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Engaging with a Legacy: Nehemia Levtzion (1935-2003)

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# “Islamic Music in Africa” as a Tool for African Studies

Michael Frishkopf

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## Résumé

*Convenablement interprété “La Musique islamique en Afrique” offre aux Études africaines un outil analytique utile à l’exploration des relations entre l’expérience affective individuelle et les structures sociales, les valeurs, et les concepts culturels que la musique à la fois reflète et soutient dans les régions musulmanes. La diversité musicale islamique non-discursive a facilité l’expansion islamique en rendant possibles de puissantes adaptations affectives à des conditions socio-culturelles. Les pratiques soniques de l’Islam constituent des sites centraux pour la production sociale chargée d’émotion de l’Islam, modulée au niveau local, et appuyant la défense de l’identité et des normes musulmanes. La diversité de la musique islamique reflète aussi une histoire riche en interactions culturelles, du fait que la musique est un baromètre sensible des conditions sociales et historiques. Pourtant, la diffusion a créé également une certaine uniformité musicale, liant entre elles les utilisations des sons à travers des pays lointains et consolidant des sentiments communs à l’identité culturelle musulmane en Afrique.*

## Abstract

*Suitably interpreted, “Islamic music in Africa” provides African Studies with a useful analytical tool for probing the relation between affective individual experience and the social structures, values, and cultural concepts which music both reflects and supports in Muslim areas. Non-discursive Islamic musical diversity has facilitated Islamic expansion by enabling affectively powerful adaptations to local socio-cultural conditions. The sonic practices of Islam constitute central sites for the affectively charged social production of Islam, as locally inflected, and for the contestation of Muslim identity and norms. The diversity of Islamic music also reflects a rich history of cultural interactions, as music is a sensitive barometer of social and historical conditions. Yet diffusions have bestowed a certain musical consistency as well, linking sound prac-*

*tices over vast distances, and underpinning common feelings of Muslim cultural identity in Africa.*

### *Introduction*

What is "Islamic music in Africa"? What range of social-sonic phenomena does this analytical concept cover? Of what use is it to African Studies? Before addressing these questions, one must begin with a critique, for the phrase is decidedly problematic. The concept of "music" can never be wholly liberated from its long history within the dominant European discursive tradition. In that tradition, "music" centers on a cultivated art of sonic beauty, in which the purity of the aesthetic experience is valued over its socio-cultural embeddedness and individual embodiment. Such "music" is sharply distinguished from linguistic, visual, and body-kinetic arts. Musical performance takes place in particular (mostly secular) social contexts, featuring the "concert" in which "performers" and "audience" are distinctly separated, and where the practice of disembodied "contemplative" listening and its associated ideal of aesthetic pleasure are primary. All this is supported by parallel traditions of writing music, and writing about music, historically and theoretically. As a result of this history, the concept of "music" has accumulated a cluster of associated qualities frequently inducing erroneous distinctions when applied elsewhere.

These errors are particularly salient when "music" is applied to the diverse profusion of largely orally-transmitted social-sonic practices in Africa, in which sonorous, verbal, and body-kinetic performance types are usually inextricably interconnected, while aesthetic and social-ritual functions are often inseparable. Is it really useful to group all this under "music," given this term's weighty European baggage, and the absence of a comparable term in African languages?

The "Islamic" qualifier introduces new problems, not least because it is not always easy to define "Islam" in an area as large as Africa. Exclusive definitions appear arbitrary (even ideological), while inclusive definitions entail a heterogeneity that calls into question the meaningfulness of the term. Beyond such definitional problems, the qualifier "Islamic" is ambiguous, as it can be taken either in a narrower sense ("related to Islamic religion"), or a

broader one ("related to Muslims" or "related Muslim-majority societies," that is, "Islamicate" [Hodgson 1974, 57-60]).

Furthermore, the very pairing of "Islamic" and "music" is problematic. Worldwide, Islamic ritual practice centers upon public language performance more than sound (Frishkopf 1999), ranging continuously from heightened speech to elaborate melody; no clear speech-music boundary can be drawn. "Islamic music" is quasi-oxymoronic, insofar as many strict Muslims (relying on particular interpretations of Qur'an and Hadith) regard "music" (or its local lexical proxies, such as Arabic *musiqa*) as *haram* (forbidden); religious performance genres, for which the usual words for music tend to be avoided, carry special names (such as *adhan* for the call to prayer). Finally, the staggering diversity of both "Islam" and "music" in Africa not only renders the phrase "Islamic music" unwieldy, but also misleading. Geographically-defined boundaries further reduce its conceptual coherence, by sundering important cultural connections (such as East Africa and Arabia), while falsely implying the primacy of others (such as West and East Africa).

Nevertheless, "Islamic music" provides a helpful analytical tool for African studies, so long as the aforementioned caveats and limitations are borne in mind. Music (loosely defined) is so ubiquitous, affective, and broadly participatory throughout Africa that its consideration usefully pushes the researcher to consider the relation between individual experience, and the social structures, values, and cultural concepts which music both reflects and supports. Within Muslim-majority areas, much the same is true of Islam, a highly affective and broadly participatory set of discourses and practices strongly linked to personal identity and informing every aspect of life, whose study entails broader socio-cultural considerations as well as more narrowly personal ones. Both "music" and "Islam" are thus highly productive keywords for explorations of Muslim societies in Africa.

At the intersection of these two keywords stands "Islamic music," a form of sonic-social practice critical to the production and maintenance of the affective charges that make social ties and cultural meanings tangible and durable for Muslims, and comprehensible for the researcher. The close connections of "Islamic music" to language, religion, and social life mean that probing the former always reveals much about culture, society, and history

generally, as grounded in individual experience. The tension between concepts of “music” and “Islam,” far from vitiating “Islamic music” as an analytical tool, actually ensures that this intersection remains a dynamic site of contestation and conflict — a most interesting place for the researcher to be. Among Muslims, the practices of Islamic music broadly construed as “Islamic sound” are primary sites for the production of social identity and cohesion, and for the negotiation of those identities. Islamic music provides a productive window into the affective and discursive nucleus of Muslim societies.

Despite Muslim ideologies of music-rejection, there are, in each locale, real continuities between Islamic sonic practices, and broader musical ones. Muslim modulations of sound are therefore found to be as productive, or reflective, of general social structures and meanings as music in general. While some features of Islamic music are global, representing the worldwide dissemination of Middle Eastern practices at its historical and normative core, these features are everywhere modulated according to local culture and resources. Some African Islamic regions exhibit considerable musical coherence, which is, however, not easily explained as resulting from a simple “Islamic impact.” Thus are generated both hypotheses and questions about Muslim history.

For instance, David Ames notes:

... there are far greater similarities in the position of the musician among widely separated Muslim societies located in [the] ... Western Sudan culture area ... than among the much more closely situated Igbo of eastern Nigeria and Hausa of northern Nigeria (1973, 250-51, 272).

Can such similarities be traced to common features of Islamic practice and belief? Or are they better attributed to the ready diffusion of particular practices and values throughout a social network bound by ties of religious confraternity?

But beyond Muslim sound as a feature for understanding the boundaries and history of culture areas in Africa, its centrality and problematic status renders “Islamic music” highly productive of research questions. For instance, research questions such as “Who can play music?” and “What is the musician’s status?” typically assume significance far beyond the field of music studies *per se*, precisely because these questions are problematic for members of

the society as well. Particularly in regions that cannot be generally characterized as “Islamic” — that is, much of sub-Saharan Africa — the concept of “Islamicate music” becomes ambiguous.<sup>1</sup> This article will therefore treat “Islamic music” as sound-centric, public performance practices freighted — via text, context, associations, or intentions — with Islamic (religious) meanings.

