RETHINKING THE URBAN COMMUNITY: (RE) MAPPING MUSICAL PROCESSES AND PLACES

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Abstract: ***Urban musical research continues to present theoretical and methodological challenges. This paper suggests a revised approach to the study of the urban diaspora community, mapping ways in which musical processes have been instrumental in shaping the cultural places central to the development of the Ethiopian diaspora community. Following cultural geography's attention to "place-making" rather than residential proximity as the locus of community formation, the discussion tracks aspects of musical transmission and performance that have helped generate, shape, and sustain new communities among Ethiopians in the diaspora.***

Keywords: ***urban; community; diaspora; music; Ethiopians***

If studies of urban musical phenomena have come to dominate ethnomusicological research since the 1970s, there remain both theoretical and methodological issues surrounding this complex area of inquiry. While approaches to urban musical life had their roots in the study of ethnic communities (Reyes 1979) and often continue to focus on collectivities united by descent, our changing world has reshaped the processes through which urban communities are formed, encouraged their increasingly porous boundaries, and transformed the networks and media through which they are sustained. Indeed, the very notion of musical community itself merits considerable rethinking and expansion, a discussion I have initiated in a recent publication (Shelemay 2011a). In this paper I will take a close look at ways in which musical processes have been instrumental in shaping urban musical communities through music's role in establishing

the ethnic places that unite a collectivity from within and represent it to the outside world.[1]

Here I am interested in approaching musical transmission and performance not as static symbols of established social groupings, but rather as dynamic processes that can generate, shape, and sustain new communities. In urban settings, these musical processes operate in distinctive ways. My comments here derive from observing the formation of Ethiopian diaspora communities since their beginnings in the second half of the 1970s, most particularly in heavily urban North American locales, and from tracking music's pivotal role in generating differentiated social groupings. An unusually large number of Ethiopian musicians have migrated abroad since the advent of the Ethiopian revolution in 1974, providing a unique opportunity to document their roles in both sustaining existing social ties and galvanizing new collectivities during the processes of resettlement. Ethiopia is an intensely multi-ethnic country with many different musical traditions; a signal challenge in the diaspora is to discern how multiple musical styles figure into a complicated process of community formation. During 2007–2008, I tracked individual immigrant musicians who performed the widest range of Ethiopian musics in various settings, seeking to understand their musical lives in their new urban environments.[2] The theoretical proposals in this paper emerge both from this recent round of ethnographic research and from my longer-term studies of the Ethiopian homeland and subsequent diaspora formation.

In bringing the urban area into clearer dialogue with the role of music making in generating new Ethiopian communities, I will draw on an article by cultural geographer Elizabeth Chacko, who studied the growing numbers of African immigrants, with special attention to Ethiopians among them, in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area (Chacko 2003). Ethiopians are the second largest of the new African immigrant groups who have arrived in North America since the period of African independence post 1965 and who are today

1 In this discussion, I will use the terms community, collectivity, and social grouping interchangeably.

2 I am grateful to the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress, where I spent two summers as the Chair for Modern Culture during 2007–2008, carrying out fieldwork with Ethiopian musicians in the Washington, D.C, metropolitan area. I acknowledge the many musicians who participated in the project and shared their experiences and music with me. More than sixty oral histories, sound recordings, and related ephemera gathered during this residency have been deposited in the archives of the American Folklife Center. Fellowships from Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the National Endowment forj the Humanities made possible release time from teaching for the 2007–2008 academic year.

widely dispersed across the United States and Canada.[3] There are estimated to be approximately 250,000 Ethiopian immigrants living in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area alone. Chacko has noted that Ethiopians (and other new African communities) are not concentrated in a single residential area, but rather are widely dispersed across a number of neighborhoods in the District of Columbia and nearby municipalities in Maryland and Virginia.

