The festival of world sacred music: recontextualizing religious ritual on the secular stage

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THE FESTIVAL OF WORLD SACRED MUSIC:
RECONTEXTUALING RELIGIOUS RITUAL ON THE SECULAR STAGE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in
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by

Deborah Justice

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I. Introduction

On the way to a gig, the fiddle player in our band popped a CD into the car stereo. “I think you’ll really like this,” she said. Within seconds, I was captivated by a rich female voice singing beautiful Arabic words, floating over an instrumental drone.\(^1\) I did not know what I was listening to, but the singer conveyed a remarkable quality, which I would now describe as tarab.\(^2\) This evocative opening track was followed by the rhythmically complex and timbrelly raw music of Morocco’s Rif Mountains.\(^3\) I was amazed at the stylistic juxtaposition, a feeling which grew as the remaining tracks on the two-disc set touched upon a wide assortment of sacred musical traditions, ranging from the ceremonies of Moroccan brotherhoods to Hindustani chanting to Javanese gamelan.

This musical compilation was unlike anything I had ever heard; it was *Hamdulillah: Fes Festival of World Sacred Music*.

Appealing to my sensitivities as a performer and an academic, this compact disc (see Appendix One) sparked my interest in the Fes Festival. What was this event? Was it a recurring, annual occasion? Did it always feature such diverse traditions? How did such pluralism and religious tolerance exist in a state-supported festival in the officially Muslim kingdom of Morocco? My increasing questions led me to a single conclusion: I would go to see the festival myself. Three years later, funded by a Monroe grant from the College of William and Mary, I attended the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. Although my experiences in Fes answered some of my more concrete questions

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\(^1\) Track One on *Hamdulillah* features Amina Alaoui and the Ahmed Prio Ensemble performing Arab-Andalusian music of the Gharnati tradition (*Hamdulillah* 1998)

\(^2\) *Tarab* — a quality of ecstasy or enchantment central to Arab musical performance

\(^3\) Track two features Taqtouqa al-Jabaliyya, a Fes-based ensemble that performs in the regional *tqatouqa* style in veneration of twelfth-century Sufi saint and Moroccan spiritual pillar, Moulay Abdessalam Ben Mchich (*Hamdulillah* liner notes 1998: 6)
about the festival, they also raised inquiries of a much grander scale regarding the staging of sacred music, the festival construct, and the implications of both of these contexts on the traditional roles of patrons, performers, and the audience within sacred music.

This honors thesis addresses these questions within in a framework of ethnomusicological theory and is supported by my recent fieldwork. To augment my primary ethnographic experiences at the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music in Fes, Morocco, I also consider the regional 2001 Tidewater Gospel Festival, held at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The ethnographic data from these two festivals is also supported by observation and participation in a number of other sacred music events. Over the summer of 1999, I conducted fieldwork with the Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, a highly religious Anabaptist community. I regularly attend Sunday services at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church (P.C.U.S.A.) in Williamsburg, Virginia, as well as periodically visiting Neffsville Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I am also an active church musician, performing with the Presbyterian Williamsburg Ringers bell choir, and independently on the hammered dulcimer. My interests in religion and music have also been informed by my coursework at William and Mary.

1. Structure and Organization

Chapter One utilizes the words in the title of the *Fes Festival of World Sacred Music* in reverse order as a framework to introduce the major theoretical issues that guide the following chapters. First, *music* is conceptualized as a powerful force that can detach space and time from mundane reality. The extraordinary experience created by music can then be coupled with the superhuman dimensions of the *sacred*. This preliminary
discussion of sacred music establishes definitions of key terms, such as sacred, religious, and spiritual. The all-inclusive adjective world denotes the postmodern pluralism and tolerance, the appeal of the unspecified exotic, elements of ethnotourism, and notions of primordial purity. Festival denotes an event that seeks to create a “time out of time” (Falassi 1987: 4) that interrupts the usual functions and meanings of time and space. The inclusion of the city of Fes in the festival’s title highlights the importance of spiritual and physical geography in creating a festival’s sense of authenticity and legitimacy. Thus, dissecting the very title of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music defines key terms and outlines the particularly salient issues raised by the staging of sacred music.

The remaining chapters of this thesis develop the ideas introduced in Chapter One by addressing the role of patrons and producers, performers, and participants in the sacred music festival. Using the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the Tidewater Gospel Festival as primary ethnographic examples, Chapter Two focuses on the performers of sacred music, contrasting their roles within the service of religion with their ambiguously-defined identities on the secular stage. In “transcontextualizing” (Sheehy 1992: 220) music that stems from religious tradition into a public-sector festival environment, the performers may choose to alter the specific content and methodology of their performance in relationship to the festival frame. Presented by pluralistic festivals as culturally situated couriers of the spiritually generic, sacred musicians must balance “authentic” performance practices with staged universal appeal. Through interviews and fieldwork, I analyze the perspectives of sacred musicians regarding the limits of the festival environment upon religious specificity, cultural content, performance practice, and personal motivations.
Chapter Three addresses aspects of patronage and production at the Fes Festival and Tidewater Gospel Festival: festival establishment, choice of venue, creative vision, musical content, monetary support, production staff, and practical operations of sacred music festivals. By framing the exotic within a festival, event organizers validate and define the traditions that they present. The perspective of the patrons and producers not only influences audience perceptions of the music, but reinterprets performance for the musicians as well.

Chapter Four moves beyond the performers to explore the participatory continuum between audience and congregation. Both the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the Tidewater Gospel Festival introduce sacred traditions to a broadly based audience, ranging from those who have a high degree of familiarity with the represented tradition to cultural outsiders. Aptly characterized by Maxine Feifer’s label of “post-tourists,” many audience members at these two festivals of world sacred music are keenly aware that festival is a time and space demarcated from mundane existence (1985). In this chapter, I investigate the reception phenomenology of such events through a discussion of the audience’s demographic composition, level of participation, and experience of the sacred.

Following this discussion of the transformed roles of the patrons, performers, and audience of sacred music festivals, in Chapter Five, I offer summaries and conclusions, revisiting the framing issues of the thesis in light of insights discovered through a discussion of my fieldwork. I also pose questions that, while touched upon in the body of my work, merit further exploration.
II. CHAPTER ONE: What's in a Name: The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music

1. Music

Capturing the power of sound, music is one of the most powerful means of organizing human experience. Discussing performance and place in his introduction to *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music*, Martin Stokes writes that “The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power, and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity” (1997: 3). Music has the power to set apart time, space, and human experience from the banality of daily existence. Participation in musical activities develops a sense of individual and collective identity while providing a foundation for communal experience and catharsis.

The opening of the 2001 Tidewater Gospel Festival demonstrates how music’s ability to set apart time, space and community overshadows the force of spoken language. Although the festival officially commenced with a few polite remarks by the head of the music department, it was only after Dr. Katherine Preston left the microphone that the Gospel Festival really began. The keyboard and drums, playing a heavy, steady backbeat, set the now-empty stage with a 12 bar-blues style vamp. Then, Dr. Horace Boyer, slowly strutting in time with the music, led the rest of the performers into the space. Although their attire visually differentiated the five performing groups, the participants responded to the music as one. They clapped along, bopping and swaying as they processed. The collective musical act tied the participants together and created a firm foundation of unity in the groove.
Once all of the performers had entered the auditorium, Tarrence Paschall led the whole group with a refrain of “Glory, Glory” which spread into “Glory Glory, Hallelujah, There ain’t nobody like Jesus...” Then the song fully blossomed into “This Little Light of Mine.” The medley continued and grew in momentum as the performers warmed to the event. Only after the singing had set the mood did Dr. Boyer take to the podium, “Say Amen! (The audience and performers responded with a resounding “Amen!”) That was good practice, that was really fun, now let’s all get it together at William and Mary.”

As Dr. Boyer’s remarks illustrate, the Tidewater Gospel Festival has not truly begun until the music unites the performers and audience in a spirit of fellowship. The procession provides an opening frame for the event, setting it apart from ordinary experience as both a cultural display and a musical ritual. Music clearly delineates the patron’s (the College of William and Mary) general secular opening of the festival from the performers’ creation of sacred physical and metaphysical space through music. Once the performers have processed into the room and used music to establish sacred space and time, there is no question for them that a worship experience is going to take place. With the power to interrupt the ordinary flow of time and space, music is immensely important within religious practice. Writing about over-arching musical functions, Bruno Nettl asserts that “one of the main functions of music for man is communication with the supernatural” (1975: 8). Indeed, according to ethnomusicologist Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi, music “draws the worshipper away from this world in order to concentrate on another, spiritual, realm (al-Faruqi 1989:28). Seeking to unite the human and the divine, religions can systematically approach the sacred through rituals built upon combinations of song, chant, instrumental sounds, stylized speech, spoken word, movement, silence, and ritual
use of space and objects. Indeed, rituals are structured by concentrating specific media of performance at given periods during the progression of the ritual.4

For example, on any given Sunday at the Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, the service is divided into distinct sections that alternate between instrumental music, choral music, silence, and the spoken word. On January 20, 2002, a choral introit and a spoken congregational call to worship followed the organ prelude. The choir then processed in to a hymn. Spoken “Prayers of Adoration and Confession” and “The Assurance of Pardon” were interspersed with a vocal “Kyrie” and the “Gloria Patri.” The service progressed to a completely spoken section of prayers, concerns of the church, Biblical lessons, the sermon, and the Apostles’ Creed. Music re-entered the service in a hymn, followed by the spoken “Prayers of Petition and The Lord’s Prayer. After the offertory, sung Doxology, closing hymn, and spoken benediction, the instrumental postlude officially framed the ritual event. The brevity of the service (one hour and fifteen minutes) and the steady alternation of words, music, and movement provides multisensory action and flow. The music, which opens, closes, and structures the church service delineates the event from ordinary human experience of time and space. My description of a local church service is just one local and culturally familiar example of the universal function of music in ritual structure.

2. Sacred

Writings on sacred music are fraught with a plethora of seemingly ambiguous and overlapping term, such as the labels “sacred,” and “religious” that are frequently used interchangeably. This indiscriminate use of language further complicates the already

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4 Analysis of ritual structure forms a core of anthropological study. For further information see Kapferer, 1986.
challenging discussion of the intangible and aesthetic qualities of music, which often defy articulation through words alone. The terms “sacred” and “religious,” for example, carry extremely different meanings, the contrasts of which illustrate many of the inherent tensions of staging sacred music. Therefore, in order to facilitate exploration of the topic, the following sections of this thesis use a sociological approach to develop functional definitions and differentiations between the terms “religious” and “sacred” in the context of music and festivals.

2. A. Defining Religious

In the terminology of this thesis, religion is a systematic approach to sacred experience. Support for this view comes from the HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion which defines religions as “systems or structures consisting of specific kinds of beliefs and practices: beliefs and practices that are related to superhuman beings. Superhuman beings are being who can do things ordinary mortals cannot do” (“Religion” 1995: 893). Although these superhuman or divine figures may be conceptualized as gods, goddesses, spirits, or impersonal forces, they are set apart by their existence in an elevated realm of reality: the sacred. Religions are systematic human constructs that seek to bridge the gap between our secular, profane world and the extraordinary sacred. Frequently, religious systems use ritual and music to structure their search for the divine.

Following my definition of religion as a system of beliefs and practices, religious music is specifically defined as music that functions in service of a religion. Just as the following definition of sacred music emphasizes the music’s function, religious music is also defined by its practical application. The “Gloria Patri,” congregational singing on Sunday morning, and chanting which drives a Sufi dhikr ceremony are all religious
musics. While they are also all sacred musics, as the following section of the thesis explains, only when music is used in the course of religious ritual is the term “religious music” applicable.

2. B. Defining Sacred

For humankind, the sacred exists as a foil to the banality of everyday existence. According to the HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, the sacred is the “experience of feeling of an immaterial, awesome, overpowering impersonal realm or force that is at once intimidating and alluring and is the opposite of everyday, profane reality” (“Sacred, profane” 1995: 944). The experience of the sacred speaks to a greater truth, or reality, which operates in a realm just beyond that of ordinary human function. When the experience of the sacred disrupts mundane reality, it detaches “a part of space and/or time from its surrounding parts, making it qualitatively different” (“Sacred, profane” 1995: 944). Humans are receptive to this supernatural force; Eliade writes that “Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different than the profane” (qt. “Sacred, profane” 1995: 944). When humans recognize this breach of normality, the sacred is perceived and validated as separate from profane life. It is human experience and perception of this superhuman force that authenticates and defines the sacred.

Frequently, humans seek to capture the transient nature of the experience of the sacred by projecting its qualities onto physical objects or places. Sacred space is conceptualized around places and things which most effectively facilitate experience of the sacred, and these objects often take on spiritual dimensions in their own right.

Representing a predominant stance within Western Christianity, in the Sacrosanctum
Concilium, n 112 of Vatican II, the Holy See proclaimed that “sacred music is to be considered the more holy, the more closely connected it is with the liturgical action” (Jeffery 1989: 21). In the Middle East, the impersonal and supernatural force perceived as emanating from venerated objects is termed baraka. As the vehicle of many past experiences of the sacred, a great cathedral, revered shrine, saintly reliquary, icon, totem, song, or pious figure is endowed with the capacity to transfer the power of previous experiences of the sacred onto each newcomer. Thus, pilgrims hope to receive blessings by virtue of their proximity to the consecrated and holy.