### *Overview of Islamic Music in Africa*

Throughout Islamic history there has been disagreement over the legitimacy of public musical practice — as entertainment, or even (sometimes, especially) as devotion — (Shiloah 1997; Gribetz 1991). Such disputes flared in Muslim Africa, too, particularly during periods of attempted reform (Erlmann 1986; Ames 1973, 273). In West Africa, musicians’ social status appears to have declined with the introduction of Islam (Erlmann 1983, 190-201). Given respectable text and context, male vocal forms are most acceptable; accompanying frame drums (Arabic: *tar*, *duff*), and occasionally flutes (Arabic: *nay*), are often sanctioned, in accord with Hadith and musical traditions.

Other instruments are more suspect in Islamic contexts, especially if they carry un-Islamic associations (for example, with intoxicants, public eroticism, or pre-Islamic rituals). Mixed gender dancing was repressed in some areas, but not in others (Ames 1982). Due to their mystical orientation, Sufi *turuq* (orders [singular *tariqa*]) have frequently (but not always) been more tolerant of “spiritual audition” (*sama*). Anti-music and -dance polemics have sounded more loudly in some communities (such as *post-jihad* Hausaland) than others (for example, among the Yoruba or Wolof); in Senegal, where most Muslims belong to one of the major orders (Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, or Mouride), superstar singers (for example, Youssou N’Dour) pay homage to Sufi saints in popular songs featured on radio and television and in nightclubs (McLaughlin 1997).

A genre of Islamic sound is defined by constellations of sonic, textual, and contextual features, all of which may contribute to its meaning. Text typically plays a central role in Islamic music, but context often plays an equally important one in shaping the overall meaning of performance. Each context is associated with a cluster of genres, whose configuration and style of performance may vary,

even as the context itself recurs, throughout Muslim communities worldwide.

Across the Muslim world, three categories of recurring performance contexts, each context carrying a uniform meaning, may be discerned, characterized by three degrees of genre variation within each context. Least variable are formal *ritual* contexts, such as *salah* (obligatory prayer). In such contexts, genres of Islamic sound tend to be constrained, at least in part, by Islamic law (*shari`a*). Such genres are therefore often globalized: the same genres appear everywhere, and they appear everywhere in nearly the same form.

More variable are Islamic festival contexts. Such contexts, which often represent supererogatory rather than core religious practices, are typically celebratory or memorial, and feature informal, looser constraints, because performance in these contexts, though regarded as supererogatory religious worship, is only indicated — not required or closely regulated — by Islamic law. Examples of such contexts include celebrations of *Ashura`* (the tenth of *Muharram*, the first month in the Islamic lunar calendar), *Mawlid al-Nabi* (the Prophet's Birthday), *Ramadan* (month of fasting, and ninth month in the Islamic calendar), *Id al-Fitr* (fast breaking holiday), *Id al-Adha* (*Id al-Kabir*), and the departure or return of Hajj pilgrims. Genres appearing in these contexts tend to be strongly influenced by regional musical or linguistic traditions, or are local genres not recurring elsewhere.

Less constrained still are life-cycle contexts in Muslim societies, such as birth, circumcision, marriage, and funerals. As such contexts are not limited to Muslim communities, they are frequently linked to equivalent ceremonies in non- or pre-Islamic traditions. Such ceremonies naturally vary greatly depending on the cultural context. As a result, the genres performed within these contexts, even while carrying Islamic meanings, are highly localized.

Lying outside these three categories of recurrent contexts are recurring context-types, each subsuming homologous, yet distinctive, contexts characterizing, in part, particular interpretations of Islam. Such context-types include Sufi *hadras* (weekly congregational worship ceremonies), saint festivals, sectarian rites (of various Shi`a groups, for instance), and syncretic spirit possession rituals. Unlike recurring contexts, such as the *Mawlid al-Nabi*,

which presents the same essential meanings across Muslim societies, meaning varies dramatically within the homologous contexts grouped within each context-type, such as the Sufi *hadra* (since each *tariqa* features distinctive saintly figures) or the spirit possession ritual (which often exhibits local pre-Islamic cultural features). Finally, one must consider popular music genres carrying Islamic themes, relatively disengaged from specific social contexts, but embedded instead in local or global media-commodity systems.

Formal ritual genres, prescribed by Islamic law, center on vocalized text, often at the expense of musical sound. Musical instruments are infrequent, and insistence upon use of the sacred liturgical language (Arabic) may preclude local understanding. Here variation is primarily in the domain of vocal and social aspects of performance style.

More informal festival genres, associated with supererogatory devotions, exhibit both sonic and textual diversity, often drawing upon local languages, poetic genres, and musical traditions — yet similar genres frequently arise in disparate locales in response to parallel devotional concepts (for example, *madih*, praise, usually for the Prophet Muhammad). Many genres (sometimes textless, such as drumming) develop religious meanings only via contextual association with religious festivals. Life-cycle genres are more diverse still, even more open to local textual and musical sources, carrying Islamic meanings but closely connected to local culture. With the introduction of Islam to a region, formal ritual genres are necessarily injected, whereas festival and life-cycle contexts tend to absorb pre-Islamic practices, subsequently remaining open to extra-Islamic ones, or helping to define a “localized Islam.” Subsequent waves of Islamic reformism (especially prevalent in the present day, as a form of Islamic globalization centered on principal centers of Islamic learning and practice, such as Cairo and Saudi Arabia) may clash with these earlier localizations.

Life-cycle contexts tend to draw upon a general category of “musician” who works outside the religious sphere and frequently is not regarded as a religious specialist *per se*. Conversely, religious performers and genres may crossover to the popular music world, transformed (by new instruments, contexts, and meanings) while retaining religious associations via text, sound, intention, and history. In particular, Islamic festival contexts often foster musical

specialists who subsequently become artists and entertainers outside the religious domain. Since the early twentieth century, the music media system provides additional incentives; output is commodified via live performance venues, broadcasts, and recorded media. Some of this output is embedded in the local music media system and limited to local distribution; some is absorbed into the global music media system under the guise of "world music," and distributed via international festivals and recordings.

Generally, Islamization of traditional music was an effective means by which the *du`ah* (literally, those who "call" to Islam) could lead a broad following to the faith. Conversely, this strategy might entail localization of global Islamic expressive forms via absorption of vernacular literary and musical styles (Hiskett 1973, 134-41). The oft-stated opposition of political (*jihadist*) and aesthetic / mystical (Sufi) Islam is inaccurate and misleading, since most Muslim political activists (from Ibn Taymiyya to Osman dan Fodiyo, to Hasan al-Banna) have been influenced by Sufism, and many expressed themselves in poetry carrying their messages within an aesthetic literary matrix. Sung poetry, as a public devotion, serves as an affectively potent vehicle to deliver ideology. A famous example is Asma'u Fodiyo (1793-1863), daughter of Fulani jihadist Osman dan Fodiyo, who taught Islam to Hausa women — many of whom were involved in the non-Islamic Bori spirit-worship cult — via sung poetry (Boyd 2001).

In the remainder of this article, I begin by surveying genres of the principal recurrent Islamic contexts and context-types, progressing from most to least unified, within principal regions of Muslim Africa. This survey is followed by a discussion of recurrent context-types (particular to religious associations and sects), and the emergence of Islamic music into the broader sphere of popular music, both local and global, through flows of musicians, musical styles, or both. Several broad conclusions can then be drawn.

### *Elements of Islamic Music*

Throughout African Islamic performance certain rhetorical elements recur: petitions, praise, and loving devotion (to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and the saints), exhortations to the community (Arabic: *wa`z*), and expressions of religious experience and knowledge (for example, in Egypt [Frishkopf 2000]; in Somalia,

[Orwin 2001, 69]) (in Swahili, [Topan 2001]). Besides Qur'an, these themes are primarily expressed in sung poetry, known in Arabic as *inshad dini* (religious hymns).

One naturally finds a wide distribution of Arabic terminology for Islamic music, though local terms are also used, especially for the instrumentarium, which centers on frame drums and reed flutes due to supportive Prophetic *hadiths*, and long-standing Sufi traditions.<sup>2</sup> Arabic terms tend to acquire a religious hue outside the Arabic-speaking world, where the Arabic language is nearly coextensive with the Islamic domain. Thus, whereas the Arabic word *qasida* simply means "poem," in non-Arabic speaking areas the loan-word *qasida* often refers to a religious devotional song.