The shaded areas on Chacko's map reproduced in Figure 1 identify residential concentrations of Ethiopians, although it should be noted that Ethiopians constitute only 18% of new African arrivals even in those areas where they have the greatest concentrations, a "palpable," but by no means dominant presence (Chacko: 29). We should also take into account that there have surely been some subtle changes in residence patterns and place-making since Chacko's map was published in 2003, notably a shift of commercial institutions from the Adams Morgan neighborhood north of Dupont Circle, to areas a short distance east on the U Street corridor.[4] The residential neighborhoods highlighted on Chacko's map and the relative numbers of Ethiopians in each area, with the largest number of Ethiopians dwelling in Virginia, followed by Maryland, with the District in third place, are quite congruent with the more limited residential data I gathered from 31 Ethiopian musicians active in the D.C. metropolitan area during 2007–2008. Among my research associates, the largest number (13) lived in Virginia (primarily in Arlington and Alexandria); 10 resided in Maryland, spread mainly across the Takoma Park/Silver Spring area; and 8 dwelled within or near to the District of Columbia's Columbia Heights area. Thus Ethiopians are dispersed across multiple neighborhoods, although they undoubtedly will encounter other immigrants from their homeland in each. At least 4 of the 31 musicians I interviewed moved within the metropolitan area or away from it during or shortly after the interview period in 2007–2008, a familiar profile

3 See Shelemay and Kaplan, 'Introduction," 2006 (2011) for a fuller account of Ethiopian migration, past and present, and the challenges of providing data such as firm population figures. In some sources and population surveys, the designation 'Ethiopian' may include Eritreans, people from the former Ethiopian province along the Red Sea coast that has been an independent country since 1991, as well as a large number of Ethiopian communities collectively known as the Oromo.

4 The U Street Corridor in Northwest Washington has since the early twentieth century been closely associated with the African American community. It is within walking distance of Howard University and home to the Lincoln Theatre and many African American music clubs. The African- American Civil War Memorial is located on U Street adjacent to the Cardoza Washington Metro Station. A large mural of Duke Ellington decorates a wall of the U Street True Reformer Building, itself across the street from the legendary Ben's Chili Bowl Restaurant.

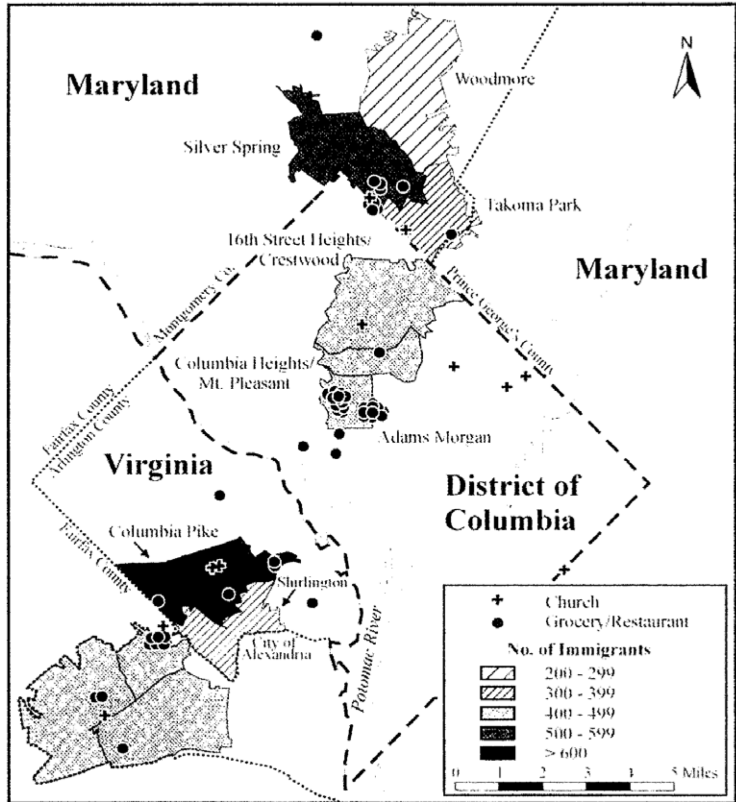

Figure 1: Map of Ethiopian Community in Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area.
Source: Elizabeth Chacko, "Ethiopian Ethos and the Making of Ethnic Places in the Washington Metropolitan Area," *Cultural Geography* 2003 (20/2): 23. Used by permission.

in which new immigrants are quite mobile as they search for employment and economical housing in a new locale.

