passing tone.

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[117] Moshe Beregovski, *Old Jewish Folk Music*, trans., Mark Slobin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).

Ben-Haim marks the sections of this rondo clearly with changes in tempo. The majority of these tempo changes are either a ritard or some other type of marking to indicate a slower tempo. For example, when Ben-Haim transitions from the first statement to the first episode, he indicates a ritard in measure six (Example 3.4).

Example 3.4. Mvt. 1, mm. 5–8. Transition to first episode.

There are two places within the movement where Ben-Haim deviates from a slower tempo transition from section to section. The first happens in measure forty-three with change from the D section to the return of the A section (Example 3.5). Instead of a ritard into the rondo theme, Ben-Haim uses an accelerando to return to the rondo theme at a faster tempo (tempo giusto). The accelerando measure happens at the golden mean (mm. 43), which traditionally indicates the climax of the piece. Though this statement of the rondo theme is not the loudest point of the movement, the use of the sixth scale degree signifies importance. As Ratner states, "The use of the third or sixth degree as a

turning point stems from church modal practice."[118] In the classic era sonata this would often happen at the point furthest removed during the development. Again Ratner said, "This progression was widely used as a structural fulcrum to link sections with in a movement."[119] The use of the sixth scale degree for the rondo theme is significant for three reasons. First, it allows for the easy return to the tonic key area. Second, the episodes prior to this statement of the rondo theme are furthest in style from the rondo theme. With the tonicization of the sixth scale degree and the faster tempo, Ben-Haim is able to draw the listener back to the main theme. Thirdly, this is one of the strongest cadences used in the entire movement. On the last beat of measure 43 Ben-Haim outlines a B dominant seventh chord before resolving it to an E chord in measure 44.

Example 3.5. Mvt. 1, mm. 42–45. B dom. 7 resolving to E at the golden mean.
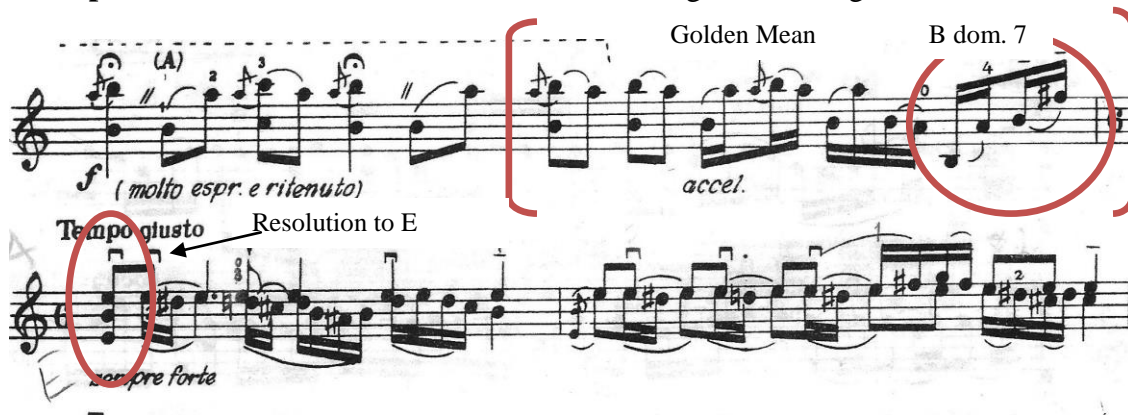
According to Hirshberg, the first movement is "the most tonal Ben-Haim composed for a long time."[120] He goes onto to say that without the support of another

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[118] Ratner, 226.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Hirshberg, 284.

instrument, Ben-Haim sought harmonic clarity.[121] This harmonic clarity was achieved by

using the key areas that were chosen in order to use the open strings of the violin. Of the

five key areas Ben- Haim incorporates, all but two of them are open strings of the violin.

Furthermore, the movement briefly tonicizes D in measure 28-32, thus tonicizing all four

open strings of the violin. The five major key areas are G, C, F, A, and E. By using that

many open strings, Ben-Haim is able to achieve many open intervals juxtaposed against

striking dissonances. This juxtaposition is an important trait of Eastern

Mediterraneanism. One of the important characteristics of this piece is how Ben-Haim

uses dissonances against the open strings to help establish key areas. By using the major

seventh and minor seventh against a repeated open G in the very first measure, our ear is

drawn to the G pedal (see again Example 3.6).