However, when dealing with a subject as intangible as music, it is important to clarify that, while the transcendent exists, it is not contained within physical objects. It is the human conception of the physical object that imbues it with superhuman or sacred qualities. Although musical instruments, compositions, natural wonders, or idols may facilitate human experience of the sacred, the objects remain profane in and of themselves. The physical form of the music and its means of production are not nearly as important in establishing sacred meaning as are the music’s function and reception. The same guitar that backs a blues singer in a smoky bar on Saturday night can be used to accompany an ecstatic soloist on Sunday morning. Bach’s preludes and fugues can be played as a prelude in a cathedral or performed in a concert hall as Baroque art music. As Durkheim argues, society, and therefore humanity, subjectively creates sacred things (Colpe 1987: 519). Thus, perceived manifestations of the sacred vary between cultures.

5 "Both religionists and social scientists trace the notion of the sacred to the analysis by R. H. Codrington, a nineteenth-century missionary, of the primitive Melanesian idea of an impersonal supernatural force, mana" ("Sacred, the" 1995: 944). Since much of my coursework and research focuses on the Middle East, I use the Arabic term baraka, which carries similar meanings and connotations, to reference this impersonal sacred force emanating from hallowed objects and practices.
and even individuals. It is clear, then, that context, not content, is of primary importance in defining the sacred.

2. C. Sacred Music

Subjectively based in context, musical meaning is also culturally situated. Although music has been hailed as “the universal language,” understanding this language requires knowledge of the music’s functions, and meanings within its original culture. Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnomusicologist Benjamin Gilman notes the strong tendency toward aural ethnocentrism,

Since c-e-g on our instruments is a major chord and e-g-b a minor, the two sound to us major and minor, respectively, on a Siamese xylophone, where they are, nevertheless, identical combinations...it [is] apparent that Europeans apprehend all music in the diatonic terms familiar to their ears.

(1909, reproduced in Shelemay 1992: 4)

Clearly, the same harmonic triad can evoke varied connotations in contrasting contexts. To understand the musical function of a c-e-g triad within a piece of Siamese (Thai) music, the listener must contextualize the sonic event within the larger tradition of Siamese (Thai) music. Outside of its cultural performance context, the physical content of the music carries very little meaning, which is interpreted ambiguously at best.

The content versus context debate regarding musical meaning is particularly relevant to staging sacred music. Basing music’s potential for sacred affect in its active reception and interpretation, rather than some innate concrete quality, greatly expands the scope of musics which can be viewed as sacred. Indeed, modernist Arthur Schopenhaur claims that all music is sacred because it expresses man’s ideas about the nature of existence (Al-Faruqi 1983: 23). Many festivals of world sacred music operate under a
similarly inclusive premise, thereby condoning a wide variety of sacred traditions for representation.

The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music defines “sacred music” broadly. Dr. Faouzi Skali, current General Director and founder of the Fes Festival, stresses the importance of context in defining sacred music. He posits inclusively that “Music is considered sacred when we go toward the place where it happens with a certain spirit” (qt. Shewey 1998 in Lynch 2000: 82). Artistic Director Gerard Kurdjian embraces a wide variety of musics as sacred by emphasizing the spiritual link between traditional musics and sacred musics:

The world’s traditions of immense musical richness, the fruit of secular cultures have become progressively more accessible...In the collective conscience, in the cultural imagination, in dance clubs, Bach will henceforth be placed side by side with Vilayat Khan or Ravi Shankar, Mozart will mix with Mounir Bachir, Las Callas and Oum Kaltoum...confirming the old saying 'Vox Populi, Vox Dei'6 which reminds us of the profound and organic link that exists between Tradition and the Sacred.

(“The Soul of World Music” in Fes Festival Program 2001: 12)

Kurdjian finds that traditional musics awaken a “nostalgia that’s not personal but archetypal. It’s the nostalgia for anyone on Earth trying to get in touch with transcendence or eternity” (qt. Shewey 1998: 43 in Lynch 2000: 83). Thus, Kurdjian equates the function of traditional musics with that of sacred musics; on his view, both of these genres have a primary goal of transcending mundane reality and tapping into the superhuman realm of the sacred. American jazz singer Abby Lincoln beautifully summarized the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music’s stance of inclusive pluralism. As

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6 Trans. “The voice of the people is the voice of God”

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her jazz quartet followed a brotherhood of Moroccans, the Daqqa of Taroudant, in the opening concert of the 2001 Fes Festival, Lincoln loudly proclaimed that “Every type of music is sacred!”

3. World

The images and sounds of non-Western culture have a long history of influence and interaction with the West. In the nineteenth century, European Romantics turned to the exotic Orient for aesthetic inspiration, while Indonesian gamelan later intrigued Debussy and his contemporaries. Later, in the mid-twentieth century Western rock sought to revitalize itself through contact with indigenous music; for example the Beatles’ exploration of Indian spirituality and sitar or Rolling Stone’s member Brian Jones’ pilgrimage to Jaoujuka, Morocco.

Reflecting the clearly delineated boundaries of modernist thought, these forays into the field of untamed exotica are seen as temporary trips where the lines between normalcy and the outside “world” at large remained distinct and strong. Separated geographically and conceptually from mundane experience, the isolated “world” occupies a realm of mystery and allure. The actual difficulties of accessing the exotic simply augment the excitement of encountering the Other in everyday life.

A clear definition of the Other has been manifest in the academic disciplines of ethnomusicology and anthropology, as well as in tourism. The Other has long been “clearly bounded by time, ‘culture,’ and language. We experience a very real dislocation when we go ‘the field.’ We know that our time there is finite, and it will be difficult to

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7 Dedicated to Saint Sidi Ben Sidi, the Daqqa of Taroudant perform a ritual religious ceremony of percussion, clapping, turning, and incense. Originally occurring on Achoura, the tenth day of the first Muslim lunar month the daqqa is now “a religious ritual, a concert, and an important moment in the social life of the city” (Fes Festival program 2001, 26).
“return once we leave” (Babiracki 1997: 122). The physical difficulties in accessing the field allow researchers, such as Babiracki, to clearly delineate between their own lifestyles and those of their research communities.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, increasing technological development, mass media, and subsequent globalization have rendered the multicultural paradigm increasingly commonplace. Although this trend is a continuation of existing interest in exotica, the previous modernist perspective has given way to a postmodern philosophy. The firm boundaries separating “us” and the ethnic “them” are eroding under a steady stream of increasing availability. Feifer, Lash and Urry assert that the world has entered an era of “post-tourism,” where there is very little left on earth that is not accessible in some form (see Taylor 1999: 180). Decontextualized cultural symbols have become accepted, and even expected: “A touch of the exotic as local color...is giving way to a more pervasive series of representations and icons of Otherness as a cultural dominant” (Taylor 1999: 180). Cultural recontextualization thus becomes a normative practice as the lines between cultures are blurred via increasingly frequent crossings.

Displaced and oddly juxtaposed cross-cultural spiritual images lend a great deal of color to the post-modern experience. Lash and Urry assert that “people are tourists most of the time, whether they are literally mobile or only experience simulated mobility through the incredible fluidity of multiple signs and electronic images (1994: 259). Apple Computers uses meditating monks to sell PCs which will play “The Material Girl’s” new chant-inspired album, *Ray of Light*. You can listen to the medley of synthesizers and spirituality while reflecting upon the multicultural pedigree of your Starbuck’s Tazo
Sweet Orange Tea which will “soothe your psyche and enlighten your spirit...with the rich taste of blackberry leaves from Eastern Europe, blended with lemongrass from Guatemala, spearmint from Oregon and the spicy taste of Chinese ginger...Mumbled chantings give it incredible juju.” (Tazo 2002).

3. A. World Sacred Music

Describing sacred music with the adjective “world” resonates with the above-mentioned images, and results in a number of seemingly conflicting effects. Initially, the term “world” endows the sacred music with increased value because of its relevance to a global context. Many of the musics that are classified as “world music” come from deeply culturally situated performance traditions. As a result of their cultural specificity, these “other” musics may sometimes be easily dismissed as exotic oddities with little resonance to humanity as a whole. However, as “music of the world,” the genre in question is elevated from regional or cultural obscurity by virtue of some innate intricacy, aesthetic appeal, or spiritual potential that ostensibly merits the attention of the entire globe.

The annual Essaouira Festival of gnaoua music in Essaouira, Morocco provides an excellent example of just such a case. Despite the relative uniqueness of gnaoua music to the black under-classes of Morocco, the slogan, “Gnaoua: Music of the World,” (Essaouira Festival) emphasizes the tradition’s relevance to potential fans from all corners of the globe. The festival uses the adjective “world” simply to accentuate the global appeal of this culturally-situated music.

While “world” sacred music enjoys increased global relevance, the second implication of the all-inclusive adjective highlights an accompanying global accessibility.
In the last few decades, world travel has expanded beyond the timeless monuments of Western Europe to include the living traditions of native peoples and cultures. The industry of “ethnotourism” has flourished by enabling Westerners to experience the excitement of “authentic” cross-cultural contact while retaining a sense of control and safety. Increasing ethnotourism and the expanding consciousness of globalization, signifying the onset of Feifer’s “post-tourism,” supported a concurrent rebirth of interest in world music (Taylor 1999: 181, see also Feifer 1985, Lash and Urry 1994). Riding the general trend toward value-adding exotica, “world music” promises the lures of adventure, travel, and cross-cultural contact, discretely and innocuously packaged to facilitate Western consumption. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains, carefully crafted “display enables playful participation in a zone of repudiation once it has been insulated from the possibility of anyone going native” (1998: 8). As a temporary participant and/or observer of the exotic, the outsider retains a strong sense of self.

Likewise musical ethnotourism temporarily brings outsiders into the midst of the “other,” while allowing them to maintain a degree of distance from the sensitive cultural and religious subject matter. In his study of world music in television ads, Timothy Taylor addresses this insulatory aspect of the carefully packaged and recontextualized Other: “There are no scary natives around...and the music also suggests that it is possible to know something about these natives without getting too close” (Taylor 1999: 183). Taylor reveals the inherent tension of ethnotourism; consumers seek authentic cross-cultural experiences, but they want to do so at minimal risk.

The dynamic performance of South African Colenso Abafana at the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred music beautifully illustrates the ethnotouristic allure of Taylor’s

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8 Post-tourism is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, see page 80.
now-accessible “scary natives.” Although the English-speaking attendees had been forewarned of the Francophone nature of the Fes Festival, by the third day of events, a significant number of the Anglophones were simply linguistically frustrated. Certainly, the Americans, British, and Australians had come to Morocco for cross-cultural contact and exotic musicians, and they may have been eagerly awaiting chanting tribesmen with spears and drums, but some were daunted by yet another concert program beginning “Colenso Abafana (Afrique du Sud) ‘Polyphonies Sacrées Zoulou’/ Originaires de la province du Natal…” (concert program, *Colenso Abafana* 2001).

*Colenso Abafana*’s entrance invigorated the audience with a restorative dose of culture shock. Clad in the scanty skins and loincloths of traditional Zulu warriors, the nine men rhythmically stomped onto the stage with spears and shields in hand. Zulu-language chanting, percussive stamping, leaping, clapping, spear clanging, and the sheer tribal rawness of it all captivated the audience. The dancers’ bare chests glistened under the scaring Moroccan sun as their leader, a shaman, stepped forward to address the eager crowd.

Good afternoon you all. How are you? My name is Victor Mkhisé, and I am for *Colenso Abafana* from South Africa. I am very happy to be with you this evening and I think you will be happy because we bring our song from South Africa, traditional song in our culture, I think you will be happy and because our song is sing in Zulu (pause) and in English! I think you will be happy.

(field recording, *Colenso Abafana* 2001)

The audience broke into wild cheering and applause. In the happy compromise of ethnotourism, the concert-goers could experience the exotic natives and understand them.
The audience demanded multiple encores and *Colenso Abafana* was hailed as one of the most successful acts of the 2001 Festival\(^9\)

Thus, although world music thrives on the appeal of exoticism, it flourishes only when the exotic is made accessible. The struggle to retain the authenticity of the music’s original form while promoting the new popularity of the genre in a global context creates tension. In order to maintain a steady fan-base, the unfamiliar genres and performance practices must be presented in a suitably approachable manner, while retaining their original foreign mystique.

In the case of sacred music, there is a particular sense of urgency to protect the original intent and character of the music. Much sacred music functions as religious music, promoting a particular dogma, belief system, and deity. Asserting that this enculturated religious music is now appropriate for indiscriminate consumption on a global level dilutes its potency and identity. I elaborate upon the tension between religious and sacred music on the world stage while discussing the role of performers in Chapter 2.

4. Festival

An integral part of organized society, festivals function similarly to music, the sacred, and the exotic by interrupting habitual human experience of time and space. Peter Sellers, director of the 1990 Los Angeles Festival of the Arts describes festival as a Saturnalian “moment in which the world is turned upside down and we can rethink which end is up” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 224). In his seminal work on the festival

\(^9\) For more on audience reaction to Colenso Abafana’s 2001 Festival Performance, see Passelegue 2001.
construct, Alessandro Falassi summarizes that festival activity is related to everyday life, yet,

> at festival times, people do something they normally do not; they abstain from something they normally do; they carry to the extreme behaviors that are usually regulated by measure; they invert patterns of daily social life. Reversal, intensification, trespassing, and abstinence are the four cardinal points of festive behavior.

