

International and Interdisciplinary Workshop

The Arab Collections of the Phonogramm-Archiv

Friday, 3 December 2021

Humboldt Forum Berlin, Schloßplatz, 10178 Berlin, Klangwerkstatt

Organized by Ethnologisches Museum Berlin and
the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)

Please note that 2G+ rules apply: Proof of vaccination or recovery is required PLUS a negative test.

9:00 Welcome Address

Maurice Mengel, Ethnologisches Museum / Humboldt Forum, Berlin, Germany

The Arab Collections of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv

Chair: AGYA member Matthias Pasdzierny, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW), Germany

9:15 The Collections of Arab Music in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv

Susanne Ziegler, Phonogramm-Archiv Berlin, Germany

9:35 A Panorama of Yemeni Music in 1934: The First Cylinder Recordings by Hans Helfritz

Jean Lambert, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Beirut, Lebanon

10:00 Syria at the Berlin Sound Archive

Tala Jarjour, King's College, United Kingdom of Great Britain

10:20 Q&A Session

10:50 Break

11:10 Robert Lachmann Discovering the Music in Tunisia: From Wünsdorf to Djerba

Anas Ghrab, University of Sousse, Tunisia

11:30 The Lachmann Collections: A German-Jewish Ethnomusicologist's Recordings of Arabic Music

Gila Flam, National Library of Israel

11:50 Q&A Session

12:15 Lunch break

14:15 Roundtable

Travelling Sounds and Knowledge Change. Musical Topographies between Production, Recording and Archiving

Chair: Mitchell Ash, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Germany

Participants: Dörte Schmidt, Universität der Künste (UdK), Germany

Gideon Reuveni, University of Sussex, United Kingdom of Great Britain

15:00 Q&A Session



Ethnologisches Museum
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin



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The Collections of Arab Music in the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv

Susanne Ziegler, Phonogramm-Archiv Berlin, Germany

The number of collections of Arabic music, 30 collections in all, is impressive, as is the great number of wax cylinders. In the beginning, Arabic music was not the main concern of the Phonogram Archive; there were only a small number of collections of Arabic music until 1918, but even then extensive research was being done (see Hornbostel's 1906-7 article on Tunisian music). The records made in Arab countries peaked around 1930, with Robert Lachmann as the leading figure and several other scholars associated with the Berlin School of Comparative Musicology.

In my presentation, I will give an overview of the collections, their status and content, and highlight their specific features compared to collections from other regions of the world. Based on the historical documents associated with the collections (correspondence, publications), information will also be given about the collectors, their background, motivation, and fieldwork.

A Panorama of Yemeni Music in 1934: The First Cylinder Recordings by Hans Helfritz

Jean Lambert, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Lebanon

The recordings of Hans Helfritz made in Yemen in 1934 represent a sonic treasure for our knowledge of this country's music. They are the first massive recordings of Yemeni music; the first commercial recordings began only later, and not in the same regions. Although these regions were almost inaccessible, because Hans Helfritz travelled through large parts of Yemen, from north to south and east to west, we are fortunate to dispose of rare examples of popular music from Sanaa, Taiz, Tihama, Hodaïdah, Zabid (Zaranig tribe), 'Awlaq, Habban, Lahij and Hadramaut (Shihr). The sociological variety is also very impressive: there are songs of shepherds, muleteers and cameleers, songs of soldiers of the Imam, songs of Bedouins and tribesmen from the Highlands, *razfa* and *zāmil* (Beni Matar, al-Haima, Manakha), children's songs, Jewish songs in Arabic and Hebrew, as well as historical or mythical accounts such as the Jews' journey from Jerusalem to Yemen. These recordings are mostly a cappella songs, but there are also some with the *mizmār* double clarinet and the *gaşba* flute. We note the absence of the lute, 'ūd, which was present at that time in Sanaa, but prohibited by the theocratic power of the Imam. Also leaning on Hans Helfritz account from his book, my communication will attempt to identify as many possible texts.

