MY VOICE IS MY WEAPON

Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance

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For Seamus Patrick McDonald

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Transliteration of Arabic words has followed the system used by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, except for colloquial Palestinian names, texts, and phrases for which I have adapted the system used in the Hinds and Badawi dictionary to Palestinian dialect. At times throughout the research and writing of this book it was extremely difficult to distinguish between colloquial and formal texts. Throughout I have attempted to provide transliterations of popular song texts, poetry, dialogue, and commentary that remain legible to the reader while preserving essential aspects of dialect, accent, and inflection. However, there are several instances where song texts, slang, and other commentary required a bit of creativity in transliteration. Palestinian poets, singers, and musicians are notorious for manipulating the pronunciation of their texts to fit syllabic patterns and rhyme schemes, to shield meaning from censors and the secret police, and to play with words and their relations. Insofar as is practicable, I have tried to maintain a middle ground between what was said or sung and what was meant or intended. Consistency has been difficult to maintain as artists often shift their pronunciation from performance to performance. Song titles, poetry titles, and other titles of published works have been capitalized and transliterated without diacritical marks (except for ʾ and ʿ). Common names have also been capitalized throughout, transliterated, and italicized without diacritical marks (except for ʾ and ʿ). Words that appear in *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* or that have an accepted English spelling and/or pronunciation, such as *Cairo*, *Beirut*, and *Yasser Arafat*, remain in their familiar forms without diacritics. In instances where individuals, ensembles, or other organizations have readily adopted an English transliteration (for example, *El-Funoun* instead of *al-Fanūn*), I have maintained their transliteration throughout. I adopted the same approach for the one Hebrew transliteration in this text as well.

I have deposited a portion of my ethnographic field recordings with the EVIA Digital Archive Project housed at Indiana University (www.eviada .org). The EVIA project is a collaborative venture to establish an online digital archive of ethnographic field videotapes for use by scholars and instructors. Funded from 2001 to 2009 by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Indiana University, and the University of Michigan, the project developed from the joint efforts of ethnographers, scholars, archivists, librarians, and information technologists to make available ethnographic field tapes for use online in teaching and research environments. However, the EVIA project is much more than simply a digital archive. The process of depositing these recordings requires rigorous annotation and peer review whereby each performance, each song, is painstakingly documented, analyzed, and fully searchable across the entire collection by various keywords and controlled vocabularies.

As a companion to this text, my EVIA project, entitled *Music, Folklore, and Nationalism among Palestinian Refugees in Amman, Jordan (2003– 2005)*, allows the reader to view video field recordings of many of the performances discussed in this monograph; easily search within the collection for titles, lyrics, or artists; and quickly toggle between performances of the same songs and dances by various performers. While making their way through this monograph, readers are invited to explore this ethnographic video collection for further explanations, performances, and demonstrations of core aspects of Palestinian music and dance.

Below is a list of pertinent audio/video examples available for viewing on the EVIA website. Each example below has been assigned a persistent uniform resource locator, or PURL, which functions as a unique marker or web address for locating the audio/video example in the EVIA project collections. Throughout the text I have also labeled each example with a

parenthetical code (e.g., EVIA 14-A3387). Those who wish to access the EVIA project collections must first create a free account by clicking "enter the archive" and then clicking the login button, which opens the "create an account" page where they may register with the EVIA project. Once an account has been created, the listed examples below may be easily located. Readers of the print edition of this book may access the videos by logging into the EVIA project and typing into their web browser the full PURL address associated with a specific media example. These PURL addresses are listed below as well as in the endnotes of the chapter wherein an example is discussed. A PURL address includes a root that never changes and a six-digit, one-character, PURL identifier at the end of the address (e.g., 14-S9030) that is unique to each specific media example. Once the full PURL address has been entered, readers may view other media examples simply by replacing the unique PURL identifier at the end of the address with the PURL identifier of the media example they wish to view. Readers of the electronic version of this book may simply click on the PURL address for each example wherever it arises; once they have logged into the EVIA website, this active link will take them directly to the requested media example. Once registered with EVIA, readers may create a playlist of events and scenes for future reference. This playlist will eliminate the need to search for each example when returning to the site. The list below, organized by chapter, includes the segment title, parenthetical code, and the full PURL address for each audio/video example discussed in this book.