(1987: 3)

By interrupting ordinary temporal experience, the festival creates an atmosphere of possibility and exploration. This time out of time not only allows, but advocates, experimentation with the unknown, as well as with that which is known, but unacceptable in everyday life.

While music, the sacred, and the nebulous “world” interrupt daily human experience, the extraordinary segments of space and time that they create exist in a largely conceptual realm. Within everyday life, encounters with the sacred musics of the world are largely unmediated, unexplained, and unlimited by physical bounds. These brief interruptions of daily time and space simply whet the appetite and prompt the search for a more reliable conduit beyond reality.

The construction of the festival environment creates just such an appropriately sanctified temporal and physical space. While secular festivals set apart time and space, the added element of spirituality intensifies the experience to the point of sanctifying the venue. The effects of world sacred music compound, culminate, and burst into full bloom in the dynamic, concrete setting of the festival. This section of my thesis focuses upon one of the most vibrant venues of conceptual and literal “time out of time” (Falassi 1987: 4): the world sacred music festival.
4. A. Festivals of World Sacred Music

A simple search on the World Wide Web paints a telling portrait of the current trends in the sacred music festival scene. Typing the keywords “festival + ‘sacred music’” into Google, one of the more popular internet search engines, yields approximately 12,200 hits in .11 seconds (<www.google.com> 2001). Roughly 45 percent of the first sixty results pertain to the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music in Morocco. Various geographic incarnations of the Dalai Lama’s “World Festival of Sacred Music” constitute the second most popular category, with 28 percent of the search engine’s listings. A wide variety of other festivals make up the remaining 27 percent of Google’s results. A sampling of these events ranges from the West Coast Sacred Music Festival in Vancouver, Canada, to the Concordia University College Festival of Sacred Music in Alberta, to the Polish “‘Gaude Mater’ International Sacral Music Festival.”

The wide variety of sacred music festivals speaks to the pervasive desire for relief from the banality of everyday life. These web-generated listings reflect only a fraction of the world’s sacred music festivals. Less-aggressively marketed sacred music festivals propel the world’s religions, giving focus, form, and forum for worship. Kirshenblatt-Gimblet’s description of the festival as a poignant point of entrée for tourists extends to general spiritual experience as well, “Public and spectacular, festivals have the practical advantage of offering, in a concentrated form, at a designated place and time, what the tourist would otherwise search out in the diffuseness of everyday life, with no guarantee of ever finding it” (59). Paradoxically, for tourists, as well as cultural insiders, the festival’s basic contrast to quotidian experience distills the core values of society.
As an epitome of societal ideals, the festival bestows added value on the musics and traditions displayed within it. Inclusion in a festival recognizes the merits of the musical traditions and their performers to the public at large. In the case of sacred musics, recontextualization in a secular venue places the sacred music at center stage as a largely aesthetic object, not solely a tool in the service of religion. By validating the music outside of purely ritual function, the festival context affirms an etic interest in a culturally specific tradition.

The festival is a particularly potent forum for addressing outside interest in culture, because, in addition to encapsulating the essence of society, the festival is designed to express this essence to a broad and diverse audience. This wide-ranging appeal and publicity of the festival raises many issues regarding the “high-context” nature of many religious and world musics (see Hall 1976: 35). In their original environments, these musics were played for insider audiences who were familiar with traditional repertoire and performance decorum, but the purposefully constructed accessibility of the festival setting reveals these musics to a far broader audience.

Large international festivals of sacred music, such as the Fes Festival, the Los Angeles Festival of the Arts, or the Dalai Lama’s World Festival of Sacred Music feature artists representing a variety of world religions. In this eclectic cross-cultural and cross-confessional setting, many of the festival-goers are only nominally familiar with the featured performance traditions and their parent religious systems. Depending on one’s hermeneutic approach, this lack of prior knowledge and understanding may be cast in a positive or negative light. Academic debates aside, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett concludes that in practice, the festival reaches a compromise at the “convergence between practical
limitations on what audiences can be expected to know or learn and avant-garde
principles of reception that, at least theoretically, require no preparation or expert
foreknowledge and may even benefit from their absence" (1998: 237). Fewer
preconceptions and expectations may lead to an open-minded, honest experience of the
music, or the unfamiliarity may prove to be an insurmountable cultural and aesthetic
barrier.10

4. B. Festivals and Proslytizing

By virtue of their inviting, introductory nature, sacred music festivals can be a
forum for proselytization. This is function is especially emphasized when the festival
operates within the religious ritual calendar with the support of religious officials and
their funds. For example, Sufism employs music as a bridge to unbelievers, as well as to
the divine. When asked about the function of the annual urs11 in celebration of Punjabi
Saint Noori Boori, a local Muslim explains that “Urs is missionary work...It [the music
in the festival] is a way of propagating the faith. It attracts people, so they come and
listen to the words of our faith. [The purpose of the sama12 is] to spread the faith and
proclaim Islam” (I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim 1994).

When a sacred music festival is conceptualized as aesthetically mediated
missions, the caliber and propriety of the musicians and their repertoire becomes an issue
of heightened importance. The above-mentioned Punjabi urs was graced by world-
renowned qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn, who had composed religious lyrics
specifically for the occasion (Ibid). Since the urs provides an opportunity to demonstrate

10 These issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4: The Audience-Congregation Continuum.
11 Urs is a three-day annual ceremony commemorating the birthday of local saint Noori Boori. The event is
a secular fair incorporating free food and entertainment, as well as a religious celebration.
12 Sama is concert of Sufi song, especially noted for its use of qawwals, a genre of praise songs.
the glory of Islam to pilgrims from diverse regions and social strata, the quality of the music plays an important role in attracting people to the festival and the faith.\textsuperscript{13}

The element of prostylization is largely absent at the larger, international festivals because of the spirit of egalitarian tolerance that drives these events. Promoting any single theology would defy the inclusive pluralism that assembles all religions under the broad umbrella of “world sacred music.” Dr. Faouzi Skali, founder and General Director of the Fes Festival emphasizes the richness of diversity, “Instead of trying to unify world visions, it would certainly be more profitable to see how the specificities and competences (sic) unique to each culture (and in the end to each experience) join to enrich this world debate” (Fes Festival Program 2001: 10). Certainly, the Dalai Lama’s World Festival of Sacred Music stems from Buddhist tenants of tolerance, but the festival’s primary goal is not to spark a wave of conversion to Buddhism. Promoting a search for the sacred beyond the confines of rigid religious establishments, festivals of world sacred music pulse to the beat of pluralism. The non-confrontive, egalitarian atmosphere of these festivals ensures that the absolutism and emotional baggage of organized religion is checked at the door.

5. \textbf{Fes: The Power of Geography}

As previously mentioned in my discussion of the sacred, humanity frequently assigns spiritual significance to physical spaces. A history of sacred events culminates in the sacred aura of a building, city, or natural feature. Festivals and pilgrimages to such sacred spaces are a common feature in many religions: Christians commemorate Christ’s final journey on the Via Dolorosa, and Jews visit the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, each

\textsuperscript{13} The relationship between performers, repertoire, and musical quality is further discussed in Chapter 3.
year Muslims complete the Hajj to Mecca. The embodiment of earthly spirituality, these holy places provide the perfect setting for festivals of world sacred music.

The city of Fes provides an excellent case study in spiritual geography. Situated between Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East, Morocco has long been a cultural crossroads. Invading Arab armies settled on the Mediterranean coast, while native Berber tribes concentrated their forces in the mountains. When the Christian reconquest of Spain forced the Muslims and Jews from Andalucia, the displaced population took refuge in Morocco’s northern cities. Centuries of French colonialism were a potent force in shaping current popular culture, notably in the adoption of French as the *lingua franca*.

Fes’ cultural pedigree is equaled by the city’s spiritual lineage. The oldest of the four imperial cities of Morocco, Fes is routinely graced with the presence of the royal family. Founded by national hero and Muslim saint Moulay Idriss II in 809, this city of countless mosques is “the spiritual heart of Morocco.” The medina of Fes radiates from Zaouia Moulay Idriss II, a popular shrine and pilgrimage destination. A few meters from the intricately ornamented 14th century Madrassa al-Attarine, stands the magnificent Qaraouine Mosque. Founded in 859, this university and mosque shaped the great minds of its day, including Pope Sylvester II who later introduced the Arab concepts of modern numerical systems and algebra to Europe (Schneider 1999: 677). UNESCO has designated Fes as a World Heritage Site, internationally recognizing the strong baraka emanating from this ancient intellectual and spiritual capital of Morocco.

The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music gains authority and legitimacy by building upon the city’s spiritual heritage, for Fes is “a city that holds the memory of
what once was the culture and tradition of the Sacred. Tied to this past, the medina (medieval city) of Fez still continues to live by the rhythm of the call to prayer and religious celebrations” (Abdelfettah Bouzoubâa in Fes Festival Program 2001: 22). This geographically enhanced spirituality propels the festival’s copious publicity. The official travel agency of the Fes Festival, Sarah Tours, claims that “the festival is born out of two elements: the encounter of people from diverse areas and a rich variety of specialties, and its site, Fez, a spiritual metropolis” (Sarah Tours brochure 2001). In its English language website, the tour company echoes official Fes Festival promotions by advertising the intense potential for experiencing the sacred via a post-modern pilgrimage to Fes,

In May, 2002, travelers from all over the world will meet in the holy city of Fez - Morocco, for the 8th Annual World Sacred Music Festival. A sacred place and a noble event where leading musicians of world calibre will share sacred music from the spiritual traditions of both East and West. Join in the spirit of this unique multi-cultural event and experience the beauty and majesty of the world's most moving sacred music.

(Sarah Tours 2002).

The language in this advertisement lauds the 2002 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music as a appropriate, even glorious, continuation of Fes’ innate spirituality. While the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music affirms the city’s predominantly Muslim past, it casts this religious tradition within the pluralistic light of postmodernism, highlighting opportunities for cross-cultural and crossconfessional experience of the transcendent.
III. CHAPTER 2: Performers: Transforming Function via Forum

The love brings people together – love for your brother, for what you do. It overrides disagreements. Some people do it [perform] for the love of God, for the love of clapping, for the love of glory, for the love of money. But it is the love that brings them together. And if I represent what I stand for, then God is love, and God’s love will come through.

(T. Paschall personal communication: 11-3-01)

Within religious practice, musicians perform a deeply enculturated role as highly skilled ritual specialists (Rasmussen 2000: 556). These artists facilitate ritual events, preserve knowledge of music and performance practices, and help others to experience the sacred through music. Recontextualizing religious music on the secularized stage of a festival of world sacred music transforms the role of the liturgical musician. The fairly simple relationship of a devout musician in service of the Divine is convoluted by the process of festivalization, marketing, profits, fame, and the demands of tolerant pluralism. This chapter addresses the issues of performers’ motivation, redefined performance practice, and proselytizing that are raised by the post-modern staging of the sacred.

1. Musicians within Religion

As ritual specialists, liturgical musicians play an important role in preserving the musical, linguistic, and cultural practices of the religious community. The ritual events of religious ceremony are frequently demarcated by culturally informed musical events, guided by these ritual specialists. In her extensive fieldwork among Prespa Albanian weddings, Jane Sugarman explains how singers delineate each section of the various ceremonies through appropriate musical changes. By striking up a new tune, musicians give momentum and structure to funerals, circumcisions, and weddings.
Particularly in the case of oral tradition, the ritual specialists may be among the privileged few in the community who retain the repertoire and original performance practices of religion. The subject of ethnomusicologist David McAllester’s research, Navajo Blessingway singer Frank Mitchell is a widely-recognized exemplar of this type of specialized knowledge. Religious communities may perceive and enjoy the impact of their unique performance practices, but they may require the assistance of ritual specialists in creating and fully understanding the effects. For example, among the Amish of Lancaster County, PA, the vorsinger is frequently the sole means of transmitting hymn tunes and performance practices to subsequent generations. The wisdom of these ritual specialists also localizes religious adherence, allowing folk practices to fill in the gaps of officially codified dogma. Religion provides a template for fundamentally pure urtext of belief and praxis, but the musical ritual specialist provides each community with its own personalized access to this vast store of knowledge.

Supplementing their preservation of performance practice and musical repertoire, ritual specialists also sustain religious authenticity through their command of sacred, and at times specifically liturgical, language. When cultural considerations or conceptions of the sacred hold that changing the language would defile the nature of worship, then musicians assume an important role in keeping tradition alive. The desire to retain linguistic and cultural practices may be based in the ability of cultural groups to draw a sense of identity and pride from singing in their native languages. Although the group

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15 The vorsinger is an older adult man who leads the congregation in Sunday morning hymns. The hymnbook only contains the text in medieval High German, without musical notation. In daily life, the Amish of Lancaster County speak dialectical Pennsylvania German and/or English. Thus, unless the song is quite familiar to the community by rote, then very few people in the congregation deeply understand, or know, the lyrics and the music.
may espouse no theological basis for continuing to worship in what has become a foreign language, the strength of tradition deters change. For example, the Amish continue their formal worship in the High German of their commemorated martyr ancestors, while Latin is revered in the Catholic church and Qur’anic Arabic is essential for the practice of Islam.

2. Performance within Religion

Within the context of religious practice, musical performance operates within a well-established ritual framework. In his work with the Primitive Baptists of Western Virginia, Jeff Todd Titon incorporates Jansen’s anatomy of performance to describe the shared folk culture created by communal ritual practice. Titon and Jansen describe performance in three ways. First, performance is demarcated from normal flow of space and time. Just as the festival setting is removed from daily existence, a single performance provides a microcosm of the same detachment. Since religion is a systematic approach to the transcendental, performance is rule-governed; there is a guide to exactly how actions should progress, what subjects are appropriate, whether one should emote in a certain manner, assume a type of posture, pray out loud, and the like.