Due to centrality of text, vocalists are central and vital to most genres of Islamic music. The most general terms for religious singer in Arabic are *munshid* (hymnodist) or *maddah* (praiser, that is, for the Prophet Muhammad). Other local terms are introduced below. Performers may also be locally known as "singers" as religious shades into popular music. Female performers are common, particularly within domestic life-cycle contexts; thus Hausa women chant poems (*waka*) treating religious topics, such as *shari'a*, veiling, and pilgrimage (Mack 2004, 13, 14, 133-34).

Throughout the Muslim world, the most common themes are petitions (Arabic: *ibtihalat* to God; *tawassul* to Prophet and saints), and praise (Arabic: *madih*). While Allah is broadly glorified and supplicated, detailed panegyric is directed primarily to the Prophet (*madih nabawi*), centered on appearance and hagiography, expressing loving devotion, calling for God to bless him (*salawat*), and requesting intercession (*shafa'a*). Such praise is believed to confer spiritual benefits on singer and listener alike. Though African oral literary traditions of praise exist apart from (and prior to) Islamic ones, the two sets of traditions clearly harmonized.

For instance, traditional Manding griots (praise singers) of West Africa trace their ancestry to Surakata, praise-singer for the Prophet himself (Conrad 1985, 39-40). Likewise, Fulani Muslim reformer `Uthman ibn Fudi (usually transliterated, Osman dan Fodiyo, as per local pronunciation) (1754-1817), who banned much music and dance, nevertheless strove to convert traditional Hausa praise singers into Islamic panegyrists, writing:

Singer, stop, do not waste your time

In singing the praise of men.

Sing the praises of the Prophet and be content (Erlmann 1986, 15, 31, 37).

Henceforth, even non-Islamic praise-singing incorporated Islamic literary conventions (Hiskett 1973, 133-34). Hausa panegyric to the Prophet was composed by Isa dan Shehu (Osman dan Fodiyo's son) and Nana (his daughter) (Hiskett 1973, 141; Boyd 2001, 15), who became a model for Hausa women (Mack 2004, 10).

Certain African *madih* texts exerted global influence, especially the invocation *Dala'il al-Khayrat* by the Moroccan al-Jazuli (died 1465), and poetry of Sharaf al-Din al-Busiri (born 1212), an Egyptian of Berber origin. Two of al-Busiri's Arabic poems praising the Prophet, *al-Burda* and *al-Hamziyya*, are renowned throughout the Muslim world. They have also become models for composers in local idioms throughout Africa, including Nigeria (Hiskett 1973, 133), Sudan (Osman 1990), East Africa (Scheub 1985, 31), North Africa (Sulamiyya 1999), and Egypt (Waugh 1989; Frishkopf 2000).

In Egypt, supplication (*ibtihalat*) and *madih* are the primary themes of sung devotional poetry; both classical (*qasida*) and colloquial (*zajal*, *mawwal*) forms are used, in a wide variety of contexts, from festivals to Sufi liturgies. Performances may be solo (non-metric), choral, responsorial, or an alternation of the first and second types, a format generally known as *tawashih* (Frishkopf 2006; Barrayn 1994). Other examples of *madih* may be found from West Africa (Schulze 1965), to the North (Fez 2002), from Sudan (Simon 1989, 30-31; Sudan 1980; Osman 1990), to Somalia (Orwin 2001). A distinctive Sudanese *madih nabawi* tradition, featuring local musical style, yet following the broader textual tradition (with strong influence of al-Busiri) is well-established (Osman 1990, 150-52; Sudan 1980). *Madih* is ubiquitous in the Sufi orders, discussed below.

## *Ritual Contexts*

### DAILY PRAYER (SALAH)

Ordinary congregational prayer comprises a series of public sonic genres, including the preliminary call to prayer (*adhan*) performed by the *mu'adhdhin* (muezzin), Qur'anic recitation (*tilawa*; also discussed below) performed by the *qari* ("reader"), *du'a'*, and other short, intoned devotional texts. Such performances are non-metric

(there is no regular meter), and strictly vocal. Egyptian *mu'adh-hinin* may precede *adhan* with melodic supplication and *madih*, especially at dawn (Frishkopf 2000). For Friday prayer a *khutba* (sermon), often delivered in local languages, precedes prayer proper. Being obligatory (*fard*) *salah* is highly-regulated in its textual and contextual aspects. However, its sonic aspect — flexible in vocal timbre, phonetics, stress, tempo, and melodic style — is subjected to local linguistic and musical treatments (for example, among Yoruba, see Adegbite 1989, 35; L. Anderson 1971, 151-52). While *adhan* differences are partly attributable to performer idiosyncrasies, regional and contextual varieties can often be identified; compare North African (*Chants religieux ... au Maghreb; Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco*), Egyptian (La Chadhiliyyah 1999) and West African (Schulze 1965) versions (L. Anderson 1971, 154-56). Yet *adhan* and *tilawa* have also infused Arab sonic style (such as melisma, ornament, modality, solo nasal voice) throughout Muslim Africa, influencing music generally (Charry 2000a, 5; Charry 2000b, 546; Danielson 1991, 114).

Technically, the *adhan's* melodic origins are African, for the first performer was the Prophet's Ethiopian muezzin Bilal ibn Rabah, a fact significant in two other African performance contexts: the Moroccan *Gnawa derdeba* ceremony, and the griot tradition of West Africa. *Gnawas* claim lineal descent from Bilal, while *Manding griots* praise "Bilali Bounama" as ancestor of Sunjata, founder of the Empire of Mali (Schuyler 1981, 3; Langlois 1998, 147; Conrad 1985, 35). In Senegal, the *adhan* is typically performed by *griots* (McLaughlin 1997, 564). Prayer performance differs slightly among the Shi'a (Shiites, mainly in East Africa); for instance, the Shi'i *adhan* includes an additional phrase, "come to the best of works."

#### PUBLIC SERMON (KHUTBA)

When detached from Friday prayer, prose sermonizing (*wa'z*) can be considered an independent genre, appearing in a wide variety of contexts (funerals, festivals); such sermons may become an independent spectacle, even valued as entertainment, and distributed on cassette, as in Egypt or in West Africa (Launay 1977, 149-50; Launay 1997, 445-46).

## PUBLIC QUR'ANIC RECITATION (TILAWA, TAJWID, TARTIL)

Besides daily prayer, *tarawih* prayers (during *Ramadan*) feature extended passages of Qur'anic recitation. Outside prayer, Muslims memorize and recite the holy Qur'an in public listening sessions for a variety of occasions inside and outside the mosque (Launay 1977, 149; Miner 1942, 623), especially during *Ramadan* (month of its revelation). In theory anyone may chant Qur'an, but professional titled specialists (for example, Arabic *qari'*, Mandinka *finá*) dominate public contexts. The underlying *mushaf* (written text) is fixed, as are rules for its recitation (*ahkam al-tajwid*), governing phonetics, phrasing, syllable length, and tempo (Nelson 1985). However variant "readings" (*qira'at*) are used in different parts of Africa, for instance the reading of Warsh `an Nafi` in West and North Africa; the reading of Hafs `an `Asim elsewhere. In addition, timbral, melodic, and contextual aspects are highly variable (see Jacobsen 1996, 126; Adegbite 1989, 35). A solo ametric voice is most common in performance, but metered or corporate chanting occurs too, for instance in the distinctive Berber *tolba* of Morocco (hear: Soufis 2003; *Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco; Chants religieux ... Au Maghreb*, track #3; *Music in the World of Islam*, 1: track #1; La Chadhiliyyah 1999, track #2).

There are two principal named styles: the melodically elaborate *mujawwad*, and the more recitational *murattal*. Faster and easier to perform, *murattal* is used in *salah*, but is increasingly preferred in other contexts as well, due to reformist perceptions of its greater legality. In Egypt, for instance, performances of *mujawwad* are sometimes criticized as "singing the Qur'an," allowing aesthetic considerations to distract from the Word of God. Traditionally, Egypt's reciters set world-wide standards, but recently a distinctively Saudi style has begun to achieve global recognition as well (Frishkopf 2006).