Audio and Video Examples

CHAPTER 2

EVIA 14-S9039 | "Yama Mawil al-Hawa" (Oh song of longing)
[http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/eviada/14-S9039]

EVIA 14-S2070 | "Min Sijn ʿAkka" (From ʿAkka Prison)
[http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/eviada/14-S2070]

EVIA 14-A0876 | Carrying the martyr in a mock funeral march
[http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/eviada/14-A0876]

EVIA 14-A3387 | "ʿAtābā"
[http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/eviada/14-A3387]

EVIA 14-A1093 | "ʿAlā Dalʿūnā"
[http://purl.dlib.indiana.edu/iudl/eviada/14-A1093]

the University of Jordan, and the Edward Said National Music Conservatory of Palestine. The diplomats, administrators, teachers, students, and friends at these institutions greatly facilitated the logistics of my research with interviews, source materials, and advice on myriad topics.

Among the musicians and groups I worked with, I would especially like to recognize Adnan Odeh, Saʿud Shalash, Mais Shalash, Mohammad Smik, Firras Muhiddin, Ibrahim Sbeyhat, Nadar Jalal, ʿIssa Boulos, Suheil Khoury, Reem Talhami, Mustafa al-Kurd, Samer Totah, Ahmad al-Khatib, Heather Bursheh, Mohammad Fadel, Mohammad Yacoub, Khaled Katamesh, Hussein Munther, Abu Arab, Hussein Nazak, Mahmoud Darwish, Sharif Kanaaneh, Abd al-Aziz Abu Hudba, Moslih Kanaaneh, Mohammad Sakkijha, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Daoud Abbasi, Abeer al-Zinaty, Mohammad al-Farra, Sanaaʿ al-Moussa, and the members of Firqat Aghani al-ʿAshiqin, Firqat al-Quds, Firqat al-ʿArryaf, Baladna, DAM, PR, Firqat al-Yarmuk, Firqat al-Riif, Firqat al-Ajiil, Firqat al-Hanouneh, Firqat el-Funoun, Firqat al-Ibdaʿ, Karloma, Nawazen, and Firqat al-Zaytuna. Above all else, however, I offer my sincerest gratitude to one musician in particular, Kamal Khalil. Our many nights spent singing and talking underneath the olive tree in his front yard opened up spaces for discussion and debate about history, politics, and music essential to understanding both the musical and the personal histories of those who have dedicated their lives to Palestinian self-determination. The honesty and openness with which Kamal Khalil allowed me entrance into his life and family were truly inspiring. I am deeply indebted to him and the entire Khalil family for their endless generosity and some of the best *maqlūba* ever tasted.

Among those most supportive of my time in the field, I wish to recognize the Khoury and al-Qaisi families. By the end of my stay in Jordan it became second nature to be introduced as *ibn al-khūrī* (a son of the Khoury family). A prominent Palestinian Christian family originally from Ramallah and Bir Zeit, the transplanted Khourys of Amman welcomed me into their home for countless late-night dinners under the grape vines atop their front patio. The three talented Khoury sons adopted me as an older sibling and made sure that all of my many needs were met. Likewise the seven al-Qaisi children, especially Amani al-Qaisi, of al-Bayadar, provided many after dinner *dabke* lessons, friendship, and an inside look into Palestinian family life in diaspora.

My work in Amman for this project benefited considerably from the tireless efforts of my research assistant and language tutor, Nihad Kha-

Introduction

Entering the Field: Means and Methods

Immediately prior to my arrival in Amman, Jordan, in May 2002, the ongoing al-Aqsa intifada (uprising) (2000–2006) had recently intensified. Sparked by Ariel Sharon's heavily militarized encroachment on two of Islam's holiest sites, the Haram al-Sharif and the al-Aqsa Mosque, in September 2000, this new "intifada" had finally put to end the illusion of a peace process begun with the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) provisioned in the Oslo Accords in 1993. I hesitate to even call this an intifada, as many of my interlocutors would often shudder in embarrassment at applying this term, for while this new uprising was superficially interpreted as an extension of the first Palestinian intifada (1987–93), in reality this new uprising lacked the core principles of popular resistance seen in 1987: nonviolent civil disobedience, protests, demonstrations, and boycotts aimed at ending the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In this second al-Aqsa intifada new techniques of violent warfare were developed and used against civilians and soldiers alike in the name of "popular resistance."

That spring of 2002 the first of several Israeli invasions and Palestinian suicide attacks occurred, each in counterpoint with one another. Representatives of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), speaking on American news programs, strategically labeled these operations a "journey of colors" and a "defensive shield," yet each involved widespread and wanton devastation inflicted against civilians and the reoccupation of the Palestinian territories, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. In counterpoint Palestinian

militants responded with strategic bombings and adopted new forms of social media and performance to frame acts of violence against occupation forces and civilians alike as legitimate forms of martyrdom and resistance to a foreign Israeli military occupation.