The black dots on Chacko's map mark the locations of Ethiopian grocery stores and restaurants, while the crosses provide locations of Ethiopian churches. These are the physical sites that serve, to use Chacko's term, as "ethnic place makers" and that hold both real and symbolic meaning in the construction of the Ethiopian diaspora community (Ibid.). Most strikingly, the map shows that locations of many of the most prominent Ethiopian institutions and commercial establishments, which are the most important ethnic place-makers, are found

outside the boundaries of major Ethiopian residential areas. Building on Zelinsky and Lee's (1998) notion of heterolocalism,[5] and Wood's (1997) concept of ethnic place-making [6], Elizabeth Chacko suggests "that ethnic place-making in metropolitan areas has been loosened from its traditional centrality moorings," and differs from one immigrant community to another (Chacko, p. 24). She suggests that urban ethnic identities are not to be sought or displayed in the residential centers, but are vested in specific *places* where community is forged and embodied (Ibid., p. 25). Chacko further suggests that Ethiopians' efforts in urban ethnic place-making can serve as a model for understanding the creation and maintenance of ethnic community by other new immigrant groups. (Ibid., p. 28)

Chacko goes on to provide a taxonomy of places that serve to generate a sense of community among ethnic communities in urban settings characterized by residential scattering. She proposes that these types of places include ethnic institutions, ethnic sociocommerscapes, ethnic arenas, and intangible ethnic places, as Figure 2 summarizes and defines in detail.

Ethnic institutions (churches, civic and political organizations, etc.)

Sociocommerscapes (ethnic businesses that provide goods and meeting places)

Ethnic Arenas or Transient Ethnic Places (spaces used repeatedly by a given community, but lacking permanent ethnic markers)

Intangible Ethnic Places (Internet sites, radio and television stations, musical recordings, etc.)

Figure 2: Ethnic Place-Making in Heterolocal Urban Settings.
Source: Based on Elizabeth Chacko. 2003. "Ethiopian Ethos and the Making of Ethnic Places in the Washington Metropolitan Area," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 29/2: 29–39.

I would like to draw on Chacko's taxonomy of ethnic place-making, but wish to complicate it in two ways. First, I would like to heighten our awareness of the processes through which these types of ethnic places arise as venues of

5 Heterolocalism "refers to recent populations of shared ethnic identity that enter an area from distant sources, then quickly adopt a dispersed pattern of residential location, all the while managing to remain cohesive through a variety of means." (Zelinsky and Lee 1998: 281).

6 In Wood's study of Vietnamese Americans in Northern Virginia, he suggests that the community does not construct residential clusters, but invests with "novel meanings" specific sites for economic or other community activity (p. 58).

community activity and affiliation. And, second, I would like to suggest that musical performance and the agency of musicians play critical roles in the processes that give rise to ethnic place-making as well as their social outcomes.

With this in the way of introduction and theoretical framework, I will briefly sketch the history of the Ethiopian diaspora in order to provide an overview of issues related to the community's migration that frame the processes of place-making through musical activity. Following this overview, I will briefly track aspects of musical transmission and performance that have helped generate, shape, and sustain new urban sites in diaspora. I will then connect place-making with cross-cutting Ethiopian taxonomies of music in order to clarify the dimensions of musical heterogeneity at work as well as the social outcomes. The conclusion will offer a brief summary of ways in which musical processes shape the collective in the urban environment.

I. A Brief History of the Ethiopian Diaspora

The Ethiopian diaspora was sparked by the inception of the Ethiopian revolution in 1974, a conflict that commenced with urban protests and soon led to widespread conflict, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee across Ethiopia's borders, some south to Kenya, some east to Djibouti, others west to the Sudan. [7] In addition to the strong push factors stemming from revolutionary violence and related hardships, musicians experienced additional pressures to emigrate. The imposition of stringent curfews extending from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. for months at a time effectively shut down all performance venues, rendering musical performance impossible in restaurants, clubs, and churches.[8] Additionally, secular musicians were historically viewed as agents of political commentary in Ethiopia. During the Italian occupation of the country from 1936–1941, traditional minstrels (*azmari*) were systematically taken into custody and murdered by the Italians lest they give voice to patriotism and inspire resistance. Stringent censorship measures put in place by the revolutionary government also rendered creative activity problematic or even dangerous. Many musicians were harassed and even imprisoned for periods of time, and thus an especially large number of them fled the country and sought asylum abroad.