These rules may or may not be formally recorded, but they are articulated through performance practice. Concrete codification notwithstanding, the guiding principles and aesthetics which are agreed upon as the most conducive to experience of the sacred are eventually absorbed and internalized by rote. “You can explain the rules and instructions to people,“ says gospel singer Reverend Tarrence Paschall, “but ultimately it’s up to you [to just experience God for yourself]” (2001). Just as experience of the sacred rests upon each individual’s receptive state, engagement with the performance practices of religious
sacred music is a similarly self-determining process. Yet, the well-established framework of institutionalized religion provides a stable launch point for the individual’s participation in communal religious events, and may also structure a search for the sacred.

Second, performance is characterized by interpretation. As they are playing, musicians are interpreting, evaluating and revising their performances to best express their understanding and experience of the aesthetic and the sacred. Performers, and the audience/congregation (if they are separate) determine the meaning of the performance as it unfolds before them. This constantly evolving reception phenomenology of performance is consistent with my assertion that the experience of the sacred is a highly subjective, individualized phenomenon.

Finally, performance is intentional, purposefully designed to affect people in a specific way. In a religious or sacred context, the primary intent of musical performance is to encourage and enhance human experience of the sacred. Facilitating this human experience of the sacred is arguably the single most important contribution of musicians in the service of religion. Through the temporal demarcation of musical performance, musicians provide seekers with a participatory bridge to the Divine. Some religions believe that music literally summons gods for supernatural communication or possessions, while other religions are less concrete in conceptualizing the role of sacred music, believing that certain musics evoke a contemplative state that may lead to personal experience of the sacred. In either case, musical performance provides both musicians and congregation (if such a dichotomy exists) with an opportunity for active participation in worship.
Within the service of religion, the most salient characteristic of a musician is his or her primary identity as a devout believer. Although musicians fulfill the important role of ritual specialists, they are ideally devout followers first, and skilled artists second. Even the highest-caliber musicians, such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, use their music to develop their relationship to the transcendent:

When I sing for God, I feel myself in accord with God, and the house of God, Mecca, is right in front of me. And I worship. When I sing for Mohammed, peace be upon him, our prophet, I feel like I am sitting right next to his tomb, Medina, and paying him respect and admitting to myself that I accept his message.


Professionalism and virtuosity are appreciated, but these worldly qualities are secondary to projecting a personal experience of the sacred and affecting the same in others.

The debate over sacred music as a functional tool or as an aesthetic object is quite familiar. Since the first century, the Christian church sought to balance what Pope Paul VI has labeled “these two splendid expressions of the human spirit, prayer and art” (qt. 1967, Kock 1989: 15). In his article “Chant East and West” in Music and the Experience of God, Peter Jeffery describes the conflict between professional musicians who can easily access the canon of high art and lay people who place more value on communal participation in worship. In the same volume, Gerard Kock also explores the tensions between liturgy through high art or vernacular musical expression, focusing on the barriers that may be erected by excessive musical professionalism in worship. Kock reminds readers that, while musical virtuosity has its place within the liturgy, even the best and most artistic offering is barely able to suitably glorify God (1989: 18).

Mennonite Minister of Music Art Dyck clearly articulates the inherent tensions of

16 For example, in Santaria, percussion patterns correspond to individual Orishas, or gods.
religious musical performance. He explains that, while he values aesthetic quality and
musical mastery, he prioritizes experience of the sacred, saying, “When we start worrying
too much about the technical production of music, and stop experiencing God, then the
whole thing is a wash” (8-5-01). Dyck’s comments support the ideal primary identity of
the religious musician as a dedicated believer.

3. Proselytizing

By inviting outsiders to join in highly enculturated system’s pursuit of the
experience of the sacred, proselytizing bridges the gap between religious ritual and
secular seekers. Looking ahead to the decontextualized spirituality of festivals of world
sacred music, it is important to note that sacred music performed in the service of religion
promotes experience of the sacred through that particular religious system. For example,
while Sufi musicians may promote a generally heightened spirituality, the truly devout
among them hope that this enlightenment will occur through the auspices of their version
Islam. Although this statement may seem quite ambitious, it appeals to the simple logic
that those who fully embrace a religious tradition believe their tradition to be the best
path, or else they would not be choosing to follow it. Thus, while pluralism exists,
ultimately, each individual is enjoying or searching for what he or she would define as
the most fulfilling religious system.

Some festivals of sacred music have proselytization as one of their main goals.
Encapsulating the ideals of the religion and culture, the intense festival environment
frequently uses music to draw in a broadly based audience. While most of the attendees
are likely followers of the host religion, many others will come out of curiosity or simply
to enjoy the music. The festival provides a non-confrontation atmosphere of
experimentation where the qualities of music and the musician’s inspired performances encourage first aesthetic appreciation and then metaphysical exploration of the transcendent.

The Sufi celebration of urs\textsuperscript{17} in commemoration of local saint Noori Boori illustrates the dynamics of proselytization within a religious festival. Singing sacred q\textit{wwali samas}, the best singers from the Punjab compete for the appreciation of the pir during the three-day event. Since the musicians are operating within the well-defined sphere of religious festival, their role as promoters of the faith is highlighted. In a video interview, renowned q\textit{wwali} singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, who sang for this particular urs, explains the power of music in bringing people to faith.

Interviewer: Are the words of the song meant to convert people to Islam?

Nusrat: Of course, this is the way the Sufi sages spread Islam throughout the Indian subcontinent and elsewhere. Islam penetrated to every corner of the street and music plays a very important role in this. When the Sufi sages came to India, Hinduism was prevalent there was already a musical tradition because the songs and musical gatherings were spiritually very powerful. They people started to train musicians and that’s how the tradition of q\textit{awwali} and sama started – to help spread Islam.”

(\textit{I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim} 1994)

In this festival of sacred music, the goals of the musician are relatively clear. He is a ritual specialist whose performance serves as a conduit to the divine for both devotees and spiritual seekers.

\textsuperscript{17} Derived from the Arabic world for wedding, Urs is a Muslim celebration commemorating the union of a saint through death with Allah. According to Hazrat Shah Waliullah Muhadith Dehlwi (Radi allahu anhu) “a special Rehmat (mercy) and Anwaar (mystical light) descends at the time of the departing of the soul of the Saints. During Urs the very same Rehmat and Anwaar is anticipated” and has been established as occurring through mystical experience (Celebration 2002: 1). The ceremonies involve music, the distribution of food to the poor, and the communion of the pir, religious leader, with the spirit of the venerated saint.
4. Staging the Sacred Musician

Recontextualizing religious music on the secularized, pluralistic stage of a festival of world sacred music transforms the roles of the musician working in the service of religion. For performers, the most challenging obstacle in staging their sacred performance lies in redefining the nature of their performance in light of its new context. Musicians must balance the established rules of religious performance with the responsive nature of performance that demands constant contextual reinterpretation to achieve maximum affect.

As festivals venture into the public sector, performers must gradually revise their specifically religious and cultural overtones to compliment a generic spirituality designed to appeal to a broadly based audience. The extent of this modification is dictated by the tone of the event. In some festivals of sacred music, the secular nature of the public sector event is tempered by including performers from only one religious tradition. Performers whose musical traditions are strongly tied to ritual practice are particularly likely to continue to approach the experience of the sacred though religiously-informed performance practices. In this section of my thesis, I explore the role of performers in two contrasting festivals of world sacred music, the regional Tidewater Gospel Festival, held in Williamsburg, Virginia, and the international Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, held in Fes, Morocco.

4. A. Performance at the Tidewater Gospel Festival

The 2001 Tidewater Gospel Festival confirms Mellonee Burnim’s general assertion that “because gospel music was spawned and nurtured in the context of ritual, performers are virtually impelled, in all performance settings, to recreate the climate of
the black worship service" (1989: 54). Although the festival operates within the nonconfrontational, nondenominational realm of general experience of the sacred, the festival atmosphere retains a highly religious tone. Since the gospel tradition of Tidewater Virginia is the only religious practice presented, respecting pluralism becomes a largely moot point. Performers are there to experience the Lord through gospel music, outsiders in search of an introduction are welcome, and the audience (congregation) is expected to join in the worship and, in this secularized forum.

Held on the campus of the sponsoring College of William and Mary, the Tidewater Gospel Festival is a recurring celebration of regional gospel traditions. Reflecting the gospel’s rich heritage in southeastern Virginia, the festival features groups representing all-male quartets, family-based ensembles, choirs from traditionally black regional colleges, and church choirs. The 2001 Festival featured Ebony Expressions Gospel Choir from William and Mary, Ebony Impact gospel Choir from Old Dominion University, Saint Paul’s Choral society from Saint Paul’s College, family-based G.T.G. (Glory to God) Music Ensemble from Williamsburg, the Paschall Brothers quartet from Norfolk, and Saint Mary’s Basilica All-Male Chorus from Norfolk, Virginia. The festival stands tenuously between the sacred and secular; it is funded and hosted as a “cultural event” by a public university, yet its message and atmosphere is overtly, unapologetically Christian.

After the opening processional, a few introductory words, and the singing of “The Star-spangled Banner,” the Reverend Tarrence Paschall, of the Paschall Brothers, led everyone in prayer for God’s blessing upon the festival organizers, performers, and visitors:
Let every head bow. Eternal God our Father, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the giver of every good and prefect gift. Father, we thank you for this opportunity, God, that you allow us, God, to see this day. Now that you allow us to see this day, God, would you allow us to come from near and far, God, in order, God, to lift up your holy and righteous name. Father, as we pray, God, we ask in the name of Jesus, God, to bless the sponsors of this great program. We ask you, Father, to bless every group participating here. We ask you to bless those that are visiting on this evening. We ask you to give us strength when we are weak, build us up when we are falling down. Father, in the name of Jesus, we love you, we praise you, and we adore you. Father, we will give your name the praise, the glory, and the honor. In Jesus, name, we pray, Amen.

(video recording: 11-3-01)

Reverend Paschall’s prayer typifies the gospel festival’s approach to the sacred; no attempt is made to affect pluralism or appeal to a neutral, all-encompassing spirituality. The content of Paschall’s prayer indicates that while he is fully aware of his secularized surroundings, he chooses to incorporate them into his supplication.

In a personal interview conducted in the hours before the 2001 Tidewater Gospel Festival, Reverend Paschall expounded upon the tensions of staging sacred music. Having greatly enjoyed themselves, and heeding the people’s call to “come feed us again,” the Paschall Brothers have performed at the festival for all of the event’s three years. Although he enjoys the performance, Reverend Paschall does feel that the Tidewater Gospel Festival is a somewhat limiting setting; “you can’t say so much. It’s a festival of songs, but with a three song limit [per group]. I’m a pastor, but I can’t get preachy. You have to consider the time, and just use the songs to find the truth of what we’re singing about.” Although gospel services must adhere loose timeframe, the festival setting imposes a constraining structure upon the extemporaneous nature of the genre.

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The Tidewater Gospel Festival was initiated in the fall of 1998. It was held again in the spring of 2000 and the fall of 2001.
Reverend Paschall acknowledges that the atmosphere of the festival also impacts the performance practice of the gospel music. In an "open forum," like the Tidewater Gospel Festival, he feels that the atmosphere can be more secular, and that this effect would be multiplied in a setting that incorporated multiple religious traditions. Speaking to the effects of this recontextualization on him individually and on the Paschall Brothers Quartet, however, Reverend Paschall is adamant,

"Truth is Truth, not at opinion. With gospel, you know what they should be singing about. Our only concern is with getting out the message. Sure, there is political correctness and the atmosphere may or may not be conducive [to promoting the Lord]...but you don't change your music in different contexts. You must be free in order to make others free."

(personal communication: 11-03-01)

Paschall's freedom and ability to share his experience of the sacred stem from his firm belief in the absolute truth of his Christian convictions. By embracing the truth of God, the Paschall Brothers free themselves to share His love without heeding worldly constraints upon their message. In order to honestly and effectively present themselves and their performance as the ultimate approach to experience of the sacred, sacred musicians must fully embrace the core beliefs of their religious system.

Devita Coleman, director of Ebony Expressions Gospel Choir from the College of William and Mary, agrees that the secularized environment of the Tidewater Gospel Festival impacts her group's performance. The festival setting de-emphasizes the testimonial aspect of Ebony Expressions' delivery, but "you still want to get out the ministry, the message is in the music. It's not just a performance, but a ministry." (D. Coleman personal communication: 11-03-01). The group sees their festival performance as a chance to reach out to a broad audience base, composed of other gospel performers, insiders to the tradition, and their non-gospel peers.
With the goal of righteously ministering in every context, the main question for many festival performers is how to accomplish that ministry. While smaller, uni-religious festivals impose mild restrictions on performers, the tolerant pluralism of the secular public sector, particularly in the larger, multi-religious venues such as the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, complicated the performer’s role. Since these venues operate on the Schopenhauer’s premise that all forms of music address humankind’s relationship to the transcendent, performers find their firm convictions cast as one of many equally valid paths to sacred experience.