Cities were laid under siege. Strict curfews, checkpoints, and other restrictions of movement sequestered approximately four million Palestinians under house arrest for weeks at a time while soldiers moved from house to house in search of "militants." Likewise Israelis retreated from public spaces, vulnerable to attack by indiscriminate acts of violence by various Palestinian politico-religious factions. On March 27, 2002, a bombing in Netanya killed thirty Israelis celebrating Passover in the seaside resort city, and war was declared. The following day Operation Defensive Shield (ODS) began, resulting in the outright invasion of every major Palestinian city, refugee camp, and village, causing catastrophic damage to civilian infrastructure. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, housing population, demographic, and land ownership data were strategically targeted, as were the Ministries of Education, Health, and Culture. With precision, Israeli forces systematically destroyed the institutional vestiges of Palestinian identity (archival recordings, historical and administrative documents, books, histories, and so on), dismantling the Palestinian Authority (PA) and effectively cloistering its president (Yasser Arafat) among the last remnants of his executive compound of piled concrete and rebar. Within a matter of weeks little remained of the Palestinian protostate imagined in the 1993 Declaration of Principles and ensuing Oslo Accords.

In scope and breadth the occupation affects millions. Since the catastrophic loss of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Israeli forces in the June War of 1967, millions of Palestinians have lived under foreign occupation, without citizenship, without civil liberties, without rights to self-determination. Over time the occupation (*al-iḥtilāl*) became the defining feature of Palestinian life, shaping structures of identity and habits of thought and practice. In moments of intensified and collective violence, such as what occurred under the banners of ODS in 2002, the effects of occupation extended outward from those enduring the siege to those witnessing in exile. Walking the streets of Amman, Jordan, for example, where more than 60 percent of the population identifies as Palestinian refugees or their descendants, it was clear that intifada culture had gripped the city. Inside coffee shops and other street-side businesses,

shopkeepers, customers, and passersby attentively watched televisions. Angry commentators and other political analysts monopolized the airwaves with debate and vitriolic calls for justice. Consumer boycotts were formed against Israeli and American goods and businesses, including any companies with ties to the occupation. Protests and demonstrations processed through the city streets denouncing Israeli brutality and the failure of the Western powers to protect Palestinian human rights.

During my residence in suburban West Amman, the intifada engendered a new rise in student activism. University of Jordan students wore *kūfīyas* (black-and-white checkered scarves), flags, and bandanas to show their support for the intifada. Necklaces depicting historic pre-1948 Palestine (the combined area of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip) or other nationalistic images were sold on street corners along with various other intifada paraphernalia. Cars all over the city sported pictures of *Handhala* (the cartoon characterization of political satirist Naji al-ʿAli) on their bumpers, while many other people chose to show their support by painting over English-language street signs and license plates. Protesting students periodically gathered outside the university's main gates, shouting anti-American and anti-Israeli slogans. Activism in its myriad forms, political, social, economic, and cultural, permeated both native Jordanian and Palestinian Jordanian communities.

I arrived at a moment of profound instability, hoping to write an ethnography of Palestinian music and musicians living in this reality. Initially Jordan was my primary field site due to its having the largest Palestinian refugee population in the world. As a result of three distinct waves of exile in 1948, 1967, and 1992, Palestinian refugees have flooded into the Hashemite Kingdom to the extent that Palestinians now dominate its population, economy, and private sector. In search of the performative meanings of contemporary exile, I approached this space wanting to understand experiences of dispossession and the various ways Palestine as a national construct is articulated in diaspora. Contemporary Jordan has over time come to constitute the heart of the Palestinian diaspora, delineating its physical and imaginative properties. Here notions of Palestine structure, past, present, and future, are imagined as an idyllic wellspring of cultural identity, a force of contemporary politics, and a site of future desire and actualization.

Ethnography seeks to understand how each of these overlapping frames structure commonsense perceptions of self and other. It amounts to a

beautiful interaction, a collaboration of sorts, demanding the ability to converse intimately at the level of personal experience and meaning. In ethnomusicology this task involves conversations of a different sort, seeking out the iconicities of social structure and music performance. Initially I was naïvely inspired by notions of "resistance" as a performed social reality, believing expressive culture to be a profound modality for articulating notions of self within the Palestinian nationalist movement. In performance, specifically in musical performance, I believed I would find an essence of Palestinian identity that might fully capture widespread experiences of Israeli occupation, dispossession, and exile endemic to Palestinian life. To this end, I pursued the established, yet fluid, genre of Palestinian protest or resistance song wherever I could find it, from dusty wedding tents and mournful funeral processions to organized political rallies and demonstrations, cosmopolitan cultural festivals, and cramped twisting back-alley dance parties.