Example 3.6 Mvt. 1, mm. 1–4. G pedal.
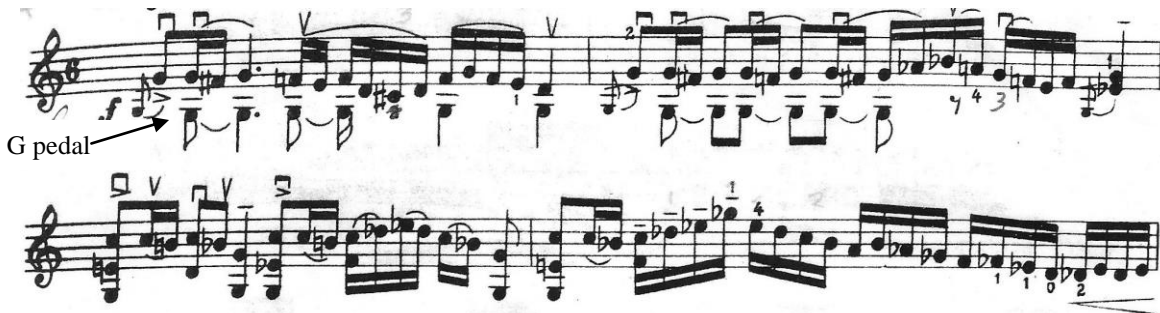
This establishes the key area almost immediately. Similarly, Ben-Haim

incorporates repeated notes in the higher voice of double stops with notes descending

stepwise to the tonic of the key. The best example is found in measure six, where the G is

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[121] Ibid.

repeated in the upper interval of the double stop and the lower notes fall by whole step

(C, B-flat, A-flat) until it resolves to an open G chord (Example 3.7).

Example 3.7. Mvt. 1, mm. 5–8. Repeated note in upper voice to establish key.

Though most key areas are established through repetition of the tonic pitch,

traditional cadences are not completely absent from the movement. As was mentioned

before, Ben-Haim uses this in measures 43 and 44. He did it earlier in measure fifteen

where there is a V-I cadence. On the last beat of measure fifteen, Ben-Haim ends with a

G chord and proceeds directly to the rondo theme starting with a C chord (Example 3.5).

Hirshberg points out that even the last cadence of the piece is inspired by traditional

harmony. The penultimate chord is an augmented sixth chord which resolves outward to

a G in the bass and a D in upper voice (Example 3.8).[122]

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[122] Ibid.

Example 3.8. Mvt. 1, mm. 14–17. V-I cadence in mm. 15–16

Example 3.9. Mvt. 1, m. 69. Augmented sixth resolving outward in the final coda.

There are three signifiers that demonstrate the *alla turca* at work in first

movement. First, the raised fourth occurs throughout the movement and can first be

observed in the opening measure (Example 3.10). Second, shifting between the major and

the minor modes occurs throughout. The first example of this shift happens in measure

three (Example 3.10). In this measure, Ben-Haim wrote C major chord on the downbeat,

and quickly shifts to a C minor chord on the third beat of the measure. Third, the use of

scalar descending lines decorated with neighbor or escape notes. Ben-Haim uses this

technique throughout the movement and incorporated into the ending of the rondo theme

(Example 3.10). These three techniques borrowed from the *alla turca* help to create the

musical language of Eastern Mediterran style.

Example 3.10. Mvt. 1, mm. 1–4. Signifiers of the *alla turca*.

Raised fourth

Shift from major to minor

Descending lines decorated with
neighbor or escape notes

Sonata in G, Movement 2

      The second movement of the *Sonata in G* has no relationship to a classic form like the first movement. The main feature of this movement is a slow melody that unfolds gradually throughout the movement. Hirshberg rightly suggests that the movement is based on four pitches B-flat, C, E-flat, and F that are heavily ornamented to achieve the final realization of the movement (Example 3.11).

Example 3.11. Hirshberg's reduction of Ben-Haim, *Sonata in G*, mvt. 2, mm. 1–4.

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      The fact that this movement was conceived on very little material, but ornamented brilliantly is reminiscent of the slow movements of the J.S. Bach *Sonatas and Partitas*. As stated earlier, Hirshberg also recognized the influence that Bach's solo

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123 Ibid., 285.