7 The long civil war with Eritrea that resulted in Eritrean independence in 1991 rendered escape to the north and east quite dangerous.

8 The most substantial portion of the Ethiopian Orthodox liturgy in terms of its musical content occurs during the performance of the Cathedral Office, which extends on holidays throughout most of the evening and early morning hours.

The revolution ended the long reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I and also overturned the hegemony of the Christian Amhara ethnic-/religious group that had for centuries dominated Ethiopian political, religious, and economic life. The revolutionary government by 1975 was headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam, a military officer who ruthlessly executed his opponents, jailed former leaders, and nationalized all urban and rural land and buildings. In 1991, Mengistu[9] was overthrown by northerners from Tigray Province who still head the Ethiopian government today, more than twenty years after the revolution's end. Building on long-standing ethnic differences that had been accentuated during the revolutionary period, the post-1991 government re-divided the country according to ethnic boundaries and introduced a multi-ethnic policy that pitted one community against another as a means to retain their own power.

As one of the oldest Christian countries in the world, with an Orthodox church founded in the early fourth century, Ethiopia's Christian Amharas, numbering around 35% of the population, fell on particularly hard times during the revolution. The revolution ended in 1991, but the subsequent 20 years saw a second wave of Christian Amhara emigration as a response to the establishment of the Tigrayan government. One new factor, however, was that, although travel to and from Ethiopia was severely limited during the revolutionary years 1975–1991, after the change of government in 1991, many were able to depart legally and others living abroad were able to return to Ethiopia for visits or to repatriate. This change increased diaspora mobility and allowed some musicians to maintain careers both in the diaspora and in the Ethiopian homeland.

As I have noted above, the largest number of those leaving Ethiopia for the diaspora were Christians whose historic church had lost its land and economic foundation through the 1975 nationalizations, and who, by 1991, were chafing under increasing ethnic pressure. But a number of Ethiopian Muslims and evangelical Christians also departed the country, as did virtually the entire community of Beta Israel/Falasha, known since the 1980s as the Ethiopian Jews.[10] My larger research project includes attention to processes and events crossing religious boundaries as well as extending to Eritrean and Oromo peoples. Since 1991 as well, some part of the emigration from Ethiopia has been voluntary, with pull

9 Ethiopians are traditionally called by their first names.

10 Ethiopians are today dispersed world wide, with certain locales becoming international centers for subsets of the population. For instance, virtually the entire Ethiopian Jewish community migrated to Israel. North America, including both the United States and Canada, attracted the majority of Ethiopian Christians and Muslims.

factors such as family reunions and economic opportunities abroad sparking departures now that borders are no longer closed; many Ethiopians have also won the lottery for U.S. diversity visas.

As a result, the largest Ethiopian diaspora community of the early twenty-first century is found in North America, with the majority being Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. Many, especially those who left the country surreptitiously, spent time in transit in refugee camps in the Sudan or in other countries along the way to final resettlement. Most arrived without much in the way of material resources and in need of supportive networks.

Thus Ethiopians who arrived in North America had a number of shared concerns as they began to build their new lives abroad. They needed a variety of goods ranging from materials for traditional dress to special ingredients that would enable them to prepare Ethiopian food and drink; they required venues in which they could celebrate their distinctive Orthodox Christian religious heritage[11]; and perhaps most keenly, immigrants longed for social networks with others who shared aspects of their background, language, culture, and experience as well as those who could help them negotiate unfamiliar demands of life in a new place. All of these needs required the establishment of places where these desires could be fulfilled.

II. Ethnic Place-Making and Musical Activity

At this point we can turn our attention to Ethiopian communities dispersed across major North American cities, with the largest concentrations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. There are also substantial Ethiopian populations in Los Angeles, Seattle, Minneapolis, Boston, Atlanta, and Toronto. Ethiopian immigrants are almost invariably heterolocal in their residential patterns and do not for the most part tend to cluster together residentially. Therefore, in each city one finds what may be termed Ethiopian places that can be discussed with reference to the four categories of ethnic places set forth by Chacko, detailed in Figure 2 above.