Ismailis of East Africa may perform additional genres at prayer-time; thus among Bohras there is no *khutba*; rather, the prayer leader concludes by praying for forgiveness and asking for the period of *satr* (occultation) to end via manifestation of the Imam (Amiji 1975, 48, 50). Nizaris include recitation of *ginan* poetry (Gillani 2004). Adjacent to the meticulously defined space-time of prayer proper there is more freedom; for example, following Friday prayers, when royal Hausa musicians greet their *sarki* (emir), playing *kakaki* (metal

trumpet), *algaita* (shawm), and *kaho* (antelope horn) (Besmer 1972, 197; Ames 1973, 256).

## *Festival Contexts*

### *Ramadan*

The ninth month in the Islamic calendar, *Ramadan* (month of fasting from dawn to sunset) subsumes two principal festival contexts containing musical performances:

- (1) Evenings, highlighting religious songs celebrating *Ramadan*, the Qur'an, and the Prophet, and supplicating God. *Ibtihalat* and *tawashih* (featuring classic performers, such as Sayyid al-Naqshabandi and Taha al-Fashni) are often heard on Egyptian radio (Frishkopf 2000), along with *tilawa*. In Kano, royal Hausa musicians perform *Gaisuwar barka da shan ruwa* during the last ten nights of *Ramadan* (Besmer 1972, 195-96), while members of the *Qadiriyya tariqa* roam the streets beating a single membrane drum while chanting praises of the Prophet (Ames 1973, 276 note 8). In the Comoro islands, *mrenge* (boxing matches) are accompanied by drumming after the evening meal (Ottenheimer 1970, 460).
- (2) Mornings, when performers rouse the devout for their pre-dawn meal (Arabic: *sahur*; Yoruba: *saari*). This latter function has generated a colourful assortment of sonic traditions. In Marrakech, *ghaita* (oboe) and *nfir* (trumpet) play melodies based on religious chants from mosque minarets (*Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco*, track #5; Chottin 1927). In Egypt, the *masahharati* awakens the faithful by calling names and chanting religious formulae, accompanied by a small drum (*baza*). Among the Dagbamba (Northern Ghana), a *jenjili* (musical bow) player circulates, playing and singing (Chernoff 1979, 131). Yoruba youth may perform *were* or *ajisaari*, whose vocal style is influenced by Islamic cantillations (Adegbite 1989, 39-40; Waterman 1990, 31); formerly *apala* praise singers accompanied by rhythm sticks, and *dundun* drummers, also used to parade from house to house. Drum patterns are taken from the general repertoire of Yoruba traditional music. Later, *apala* combined with drums and *agidigbo* (*sansa*) to produce evening *Ramadan* entertainment (Euba 1971, 178; Adegbite 1989, 37; Waterman 1990, 85).

## MAWLID AL-NABI

The season surrounding the Prophet's birthday (12 Rabi` al-Awwal) is celebrated via musical performances of biographical and panegyric texts (also called *mawlid*), as well as *madih* generally. Sometimes the *mawlid* is performed on other occasions, or even as a weekly devotion. Various *mawlid* texts have been composed based primarily on the classical *sira nabawiyya* attributed to Ibn Ishaq (born c.704), as rendered by the Egyptian, Ibn Hisham (died 828 or 833). In Egypt, the three *mawlids* most frequently performed are Barzanji (by the Medinan Ja`far ibn Hasan al-Barzanji, died 1765), Munawi (by the Cairene `Abd al-Ra'uf al-Munawi, died 1621), and al-Busiri's *Burda*.

Besides Arabic texts, local languages and poetic forms, as well as musical resources, are expressed during *mawlid*. Desert Berbers (Zenatas) of Gourara, Algeria perform *ahallil*, haunting nocturnal vocal-flute-percussion songs of praise (Sahara 2000). The Vai of Liberia sing religious songs during this period, which they call *morodi* (*Music of the Vai of Liberia*). In northern Ghana, the week-long Damba festival includes traditional singing, drumming, and dancing honouring the Prophet, and the chief (Corke *et al.* 2000; Chernoff 1985, 124; Kinney 1970). Festive and entertaining recitations (*kalan*), centered on sermons, are performed among the Dyula of Ivory Coast for Donba, the Prophet's birthday; spoken text is interspersed with song (Launay 1997, 445-46). Hausa royal musicians — praise singers, drummers, and instrumentalists — perform Sallar Gana for the *mawlid* (Besmer 1972, 288; Hausa 2006), while members of the Qadiriyya chant *madih* to the accompaniment of a drum, as during *Ramadan* (Ames 1973, 276 note 8).

Some of the most elaborate *mawlid* performances are found in East Africa, where enormous sums are expended on a *mawlid* season lasting "more than six months" (Schacht 1965, 96). In Lamu, Kenya, the *maulidi* (= *mawlid*) is highly treasured, observed as a month-long series of "readings" (*kusoma*) culminating in a one-week festival. Each reading comprises solo chanting of texts interspersed with collective *madih* (*qasida*). There are five forms, all save one in Arabic; except for the *maulidi Barzanji*, these may be accompanied by drum (*tari*, *kigoma*), flute (*nay*), and stylized male dancing. Self-referential *mawlid* songs defend the performance of *mawlid* music against its fundamentalist detractors,

saying, for instance "Do not give up praising Muhammad." The Lamuan *mawlid* thus both reflects and participates in the debate concerning music (Waswahili 1985; Boyd 1981, 88-97). Tanzanian *mawlid* includes *qasidas* and Qur'anic recitation (*Zanzibar: Music of Celebration*, tracks #6 and 7). Somali *madih*, known as *nebi-ammaan*, is composed in the local language and performed for *mawlid* (Orwin 2001, 72-78). In the Comoros, Kandza, featuring a poem about the Prophet's life, is danced (Comores 1994).

Many Sufi shaykhs compose *mawlids* for use in their orders, for example, in the Muhammadiyya Shadhiliyya of Egypt (Al-tariqa 1992; La Chadhiliyyah 1999), or the Khatmiyya of Sudan (Sudan 1980), and nearly all Sufi groups perform enthusiastic *mawlid*. The Senegalese Tivaouane *zawiya* (lodge) of the *Tijaniyya tariqa* performs a yearly *gammu* (or *mawluud*) celebrating the Prophet's birth. The *gammu* is a nocturnal ceremony during which praise poems are sung, especially devotional poetry by the *zawiya*'s founder, El Hajj Malik Sy (1855-1922), written for the Prophet (McLaughlin 2000, 194). On the other hand, the more fundamentalist Muslim reformers tend to reject *mawlid* celebrations entirely as *bid'a* (literally "innovation," but implying "heretical").

#### PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA (HAJJ)

The embarkation and return of pilgrims is a joyous annual celebration. Yoruba women used to welcome returning Muslims with *waka* songs (from Hausa *wak'a*, "song"), evincing Arab influence (melismatic, nasal, embellished), accompanied by metallic idio-phones (*seli*) (Euba 1971, 177-78; Waterman 1990, 31); this form derived from Hausa women singers (Mack 2004, 133). *Sakara* praise-singers, accompanied by the *molo* or *goje* lutes, *sakara* clay drum, and other percussion, and synthesizing Arab and local musical styles, have performed at hajj celebrations in Yorubaland (Waterman 1990, 39). Returning pilgrims from the *Khatmiyya tariqa* in Sudan are expected to sponsor a special collective ritual (*karama*) in their honour (Sudan 1980). Nubian women sing call / response songs for pilgrims, accompanied by handclaps (Nubier 1980, 54). Among illiterate Hausa women pilgrims, composition and performance of personal *hajj* songs re-enacting their journey confers cultural capital (Cooper 1999).