At a time of occupation and intense national sentiment, the study of Palestinian protest song seemed entirely appropriate. I actively sought out performative spaces where feelings of "Palestinian-ness" were cultivated, harnessed, and wielded in the project of self-determination. Friends often told me that they felt "most Palestinian" at weddings. Celebrating through music and dance, participants affirmed and embodied the very survival of Palestinian subjectivity in exile. To this end, I began performing bagpipes and percussion with Firqat al-Riif (The Village Ensemble), a local group of Palestinian wedding musicians. I did this hoping to uncover the poetics of Palestinian identification in Jordan. However, what I found was far more complex than anticipated. Weddings were sites of intense nation building, to be sure, but so-called resistance or nationalist music flowed freely between social spaces. Protest songs were sung at weddings as often as wedding songs were sung at protests, if such a distinction could even be made. Moreover, through analysis of the meanings inherent to this repertory of indigenous song, it was clear that weddings, and their associated roles, practices, and rituals, were closely identified within a broad-based and diffuse notion of "resistance," defined and articulated in myriad ways, refracted through the prism of class, religion, gender, and politics. In essence the foundational repertory of Palestinian song from which I hoped to build a coherent narrative and analysis remained elusive, kaleidoscopically shifting under the duress of overlapping frames of difference.

At each turn my quest to learn the canon of influential artists, poets,

singers, and songs became increasingly complicated. I attended political demonstrations and concerts held to raise money and awareness for Palestinian causes and sought out vast caches of intifada cassettes and other expressive media. My return to Jordan in the fall of 2003, for what would amount to sixteen months of research, only compounded my difficulties. Though the overt culture of resistance and activism had waned in the time between these two research trips slightly, the development of a new (and revival of an old) repertory of Palestinian protest song created an environment of profound fracture. Since my interests were in tracing the musical manifestations and interpretations of Palestinian resistance, I sought out many of the musicians active during the first intifada (1987–93). Combining the histories and life stories of these activists with those involved in the second intifada, I began to assemble a historical narrative of Palestinian nationalist activity through music and dance. But the pieces didn't seem to fit. Songs from the first intifada seemed tired, old, clichéd to the contemporary generation of young activists. New songs had yet to catch on, largely falling into two categories: propagandist calls for martyrdom and transnational pop songs with little relevance to contemporary Palestinian experiences of violence and exile. My search for the unified "voices of the masses," struggling to resist Israeli occupation and forced exile, resulted in nothing more than an odd collection of propagandized tropes and imagery shouted across myriad political, economic, and religious divides.

Moreover, the many terms often used to describe resistance (*maqawma*, *thawra*, *ṣumud*, intifada) became increasingly problematic as artists freely wielded them without a clear understanding of what they meant. What came to be labeled "resistance music" or "protest song" was defined not by active musico-political processes, but rather by static notions of thematic content, folkloric signification, and other elements of musical "style." Delineating between a stylistic notion of "resistance" and a process-oriented one aimed at social change became increasingly difficult. What became apparent was the need to develop a means of dealing with "resistance" apart from essentialized stylistic categories, to reinscribe "resistance" as an active functional process for social change. To this end I employ the term "resistance music" or "protest song" as a genre category based not in stylistic attributes, but in terms of musico-political processes: its articulation within larger projects of social change. Palestinian resistance music may best be defined as the conscious use of any music

in the service of the larger project of Palestinian self-determination. This functional-processual definition decouples style and sentiment and precludes the likelihood of essentializing "resistance" based on musical style alone. From this definition rural folk song, militarized marches, classical art music, and urban hip-hop may all be equally defined as resistance music.

Although the production of new forms of Palestinian resistance music was widespread, gaining access to the social spaces of production and consumption proved to be a great challenge. Artists, producers, recording companies, and political intermediaries were often hesitant to share their opinions and life stories with outsiders. Many had spent significant time in prison or had been subjected to myriad forms of state terror and harassment. Convincing these musicians of my intentions proved to be an ongoing and difficult process, unfortunately so, for some of the social, cultural, and political barriers proved too difficult to overcome. Yet by and large the majority of activists with whom I spoke were surprisingly supportive and welcoming of my research, inviting me into their homes to be a part of their daily lives.