Syria at the Berlin Sound Archive

Tala Jarjour (King's College/UK)

European scholarship has long been fascinated with the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly with what relates to its ancient artifacts. In the same vein, sounds from the region were of paramount interest to European musicology since its inception; this has been reflected in its engagement with a multitude of local musics at various points. Since the invention of sound recording technology and even before, many of the region's kinds of monophonic chant have featured prominently among objects of European scholarly interest. True to its history, and small and limited as its relevant holdings may be, the sound recordings held in Berlin reflect this fascination to a notable degree. In this short paper I survey the Syria collection of sound recordings at the Berlin Sound Archive (so far as possible from a distance), and hope to offer a preliminary take on the nature of these holdings. My paper will also suggest connections between European musicology and chant among the region's diverse peoples, with some emphasis on notions of religion and historical value.

Robert Lachmann Discovering the Music in Tunisia: From Wünsdorf to Djerba

Anas Ghrab, University of Sousse, Tunisia

Robert Lachmann is a fundamental figure in the history of comparative musicology. It was within the framework of his participation in the work of the Königlich Preußische Phonographische Kommission in which he was introduced to Tunisian musical practices, which led him to continue his analysis of this repertoire directly in the Tunisian field. There, he discovered a multitude of musical practices, including those relating to his Jewish identity, particularly targeted in the political and social context of his time. Our communication will present an analytical and synthetic reading of documents relating to R. Lachmann and Tunisia, through the recordings of the Phonogram Archiv and the traces of his meeting with Rodolphe d'Erlanger and Hasan Hosni Abdelwahhab. We will integrate this into the evolution of Lachmann's publications and the themes he addresses, ranging from scholarly music in Tunis, to popular music in the Tunisian regions, to a general theory of the evolution of Jewish music.

The Lachmann Collections: A German-Jewish Ethnomusicologist's Recordings of Arabic Music

Gila Flam, National Library of Israel

Robert Lachmann was primarily a scholar of Arab music. Fluent in both spoken and written Arabic, he carried out extensive fieldwork across North Africa through the 1920s and the early 1930s, equipped with Edison's phonograph. In April 1935, Lachmann arrived in Jerusalem accompanied by his recording technician. He brought with him his state-of-the-art recording equipment, his personal library of books, periodicals and commercial records, and copies of his own recordings of some 350-wax cylinders made for the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv. Over the following three years, Lachmann recorded about 1000 metal discs, documenting the oral traditions of the different non-European communities of Palestine, mainly Arabs, and produced several radio broadcasts on various aspects of Oriental music.

In 1936, Lachmann established the Archives of Oriental Music at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which supported him financially for three years. He owned a phonograph but had difficulties receiving wax cylinders and therefore he made most of his recordings in Palestine on metal discs. After three years of intensive work, Lachmann got ill and died in Jerusalem in 1939.

The cylinders and metal records were first handled by Lachmann's assistant, Dr. Edith Gerson Kiwi (1908-1992). In 1965, the music department and the National Sound Archives of the National Library of Israel were established as part of the National Library of Israel, and Lachmann's collection was transferred to the library along with other documents, manuscript and printed materials (Call Number MUS 26). Gerson Kiwi's documentation of these collections were also donated to the NLI. Part of it was further transferred, after her death, to the European Center for Jewish Music in Hannover (Call Number MUS 78). All the paper documents are digitized.

In the early 1990's, Lachmann's recordings were digitized (first to Digital Audio Tapes, then to computer files) and made available for listening at the Library's website. Recently, the collection has been catalogued again on the library's current cataloguing system, ALMA (by Ex - Libris Group); but many musical pieces, mostly instrumental Arabic music, could not be identified and are listed as "unidentified Arabic music". In my presentation, I will introduce Lachmann's written and audio collections as well as Gerson-Kiwi's documents, and call for professional cooperation and assistance in the deciphering and provisioning of access of this early and very important Palestinian-Arabic music.