4. B. Impact of Festivalization on Performance

At the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, and many similar events, the musicians are framed as emissaries of the culturally specific and the spiritually ambiguous. Large sacred festivals emphasize the cultural aspects of performance and a generic spiritual appeal, while discouraging overt testimony or proselytization. In some cases, pluralism may only be tolerated to a certain point, at which governmental restrictions may prohibit musicians from overtly incorporating missions into their performance. As the United States Bureau of Consular Affairs reminds travelers,

Islam is the state religion of Morocco. The Moroccan Government does not interfere with public worship by the country’s Christian or Jewish minorities. However, while Christians are allowed to practice freely, some activities, such as proselytizing or encouraging conversion to the Christian faith—both considered legally incompatible with Islam—are prohibited. It is illegal for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. In the past, American citizens have been detained or arrested and expelled for discussing or trying to engage Moroccans in debate about Christianity.

(“Morocco- Consular Information Sheet” March 10, 2002.)

Operating in this relatively tolerant climate, musicians at the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music must temper their performances in accordance with local law. Thus,
specific statements of theology or belief are conspicuously absent from performances, festival programs, and other explanatory material.

The dynamic performance of the Eddie Hawkins Gospel Singer at the 2001 Fes Festival illustrates these concerns of staging the religiously specific. Although the Eddie Hawkins Gospel Singers share similar theological and ideological roots with the performers at the Tidewater Gospel Festival, their appearance at the 2001 Fes Festival lacked the testimonial and prayerful elements of the Tidewater Festival. Based in Bishop Walter Hawkin's Love Center in Oakland, California, the Hawkins ensemble openly espouses the goals of their musical ministry:

"We, as Christians, are fishers of men. It is our job to "CATCH" anyone and everyone in God's "SAFETY NET" by sharing the gospel with "WHOSOEVER" will listen. It is not our job to determine who can receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our job to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone who wants to hear it. Thus, everyone is welcome to hear God's Word regardless of income, title, position or circumstance. GOD does the rest."

("What We Believe" 2002)

Despite the specificity of their statement of faith, the generalized pluralism of the Fes Festival (and the Islamic law of the Kingdom of Morocco) forces the Hawkins Singers to rely on God to carry the specifics of His message to the festival-goers through the music.

While all festivals of sacred world music are not constrained by national religious laws, they do prescribe to the egalitarian pluralism of post-modernism. Since festivals such as the Fes Festival and the Dalai Lama's World Festival of Sacred Music function on the pretext of promoting human experience of the sacred, the performers at these multi-religious venues are faced with a unique challenge. While providing an "authentic," audience-friendly show of the exotic other, artists must package their
approach to the sacred in a universally appealing manner that remains true to its religious convictions.

5. Types of Performers at the Fes Festival

The artists appearing at the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music fall into three main categories: those who base their performance of the sacred in 1) specific cultural appeal, 2) cosmopolitan appeal, and 3) historical appeal. Of the sixteen featured groups, ten were primarily cultural, three catered to the cosmopolitan atmosphere, and three grounded their performances in historical recreation.

5. A. Culturally Based Performance

Culturally specific performance ensembles contribute their distinctive localized flavors to the overall spiritual stew of the festival. The Hmadcha of Fes, Les Mouloudiyats du Maroq, and the Dakka of Taroudant present abbreviated versions of their Moroccan brotherhoods’ religious ceremonies. From the East, Afroz Bano sings the Bahjan and Thumris of Rajastan and Abida Paveen contributes Pakistani ghazals.19 Sheikh al-Tuni of Upper Egypt and the Al-Kindi Ensemble of Syria represent traditional Levantine Islam. Luzmila Carpio’s voice soars in the sacred chants of the Andes. The Eddie Hawkins Singers bring American gospel music, while the Zulus of Colenso Abafana come fully dressed in traditional tribal garb. Although many of these musicians give dynamic and innovative performances, they choose to remain largely within the bounds of their particular religious musical traditions.

These performers base their identities upon their cultural authenticity, as well as their sacred musical experiences. Since the Fes Festival advertises the exotic, featured performers must epitomize festival organizers’ conceptions of the exciting, authentic
other. Just as they must create an experience of the sacred upon the secular stage, performers are called upon to do so in culturally situated manner. Since decontextualized spiritual and cultural fragments are becoming increasingly common in everyday experience, festival performers are charged with recreating a stable reference point for these potentially potent portals to the divine.

Firm assertions of a distinctive identity are particularly important within the context of a multinational, multi-religious festival of sacred music. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett who describes large-scale events as a discourse of pluralism, of unity in diversity, cautions that musicians run the risk of what might be termed the "banality of difference," whereby the proliferation of variations has the neutralizing effect of rendering difference (and conflict) inconsequential" (1998: 76). While elements of the unfamiliar delineate different performance traditions, the sheer number and exoticism of the religious traditions presented frequently appeal to society's tendency toward generalizing the "other." In her book, Gone Primitive, Marianna Torgovnick explains that "Our culture's generalized notion of the primitive is by nature and effect inexact or composite: it conforms to no single social or biographical entry and, indeed, habitually and sometimes willfully infuses the attributes of different societies" (1990: 22).

Performers who base their musical identities and presentation of the sacred within culturally specific media must continuously assert themselves, both over time and within specific festival appearances, in order to counter their relegation among the generic, irrelevant "other."

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19 Ghazals are a genre of Islamic devotional song.
5. B. Pluralism Based Performance

The second category of musicians takes a slightly different approach, catering their performances to the nebulous spiritual philosophy of the festival. The performance content and styles of Sister Marie Keyrouz, Abby Lincoln, and Enrique Morente, and to some extent the Al-Kindi Ensemble, lend themselves to the "ethnographic humanism,...cosmopolitan, progressive, and democratic" values of these large festivals of world sacred music (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 217). While these performers ground their repertoire in traditional musics, they draw inspiration from a variety of sources. Their final artistic product and performance is itself a syncretic, innovative composition based that appeals to the broad-based spirituality of the festival construct.

A musician and doctor of musicology and religious anthropology, Sister Marie Keyrouz "perfectly personifies synthesis of Mediterranean spirituality" (Fes Festival Program 2001: 32). The singing Lebanese nun and her Paris-based musical Ensemble of Peace presented "Chants of Jerusalem: Psalms for the Third Millenium" at the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. The ensemble employs both Christian and Muslim musicians, and the "traditional oriental orchestra's" appearance at the Fes Festival ostensibly furthered Keyrouz' mission of "fostering Eastern and Western dialogue."

Although she is a highly educated, skilled performer in many genres, Keyrouz espouses her message as: "a prayer for love and peace which helps to break down barriers and helps to expand boundaries-fostering an understanding that brings solitary individuals and regions together" (Ibid). This message of pluralistic tolerance, expressed through a

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20 "Cultivating Milanese and Gregorian chant with equal finesse as the Byzantine or Syro-Maronite style of the Christian Oriental Church, or even Gounod, Bruckner or Schubert (as in a recent recording)...." (Ibid).
fusion of sacred styles, finds perfect expression within the context of the festival of world sacred music.

Such musical innovation and fusion, however, raises the ever-present issue of authenticity. By venturing beyond the safety of tradition, artists like Keyrouz run the risk of adopting and epitomizing Torgovnick's inexact, composite exoticism in their approach to experience of the sacred. By including a grand piano in her "oriental orchestra," Sister Keyrouz chooses to limits her repertoire to *maqamat* without semitones, or to modify the *maqamat* to accommodate the piano's intervals. In addition to these modal variations, the pianist hails from a jazz background and frequently tries to "spice things up a bit" (personal communication 6-02-01) by infusing chromatic runs and jazzy riffs into his playing. Such musical invocation can be seen either as positive development of within the tradition, or as a defiling departure from it.

In refusing to adhere to a single musical traditions or religious approach to the divine, these musicians create a genre of post-modern sacred music that is particularly suited to the cross-cultural and cross-confessional festival context. Sharing the post-tourist's penchant for introspection and evaluation, these performers are keenly aware of the cultural and musical influences of their music. Writing his through-composed "Misa Flamenca" Spanish artist Enrique Morente purposefully incorporated the liturgy of the Catholic mass, his knowledge of classical music theory, and "new musical trends without losing touch with the traditional Flamenco style" (Fes Festival Program 2001: 48). Although the resultant forms may not be precisely traditional, this syncretic, self-determining musical pursuit of the experience of the sacred perfectly aligns with the personalized, reception-based spirituality of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music.
5. C. Historically Based Performance

The third group of performers uses the spiritual connotations of history as an alternative basis of legitimacy and identity. Positioning themselves in opposition to the modern mainstream, these performers appropriate musics of the past, infusing them with new potential for effecting the experience of the sacred within the paradigm of post-modern spirituality. Tamara Livingston’s characterization of revivalists extends to explain this phenomenon of cross-cultural and historical appropriation. Sharing an “overt cultural and political agenda” revivalists “align themselves with a particular historical lineage, and offer a cultural alternative in which legitimacy is grounded in reference to authenticity and historical fidelity” (Livingston 1997, 66). Disaffected by perceived emotive or philosophical deficiencies in their own musical systems, these performers strive to communicate their experiences of the sacred via the purity that is (supposedly) innately inherent to the past and the exotic “other.”

Historically-based ensembles constituted 18.75% of the performing groups at the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. Micrologus,22 Jordi Savall and the Hesperion XXI Ensemble,23 and Ensemble Naguila24 all featured virtuosic musicians who were clearly moved by their performances. Yet, although the performers appear under the auspices of “sacred music,” the extraordinary value of the music stems not from its

21 Sing. Maqam. The organizing modal systems of traditional Arab music.
22 An Italian ensemble that recreates the orally transmitted laudes and other lay religious songs of sixteenth century Italy. According to the 2001 Fes Festival program, “The group bases its interpretations on solid historical, organological and iconographical research, as well as comparative folklore studies” (54).
23 Led by Spaniard Jordi Savall, Hesperion XXI is “brought together by the study and interpretation of ancient music through a modern premise, as well as a deep respect for the immense richness of the pre-1800 European and Hispanic Repertoire” (Fes Festival Program: 40).
24 Formed in France, Ensemble Naguila “reunites Jewish and Muslim musicians in the spirit of nurturing peaceful coexistence and a shared musical quest to preserve these traditions” of Andalucian Spain and post-Reconquista ’Ala al-Andalus in Morocco (Fes Festival Program: 50).
liturgical lyrics, but from its rich historical heritage. Hesperion XXI was “brought
together by the study and interpretation of ancient music through a modern premise, as
well as a deep respect for the immense richness of the pre-1800 European and Hispanic
repertoire” (Fes Festival Program 2001: 40). While the musicians certainly seemed to
share a “flow” experience with their listeners, I find that this historically-based “sacred”
music makes little attempt to differentiate between experience of the sacred from
experience of the aesthetic. However, since experience of the sacred is individually
defined in response to particular performances, making a sweeping value-judgement as to
the sacred affect of this music would be irresponsible. In either case, although early
music may seem far removed from the post-modern pursuit of the sacred, this
performance genre dovetails with other generalized exotic musics by appealing to notions
of the primordial purity of the past.

6. Issues of Authenticity and Motivation

While the festival environment frees performers to base their popular appeal in
cultural specificity, cosmopolitan spirituality, or historical purity, the setting prompts
questions as to the performers’ motivations. The festival of world sacred music presents
the musician as a cultural tome, a universally-accessible professional entertainer, an
artist, and a musician in service of the transcendent. Inclusion on the docket of a
prestigious international festival is extremely beneficial in raising a musicians’ profile,
endorsing their music, and expanding their fan bases. Conflicts of interest arise when

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25 Regrettably, the Festival program neglects to elaborate upon the details of Hesperion XXI’s “modern
premise” of interpretation.
musicians must reconcile their roles as religious devotees with the fame and fortune promised by their secular roles.  

Many performers of sacred music are partially motivated by audience response. Although he asserts that the Paschall Brothers "pray that we live the life that we sing about, of meekness and kindness," Tarrence Paschall also hopes for positive response to the singing, "You hope that people enjoy it, because we put so much into it" (2001). Some artists are accused of putting too much emphasis on the performative aspects of their ministry, and Mellonee Burnim quotes one woman as saying, "I think they mean to be singing for God, but they be singing for the people" (1989: 56). Whether they are singing from the secular stage of the Fes Festival or the ranks of their own choir loft, if the musicians are concentrating too much upon the popularity of their performance, then their motivations may contrast religious ideals of the worship experience.

7. Conclusion

Since the festival setting is not conducive to detailed explanation of performers' personal spirituality or defense of performance authenticity, most performers at the Fes Festival and Tidewater Gospel Festival simply opt to minister by demonstrating the sheer awesome beauty of their communion with the divine. Coleman asserts that "You can’t just tell people to minister, you just lose it then. It’s when you’re really conscious of what you’re singing about, you catch the Spirit...if you’re praising, then you’re doing your job" (2001). In the festival setting, the sacred musician also recreates elements of religious ritual, such as the worship service format of the Tidewater Gospel Festival, to create a personalized forum for communication with the divine. In contrast to communal religious ritual, the highly personal experience encouraged by the festival encourages

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26 See (Paschall, T. personal communication 11-3-01) and (Burnim 1989).
individuals to engage the transcendent in varying degrees of intensity. Since the experience of the sacred is so highly individualized (and optional), subjective allegations of compromised authenticity and commercialism are far easier to make than to counter.