Sonatas and Partitas had on Ben-Haim, though he is less specific. The best comparisons come from the opening *Adagios* to the three *Sonatas* of Bach. These three adagio movements use relatively simple harmonic progressions that Bach ornaments in an elaborate style. Similarly, Ben-Haim takes an even smaller set of pitches and ornaments them to achieve a cohesive second movement.

Because the second movement is composed based on such a small set of pitches there are no strong cadences in the movement. The lack of strong cadences gives the movement a speech-like quality similar to chanted passages from Biblical texts. Each idea seems to end with a comma and not a period, as if a cantor is taking a breath to state the next phrase. The first example of this is taken from the opening of the movement in the example below with the half note slurred to a grace note and sixteenth (Example 3.12).

Example 3.12. Mvt. 2, mm. 1–2. Cantor-like opening phrase.

This achieves a cohesive idea in the sense that the movement is one long thought developed throughout. Ben-Haim, since moving to Palestine, had become much more interested in his Jewish faith and had enrolled in Hebrew lessons upon his arrival.[124] The influence of the Jewish liturgical style had become more influential, especially among composers who were interested in establishing a Jewish national musical style. Irene

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[124] Ibid.

Heskes said that many composers in Israel found their inspiration from traditional Jewish liturgical styles, Arabo-Judaic-Oriental formula, linkage to folklore, landscape, history, the Bible and of textual interpretation.[125] It is the link to Jewish liturgical style and textual interpretation that is the most striking about this movement. Though Ben-Haim never directly stated that he was influenced by chanted Biblical text when composing this movement, the similarity is convincing.

The harmonic development of the small set of pitches also points to a liturgical influence. Many of the phrases throughout the second movement center on one pitch at a time with upper and lower neighbor tones to highlight the pitch. For example, in measure one the phrase centers on a C and upper and lower neighbor tones are used to highlight the center pitch (Example 3.13). Within the chanted prayers and Psalms tradition, this static harmonic motion often develops as words are made to fit within a set melody.

Example 3.13. Mvt. 2, mm. 1–2. Upper and lower neighbor tones highlighting the main pitch C.

In the above example, the first phrase ends on a B, which is a whole-step lower than the pitch centered on in the first measure. Just as in speech, the speaker's voice goes lower at the end of a phrase, the first phrase ends lower to emphasize the opening idea. As noted earlier, this is not a strong cadence and does not give the opening phrase a sense

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[125] Heskes.

of finality. Rather, this ending gives the sense of a comma that tells us there is more to come.

The irregularity of phrasing in the movement further supports the idea of a textual interpretation. The phrasing is speech-like with rests in between to serve as punctuation. As the second movement unfolds the speed of the rhythms increase; giving the movement forward momentum and intensity. This speeds up the sense of phrasing, further evoking images of the Jewish synagogue service.

The formal structure of this movement can be compared to the arch form in that the two outer formal areas (A, B and A1, B1) point to the climax which happens at the golden mean in measure 15 (Example 3.14).

Example 3.14 Mvt. 2, mm. 15–16. The climax located in measure 15.

This is where the comparison ends, because the formal structure of this movement (see Table 3.2) of A, B, C, A1, B1 differs slightly from a true arch form; A, B, C, B, A. Though the two forms differ, the intent to focus the listener on the middle section of the movement remains the same. Perhaps even more significant is that the arch form is related to an important literary device used in the Hebrew Bible and other ancient texts called the chiastic structure. The chiastic structure is used throughout the Torah and the Psalms to focus the reader on an important theme located in the middle of a passage of

scripture. Similarly, the second movement was composed in such a way to draw the listener to the middle part of the movement, which is the climax.

Table 3.2. Formal structures in movement II.

A	B	C	
mm.1–8	mm. 9–12	mm. 13–16	
senza calore	*espressivo*	*molto espressivo e cantabile*	

A1	Transition	B1	End
mm 17–19	m. 20	mm. 21–24	m. 25
	Piu calmo	Tempo I^{mo} rit.	

Sonata in G, Movement 3

Hirshberg says nothing of the last movement in his biography of Ben-Haim. Olin

Downes, the reviewer of the premier offers insight into the last movement when he said,

"The *Finale* is a *horra*…The *horra* attains much impetus, velocity and impact..."[126]

Downes is on the right track in that the last movement has elements of the *horra*. The

horra is a round dance in 2/4. The movement is primarily made up of a regular four-bar

phrase that repeats throughout the movement at various pitch levels (Example 3.15). This

main theme is in 4/4, which strays from a typical *horra*. The 4/4 meter is not problematic

in that the accents happen on one and three, giving the main theme the feeling of being in

either two or four (Example 3.15).