### ʿId FESTIVALS

ʿId Festivals, liturgically centred on supererogatory prayers (*salat al-ʿId*) marking the end of *Ramadan* fast (*ʿId al-Fitr*) and the sacrifice of Hajj (*ʿId al-Adha*), are sanctioned by Prophetic *Hadith*; these typically incorporate special *takbir* chants, with fixed Arabic texts, whose sonic aspect evinces local linguo-musical influence. However, beyond prayer, the precise form of celebration is not prescribed, so ʿId festivals capaciously absorb a large number of local performance genres, carrying pre-Islamic influence, or exhibiting local developments and adaptations. Many songs reference the ʿId textually, though musical content varies radically: monophonic ʿId songs in Egypt (Frishkopf 2000) contrast with polyphony of the Rashaʿida, an Arab tribe of Eritrea (*Music in the World of Islam* 1: track #7). Some ʿId performances, not religious *per se*, acquire Islamic meanings by association: among the Ivory Coast Dyula, women and children dance (Launay 1977, 149), while Mandinka *jalis* (*griots*) offer ordinary praise singing (Knight 1973, xiv).

Among Yoruba, *dundun* drum orchestras accompany processions of chiefs to and from prayer ground (Euba 1971, 176-77); *sakara* may also appear — the most famous performer was Abibus Oluwa, “the preacher” (Waterman 1990, 36-39). A famous *hadith* suggests that the Prophet advocated musical celebrations during the ʿId; correspondingly, Othman dan Fodiyo criticized the Hausa’s pagan ways but nevertheless allowed the kettle-drum to be beaten at the advent of the ʿId (Ames 1973, 273), and elaborate ʿId festival music continues to be performed there by court musicians (*maroka*), including praise singers, drums, horns, *shawms*, trumpets, bells, and rattles, for a series of court events and processions (Besmer 1974; Besmer 1972, 256-77; Ames 1973, 256). Spectacular all-night drum history narrations, involving a lead singer-drummer supported by a chorus of up to a hundred others, and climaxing in a dance (*bangumanga*), are performed for both ʿId festivals among the Dagbamba of Ghana (Chernoff 1985, 110-11; Corke *et al.* 2000).

### ASHURAʾ

Shiites in East Africa (primarily of South Asian origin) celebrate Ashuraʾ (commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn and his family at Karbalaʾ) with *majalis* (rituals centered on sung elegies and

dirges) and *ta`ziyya* (dramatic re-enactment) (Amiji 1975, 50; Qureshi 1981). Sunnis also observe this ancient holiday as commemorating various prophetic events (such as Noah's landfall, Moses' Red Sea passage and receipt of the Ten Commandments, Jonah's deliverance). In North Africa, Ashura' is announced by polyrhythmic drumming (*daqqa*) accompanied by choral chants (*ait*) comprising Divine praises, requests for intercession, prayers for the Prophet, and remembrance of Sufi masters), and trumpets (*neffar*) (La daqqa 1999); children go door to door, singing and collecting for their religious teachers (Marcais, *Encyclopedia of Islam Online*). Some Sunni groups, such as the Sudanese Khatmiyya (see below), display Shiite influence in Ashura' rituals (Karrar 1992, 159).

### *Life-cycle Contexts*

Life-cycle contexts, such as births, circumcisions, weddings, and funerals, celebrated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, may be viewed as only equivocally Islamic — or even secular — and hence are more likely to accumulate or retain a variety of genres and musical features, resulting in complex convergences, synergies, and syncretisms between Islamic styles (as marked by text and sound) and popular ones. In these familial occasions one generally observes greater liberality in use of musical instruments, musical sounds, dance, and mixing of the sexes. Due to both content and pre-Islamic associations, such performances were often targeted by reformers as un-Islamic (for example, Ames 1982, 136-37). Yet prohibitions typically are less enforceable for domestic contexts peripheral to the sphere of Islamic worship.

Religious songs, especially *madih*, are commonly performed at life-cycle events. In Egypt, *inshad* performed for circumcisions, weddings, or memorials may incorporate popular Arabic songs and instruments (Frishkopf 2002a). *Hausa Bandiri* music transforms Hindi film songs into *madih nabawi* (Larkin 2002). In Kenya, a birth may be celebrated with *mawlid* performance (Boyd 1981, 88); in Zanzibar (Tanzania) a *mawlid qasida* is performed in celebration of a wedding (*Zanzibar: Music of Celebration*, track #6). The *Dyula* traditionally perform sermons (*kalan*) for funerals and memorials (Launay 1997, 445); a new ritual deploys *kalan* for weddings as well (Launay 1977, 148-50). Comorians perform the *deba* — comprising

responsorial songs praising the prophets, accompanied by percussion — often closing with a solo *ilahi* (devotion to God), for various family occasions; weddings are celebrated with music and dance called *tari*, filled with praise of the Prophet (Comores 1994). The Comoro *daira* ("circle," or gathering) of the local *Shadhiliya tariqa*, including chant and movement, is performed in memoriam on the seventh and fortieth nights after death, as well as on the final day of wedding festivities (Ottenheimer 1970, 460). Yoruba have performed *waka* and *sakara* for weddings (Euba 1971, 177-78; Waterman 1990, 39). The Songhai (Niger) circumcision ritual (prayers, songs, *tilawa*, dancing, and drumming) fuses Islamic with pre-Islamic performance elements, illustrating how functional homology creates pathways for continuity and syncretism (Miner 1942, 621-31).

### *Sufi Context-types*

Sufi orders (*туруq*, literally "ways") are voluntary religious associations (albeit with strong hereditary tendencies), usually named for a founder-saint, whose "way" they perpetuate. Often erroneously counterpoised to "orthodoxy," Sufi orders have been ubiquitous and socially mainstream throughout much of Islamic history as a means of facilitating spiritual growth beyond what is required by the exoteric ritual and belief of *shari`a*, and as a means of providing a supportive social organization. Sufis emphasize love of God, Prophet, and saints as a means of self-transformation — sometimes even to the point of self-annihilation (*fana'*) or Divine Union (*itti-had*). Each *tariqa* group, providing for the spiritual growth of its members, generates a unique context for public sonic performance, expressing its characteristic world-view shaped by a particular spiritual-social system and doctrines, though these contexts tend to be quasi-homologous in their common emphases upon spiritual development, spiritual hierarchy, and mediation. With a spiritual guide (*shaykh*, *marabout*), members gather at a meeting place (mosque, *zawiya*, *khanqa*) for weekly supererogatory devotional liturgies (*hadra*, *dhikr*, *majlis*, *halaqa*, *daira*, *karama*, *layliyya*), including remembrance of God (*dhikr*), love and praise for the Prophet and saints, requests for intercession, and religious guidance, according to the *tariqa's* particular traditions. Language performance (Frishkopf 1999) — often musical — dominates on

these occasions.

While mainstream sonic genres (*tilawa*, *madih*, *wa`z*, *mawlid*) are common, the most distinctive Sufi genre is *dhikr* (*dikr*, *zikr*, *dhikiri*). As a genre, *dhikr* implies collective rhythmic (sometimes melodic) chanting of Divine Names, often accompanied by movement, accelerating to a climax, and possibly leading to ecstatic trance (*wajd*, *hal*). Alongside *dhikr*, religious chanters (*munshidun*) may perform poetry (*inshad* Sufi), often composed by *tariqa* founders in local languages, including coded mystical expressions, and standard themes of praise, devotion, and supplication — to God and the Prophet, but also localized to the *tariqa*'s saints (*awliya'*, *marabouts*) and regional musical styles. In solo improvisations, or choral responsorial formats, and sometimes with instrumental accompaniment, *inshad* may also appear without *dhikr*, as a catalyst for spiritual connection; such mystical "concerts" are called *sama`*, and draw on local musical traditions (Hear: Fez 2002; Al-Samaa 2004).