Some of these ethnic places may in fact be unmarked and known only to insiders, such as a Starbucks in downtown Minneapolis that was packed to over capacity with Ethiopian, Oromo, and Somali men on one Saturday afternoon

11 Ethiopian Muslim immigrants tended to join already established local mosques. In only a couple of places of resettlement did they found their own houses of worship.

when I visited there in March 2011. But the vast majority of Ethiopian ethnic places are marked in order to garner attention when they are encountered in an unexpected locale.

Institutional Places

Institutional places in the Ethiopian diaspora are dominated by churches.[12] That the Ethiopian Orthodox church features a liturgy that is almost entirely musical, with highly trained musicians necessary for its mounting, provides a clear indication of the important role of musicians in this type of diasporic institution building. Generally, a musician will be one of the founders of a local church since, without a musician, the liturgy cannot be performed.[13] A good example would be the distinguished L.M. Moges Seyoum, trained as both a priest and a musician, who was one of the founders of an Ethiopian church in Dallas, Texas, in the 1980s, and in the 1990s, of St. Mary's Church in Washington, DC., one of the largest Ethiopian churches in the diaspora (Shelemay 2011b: 309–11).[14]

Only at large churches such as St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Washington, DC, do you find a full cohort of musicians performing the liturgy, as seen in Fig. 3.

Churches in diasporic locales with fewer Ethiopians may be staffed by a single clergyman who both chants the liturgy and performs sacraments; on occasions, recordings may be used. Maintaining these religious institutions is a high priority and in the last decade a few churches have initiated classes instructing their congregants in the musical liturgy. At St. Mary's church in D.C,. L.M. Moges Seyoum teaches liturgy for approaching holidays to members of the congregation. The members of the class record the chants and commit them to memory before the liturgical occasion in question. Thus the very existence of Ethiopian Orthodox churches as well as the performance of its rituals in the diaspora are heavily dependent on the presence of musicians, from the moment of their founding forward.[15]

12 Quite common also are community centers organized by different ethnic groups within the greater Ethiopian community, such as Oromo community centers in locales ranging from Toronto to St. Paul.

13 The Ethiopian liturgy is quite esoteric, set in the ancient Semitic language, Ge'ez, and possessing an indigenous system of musical notation dating to the sixteenth century. Thus performance of the liturgy depends on musicians possessing a high level of training acquired within traditional church schools. For further details, see Shelemay and Jeffery.

14 Moges Seyoum carries the title "Liqä Mezämmәran, which means "head of the cantors [of the church choir]." (Sokolinskaia 2007: 577)

15 An additional musical component that has become an integral part of Ethiopian diaspora churches since the 1990s is the youth and women's choirs performing hymns in the Ethiopian vernacular, Amharic.

Fig. 3: Musicians Performing the Cathedral Office at St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C. Photograph by author.

Ethnic Sociocommerscapes

The various small shops of the *ethnic sociocommerscape* category provide goods and foodstuffs otherwise unavailable outside Ethiopia as well as a place where community members can congregate. Most shops also sell sound recordings and provide a venue for distributing posters and postcards announcing upcoming community social and musical events. See Figure 4 for a representative small shop, Maru Grocery on Bissonet Street in Houston, Texas, the only Ethiopian enterprise in a diverse immigrant shopping center.

Beyond the markets and shops, the most prominent Ethiopian sociocommerscapes worldwide are surely restaurants found in virtually every city with an Ethiopian resident who has resources to establish and run it. These restaurants are always well-marked and well-advertised within their respective urban areas for obvious commercial reasons: they serve simultaneously as gateways for the broader population in search of exotic food experiences as well as magnets at which Ethiopians gather.[16] One North American Ethiopian restaurant, Dukem

16 James McCann (2006: 385) argues that cooking and cuisine are more fundamental than any of the

Fig. 4: Maru Grocery, Houston, Texas. Photograph by author.

Restaurant of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, is so famous that it has been advertised on billboards in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia.