Example 3.15. Mvt. 3, mm. 1–6. The *horra* motive is presented in the first four
measures.

This is where the comparison ends in relationship to the rhythmic and phrase

structures. For the first thirty-nine measures, Ben-Haim composed a regular structure

where the opening four bar phrase alternates with a secondary phrase that consists of one

6/4 bar followed by three 4/4 bars (Example 3.16).

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[126] Hirshberg, 285-286.

Example 3.16. Mvt. 3, mm. 9–13. The secondary phrase of the third movement is presented in measures 9 through 12.

The third movement is not a strict *horra* dance, as Downes suggests, but is a *horra* juxtaposed against music indicative of Ben-Haim's earlier style. In this movement the *horra* is interrupted by an interlude (Example 3.17). Hirshberg compared the *Sonata* to Bartók's *Solo Sonata*, which Ben-Haim had heard only a short time before composing this piece.[127] Bartók's influence is particularly poignant in these interruptions to the *horra* (Example 3.17). The leap between the lower register of the violin to the upper register is reminiscent of several passages from Bartok's *Sonata for Solo Violin*. In this example taken from the *Presto* of Bartok's sonata, the solo violin leaps back and forth between the G string and E strings of the violin with double stops in the upper register (Example 3.17).

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[127] Ibid.

Example 3.17. Bartok, *Sonata for Solo Violin,* Mvt. 4, mm. 396–412. Large leaps from lower register to higher register similar to those found in Ben-Haim's *Sonata in G.*

The first example of the interruption in the *horra* happens in measure twenty-three (Example 3.18). In this passage, Ben-Haim marks a slower tempo and the writing becomes much more disjointed with large leaps similar in style to the aforementioned passage from Bartok's *sonata*. This passage happens three times throughout the movement; measures 23–28, measures 43–48, and measure 78–84. Though each statement is not a direct quote of each other, the rhythm of each statement is the same.

Example 3.18. Mvt. 3, mm. 23–31. First interruption to the *horra.*

This juxtaposition in the last movement highlights the change that occurred in Ben-Haim's musical style after immigration. For Ben-Haim and other composers who were interested in Eastern Mediterraneanism, incorporating both elements from Jewish culture and from their own compositional style before immigration became the goal. Ben-Haim achieved this in the last movement by pitting the two styles against each other. The two styles are not at odds in that one prevails over the other. Rather, the way they transfer from one to another in such an abrupt fashion suggests an inner conflict between musical styles.

There are two other important interludes used in this movement that are also based on traditional Jewish folk music. The first happens in measures 52–61 (Example 3.18). This melody is based on the "altered Phrygian" scale which was a common scale used in Jewish instrumental folk music (Example 3.19).[128] According to Beregovski's *Old Jewish Folk Music*, "Nearly one-quarter (almost 1,500) of all instrumental tunes I know are in this scale."[129]

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[128] Beregovski.

[129] Ibid., 285.

Example 3.19. Mvt. 3, mm. 52–62. Theme based on altered Phrygian scale.

Example 3.20. The altered Phrygian scale.

The first statement of this "altered Phrygian" theme is a deconstructed version of the opening theme. The rhythm begins with a short eighth, just as the beginning. However, in this instance Ben-Haim substituted a quarter-note for the four sixteenths that follow and elongated the measure by adding two quarter-notes. The addition of the two quarter-notes to the bar elongates the phrase, so that it is a six bar phrase instead of a four bar phrase. Gradually the sixteenth note passages are added, prior to the return to the main theme (Example 3.20).

In the second statement of the "altered Phrygian" music in measures 87–98, the syncopated rhythm stays throughout. Instead of regular phrasing, syncopation goes across the bar-line and a 2/4 measure is added to make the phrasing work (Example 3.21).

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Example 3.21. Mvt. 3, mm. 87–101. Second statement of altered Phrygian based theme.