Following al-Ghazali (died 1111), Sufism is generally tolerant of music with a spiritual message; though frame drums and reed flutes are often preferred, many local instruments are absorbed into the mix. Sufi emphases upon spiritual love and metaphorical interpretation generate ambiguity between sacred and secular love; any elevated love song supports Sufi interpretations, and may be used in Sufi ritual. As the tolerance and strong social fabric of *turuq* became an important means by which Islam was disseminated through sub-Saharan Africa after the twelfth century, local musical styles were naturally absorbed into Sufi liturgies. Sub-Saharan orders often feature drumming, polyrhythm, and pentatonicism, alongside Arabic elements. Even a reformer such as Othman dan Fodiyo, who initially opposed certain musical traditions, was later softened by mysticism, approving of *madih* and music in his "Najm al-Ikhwān" (1812) (Erlmann 1986, 31). Only in the twentieth century did the twin forces of Saudi-inspired Islamism and secularism lead to the *turuq*'s general decline (For general background, see Trimmingham 1998; Schimmel 1975; Waugh 1989; Waugh 2005).

Some *tariqas* (Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Shadhiliyya) are widespread throughout Africa; others are more localized (Khatmiyya in the Nile Valley, Mourides in Senegal, Aisawa and Sulamiyya in

North Africa). Music varies widely, both from one region to another, and from one *tariqa* to another even within a single region. Tijanis in Hausaland chant religious hymns (Ames 1973, 256); in Senegal, they perform the *gammu* for God, the Prophet, and chief *marabout* (McLaughlin 1997, 566). Qadiris in Hausaland chant *madih* for *mawlid* and *Ramadan* (Ames 1973, 276 note 8); in Sudan their musical rituals exhibit much sub-Saharan African influence, sometimes with instruments (Sudan 1980; Karrar 1992, 155-64); in Senegal they create remarkable percussion pieces on tuned kettle-drums (*tabala*) (Tabala 1992; McLaughlin 1997, 565). Throughout East Africa, the *tariqa* spread among non-literate population via colloquial devotional poetry (Reese 2001, 51- 53, 57-62, 66-67; Orwin 2001, 70-72).

Distinctive to far West Africa, the Mourides were founded by Cheikh Amadou Bamba (1850-1927) who composed numerous poems (*khassaiids*, from Arabic *qasa'id*) praising the prophet, and inducing trance-like states in listeners (McLaughlin 2000; McLaughlin 1997, 565; Triaud, no date). The *maggal* liturgy is dedicated to Bamba and his family; the Mouride subgroup, Baye Fall, employs Senegalese *sabar*-like drums in devotions (McLaughlin 1997, 565-66). Other Sufi liturgies of Africa have been carefully described (Gilsenan 1973; Frishkopf 1999; Waugh 1989; Waugh 2005; Franken 1986, 95-97). A quantity of recorded African Sufi music is available; for example, liturgies of the Alawiyya and Bouabdaliya of Algeria (Soufis 2003); the Sulamiyya of Tunisia (Ensemble du Cheikh Abdelaziz ben Mahmoud 2000; Sulamiyya 1999); the Shadhiliyya of Egypt (Al-tariqa 1992; La Chadhiliyyah 1999); the Khatmiya of Sudan (Sudan 1980; Simon 1989, 32).

### *Saint Festival Contexts*

With no formal procedure for canonization, the Muslim saint (Arabic: *wali*, *shaykh*, *qutb*; *sayyid*, *salih* in North Africa; *mallam* (Hausa); *faqir* and *faqih* in Sudan; *pir* among South Asian communities) is ubiquitous in Africa (Radtke, no date). Besides saints recognized throughout the Islamic world (such as Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani [died 1166], Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili [died 1258]), each region of Muslim Africa contains its local saints (for example, Moulay Idris, patron saint of Fez). As for the Prophet, saints are visited (*ziyara*) and celebrated in an annual festival variously called

*mawlid* (birth), *`urs* (wedding), or *mawsim* (season), centered (unlike *mawlid al-nabi*) on the saint's *maqam* (shrine). Sufi orders celebrate their founder-saints (usually eponymous: for example, the Tijaniyya's Ahmad al-Tijani [Algerian, died 1815]); most festivals are public occasions, inviting general community participation.

As opposed to formally closed *tariqa* liturgies, saint festivals are open, socially and sonically; instruments and ecstatic behaviours are more likely to appear. The music of saint festivals includes *tariqa* traditions of *inshad* and *dhikr*, but also draws upon a wider variety of local music, religious or secular; even when not overtly religious, such music acquires spiritual meanings for participants through the dominating presence of the saint. Spectacular processions, including music, often mark celebratory commencements or conclusions. As always, *madih* is central. Enormous *mawlid*s in Egypt incorporate musical diversity, from Sufi *inshad*, to secular folk traditions (for example, the *tahtib* stick dance); the renowned Sufi *munshid*, Shaykh Yasin al-Tuhami, performs to upwards of ten thousand listeners for the *mawlid* of the Prophet's grandson, al-Husayn, in Cairo (Frishkopf 2002b; Frishkopf 2001; al-Tuhami 1998). Music praises Moulay Idris at his festival (Chottin 1932; Fez 2002), while Amadou Bamba enjoys musical pride of place during the Grand Maggal, an annual Mouride pilgrimage to his birthplace, Touba (McLaughlin 1997, 565). In Kano, Nigeria, `Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani was celebrated with parades and beating of *bandiri* drums (Radtke).

### *Spirit Ritual Contexts.*

Rituals featuring spirit possession and mixed gender music and dance are widely distributed in "traditional" sub-Saharan African religion. Though many Muslims denounce such rituals as "pagan" (*wathni*) or "pre-Islamic" (*jahili*), in practice they often evince amalgamation with Islam, typically by associating spirits to elements of Islamic cosmology (*jinn* or saints), recognizing a class of "Muslim spirits," or assimilating social structures and practices to Sufism. Some spirit possession groups may resemble (to a greater or lesser degree) *tariqas* (and may be perceived as such) but the former are more overtly syncretic. Depending on the group, members may regard themselves as Muslims, or merely as inter-

acting with Muslim practices. Such groups often appeal to the publicly marginalized; women, peripheral in most *tariqas*, often play a principal role in musical performances associated with spirit rituals. These rituals, drawing freely on traditional African instruments and music (polyrhythmic, percussive, and pentatonic), center on spiritual therapy (via exorcism or propitiation), frequently feature ecstasy, self-mortification, and possession, and are locally perceived as "African." Commonly, melodic or rhythmic patterns are associated with particular spirits; when performed, such patterns invoke and placate corresponding spirits, thus constituting diagnosis and therapy.

North Africa features a number of different therapeutic spirit-centric musical-ritual types with acknowledged sub-Saharan connections, featuring the *guinbri* lute, such as the Moroccan *derdeba* or *lila* (Schuyler 1981, 3; *Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco; Gnawa Music of Marrakesh*) and Algerian *diwan* (Biskra 1996), performed by Gnawas (claiming descent from the Prophet's Ethiopian muezzin, Bilal); the parallel *stambeli* of Tunisia (Jankowsky 2004); the *hadra* of the Moroccan Hamadsha (Crapanzano 1973; Crapanzano, no date; *Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco*); and — lying somewhat closer to mainstream Sufi practice — the *ʿIsawiyya hadra* of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia (Soufis 2003; Les Aissawa de Fes 1999; Sulamiyya 1999; Standifer 1988, 56; Grame 1970; Michon, no date). In Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, *zar* performances include Muslim spirits (Kenyon 1995, 111; al-Shahi 1984, 28, 35; Natvig 1988). Similar *pepo* spirit possession in Kenya and Tanzania features Muslim spirits (*ki-islam*, *ki-arabu*), requesting *dhikiri* or *maulidi* performances (Giles 1989, 94-95, 274-76); spirits are increasingly Islamic in character (Giles 1995, 95, 101). The *ki-pemba* cult of Mombasa reflects Islamic influence in cosmology, songs, and Qur'anic recitation (Topan 1996, 117-22). The Hausa *bori* cult, categorized by some scholars as pre-Islamic (Ames 1973, 256), and condemned by reformers such as Asma'u Fodiyo (Boyd 2001, 12), exhibits Islamic aspects, as spirits (*iskoki*) were assimilated to Islamic *jinn* (Besmer 1972, 66). *Bori* music includes singing, and instrumental performance on calabashes (women), or lutes, rattles, and calabashes (men) (Besmer 1983, 50-52).