Given this lack of objectivity, if one has any desire to question the authenticity of the experience, one need only look within oneself. Following the subjective reception phenomenology of the festivals, asking whether or not a fulfilling experience was truly sacred may be overanalyzing the issue. Torgovnick’s summary of postmodern primitivism extends to the experience of the sacred, “if the transactions occurring in postmodern primitivism make everyone happy, then they are a cool clear rain drenching the heat of the urban jungle” (1990: 40). Likewise, if the featured musicians are comfortable in asserting themselves as sacred artists, truly communing with the divine upon the festival stage, then only disaffected members of the audience have any grounds to begin to dispute their claims.

The pluralistic atmosphere of festivals of world sacred music places participating musicians into a unique bind. These artists are supposed to present highly enculturated, authentic, and “inspired” performances. Yet, while these performances ideally retain their indigenous cultural and religious characteristics, events like the Fes Festival also advertise universal access to the human experience of the sacred. Catering to a post-touristic version of spirituality, the world festivals of sacred music of the early twenty-first century are creating a new spiritual forum. While they hold aesthetic, educational, and entertainment appeal, festivals like Fes and the Tidewater Gospel Festival also offer the intensely engaged individual a new avenue of spiritual exploration. They allow the seeker to maintain an academic perspective until he or she chooses to surrender to the
most potent and pleasurable dish on the musical buffet. In such a context, performers are restricted in communicating almost solely through their music, hoping to strike the best balance between the accessible and the "authentic."
IV. CHAPTER 3: Patrons and Producers: Staging the Sacred

The patrons and producers are the most influential participants in festivals of world sacred music. Their artistic visions determine a festival's form and content. These conceptions are given concrete form in the festival's structure via performance venue, featured musicians, targeted audience, and overall atmosphere. By holding the purse strings, patrons guide productions and assume a degree of control over the performers' and producers' puppet strings. The festival becomes a multimedia presentation of its patrons' and producers' ideological approach to the cultural and the sacred.

1. Staging the Experience of the Sacred

In order to present the sacred on stage, festival producers must be aware of their goals for the festival, and how their approach to recontextualizing the sacred upon the secular stage furthers these aims. First, festival producers must first clarify their definitions and approaches to the experience of the sacred. Will the festival focus on the music, the performers, religious pluralism, or cultural diversity? Should the allure of exotica be emphasized or will notions of global unity downplay cultural differences? Will language present an insurmountable barrier?

Does the festival adopt essentialism, claiming that the sacred is an objective quality, empirically evidenced, and manifest within particular objects, or musical forms? Or are the festival organizers anti-essentialists, believing that the experience of the sacred is a human construct, based upon subjective, individual experience? Does the festival cast its performers and music in the absolutist roles of modernity, or does the ambiguity and relativism of post-modernity take center stage? That is, do the Whirling Dervishes present the straight path to the god, or is their road one of many equally scenic routes to
enlightenment? If it is decided that the sacred can be experienced through more than one religion’s musical traditions, then how wide a variety of religious traditions should be represented? Keeping issues of cultural baggage in mind, festival designers act as aesthetic and spiritual guardians, combing the world’s sacred music for those traditions that will most effectively advance their artistic and spiritual goals.

The festival is the realization and reconciliation of these issues. The physical logistics of geographical location, performance venue, marketing, translation, and ticketing all stem from the producers’ ideologies and practical constraints. This chapter explores these issues through analysis of two highly contrasting festivals of world sacred music, the Tidewater Gospel Festival and the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music.

2. Creating and Situating a Festival

Most festivals begin as the vision and personal project of one individual and eventually reach fruition as a coordinated group effort. The size and duties of the production staff vary in relation to the scope and tone of the staged festival. For example, the Dalai Lama’s World Festival of Sacred Music encourages local initiative, organizations, and resources to function without an organizational hierarchy (“World Festival of Sacred Music” 2002). Guided in “concept and spirit,” similar festivals on five continents are now realizing this dream through a vast army of support staff and volunteers. In the following profiles of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music and the Tidewater Gospel Festival, I illustrate the how contrasting organizational approaches result in dramatically different festivals.

27 Although the Tidewater Gospel Festival only features one sacred music tradition and does not label itself as a “festival of world sacred music,” the event is nevertheless an appropriate case study. Numerous festivals featuring a single, culturally specific genre of sacred music use the adjective “world” to assert the
2. A. Tidewater Gospel Festival: Origins and Location

The Tidewater Gospel Festival began in 1998 under the sponsorship of the music department and Office of Student Affairs at the College of William and Mary. Having been hired by the college as a visiting professor of music, Dr. Horace Boyer proposed the general idea to Carol Oja, then chair of the music department and the rest of the music faculty. Current campus organizer for the festival, Chon Glover, recalls that Boyer hoped to emphasize gospel’s historical ties to southeastern Virginia, saying “wouldn’t it be great to bring in some choirs and showcase where a major part of gospel music started, in this region” (11-9-01). The department of music gave its seal of approval to the event and related secular campus groups, such as the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost, Black Studies department, and the Office of Multi-cultural Affairs were contacted for support.

Geographical location plays a key role in legitimizing and energizing the Tidewater Gospel Festival. In his opening remarks at the 2001 festival, Dr. Horace Boyer contextualized the festival within the spiritual geography of the region,

This Tidewater area of Virginia is extremely important in the development of this black sacred music we call “gospel.” It had its beginnings in 1882 when Hampton University organized a group of Jubilee singers. And then, in 1899, they sent out the Hampton Jubilee Quartet. And in 1917, they organized here a group called the Silver Leaf Jubilee Singers. In 1930, in Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk, Virginia a group of four boys started harmonizing on spirituals, calling themselves the Golden Gate Quartet. And then in 1927, in Richmond, Virginia, Joe “Gospel” Williams put together a group called the “Harmonizing Four.”

Listen children, gospel music has been in the Tidewater area forever, and we ought to say “Amen.” (The audience responded with a loud, ‘Amen!’)... I can’t thank William and Mary enough for extending this opportunity in this area to make this kind of music available to the public...Now listen, this is a very

global relevance and accessibility of their music. See discussion of the Essaouira Festival of gnoua music on page 14.
interesting period in American history. In my 64 years, I’ve not lived through a
period like this. And I like the idea that we’re all joined together to say “Yes,
God is real and we will be free!” We’d like to begin our program this evening
with a tribute from the Paschall Brothers, a group that is in the tradition of the
Jubilee Quartets of the Tidewater Area.

(H. Boyer, 11-3-01)

The rich living legacy of gospel music in the Tidewater area provided the impetus for the
festival’s foundation. During the festival, this powerful heritage contextualizes each of
the performing groups within the regional history of gospel music.

2. B. Fes: Creating a Stage in the Spiritual Heart of Morocco

Evolving from an artistic film festival, the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music
assumed its current form in 1994. After a one-year hiatus in 1995 for reconsidering its
mission and funding, the festival has been an annual event. Countering the militant
violence of Desert Storm, in 1992 Dr. Faouzi Skali organized “Desert Colloquium,” a
multimedia event incorporating film, lectures, and concerts of Sufi music. Skali felt that
the production’s music most clearly accomplished his goal of cross-cultural
communication, leading him to overhaul his approach and launch the Fes Festival of
World Sacred Music two years later.

The Fes Festival of World Sacred Music retains some of the Desert Colloquium’s
multimedia approach. In addition to the afternoon and evening concerts, the festival
offers a morning series of films, lectures, and a colloquium. In 2001, featured films were
C. Dreyer’s Jeanne d’Arc and Yasujiro Ozu’s Le Voyage À Tokyo. Three lectures were
presented: “Music is the Language of the Soul” by Edgar Morin, “Spirituality and
Globalization” by Thierry de Montbrial, and “Mysticism and Poetry” by Abdessalam
Cheddadi and festival founder, Faouzi Skali. The colloquium addressed the 2001 festival
theme, “Giving Soul to Globalization,” in three round table discussion sessions.
Although these academic forums may best articulate the festival planners’ visions, they are not showcased as the public face of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. The concerts form the core of the festival, and receive much better publicity. Reflecting a post-colonial mindset, the films, lectures, and colloquia cater to an educated, Europeanized audience. Lack of translation poses a significant challenge for many foreign festival-goers, since the lectures and colloquium were conducted almost exclusively in French. (In my estimation, at least half of the festival attendees had some command of French.) However, the ongoing dialogue between the intelligentsia of France and Morocco privileges the cultural elite of both societies, arguably continuing colonial dominance over native Moroccan linguistic and cultural groups. Just as the Fes Festival’s exotica is marketed to a particular fan-base, these formalized expressions of the festival’s ideological aims target a specific audience.

In contrast to the regional Tidewater Festival that presents only gospel music, the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music is an international venue featuring artists from various cultures and religious traditions. While the rich religious history of Fes has earned the city the title of “the spiritual heart of Morocco,” this largely Islamic heritage is unrelated to roughly half of the religious traditions represented by performing groups at the Fes Festival. Despite the almost exclusively Muslim nature of Moroccan society, festival organizers hope to reawaken a realm of religious relativism in the festival, so that “Every year through this rendez-vous of Sacred (sic) songs and music...Fez once again becomes the city of great international cultural radiance that it was during its historical splendor” (Fes Festival Program 2001: 20). Instead of relying upon spiritual specificity,
festival organizers emphasize the city’s baraka which is ostensibly manifested in and intensified by the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music.

2. C. Tidewater Gospel Festival: Production on the Local Level

The Tidewater Gospel Festival is a small regional festival, attracting approximately 700 festival-goers in its first year and averaging roughly 525 attendees in the two subsequent years (Glover 11-9-01). Given the festival’s modest proportions, the organization and production of the Tidewater Gospel Festival has been accomplished by a handful of individuals. Although many campus groups patronize the event, two individuals, Dr. Horace Boyer and Chon Glover, share the bulk of the Tidewater Gospel Festival’s organizational logistics.

As an expert scholar and experienced practitioner of gospel music, Dr. Horace Boyer oversees the artistic and spiritual aspects of the festival. He attempts to create a festival that expresses a unified Christian approach to experience of the sacred (in this case, God) while showcasing groups from the entire range of gospel music in the Tidewater area. During the festival, Dr. Boyer acts as an emcee, introducing the musicians and situating them within the historical traditions of Tidewater gospel performance. Although he does not perform musically at this venue, Dr. Boyer uses his charismatic personality and academic background to provide the festival with a sense of direction and cohesion.

Complimenting Dr. Boyer’s organizational role, Director of Multi-Cultural Affairs Chon Glover coordinates the practical aspects of the festival from her office at the College of William and Mary. Since Dr. Boyer teaches and resides in Massachusetts, his involvement in planning the festival is limited to telephone and electronic
communication. As Chon explains, "Horace tells me, 'Chon, this is what I am envisioning...’ and then I go and try to do it" (11-9-01). Glover is responsible for nearly every aspect of the festival, from reserving the campus auditorium as a performance space, preparing programs, coordinating audio-visual equipment, booking the musicians, arranging their arrival and performance schedules and transportation, and securing funding.

Logistically realized by Chon Glover, Dr. Boyer’s approach to the experience of the sacred provides the main guidance for the Tidewater Gospel Festival. Glover articulates the three major goals of the Tidewater Festival as educating people about gospel music in the Tidewater area, exposing people to a variety of styles of gospel music, and providing an opportunity for networking among the performing groups, “Between the collegiate choirs especially: St. Paul’s, Ebony Impact and Ebony Expressions. The exchange is so important. You learn and you feel connected to others who are going through the same struggles as you are” (11-9-01). Featuring only gospel music, the Tidewater Festival exhibits close ties to the ritual structure of gospel within a religious context. The event is a secularized celebration, however, and the festival’s mildly didactic goal of showcasing local history tempers the event’s religious nature.

2. D. The Fes Festival: Production on an International Level

While three rooms in the University Center of the College of William and Mary are sufficient for staging the Tidewater Gospel Festival, the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music operates on a considerably larger scale. The festival’s concerts are held in three venues, two of which are within the city of Fes. Evening concerts are set in front of the
spectacular Bab Makina, one of the gateways into the medieval medina. Seating is arranged to accommodate roughly 5,000 spectators. Located between the Fes al-Jadid and the medina, Dar Batha Museum seats about 250 afternoon concertgoers. A single concert takes place in the Roman ruins of Volubilis, also arranged to seat roughly 250 (figures from Lynch 2000: 77). North American Festival Liaison Zeyba Rahman estimates that during the week of concert, approximately 30,000 ticket holders visit the festival (qt. in Lynch 2000: 79). The large scale of the festival requires extensive planning and production and has spawned a proportionally sized festival administration.

In 2001, the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music had five main directors, supported by a multitude of organizations and individuals, including a 32-member Organization Committee, an eleven-member Executive Committee, the Fes-Saiss Association, various local authorities, numerous national governmental ministries, not to mention His Majesty Mohammad VI himself. These five directors, who also served upon many of the organizing committees, were each responsible for different aspects of the festival. Festival founder, Dr. Faouzi Skali was the General Director in charge of programming. Residing in France, Gérard Kurdjian was the Artistic Director.

28 Bab Makina, (tr. Gate of the Machines) is a portal into the medieval quarter of Fes. The concert stage is set before the magnificent arched gate. The seats, divided into clearly divided ticketed sections and correspondingly progressing from padded to utilitarian, are arranged on broad risers. (See Appendix B, figure 1).

29 "New Fes." The label "new" is relative; this quarter of the city was built by the Merinides in the 13th century (Scheider 1999: 677).