After several months of working and performing in Jordan, it became apparent that I would need new data sets from musicians active in the West Bank. This 5,640-square-kilometer area of land, along with the Gaza Strip, was all that remained of historic Palestine following the war of 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel. Claimed by Jordan following the 1948 war, the "West Bank" was so named as a strategic means of indoctrination, imagining this piece of land as an extension of the Jordanian "East Bank." However, the project of incorporating the West Bank into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan proved unsuccessful, as much of the land from the western banks of the Jordan River valley to the 1948 armistice lines of Israel, including East Jerusalem, emerged as the heart of Palestinian culture and society and the imagined site of a future Palestinian state. After the defeat of the Jordanian army in the June War of 1967 (or the Six-Day War), the West Bank and Gaza Strip (collectively called "Palestine" by its inhabitants) fell under a foreign military occupation by Israeli forces. Today these Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) are subjected to harsh military administration and control via larger projects of Israeli national security and colonialist expansion in the form of illegal (under international law) Jewish settlements.

My reasons for working in the West Bank were many. Unfortunately

Jordan is notorious for state censorship and hence offers scant research facilities. Reliable libraries, sound archives, and politically sensitive documents were difficult to find in Amman, even in the "back rooms" of private libraries and research institutions. In order to gain access to invaluable literature and recordings of Palestinian music it was necessary to work in the more expansive archives and libraries in the West Bank. Ironically, even under occupation (or perhaps because of it), political debate, critical research, and important source materials are far more available in the West Bank than in Jordan. Palestinians have devoted considerable time and resources to understanding the social, political, and cultural dynamics of the occupation, generating extensive collections of research in the social sciences and humanities. This research was largely unavailable in Jordan, where such discussions often are deemed threatening or subversive to the sovereignty of the Hashemite monarchy. Likewise, in Amman musicians seemed far too willing to gloss over the many social and political fractures inherent within the nationalist movement. I was presented with a superficial rendering of Palestinian solidarity, when on the streets raged a protracted "war of position" where many politico-religious groups sought to garner the consent of the people to lead the uprising. And finally, exilic imaginings of Palestine in song and dance were powerful markers of national identity for refugees in Jordan. In traveling to the West Bank I became increasingly concerned to find out if the imaginings of "Palestine" in exile bore any resemblance to contemporary Palestinian life in the West Bank.

Fieldwork in the West Bank presented a completely new set of methodological challenges for which I was little prepared. Especially during a period of intense occupation, work in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah was complicated by shifting curfews, closures, checkpoints, searches, interrogations, and at times emotional and physical harassment by Israeli forces. Traversing between these two separate Palestinian communities, one in exile, the other under occupation, I found many of my previous relationships obsolete. Often I was forced to walk into highly confrontational and at times violent social spaces without the necessary cover that had been provided by my cadre of contacts, friends, and associates in Jordan. Over time, however, I settled into my Ramallah-based community and found a group of politically active musicians willing to participate in this project. Traveling back and forth between Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Ramallah (a distance of about twenty kilometers) was at best arduous and

at worst impossible. Checkpoints, closures, and isolated incidents of violence between local Palestinians and occupation forces meant that even the most innocent trip required hours of waiting, three to four different taxis, and a gauntlet of body searches, questioning, and intimidation.

Returning to Amman with cases of photocopied source materials and recordings, I began to uncover two disparate cultural narratives: one of occupation and the other of exile. Exploring these two narratives offered fascinating data on the various ways identity, nationalism, and resistance are performed and enacted in everyday life. Every few weeks, or thereabouts, I would return to the West Bank via the Allenby Bridge. I would then attend concerts, interview musicians, take lessons, or search for lost books or articles. Moving back and forth between Amman and Ramallah proved to be one of the most interesting, and challenging, aspects of this research. I transported old and new intifada cassettes across the banks of Jordan River, putting groups of musicians working for the same cause in touch with one another for the first time. Travel into the West Bank has been strictly controlled since 1967, effectively preventing Palestinian refugees and their descendants in Jordan from visiting their natal villages. Shielded by my American passport and Irish complexion, I visited the ancestral villages of several of my close friends, bringing back pictures, mementos, or bags of soil (keepsakes of Palestine) for their homes. My American citizenship and non-Arab name provided an important means of reaching out to their homeland, if only through photographs and other souvenirs.