### *Sectarian Contexts*

While most African Muslims are Sunni, isolated Ibadi, Ithna`ashari Shi`a (Rizvi and King 1973, 12), Bohra (Amiji 1975), and Nizari Isma`ili groups exist as well (Ranja 2003). These groups feature unique sonic genres and contexts. The Shi`a Ashura' has already been mentioned. Inhabiting the Mzab (six hundred to eight hundred kilometres south of Algiers) are Ibadi Berbers, practicing distinctive patterns of Islamic chant (Alport 1954, 34-42). Nizari Isma`ilis of South Asian descent are concentrated in East Africa; a central liturgical practice is melodic recitation of *ginan*, featuring poetry of founding *pirs*, and a South Asian melodic ethos, often with *tabla* and harmonium accompaniment (Gillani 2004; *Music in the World of Islam*, 1: track #1; Mzab 2006).

### *Interactions with the Popular Music Sphere*

Islamic sonic performance crosses definitively from religious to popular performance when disengaged from specific contexts, and embedded instead in local or global music media-commodity systems. Sometimes popular music genres are inflected with Islamic themes and styles; other times an entire genre may "cross over," freighted with new meanings and often transformed sonically as well. Besides providing sonic resources, connections to traditional Islamic performance may confer artistic legitimacy, ethical propriety, and cultural prestige, tap powerful religious feeling and nostalgia, and serve as a touchstone of cultural authenticity. At least three processes of transformation are at work: restaging, recorded media, and globalization.

The full range of Islamic musical styles and genres, as presented above — including even Qur`anic recitation and the *adhan*, but especially genres of festival, Sufi, and spirit possession contexts — may be restaged and transformed as live entertainment, for example, Gnawa and `Isawiyya performances as spectacle in Marrakesh (Grame 1970, 77-84; Schuyler 1981; *Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco*), or the secularization of Nigerian genres (*waka*, *were*, *apala*, *sakara*) via musical, textual, and contextual changes (Euba 1971, 177-79; Adegbite 1989, 40; Collins 1992, 93). Contemporary Sufi singers of Egypt become popular stars, appreciated for *tarab* (musical emotion) as much as spirituality (Frishkopf 2001). Many popular singers of twentieth-

century Egypt trained in religious contexts, starting with the traditional schools for mastering Qur'anic recitation (*kuttab*) and continuing with *tawashih diniyya* and Sufi *dhikr*; shifting to the popular domain, they might continue to perform explicitly religious material (Shaykh Naqshabandi), or dwell on ambiguous, elevated Sufi love poetry (Shaykhs `Ali Mahmud and Yusuf al-Manyalawi), or simply enjoy the connotations of authority, authenticity, and propriety bestowed by Islamic training (such as Shaykh Sayyid Darwish and Umm Kulthum) (Danielson 1991, 114-23) even while performing an entirely secular repertoire, provided it maintained a suitable level of decorum.

Such "crossovers" are far less common in Egypt today, not only because the *kuttab* has declined (replaced by governmental schools), but also with the diminished importance of the Sufi sphere and as popular music and religious domains find themselves increasingly at odds: the former increasingly commercialized and eroticized, the latter increasingly puritanical (sometimes to the point of rejecting overly-elaborate Qur'anic recitation). Thus when Nubian pop star Mohamed Mounir produced a post-9/11 album of Islamic music in 2002 entitled *Earth ... Peace* he found himself embroiled in controversy. Emphasizing Islam as a religion of peace and love, he sang "the spilling of any blood is deemed sinful by God." But the music video for this song was banned from Egyptian television, because its petition (*madad*, "help us") to the Prophet was not palatable to the conservative religious establishment (MSN Arabia; Mounir 2002).

Recorded media may play a critical role in the shift to the popular sphere, providing broader markets and disengaging context. In the 1970s, Nigerian *fuji* (including trap set, synthesizers, and traditional Nigerian percussion) emerged from *Ramadan ajisaari*, popularized by early recordings of Muslim musicians Kollington Ayinla and Chief Ayinde Barrister. While *fuji per se* is not Islamic, *fuji* musicians and majority of fans are Muslims (though many are Christian, too), and record companies release special *fuji* LPs on major Muslim holidays (Barber and Waterman 1995, 244; Waterman 1990, 150-51, 231).

In Senegal's bustling music scene, popular singers such as Youssou N'Dour (2004), Cheikh Lo (1996), and Baaba Maal (1998) include on each album one or more songs praising and invoking

local Sufi saints, especially Amadou Bamba, his disciple Ibra Fall, and El Hajj Malik Sy; though such music is played in nightclubs and bars, it also expresses a religious message. This phenomenon is testimony to the strength of Sufism there, and reflects also the influence of secular *griot* praise traditions which Senegalese pop stars have inherited (McLaughlin 2000, 191; McLaughlin 1997). The influence of these saints extends beyond Senegal, for example, Mauritanian *griot*-star Malouma who praises Amadou Bamba (Miadeh 1998). Guinean *griot* Mory Kante mixes the call to prayer in one popular song (Kante 1987, track #3). The mixing of sacred and secular is not unproblematic, however; religious conservatives sharply criticized Cheikh Ismael Lo for recording a song ("Wassalia") drawing upon El Hajj Malik's hagiography of Mohammed from the *gammu*, since his cassettes are played in bars and at parties, contexts considered inappropriate for devotional poetry (McLaughlin 2000, 199-200).

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of popular Moroccan groups such as Nass el-Ghiwane and Jil Jilala, which drew eclectically from Moroccan folk and Sufi heritage (including *Isawiyya* and *Gnawa*), in combination with western popular music (Schuyler 2002). These Moroccan groups also illustrate their transcendence of the local popular scene by touring for Western audiences throughout Europe and North America.

Western consumption generates at least three distinctive categories of African Islamic popular music (all of which tend to be filed as "world music"): what may be termed "global ethnographic," "world beat," and "global pop" musics. "Global ethnographic" includes the numerous recordings and festival performances of what is perceived as "authentic" (that is, rooted in the pre-modern period) Islamic cultural traditions described above, as presented to a Western audience as a kind of auditory travelogue. With the help of program and liner notes, the putative aim of such recordings and concerts is to document the world's cultural diversity and educate Westerners about it. However, despite claims of authenticity, such performances are necessarily transformed, at least by the contextual shift to stage or CD (for example, Tabala 1992; *Morocco I: The Music of Islam and Sufism in Morocco*; Sufi Music Village [London] 1997 [www.culturalco-operation.org]; Al-Tuni 2000).

"World beat" results from eclectic musical hybrids incorporat-

ing African-Islamic styles. For instance, Moroccan Gnawa music has generated tremendous interest among Western jazz and rock musicians, resulting in creative fusions; Hasan Hakmoun is an important exponent (such as Hakmoun 1991, with acclaimed jazz trumpeter Don Cherry). Here, creative expression is emphasized over “authenticity”; if an Islamic message appears at all, it is that musical collaborations across cultural divides can facilitate social ones, and demonstrate the spiritual unity of mankind.

Finally, the international music industry and post-colonial connections often enable the uptake of local media scenes into the global market (al-Tuhami 1998; Gharib 2004; Tabala 1992); while *fuji* has remained relatively localized (as compared to other Nigerian genres, such as Afrobeat or juju), Islamically-tinged Senegalese popular music has brilliantly succeeded internationally, especially Youssou N’Dour (2004) who won a Grammy award for “Best Contemporary World Music Album” in 2004. International markets push such music in new directions, sometimes resulting in two versions of releases (local and global) (McLaughlin 1997, 576), or inducing artists to experiment creatively with new fusions (Aichi 2001; Fadhel Jaziri 2000). The striking success of many Muslim West African artists in a global popular music scene strongly conditioned by African-American, Afro-Latin, and Afro-Caribbean forms appears to support speculative arguments made by Gerhard Kubik and others that a large segment of the African diaspora across the Americas was Muslim (Kubik 1999).