30 This afternoon concert venue was somewhat more informal, featuring a single section of chairs fanned around a large oriental rug in front of a low stage in the museum courtyard. In 2001, many audience members chose to sit on the rug. (See Appendix B, figure 2).

31 Officially, seats are arranged on the slope of a low hill that faces the musicians performing beneath an ancient Roman triumphal arch. The environment is quite informal, however, leaving audience members free to sit in the chairs, on the ground, or in any section of the sprawling ruins that remains within ear shot of the concert. (See Appendix B, figure 3).

32 Admittedly, the king is not extensively involved in the practical aspects of planning and running the festival, but his preferences extend considerable influence over the choices of festival organizers. See
Abdelfattah Bouzoubaa directed Coordination and Sponsoring, while Driss Faceh served as Commercial Director and Abdelali Diouri served as Administrative Director and General Registrar (Fes Festival Program 2001: 19). Skali and Kurdjian hold to most influence over the tone and content of the festival, whereas the remaining three directors concentrate on the event's logistical aspects.

3. Patronage

In dealing with sacred music, the very issue of monetary exchange is tinged with shades of debasement and corruption. The festival's transcendental goals of enlightenment and experience of the sacred seem above the defiling capitalism of the music and tourist industries. However, staging a festival requires monetary support. Festival patrons can often accompany their donations with influence, exercising varying degrees of control over festival content and operations. When governing bodies lend their funds and influence to a festival, the event's decorum is more tightly constrained by legal relationship of institutionalized religion and the state. Private-sector funding may present fewer conflicts of interest, although the sullyng dynamics of economic exchange remain present.

3. A. The Tidewater Gospel Festival: Low-budget state funding

Charging no admission fee, the Tidewater Gospel Festival operates on a very small budget, only providing travel stipends for regionally-based performing ensembles and a speaking fee to Dr. Boyer. The patronage of the Tidewater Gospel Festival by the College of William and Mary plays a key role in realizing the festival's secular goals of inclusion and education. The College of William and Mary is one of the State of

Appendix C for the 2001 Fes Festival Organization Committee and Executive Committee rosters. Also note that many individuals serve on both committees.
Virginias’ public universities, and as such is funded largely by the state government. Each year, campus organizations, such as the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Vice-President of Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Multi-cultural Affairs, and related academic departments, pool their resources to fund the event. With the college’s support and provision of performance space and audiovisual equipment, the festival is largely uninhibited by financial constraints. Thus, the Tidewater Gospel Festival is indirectly funded by the State of Virginia.

Given this governmental funding, the unapologetically Christian stance of the Tidewater Gospel Festival is somewhat unexpected. The majority of the musicians at the festival view their performance as a ministry. Prayer, Biblical readings, and, to a lesser extent, personal testimony is nearly as important as the music. According to Music Professor Anne Rasmussen, Dr. Boyer has voiced his surprise at the degree of religious expression allowed in the festival. He reports that such overt Christian practice would not be sanctioned in the political climate of his home institution, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Rasmussen personal communication, 3-13-02).

Although the public-sector governmental funding limits some of the overtly proselytizing aspects of the gospel tradition, the College’s logistical and monetary support allows the festival to maintain its distinctive character. First, the association with the college lends an air of academic legitimacy to the festival’s educational goals. Dr. Boyer is a distinguished scholar in his own right, but College’s official seal of approval extends to add academic legitimacy to the entire proceeding.

33 See Chapter 2, p. 33, “Staging the Sacred Musician” for further discussion of the constraints of the festival environment on specific religious expression.
Secondly, the festival’s free admission is very important in opening the venue to a wider segment of the population. Although enlightenment ideals of universal education prompt the college to provide enough funding to waive an admission fee, similar ideals of accessibility are found in gospel as well. Gospel theology emphasizes the omnipresent availability of God to any person, in any space, and at any time. The accessible forum of the festival reaches out to a wide segment of the population, many of who might be dissuaded by ticket prices. During the 2001 festival, many of the University Center employees (the majority of who were African American) took a few moments from their work to look in on the gospel festival. Opening the festival across economic boundaries puts the gospel principle of the universally accessible experience of the sacred into practice.

3. B. The Fes Festival: Tapping into the Post-Tourist Market

Association with the high-profile Fes Festival of World Sacred Music gives sponsors extensive advertising exposure to an affluent and culturally savvy crowd of international origins. Numerous private organizations, the majority of which are large national banks, support the festival. Notably, the festival also enjoys the official patronage of His Majesty Muhammad VI, the king of Morocco.

The relationship of the royalty to the festival provides a fascinating snapshot of the repartee between sponsors and festivals of world sacred music. By lending his support to the festival, Muhammad VI earns credibility (for himself and his country) as a modernized, liberal, and open-minded benefactor to the arts. In addition to royal money, the festival receives the king’s official seal of approval, which raises the event’s
legitimacy and social status. Power and money affect agreement, and many prominent Moroccans find it wise to share their king’s interests in the arts.

The king’s patronage is prominently displayed in the festival’s copious advertising, but contrasting aspects of Muhammad VI are featured in different contexts. Opened from the left, the 2001 Fes Festival Program is printed in English and French, while Arabic narration begins at the booklet’s facing cover. The first page of both halves is graced by a graceful rendering of the Bismillah34, and the second page features a photographic portrait of the king of Morocco.35 Impeccably coifed in a French suit, hands folded on his knee, “His Majesty MOHAMMED VI, King of Morocco” or “Sa Majesté MOHAMMED VI, Roi du Maroc” smiles from his pose in front of green brocade curtains (5). In a seeming split personality, the Arabic photo portrays “Sahib al-KhilAla Muhammad al-SAdis, Malak al-Maghrib” (tr. “His Majesty Muhammad VI, King of Morocco”) in a brocaded traveling compartment, wearing the white garb of a hajji.36 Only his face, waving hand, and prayer beads emerge from his flowing white garment. His Majesty is aware of the vastly different perspectives of the Fes Festival’s two main linguistic groups, and attempts to strike a balance in appealing to both of them. His dual existence epitomizes the post-touristic identity crisis of festivals of world sacred music: is it possible to unify the “enlightened,” “objective” West with the “authentic” and “exotic” East without compromising the integrity of them both?

34 Either vocal or written, the invocation “Bi ism Allah al-rahman al-rahim” (tr. In the name of God, the compassionate and merciful) precedes most practices of Islam, including every reading of the Qur’anic verses. The phrase is frequently rendered artistically in various styles of Arabic calligraphy.
35 See Appendix D.
4. Audience Demographics: The Fes Festival

One method by which a festival of world sacred music addresses issues of identity and overall coherence is by catering to a specific target audience. Despite lauding economic equality and social justice, the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music manifests itself as a relatively exclusive, elitist event. Festival President Mohammed Kabbaj prominently decries globalization’s economic discrimination, asking,

Why don’t we widen the scope of this openness limited to trade and investment flows, to include the spiritual values as sine qua non components? Economy, culture and spirituality are inextricably linked. Respecting their balance will favor the emergence of a larger sense of development in which human dignity and a universal dimension of solidarity will prevail.

(Fes Festival Program 2001: 9)

His words, however, are not matched by the practical operations of the Fes Festival. Although the festival enjoys substantial sponsorship from public and private funds, tickets to Fes Festival events are required and expensive. A small army of ushers and uniformed security personnel maintain distinct boundaries between seating sections and ensure that only ticket holders may access the festival. Admission to a single concert costs between $30 to $40 American dollars (during the 2001 festival, the exchange rate equaled roughly 360 to 480 dirhams). Considering that the average working Moroccan earns roughly $3,500 U.S. per year (about $9.59 per day) (“CIA World Fact Book” 4-2-02), these ticket prices effectively bar most average Moroccans from attending the festival. Such exclusionary prices could be seen in the light of post-colonialism, as insurance of continued insulation from the working class masses. For non-Moroccans attending the festival, the cost of transportation, tickets, and lodging is also fairly prohibitive. Simply arriving in Fes via the average Trans-Atlantic flight costs between

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36 A Muslim who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
$800 and $1000 (US), requiring international festival guests to be relatively financially independent.

Thus, the audience demographic at the Fes Festival represents an elite economic group. Describing cross-cultural mobility epitomized in festivals of world sacred music, Timothy Taylor describes a distinctive "kind of informational capital...here [that] can thus be associated only with certain highly placed social groups, even though it is theoretically available to anyone" (2000: 179). Such elitism would seem to run contrary to the egalitarian spirit encouraged by the tolerant pluralism of sacred music festivals.

Embracing the self-recrimination of post-tourism, many 2001 Fes festival-goers were uncomfortable with the obvious economic discrimination of the Fes Festival. The afternoon concert venue at the 2001 Fes Festival became a forum of mild protest against the social posturing of the festival. The four o'clock performances took place on a small stage under a spreading tree in the gardens of the Dar Batha Museum, a restored traditional Moroccan palace. The musicians were situated on raised platform with a large oriental rug at its base. Chairs were arranged in a semi-circle behind the carpet, creating a ten-foot margin between the performers and their audience. After a few concerts, some of the more bohemian audience members chose abandon the formality of convention, and began to sit cross-legged on the carpet in order to be closer to the musicians. Gradually, in apparent disregard for class differences about half of the attendees followed suit and filled the carpet to its fringes.

There is evident tension between outsiders' desire to access the purity of "primitive" sacred music and their reluctance to enter the cultural context that nurtures the music. The festival setting make such arbitrary selection possible by filtering the grit
of sociopolitical realities through the rosy lenses of romanticism and the artificially imposed festival frame. In her 1990 book Gone Primitive, Marianna Torgovnick explores Western tendencies to acknowledge only those aspects of the exotic, in her terminology the “primitive,” which affirm our pre-existing idealized conceptions of the “other.” Torgovnick asserts that “primitives, as often as not, do not simply vanish but change into the urban poor, and thus can no longer serve as a locus for our powerful longings precisely because they have entered our own normative conditions of urban life” (1990:192). Although the urban poor of Fes are interested in the performing groups featured in the Fes Festival (Passelegue 6-9-01), their financial situation almost unilaterally bars them from the festival, despite its appealing slogans of universal brotherhood and inclusion.37

5. Audience Demographics at the Tidewater Gospel Festival

In contrast to the closed forum and elite mindset of the Fes Festival, the open doors of the Tidewater Gospel Festival extend their welcome to all. The festival’s small scope and regional appeal draw a relatively local crowd, although the audience demographics of the Tidewater Gospel Festival have varied slightly over the event’s three-year history. Since the festival is situated just north of the Bible-belt in a conservative area of Virginia, the vast majority of those in attendance are familiar with or followers of Christianity. A significant percentage of the attendees are the musicians themselves, interacting as an enthused congregation when they not performing on stage. The inaugural festival in 1998 was more heavily attended, in part because of the novelty

37 Continued resentment of the Festival of World Sacred Music’s de facto economic discrimination fosters support for a concurrent non-profit music festival. Sponsored by a local arts organization, Association Nida’Fes, the two-year old Fes Fringe Festival features free performances by many of the artists playing at the larger Fes Festival of World Sacred Music (Association NIDAFES 2001: 2).
of the event, but also the featured choirs were larger (Glover 11-9-01). In 2001, festival participants filled roughly one third of the occupied seats. Performers aside, the racial proportions of the festival-goers is considerably more balanced than William and Mary’s student demographic of five and a half percent African Americans, although the audience remains primarily Caucasian. This ratio reflects the demographics of the greater Williamsburg community, which is only twenty-one percent African American38 (“City of Williamsburg” 3-31-02). Indeed, members of the Williamsburg community equaled, if not exceeded, the college students in attendance at the 2001 festival.

Glover commented upon the dynamics of the insider/outsider demographics of the Tidewater Festival in her description of the target audience of the festival. According to Glover, the target audience is,

...everybody. There really is no special section. The audiences here have been racially Caucasian, largely because African Americans think that they already know all that they need to know about gospel music. They think that this is purely a teaching event, but it is not just that - it’s a free concert with just a small teaching section; it’s a time of praise and worship.

We also want the students, because it enriches their experience. It takes their classroom experience and augments it with hands-on experience.

We also want to bring in members of the community and prospective students, we want to show the bond between the college and community at large.

(personal communication 11-9-01)

This description of the festival’s ideal audience corresponds to Glover’s and Boyer’s goals for the festival. They hope to introduce the history and the music of the gospel tradition to the community on campus and at large, while providing an uplifting forum of communication and musical expression for regional performance ensembles.

38 This figure (21%) does not include the student body of the College of William and Mary. Including the William and Mary population lowers the ratio of African Americans to 13.3%. (“City of Williamsburg 3-31-02).
6. Presenting the Sacred for Secular Consumption

The artistic vision of the production staff is one of the single most important factors in determining the tone and form of the festival. Divorced from their original settings, the musical performances are assigned new meanings within the context of the festival. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes that “ethnographic objects are made, not found, despite claims to the contrary. They did not begin their lives as ethnographic objects. They ‘became’ ethnographic through processes of detachment and contextualization” (1998: 3). By deciding how, or if, festival performances will be explained, translated, or culturally situated, festival producers filter featured musics through a lens of publication.