In the fall of 2003 I began rehearsing with one of the most famous resistance ensembles of the 1970s and 1980s, Firqat Aghani al-ʿAshiqin (The Songs of the Lovers Ensemble). The group had recently begun a comeback tour in November 2003, enlisting the talents of a new generation of young musicians to revive the group's canon of past resistance songs made famous in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Under the direction of one of the group's founding members, Hussein Munther (Abu Ali), I was enlisted to help consult with the group and acted as the group's *nai* player (an Arab end-blown reed flute) in rehearsals and recording sessions. While playing with al-ʿAshiqin, I learned the standard repertory of intifada songs (melodies, rhythms, and texts) from the vantage point of an inside performer. Modal relationships, timbre, ornamentation, and rhythmic and melodic nuance were all explained onstage and in the course of

performance. This training was invaluable to my research and proved my savior on many occasions.

My ethnographic experience working and performing with these famous intifada singers gives this study a unique coloring typically absent from previous work on Palestinian music. As a performer, I was able to not only record and collect these songs, but at times perform them at rallies, weddings, and festivals. My participation in rehearsals, concerts, jam sessions, and other musical events allowed me entrance into the compositional and performative processes that gave the music its meaning. In my analysis I explored the musicological relationships between the canonized repertory of resistance cassettes made popular in the early 1970s and their indigenous "folk" antecedents by getting directly into their instinctive and associative musical meanings. Learning the songs directly from the poets and singers opened up possibilities for exploring meaning, intent, composition, improvisation, and other creative processes not available from recordings alone.

My approach to researching the fields of music and nationalism consisted of a careful reading of the extant literature, while at the same time seeking out the opinions, histories, and practices of those currently working in the movement for Palestinian self-determination. This research was, therefore, largely ethnographic in orientation, based on extended participant-observation. In some cases I documented performances from afar, mingling among the crowds. At other times I was a full member of the ensemble, participating in rehearsals and performances onstage. Here in the living rooms and performance halls I learned the nuance of certain melodies and rhythms, why ṣaba and huzām, for example, were particularly powerful modes for indexing experiences of mourning and lament. Throughout this fieldwork it was my hope that such an approach would provide a more meaningful middle ground between journalistic observation and source material analysis, infusing each with an ethnographic "sense of being": a representation of the repertory as it was performed and consumed among its practitioners.

Circulating among groups of activists in Amman and Ramallah, I attended countless concerts, protests, and demonstrations; made extensive visits to Palestinian social and political institutions; and sought out folklorists and other experts in the political sphere. Participant-observation combined with formal interviews and the collection of oral histories

formed the main methods of my research. Many of these interviews were informally held in late-night music sessions over a plate of hummus and coffee or tea. Others were quite formal, taking place in government offices and ministries. In either case interviews were done in a mixture of Arabic and English depending on the situation. Research in one of Jordan's many refugee camps was often entirely in Arabic, while interviews with government officials and more cosmopolitan artists in the cities would often be entirely in English. Unconsciously and unintentionally, many of these conversations freely shifted between the two languages, making for a considerably difficult time transcribing the interviews the next day. In a cultural intersection of class and social formation, language was a primary means of self-identification and self-construal, distinguishing a *mathāqqaf* (cultured) Palestinian from someone *min al-shuwāriʿ* (from the streets).

After several months of working in Amman in the winter of 2003, I met Kamal Khalil, leader of the Jordanian-based ensemble Baladna (Our Homeland). Working with Kamal provided a fascinating counterpoint to previous narratives I had been exposed to. In our interviews Kamal was eager to share many of his life experiences. He provided a compelling history of activism in Jordan, and through our close relationship he emerged as one of the primary voices in this book. Despite our mutual enthusiasm, there were often unavoidable difficulties in our collaboration. Working fifteen-hour days as a construction laborer, Kamal was often too tired to be interviewed, too busy with family obligations, or simply not up to entertaining a non–family member in his busy house. So, too, for me, the trip to his home in Ruseifa took three buses and, depending on traffic, over an hour each way. Given that our meetings rarely began before 8:00 PM, I was often left wondering how I would make it back to my apartment in suburban Amman. After midnight, buses and shared taxis became very difficult to find, and rarely was I able to get back home without incident. At times the trek back to Amman in the middle of the night required imagination, a sense of humor, and resourcefulness. One particular night I was overjoyed upon finding a bus going directly to my Amman neighborhood, Talaʿ ʿAli. Unfortunately the driver was so tired from his twenty-hour shift that the only way I could persuade him to finish his route was to drive the bus myself. So while he slept in a passenger seat, I drove the bus back to Amman, picking up passengers, collecting fares, laughing uncontrollably at the strange looks and surprised faces from the local passengers.