Ben-Haim ends the movement with a short slow coda (Example 3.22). The use of the G pedal as the bottom note of each chord solidifies G as the tonic purely by repetition. If one removes the G pedal from the chord progression, the harmony becomes clearer. Measures 109–111 move up by half-step until it seems like a resolution to a G major chord on the third beat of measure 111. However, the chord on the downbeat of measure 112 has a G-sharp in the chord, which acts as a two to one suspension from nowhere. Perhaps a better explanation for this G-sharp to F-double sharp pattern at the end is a reference to the opening motive at half speed. This allows for the top two notes of the chord to be the harmony notes, so that the progression from measures 111 until the end is I, N6, flat-V to I. This creates a strong cadence at the end of the piece.

Example 3.22. Mvt. 3, mm. 108–114. The slow coda begins on the final chord of
measure 109.

In order to further understand this movement, the following table has been created

to show the main sections with appropriate tempo changes. Each section has been

labeled as to how it fits within the deviation of the *horra* theme.

Table 3.3. Formal structure of movement III.

A	**A1**	**B**
Horra theme	*Horra* theme	Interruption of the *horra* theme
(mm. 1–12)	(mm. 13–downbeat of 23)	(mm. 23–28)
Molto Allegro	*come prima*	*Ritenuto e pesante*
A Extended	**B**	**C**
Horra theme	Interruption of the *horra* theme	Altered Phrygian theme
(mm.29–43)	(mm.43–49)	(mm. 50–54)
Tempo I^{mo}	*Rit.*	*Rit.*
C Variation	**A Extended**	**B Extended**
(mm. 55–61)	(mm.62–78)	(mm.78–85)
a tempo	*accel.*	*rit.*
Transition	**C1**	**A Abbreviated**
(mm 85–86)	(mm. 87–98)	(mm.99–109)
Ritenuto—in tempo—rit.	*Molto meno mosso—rit.*	*Tempo I^{mo}*
Coda		
(mm. 109–114)		
molto rit.—Pesante e grave		

The *Sonata in G* is an excellent example of the Eastern Mediterranean Style. Ben-Haim skillfully incorporated elements from traditional Jewish traditional music with elements from Western art music to create a musical language that represented his new homeland. Though the Eastern Mediterranean style never became a national style of Israel, it became an effective way for Ben-Haim to sonically describe his new home.

CHAPTER IV

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES

The source for this edition was the Israeli Music Publications Limited edition of the *Sonata in G* by Paul Ben-Haim, edited by Yehudi Menuhin. This is the only edition currently in print and was edited by the original performer.

The Sonata was transposed down at the interval of a fifth in order to retain Ben-Haim's intentions regarding double stops, passage-work, string crossings and other typical violin-related figures. All tempo markings, expressive markings, and dynamics have been retained from the original edition.

Some problems did arise due to the difference in technique between the violin and the viola. Some fingerings were changed in order to have stronger fingers to play certain passagework. The majority of the double-stop passages were retained in the new edition. Some reaches are too extreme for the viola and one note will be dropped when the reach becomes too large. Both instances occur in the first movement and occur at a double-stop unison. The first occurrence is in measure seventeen (Example 4.1).

Example 4.1 Mvt 1, m. 17. Elimination of double-stop in viola edition.

The original violin part contains a unison F. The new viola edition eliminates the unison to account for the larger reach of the left hand.

Other problems that exist are related to the difference in timbre between the violin and the viola. Several passages that require the performer to play in position on the G string will be changed on the viola for more resonance.[130] This takes place in faster passages where the string will not speak well when in a higher position on the viola. In addition, some of the spiccato writing will be changed to accommodate the change in timbre.

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[130] The assumption is that the indications for passages played strictly on one string in the violin score were the intent of the composer. However, the viola edition was prepared from the first edition of the violin score and directions for specific string use were not notated as the original intent of the composer. Nor were string choices indicated as the suggestion by the editor, Yehudi Menuhin.

For Further Research

  The study of the *Sonata in G* by Paul Ben-Haim has sparked an interest in further study of the music of Ben-Haim. Three pieces stand out as future projects; *Two Landscapes, Op. 27* (1939) for viola (originally cello) and piano, *Piano Quartet, Op. 4* (1920–21), and *Chamber Music* (1978) for flute, viola, and harp.

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Sonata in G

Allegro energico ♩ = 88

P. Ben-Haim
Trans.by
Clark Spencer

II

Lento e sotto voce ♩ = 40

III

Molto Allegro ♩ = 152