### *Conclusion*

From this diverse survey of Islamic music in Africa, several general conclusions can now be drawn. First is the remarkable diversity of Islamic sonic forms, as ritual practices adapt to local socio-cultural conditions, yet generally without any sense of sectarian fissioning, of having “left the faith.” The flexibility of Islamic music — and sound generally — plays a critical role in such adaptation, as Islamic performance contexts draw on local musical materials, and as musical materials stemming from the Middle East fuse with local musical structures, such as polyphonic drumming, polyrhythm, and pentatonicism. The “unity in diversity” which characterizes Islam in Africa may be attributed to a strong oral

tradition coupled with decentralized religious authority, particularly in Sunni Islam, imposing minimal formal ritual and doctrinal requirements.

These requirements centre on discursive performance, allowing freer reign to local adaptation in non-discursive performative dimensions. Sound, operating largely outside Islamic discourse, whose details discourse is unable to precisely reference and therefore unable to precisely regulate, possesses the ability to adapt to local conditions through absorption of local practices. While the concept of "music" (*musiqā*), usually implying instruments performed for entertainment, may occasionally be subjected to discursive sanctions, the more fundamental concept of "sound" (coupled with "text") remains active and vital, thinly veiled behind a myriad of terminological guises (*adhan*, *tajwid*, *inshad*, and *khutba*). Music's power is all the greater for not being explicitly recognized as such.

The broader picture of Islamic performance is thus one of ramification in its sonic-social aspect, threaded throughout by common filaments of Arabic text, or at least core meanings, most centrally: *tawhid* (affirmation of God's unity), *ibtihalat* (supplication to God), *madih* (praise for His Prophet), and *tawassul* (petitions to Prophet and saints). It is the sense of connectedness, through a genealogical network of performance tradition, rather than uniformity of performance, which supports a common Muslim identity despite outward diversity.

Or, perhaps, because of it. The ability to adapt — which gives rise to the rich variegation of Islamic performative traditions — is also what has enabled Islam to expand by taking root in so many different cultural soils across Africa. In particular, the ability of music to adjust to local socio-cultural conditions, absorbing and transforming local performance materials, while nevertheless bearing core Islamic meanings, combined with the powerful "affecting presence" of socially performed and locally meaningful sound, representing Islam as a whole while remaining deeply enmeshed in local meaning and local sentiment, and thereby connecting, or at least mediating, between the broader world of Islam and other worlds (pre- or extra-Islamic) which impinge upon it, has enabled music to serve as a particularly effective agent of Islamic *da`wa* (missionizing).

Second is the palpable consistency of sound, text, and context across cultural, linguistic, and geographical regions, particularly within ritual and festival contexts, and the recurrence of sounds, textual themes, and performance occasions, albeit with local inflections. Whereas Sufi and (especially) sectarian forms vary more widely in meaning, social and festival contexts often feature the same meanings (expressed in local languages), while ritual contexts (centered on Arabic) vary primarily in sound.

Yet sonic-textual-social forms exhibit considerable consistency across broad geographical areas of Muslim Africa. Recurrent sonic features, throughout both Islamic music and music of Muslims more generally, includes centrality of highly ornamented, melismatic vocalizations; a tense vocal quality and high tessitura; Arabic-inflected tonality (including influence of the seven-toned microtonal modes called *maqamat*); emphasis upon solo, monophonic, or heterophonic textures; salience of poetry over dance; and use of characteristically Islamicate instruments, such as lutes, plucked or bowed. Textual features, especially the ubiquity of praise-song, have already been mentioned. Social-cultural features recur also: a general suspicion of unregulated music; restrictions on mixed-gender dance and female public performance; distinctive male and female repertoires; the appearance of a specialized and professionalized musician-caste and hereditary musician lineages, supported by aristocratic patrons; and centrality of praise-singers, especially as attached to political power. Ames' aforementioned observation of non-correlation between musical similarity and geographical distance (viz. the greater similarity between musicians' social position across Muslim Western Sudan than between Igbo and Hausa in Northern Nigeria) is a case in point (Ames 1973, 250-51, 272).

This consistency, which underpins a measure of Muslim cultural identity, reflects, in turn, the common fund of Islamic norms, meanings, contexts, and practices to which Muslims subscribe, the broad diffusion of Arabo-Islamic culture (crossing to sub-Saharan Africa from Arab North Africa, Egypt, and Arabia) which has infused Muslim-majority areas of East and West Africa (especially the specific practices of Qur'anic recitation and the call to prayer), and the long history of extensive interactions — economic, migrational, cultural, political — across the Muslim

world, as supported by the common cultural substrate of Islam.

Third, it is clear that Islamic music reflects these interactions. Music is a sensitive barometer of social and historical conditions in Muslim societies, and for a sound reason: the “sound of Islam” is not merely an epiphenomenal expression of Islamic faith. Rather, sonic-linguistic practices, what I am liberally calling “music” but might be better known as “language performance,” along with the discourse (sometimes heated) surrounding them — including everything from *tajwid*, to *madih*, to prayer itself — are central to the Islamic religion, and to the construction and maintenance of faith of individual Muslims. Such practices, often occurring in intensively social and emotive contexts, inscribe and renew socio-spiritual relationships — to God, to the Prophet, to saints, and to other Muslims — by invoking them within an atmosphere of deeply felt meaning produced by sound and text performed together.

The sonic practices of Islam thus constitute a central site for the affectively charged social production of Islam, as locally inflected, as well as a site for the contestation of what it means to be a Muslim, and the construction of Islamic norms. In musical practice and discourse one observes ongoing debates about what Islam should be, in the broader context of interactions among local, regional, and global social forces. Music’s barometric salience becomes most explicit when it emerges into public discourse as yet another instance of the “music polemic” (Nelson 1985), as accusations of heresy are flung against musicians or practices thought by some to deviate too far from Shari`a-sanctioned norms of devotion. But such debates are implicitly present elsewhere as well; for instance, in the striking divergence among ritual practices of Sufi orders in Cairo (Frishkopf 1999), or the silencing effects of contemporary Islamism, rejecting the more musical practices of recitation — especially as carried by the Sufi orders — and thrusting melodically conservative Saudi recitational practices to global prominence, thereby displacing their more traditional Egyptian counterparts (Frishkopf 2006). There is a musical reading of global Islamic politics.

What is striking too is the dearth of historiographic or ethnographic data, across time and space. Though a number of researchers have produced superb scholarship on Islamic musical

practices, as indicated by the foregoing survey, coverage is spotty; vast terrains remain uncharted. This fact is linked to another — the undervaluing, within Islamic studies, of research on Muslim performance practices, especially the nuanced cultural modulations to be found even within the most central, and supposedly immutable, of Islamic rituals. While our historical picture of Islamic sound will ever remain incomplete, the contemporary ethnographic scene is far more open to inspection; indeed, a great deal of modern Muslim culture is partially self-documenting, via the local mass media.

A deeper understanding of Islam in Africa depends upon research, both intensive and extensive, of the many local interpretations of Islam. For this purpose, an understanding of the myriad expressive cultural practices carrying Islamic meanings is essential, because of the ability of such practices to represent, and to reproduce or contest, core concepts and social relations characterizing Muslim societies. Among these practices, music is central, due to its collective and affectively charged nature. An enormous amount of feasible research on contemporary Islamic musical practices remains to be carried out. This research promises to illuminate the interactions of local and global forces — ideological, political, or economic — now shaping Muslim societies throughout the region.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hodgson himself intended his neologism “Islamicate” to mean “‘of or pertaining to’ the society and culture of Islamdom,” where “Islamdom” is “the society in which the Muslim and their faith are recognized as prevalent and socially dominant” (1974, 58).

<sup>2</sup> *Sahih Muslim* supports beating the *duff* (frame drum) for *ʿId* celebrations. With its symbolism of the human body, and plaintive sound, the reed flute has been a fixture of many Sufi liturgies at least since the thirteenth century, when it was documented by Jalal al-Din Rumi’s poetry and established in the ritual practice of the Sufi order founded in his name, the Mevleviyya.