Over the course of twenty months of fieldwork during the second al-Aqsa intifada, the political landscape of the resistance movement changed considerably. The American invasion of Iraq, the accelerated construction of the Israeli "security/apartheid" wall, the assassinations of Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his successor (Abdel Aziz Rantisi), the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal, the signing of the "Road Map," and the death of Yasser Arafat all had significant effects on Palestinian society and were manifest in music and cultural production. Within days of each of these events, CDs, videos, and other popular media (both new and old) became available on the streets, commemorating the dead, debating political ideology, or expressing outrage. Music, it seems, was a powerful means of reaching out to the Palestinian community, of nationalizing and defining resistance, and of forging political allegiances. This musical soundscape formed a significant space in which commonsense understandings of Palestinian identity, nation, and resistance were publicly debated on stereos and street corners, in taxicabs and coffee shops.

In the summer of 2005 I returned to Palestine to embark on a new path of research. Over the previous year I had been in contact, via e-mail, with a group of Palestinian Israeli hip-hop artists currently performing throughout Israel and the West Bank. Their experiences living in the Israeli ghettos of Lyd offered an intriguing aspect of Palestinian music and resistance heretofore absent from my research. They were Palestinian citizens of Israel, or "'48s," as they called themselves, an allusion to their residence in and identification with pre-1948 Palestine. These young artists used a transnational form of American hip-hop to express feelings of ethnic and national sentiment across both Palestinian and Israeli soundscapes. Performing in a mixture of English, Hebrew, and Arabic, these rappers offered a truly remarkable opportunity to document a new direction in Palestinian resistance song, one that was perhaps more aligned with new transnational social realities. For three months in the summer of 2005 I researched the development of Palestinian hip-hop, interviewing artists and audiences, and attending performances in Israel and the West Bank. The fluidity with which these young rappers were able to traverse and at times transcend the rigid binaries of Palestinian and Israeli, Arab and Jew, offered a truly intriguing foil to the hardcore nationalists performing in exile and under occupation. By documenting the cultural, aesthetic, and ideational tactics exhibited by these rappers as they performed before audiences of Israeli Jews and West Bank Palestinians, I

began to realize the poetics, politics, and potentialities for a new imagining of Palestinian protest song.

Synopsis

This book is conceptualized in two distinct yet interrelated sections: the first ethnohistorical (chapters 2–5); the second, ethnographic (chapters 6–9). Ethnomusicologists have long employed historical and ethnographic methodologies in their work, and this book is certainly no exception. My goal has been to blend historical and ethnographic modalities, shifting from broad historical narrative to particular ethnographic experience. However, the movement between these two methodologies presents certain challenges, and they tend to overlap throughout the text. To this end historical events may reappear in subsequent chapters as they are opened up to further interrogation and more in-depth ethnographic analysis based in personal experience.

The distinctions between historical and ethnographic modalities are further complicated in terms of fieldwork techniques. For while the historical narrative presented in chapters 2–5 was written as a chronology, it was derived entirely from ethnographic methods: long-term sustained participant-observation, oral histories, interviews, and textual analysis. Many of the singers and songs depicted in this historical narrative were revealed to me in the course of contemporary performance (conversations, interviews, collective listening, and musical performance). Artists build on and dialogue with the established repertories of the past. In this way the history of Palestinian protest song is one of constant conversation, never detached or distant from the lives and experiences of contemporary actors. My attempt to present an ethnographic history of Palestinian protest song situates historical understanding of political events within the legacies and frameworks of contemporary meaning.

On a more practical level the division of this text into two sections serves a specific purpose. Given the lack of an English-language monograph on the history and development of Palestinian music, the chronology presented in chapters 2–5 is intended to lay the groundwork for later discussions of individuated experience and local meaning, to establish a working vocabulary of Palestinian musical identity that may then be employed in understanding the lives and experiences of contemporary performers. To fully understand the ideational processes through which

the performance of the Palestinian line dance, *al-dabke*, becomes a meaningful gesture of resistance, for example, one must first understand the legacies of history, the interpretive frameworks through which the dabke becomes meaningful to its participants. For this to occur it is essential to have a working knowledge of Palestinian cultural history, to know names and dates, people and places.