However, a closer look at restaurants also makes it clear that Ethiopian place-making in sociocommercial domains is closely tied to musical life: Ethiopian restaurants are at the same time musical venues, with music and its performance integral to their missions and success. For instance, almost all Ethiopian restaurants play recordings of Ethiopian music, with live performances if any Ethiopian musician is available in the area. At large restaurants in major urban centers, such as Washington, D.C.'s Dukem, the musical offerings receive nearly as much publicity as the food. Immediately following its "Welcome to Dukem Restaurant" heading, the restaurant's website proclaims: "Dukem Ethiopian Restaurant is the most enduring Ethiopian music entertainment landmark in the district." (http://dukemrestaurant.com/, accessed August 30, 2011)

aesthetic arts to Ethiopian cultural identity in the diaspora, serving as both an "economic engine and identity marker" of the diasporic community. However, he does not consider the role of music in these establishments.

Fig. 5: Dukem Restaurant Billboard, Bole Road, Addis Ababa, 2006.
Source: Photograph by author.

It is important to emphasize the diversity of Ethiopian musical offerings that span an array of musical styles from the most traditional to jazz. Dukem offers live music four nights a week, with a "cultural show" of Ethiopian traditional music and dance center stage from 7–10 p.m. on Wednesday evenings and Ethiopian popular music performed from 11 p.m. until the wee hours of the morning on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings.[17] On both Ethiopian and American holidays, as well as other special occasions, Dukem mounts an expanded menu of musical offerings. For instance, when the annual Ethiopian soccer tournament sponsored by ESFNA (Ethiopian Soccer Federation of North America) was held in Washington, D.C., in July 2008, Dukem stayed open twenty-four hours a day and had live entertainment seven days that week. As seen in Fig. 6, the

17 Before the 2008 economic downturn, Dukem offered two cultural shows weekly, mounting a show during early dinner hours on Sunday evenings as well as on Wednesdays. The cultural show attracts mainly non-Ethiopians and tourists, while the late night performances featuring popular Ethiopian singers accompanied by synthesizer and traditional Ethiopian instruments such as the six-stringed lyre (*krar*) attract a primarily Ethiopian audience.

Fig. 6: Dukem Restaurant in Washington DC, 2007.
Photograph by Itsushi Kawase, used by permission.

banner displayed outside the restaurant during that event pictured the musicians performing there, including both immigrants living in the metropolitan area and an artist brought from Addis Ababa.

Ethiopian sociocommerscapes such as restaurants or other shops can, but do not necessarily, occur in clusters. The Washington, D.C., U Street corridor has for the last decade been the site of several Ethiopian restaurants and clubs. Other similar sociocommercial clusters exist in locales ranging from downtown Silver Springs, Maryland to Arlington, Virginia.

Ethnic Arenas or Transient Ethnic Places

"Ethnic arenas" are spaces that provide "a temporary location for the convergence of the ethnic community" (Chacko 2003: 35) and are an important part of Ethiopian urban life. Like institutions and sociocommerscapes, their use is heavily associated with musical performance and most of the events held are generated at least in part by musicians.

Fig. 7: Sunset at Masqal Celebration, River Park, Cambridge, MA, 2009.
Photograph by David Kaminsky, used by permission.

For Ethiopian Christian holidays traditionally celebrated outdoors, such as Masqal, the festival of the True Cross observed annually in late September, many Ethiopian churches mount ceremonies in local parks, where they temporarily demark and decorate the space. River Park, bordering on Memorial Drive in Cambridge, MA, has become a regular site for the annual Masqal ceremony mounted by several Ethiopian Orthodox Churches located in different areas of Boston and its suburbs.

The park is temporarily rendered a sacred space, with a tent mounted to shield the clergy, their ritual objects and instruments, and prominent church leaders from the elements. A sound system is set up to render the ritual audible in the outdoor soundscape that abuts busy Memorial Drive and a shopping center. Diasporic creativity is also on clear display when the Masqal bonfire (*dämära*), traditionally lit at sunset as the climax of the ritual in Ethiopia, is replaced in deference to local fire laws by a fake bonfire made of gold-bordered cloth that reflects the rays of the setting sun. (See Fig. 7) Instead of lighting the bonfire, the congregants light tapers and sparklers as they festively circle the "bonfire."

Fig. 8: Musical Performance, Ethiopian Soccer Tournament, Washington, D.C. Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, 2008. Photograph by author.