With this in mind, in chapters 2–5 I provide a basic historical overview of the canon of Palestinian resistance song, focusing specifically on its relationship with the changing social and political landscape. Through careful musical and textual analysis I explore many of the dominant signs, myths, and meanings inherent to this repertory, deconstructing the indexical associations that constitute the poetics of Palestinian nationalism and resistance. In chapter 2 I investigate the pre-1948 origins of Palestinian resistance song, beginning with the repertory of the traditional *sha'r al-murtajal* (poet-singer). The life and career of the famous poet Nuh Ibrahim and his influence on the 1936 Great Revolt is explored with particular detail, emphasizing his overall impact in fostering support for the rebellion and nationalizing a rural population of indigenous *fallāḥīn* (peasantry) to rise up against the British colonial administration.

Following this, I trace the cultural repercussions of the 1948 war, *al-nakba* (the catastrophe), on indigenous forms of Palestinian music making. I then explore the effects of Arabism on music and cultural production in Egyptian cosmopolitan centers as well as among communities of dispersed Palestinian refugees across the region. I discuss the ideational impact of Arabism and Nasserism on the formation of Palestinian national identities in exile and document the role of music and music performance in maintaining communal relations and subjectivities in the refugee camps. With the fall of Nasserism and the defeat of Arab forces in the June War of 1967, a new repertory of political song emerged, made known by the famous satirist Sheikh Imam 'Issa. I begin chapter 3 with an investigation into the rise of the sheikh and further trace his lasting impact on the formation of modern Arabic political song to the present day.

In chapter 3 I continue the historical narrative, beginning with the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the rise of the *fidā'iyīn* (paramilitant freedom fighters). The various styles of music emanating from the liberation movement are analyzed with regard to the formation and dissemination of prominent Palestinian identity constructs. Significant poets, singers, and songs are discussed with

regard to the overall project of nationalism, liberation, and militarization. The Palestinian-Jordanian civil war (Black September) and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila are then discussed with regards to their influence on Palestinian poetics and cultural production.

In chapter 4 I explore the role of music in the first Palestinian intifada of 1987–93. Here I present an analysis of the ensuing revival of indigenous forms of political activism. The identity construct of the militarized *fidāʾī* was supplanted by imagery of stone-throwing youth, the *atfāl al-ḥijāra* (children of the stones), rebelling in the streets of Gaza. This shift had tremendous importance for defining the nation and the culturally constructed notions of resistance prescribed in its defense. I examine, in turn, the conflicting aesthetics of nationalist, Islamist, and Arabist musical formations and follow the trajectories of each through the post-Oslo period and into the beginnings of the second al-Aqsa intifada. I begin chapter 5 with a discussion of revivals and new arrivals, resistance singers and songs brought back into the public sphere nearly twenty years after their prime as well as a new crop of cultural activists composing and performing for the next generation (*jīl al-thānī*).

In chapters 6–7 I depart from a broad historical narrative to provide an ethnographic look into the life and career of one of the most famous intifada singers of the 1980s and 1990s, Kamal Khalil. In studying Khalil's life and career I illustrate how large-scale social and political forces were felt and experienced by musicians willing to sacrifice their careers, families, and bodies for a nationalist ideal. Situated within the Palestinian Jordanian nationscape, these two chapters provide a historical and ethnographic analysis of the compositional and performative processes by which one musician attempted to negotiate pervasive structures of violence and state terror. Drawing out personal narratives of arrest and torture, I attempt to reveal the personal manifestations of Palestinian dispossession and further illustrate what effects state actions, interests, and discourses have had on musical processes emerging from within its frames. For a population of exiles living peacefully in a host nation-state, what does resistance really mean? And how might music fashion performative moves for experiencing and participating in the intifada from afar?

In chapters 8 and 9 I shift to an examination of the origins of Palestinian hip-hop as it was spearheaded by a group of young Palestinian Israelis from the city of Lyd, a small ethnically mixed neighborhood outside of Tel Aviv, Israel. At the time of my initial research, Palestinian hip-

hop constituted a new direction in resistance song that quickly took hold among cosmopolitan youth in Israel and the West Bank. This movement was especially significant in that it began among a small community of Palestinian Israelis initially rapping in a mixture of English, Arabic, and Hebrew. Their work revealed a new discursive field wherein the established modes of Palestinian nationalism were resignified, inclusive of new forms of music and media. Particularly important to this analysis are the changing ways these artists have attempted to transcend their ethnic and national ambiguity through the performance of shared cosmopolitan aesthetics and practices. In analyzing the politics and poetics of this new wave of hip-hop I interrogate contemporary discourses of terrorism, nation, and transnationalism, pursuing an approach that situates popular culture as a fundamental means of examining power and agency.