Many other ethnic arenas can be identified, including, most prominently, the stadiums that host regular Ethiopian athletic tournaments. Annual Ethiopian national soccer competitions attract thousands from all over North America and beyond. Large gatherings, such as these tournaments at ethnic arenas, always feature a wide range of musical performances, some within the stadium itself, every evening, as seen in Fig. 8.[18] Invariably, booths are mounted to constitute a temporary sociocommerscape on the stadium grounds, marketing traditional food, musical recordings and videos, and many other souvenirs. Many Ethiopian-American philanthropic and community organizations also set up displays, reaching out to the large number of Ethiopian expatriates in attendance.

On other occasions, including both American and Ethiopian holidays, other local venues—from hotels to social halls—become temporary ethnic arenas

18 These concerts often feature several prominent musicians as well as traditional music ensembles; many venues have large open spaces in front of the musicians to accommodate social dancing.

for concerts and festive celebrations. Most of these events are spearheaded by musicians who tour and depend on local representatives for arrangements and ticket sales.

Intangible Ethnic Places

Finally, one finds intangible ethnic places in most major diasporic urban centers, including local Ethiopian radio and television stations. There is an overwhelming presence in the diaspora of Internet networks to "reflect on identity, to forge new communities, and to promote cultural innovation" (Hafkin 2011: 221). Music is, of course, ubiquitous on many of the web sites as Ethiopians attempt to overcome distances from the homeland and to forge new, virtual social networks (Ibid.: 224). There is widespread circulation of video footage and recordings both in intangible ethnic places on the web and in all of the other physical places I've mentioned. Most musicians advertise and distribute their own CDs and DVDs to Ethiopian shops internationally, circulating clips on the web for advertisements.

This quick overview of ethnic place-making in the Ethiopian urban scene should make clear the point that each category of place (institutions, sociocommerscapes, ethnic arenas, and virtual arenas) owes its existence at least in part to musical activity, with which it is prominently associated. To quote one of the musicians with whom I've worked:

"Music has a strong role within the Ethiopian youth community, or in the general community. Ethiopians have always explained their anger, pride, problems, and love of country through music… At the same time, music in Ethiopia, as anywhere else, is very special. It brings people together for common purpose, for national purpose, for religious purpose, for anything you like" (Interview with Getahun Atlaw Garede, 3 August 2008).

III. Musical Heterogeneity, Processes, and Places

If music plays an important role in shaping ethnic urban spaces, it is important to discuss briefly the heterogeneous musical styles that help construct communities in these locations. It is quite clear from my research to date that no single musical style correlates exclusively to a particular ethnic place nor is its music directed only at a single social grouping. For instance, as we have seen above in the example of Dukem, music at Ethiopian restaurants spans traditional and popular styles. One may often encounter traditional musicians performing secular songs following the church rituals held in urban parks. And finally, public concerts

may juxtapose a full range of musical styles from liturgical chant, to traditional music, to popular music. At the concert held in Washington, DC, to celebrate the Ethiopian Millennium in September, 2007,[19] the performance divided into three sections separated by intermissions.

A bit more detail is useful in this case. The first section featured church musicians performing a sequence of ritual chants and sacred dance in full liturgical regalia. The second section consisted of an ensemble of secular musicians playing traditional instruments, accompanying singers and dancers who did a series of fast costume changes as they performed a medley of songs and dances associated with a cross-section of Ethiopian ethnic groups and regions. The final portion of the concert, for which a Western-style bandstand was quickly put in place, featured popular singers accompanied by a modern jazz band.

The three divisions of this iconic concert correspond to a taxonomy of music long established in highland Ethiopia and actively maintained in the diaspora. Distinctions are first made between sacred music (*zema*), notably Ethiopian Christian chant, and secular music (*zäfän*), with secular styles breaking down into two broad subdivisions, each with its own internal complexities. The first secular category is cultural music (*bahəlawi*), referring to traditional musical styles associated with ethnic or regional communities, accompanied by traditional instruments. The second broad secular category is named *zämänawi* (literally “timely” or “modern” music), referring to popular music, including international styles such as jazz and hip-hop long ago introduced from abroad into the Ethiopian homeland experience. However, the boundaries between cultural and popular music prove to be permeable in practice, and there exists an ambiguous middle zone known as *bahəl zämänawi* , literally “cultural popular music.”[20]

All of the Ethiopian ethnic places discussed above accommodate a substantial range of musical styles. The one exception may appear at first glance to be the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, where traditional chant (*zema*) occupies center stage. However, even in the church, another musical style, that of vernacular (Amharic) hymns performed by choirs of young people and women, has since the revolution introduced a new set of musical traditions. Thus a concert with

19 The Ethiopian calendar is seven and one-half years behind the Western calendar, hence the dating of their Millennium celebration to September, 2007. See Shelemay 2009 for more details.

20 *Bahəl zämänawi* music is generally a popular song with a text in an Ethiopian language that is accompanied by one of the traditional instruments, such as the lyre (*krar*) or one-string bowed lute (*masenqo*). Some traditional songs accompanied by synthesizer also fall into this category.

multiple styles, as in the case of the Millennium Concert, in fact incorporates musical heterogeneity in order to signal inclusivity to the diverse Ethiopian audience numbering in the thousands. At the same time, music within one category can have extremely porous boundaries with that of another, as we have seen in the case of *bahəl zämänawi*. No one musical style correlates absolutely to a single place or collectivity, although there are moments at which a given musical style is preferred in order to attract or reinforce a particular social grouping. For instance, the cultural music performances at restaurants like Dukem are intended to attract individuals from outside the Ethiopian community and to enhance the appeal of Ethiopian food for those unfamiliar with the culture. Here traditional music is used largely to attract a community of affinity, outsiders attracted by new sights and sounds (Shelemay 2011a). In contrast, Ethiopian popular music (almost entirely with Ethiopian language texts) mainly appeals to an audience of Ethiopian immigrants, most particularly of a younger generation; scheduling these popular music performances very late in the evening hours further insures that a primarily Ethiopian audience will attend.[21]

Thus a very heterogeneous array of musical traditions, all of which may be glossed as "Ethiopian," give rise to an array of different collectivities. They provide moments in which aspects of the Ethiopian experience past and present can be shared, and the diaspora environment rendered familiar. Music, then, defines a given space at a particular moment as "Ethiopian."

Conclusion

In this paper, I've wedded theoretical ideas about place-making drawn from cultural geography to consideration of musical practices that shape in important ways to the character of these "ethnic places." That immigrant urban residential patterns are often heterolocal is surely well known to scholars of urban musical communities, as is the dispersal of ethnic places outside the boundaries of even modest residential clustering. However, the typology of heterolocal ethnic places opens up a rich area of exploration, one that reveals the surprising role of music in place-making across the board.

21 Ethiopian popular music concerts will often be announced for a conventional hour—beginning at 8 or 9 p.m.—but in practice almost always start at least several hours later. This reflects a longstanding tradition from Ethiopian culture, where promptness is understood to connote a state of anxiousness. This practice of arriving late at most events has been maintained in the diaspora, no doubt exacerbated by distance, complex work schedules, and transportation challenges in large urban areas.

Music plays a decisive role in shaping each of the four types of ethnic places discussed above and helps catalyze new collectivities associated with each place. Thus we have seen that musicians are vital to the founding and perpetuation of institutions such as Ethiopian Orthodox churches in the diaspora, performing both liturgical form and content that defines and unites an otherwise dispersed religious community. In ethnic arenas and sociocommerscapes, music generates and sustains new social groupings linked by shared culture and language; they mount musical events that run the gamut of musical styles, ranging from the celebration and commemoration of community occasions such as the Ethiopian new year, to attempts to attract new audiences beyond the boundaries of the ethnic community. Some major concerts held in various arenas serve to underscore diaspora dissent from homeland politics; a notable example was a 2009 concert in Washington, D.C., following the release of singer Teddy Afro from an Ethiopian prison on what were widely perceived to be false charges lodged by the current government. Finally, Ethiopian diaspora musical initiatives seek to attract and build new affinity communities, whether through performances of traditional music and dance, or through new hybrid styles on the jazz and popular music scene. In all cases, music-making imprints the various spaces with a full panoply of ethnic sounds. The range of musical styles invites multiple modalities of ethnic identity. Through (re) mapping musical processes and places, we can clarify ways in which the immigrant community both reinforces ties within the social group and, at some moments, invites others to cross those boundaries and join with them.

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