Most festivals of world sacred music, including the Tidewater Gospel Festival and the Fes Festival, acknowledge that the recontextualization of staging sacred performance compromises the authenticity of original ritual forms. For example, the New York Public Radio show *New Sounds* frequently features week-long profiles of festivals of world sacred music, such as their October 15–17, 2001 profile of the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music. New Sounds producer John Schafer is also involved with the production of the Fes Festival. He assists with the event’s sound while recording the performances for later air play on his New York public radio show. Schafer presents his broadcasts of sacred traditions as musical events outside of religious service,

I take the performance for what it is: a re-creation of a sacred rite, often of great subtlety and antiquity, in a ‘performance’ setting. It is usually not the rite itself; rather, it’s usually an introduction, and perhaps an invitation to explore more deeply. That in particular is how I try to present these things on my show.

(personal communication 1-4-02)

As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes “carnival represented is carnival tamed” (1998: 77), thus festivals are by nature unable to present a truly “authentic” experience. Yet, by
acknowledging the demarcated nature of the festival environment, this self-conscious perception of the festival frame preserves the integrity of the represented tradition while packaging the performance in an accessible format.

Since Christianity is at least culturally familiar to most of the performers and festival-goers, the distinctive nature of gospel performance practice is cast in a relatively unexotic light. Gospel music has become a current in mainstream American culture, and Glover notes that “this year the [Tidewater Gospel] festival transcended denominational lines, by having the Catholics. Since *Sister Act*\(^39\) came out, people have been more aware that gospel can be a Catholic, or Episcopalian thing” (11-9-01). The Tidewater Gospel Festival addresses its audience from a primarily insider perspective, which is, in this case, as Protestant Christians approaching other like-minded Christians. Festival producers choose to limit its overt didacticism, educating instead through the musical performance.

The structure of the Tidewater Gospel Festival is similar to that of a church service. The festival begins with all of the participants processing into the performance space, just as the pastors and choir typically enter the sanctuary after the congregation has gathered. In 2001, following a few words from Dr. Boyer, an invocation was given by the Reverend Tarrence Paschall. The performances of each participating group are contained within a section of “Fellowship and Praise” (Tidewater Gospel Festival program 2001). All of the choirs join their voices for a closing hymn, and then Dr. Boyer concludes the evening with a few closing remarks reminiscent of a benediction.

While the producers of the Tidewater Gospel Festival have a great deal of experience with the traditions presented in the festival, festival producers do not always
have such a thorough background in the represented subject matter. Although festival producers strive to affect “authentic” experiences of the sacred and culture through the staging of sacred music, their own lack of intimate familiarity with the cultural situation and performance norms of the traditions may generate confusion.

The conflicted audience reaction to Ensemble al-Kindi’s first New York City performance illustrates the dilemma of presenting recontextualization. In opening remarks, at the concert, an official from the sponsoring World Music Institute instructed the crowd that they should refrain from applause during the performance because this was sacred music. Shannon writes that,

> I found this remark strange because in my experience, Aleppine performers and audiences do not consistently distinguish between “sacred” and “non-sacred” performance genres, even in the context of the mosque of Sufi zawiya where audience participation is pretty much mandatory and one finds similar responses to what happens in tarab performances; also, much of the repertoire...is shared.

(2001: 3)

A number of vocal latecomers, familiar with Arab performance etiquette, who “reacted to the performance as any good and skilled Arab listener would: with shouts of ‘Allah,’ ‘aywa!,’ and ‘ya ‘aynil’ as well as applause” (Shannon 2001: 4) were promptly shushed by the “properly” instructed audience members.

In their presentation of the Al-Kindi concert, festival organizers followed a trend which makes the culturally and religiously exotic accessible through generalization. In

39 Released by Buena Vista in 1992 Sister Act featured Whoopi Goldberg as a lounge singer hiding out in a convent through the federal witness protection program. The singer infused new life into the convent’s choir by transforming the stiff white sisters into swinging gospel singers.

40 Led by qanun virtuoso Julien Weiss, Ensemble al-Kindi is based on the classical model of the takht: a small Arabic musical ensemble, generally consisting of one of each of the main traditional instruments and a singer. Ensemble al-Kindi accompanies its guest vocalists with qanun, ‘ud, nye, and riqq. Based in Aleppo, the group performs a mixed repertoire of Syrian Islamic songs and profane songs, such as muwashshashat. Shannon writes that “the repertoire is similar if not identical between “sacred” and
this case, the generalization was that respectful silence is the most appropriate audience reaction to sacred music. Although the festival producers no doubt intended to respect the hallowed character of the sacred music, did not reconcile their culturally biased conceptions of appropriate response with the culturally situated performance response usual to the tradition. By classifying al-Kindi’s ensemble as generic “sacred music,” meriting a certain category of response, festival organizers blur some of the defining characteristics of the genre. Individual world sacred musics are frequently presented as colorful examples of a single performance genre, “And just as all ‘ethnic’ worlds are though somehow to be closer to nature than their ‘modern’ counterparts, so too these ethnic worlds are thought to share attributes that bond them together in a ‘fraternity of otherness,’ making them mutually intelligible to one another while remaining uniformly foreign, and sometimes wondrous, to those who inhabit the West.” Phillips and Steiner. (1999: 18). As the primary lens between the world and the represented musical tradition, festival organizers exercise extensive influence in constructing identity on the sacred stage.

“profane” settings and it is usually the venue that is more important in distinguishing sacred from non-sacred domains (2001: 9).
V. Chapter 4: Participants: Pilgrimage from the Post-Modern Perspective

Depending on the artistic and spiritual visions of their organizers, festivals of world sacred music can present audiences with a vast range of sacred musical traditions. Although the originally religious musics have been contextualized onto the relatively neutral festival stage, every spectator nevertheless brings his or her own cultural, experiential, religious, and social background to the musical performance. This precognition in the minds of the audience gives rise to a number of different perspectives on the experience of musical meaning and the sacred. Preconceptions about a tradition may be seen as negatively as cultural baggage, or positively as insightful background that may yield valuable ethnographic and personal understanding. Similarly, while culture shock may be a rude awakening for some, others agree with the avant-garde organizers of the 1990 Los Angeles Festival of the Arts, who held that culture shock is to be celebrated as the “relative absence of preconception or bias” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 215).

Establishing ones’ own relation to the sacred via the presented Other constitutes the primary challenge facing those who attend a festival of world sacred music.

As the following discussion of post-tourism reveals, a portion of sacred music festival-goers are likely to possess some degree of self-awareness regarding their role in the festival. Even those attendees who are devout followers of the exhibited sacred tradition are made increasingly aware of their relationship to the music and the sacred through the recontextualization of staging. As I assert in this section of my thesis, interpreting the performance becomes an act of self-reflective reception phenomenology in which the festival-goer must actively reconcile his or her own sense of spirituality, culture, and musical aesthetics with the staged presentation of the sacred.
Three major issues frame the festival-goer’s search for participatory identity: 1) the constructed frame of the festival event, 2) cross-cultural musical and linguistic communication barriers, and 3) faith-based convictions. The festival-goer is exposed to one or more sacred traditions, the music cultures and religious beliefs of which may or may not conflict with his or her own musical and religious traditions. Those who attend a sacred performance event place themselves on a responsive continuum between a spiritually objective audience and a fully engaged congregation. Indeed, even those festival-goers who chose to ignore the spiritual dimensions of the festival in favor of the event’s entertainment or educational value are asserting their own values. Deciding not to engage in a pursuit of the sacred is just as valid a response as fully participating in religious ritual or tentatively exploring a foreign approach to worship. Attendees establish their participatory identities by reevaluating their relationship to the musical performance and, indeed, to the experience of the sacred.

1. The Audience-Congregation Continuum

In religious ritual, those in attendance constitute a congregation. Defined in the broad terms of The New Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a congregation is “an assembly of persons met esp. for worship” (1989: 169). Although this term connotes Protestant Christianity for some, in the terminology of my paper, the label “congregation” emphasizes active group participation on a mental and/or physical level. Members interact with each other and the performers, take part in ritual acts, and actively pursue experience of the sacred. Presbyterian pastor Reverend Patrick Willson explains that the

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41 This difference between actively engaged and passive audience members extends beyond the confines of the world sacred music festival. The crowd at any festival, concert, or religious event consists of individuals who participate on a variety of levels. Any ecumenical connotations notwithstanding, the two
faithful do not go to church to be entertained by the spectacle, but to show share their progressive spiritual state with God - the congregants are the spectacle (2001). Active participation and a communal goal of catharsis and experience of the sacred characterizes the congregation.

Admittedly, this description of a congregation depicts ideal religious ritual participation. In reality, people attend religious events for many purposes, including social interaction, maintaining an upstanding reputation within the community, force of habit, and the like. I argue, however, that a congregation is actively engaged in the pursuit of the experience of the sacred and that this other, less-intensely spiritually engaged group of attendees is far more accurately described as an audience. These terms are not meant to be pejorative, simply explanatory.

In contrast to a congregation’s pursuit of the transcendent, an audience desires a secular experience. Describing this difference in relation to gospel music, Mellonee Burnim writes that one goes to a concert to be entertained, but ones goes to a service to praise God (1989: 58). This is not to say that audience members are uninvolved in the performance, indeed, an audience member might be deeply moved by aesthetic beauty, technical virtuosity, or learn a great deal about cross-cultural performance practices. However, unlike a congregation, the focus of the audience’s attention does not center on the experience of the sacred.

Some audience members come to festivals primarily for an aesthetic experience or to hobnob in the distinctive social milieu. For example, because of its royal patronage and exclusive ticket prices, the sheer prestige of the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred

overarching terms of “congregation” and “audience” are helpful in establishing general categories of response.
Music attracts a number of Moroccans. The conduct of many of the affluent Moroccans in attendance implied a lack of interest in actively pursuing an experience of the sacred at the festival. In the main, these elites were absorbed by the social scene at the festival, chatting on their cellular telephones, visiting with friends and family, showing off exquisitely tailored fashions, and seeing and being seen (see also Lynch 2000, Shewey 1998). Given that this group’s attendance did vary in response to the featured artist, these audience members were interested in the featured music. Yet, their demeanor gave the impression that their attention was centered upon the entertainment value of the occasion, not the performance’s potential for creating spiritual experience.

The labels “congregation” and “audience” are helpful in describing the participation of spectators at the Fes Festival, as well as similar festivals of world sacred music. The crowd in Fes is generally quite diverse, encompassing people who fall along the entire length of the audience-congregation continuum of participation. Larger international festivals of world sacred music, such as the Fes Festival, advertise their potential for encouraging experience of the sacred, “The World Sacred Music Festival is an offering of shared blissful moments, through the medium of devotional music from around the globe, known to all human hearts and understood as a universal sacred language of the soul” (Sarah Tours 2001: 21). Told that they can indeed experience the sacred through all of these musics, festival-goers are given the opportunity to reconcile their own religious beliefs and practices with the diverse array of featured sacred musical traditions.
2. The Festival Frame

Based on my fieldwork at the Tidewater Gospel Festival and the Fes Festival, as well as other experiences with sacred world music, I assert that the first factor guiding the participatory search for identity is the festival frame itself. By staging sacred music outside of its original ritual context, festivals project the exotic and the spiritual in a new physical and conceptual space. Marianna Torgovnick explains that such ambiguity encourages exploration that is simultaneously alluring and frightening, for,

Our interest in the primitive meshes thoroughly, in ways that we have only begun to understand, with out passion for clearly marked and definable beginning and ending that will make what comes between them coherent narrations. A significant motivation for primitivism in modernism, and perhaps especially in postmodernism, is a new version of the idyllic, utopian primitive:... the wish for physical, psychological, and social integrity as a birthright, within...cultural traditions that both connect to the past and allow for a changing future.

(1990: 245)

Although an audience member may have felt quite secure in his or her defined role of ritual of religion, the new incarnation of the tradition on the festival stage advocates an invigorating self-motivated search for meaning. The festival audience is encouraged to pursue experience of the sacred, yet this search is conducted without the benefit of the safety net of familiar religious settings and roles.

Unlike religious ritual, which ideally actively engages its congregants, the non-confrontational nature of the festival allows spectators to retain a passive, emotionally-insulated role. The festival invites its audience members to slide toward the congregational end of the participatory continuum, without the pressure of mandatory engagement with the Divine. At the Tidewater Gospel Festival, Dr. Horace Boyer acknowledges that, although most of the participants relish the opportunity to “get
happy,” not all of the audience members may be familiar or comfortable with this aspect of gospel behavior. Depending on the individual’s comfort level, Boyer encourages a wide range of response to the gospel music, from arm-waving celebration to singing along to just sitting and watching (paraphrase, Boyer 11-3-01). Departing from the ideal unified response of corporate worship, festivalization creates a uniquely receptive atmosphere by advancing various participatory levels as equally valid responses.

In a secularized festival setting, the audience is allowed to de-emphasize the sacred nature of the music, evaluating the performance on its aesthetic or technical merits, instead of concentrating on its spiritual functions. While this level of objective reserve may facilitate greater understanding of the cultural and musical systems involved in the music, such detached intellectual engagement may inhibit the cathartic experience of the sacred. Many festival-goers may find it difficult to be emotionally or spiritually moved by the object of their critical evaluation. Although the music may enable the experience of the sacred, the frame of the festival setting also provides the audience with a degree of critical detachment.

The festival setting also encourages many audience members to simply enjoy the entertaining or educational aspects of the represented tradition. There is no compulsion in this type of public sector staging, and many festival-goers are simply tourists there to enjoy the show. While I would argue that their lack of spiritual engagement is indeed a reaction to the festival’s approach to experiencing the sacred, admittedly, such thoughts may never cross some attendees’ minds. The nonconfrontational nature of the festival setting encourages individuality to the point that one cannot speak of a “shared” festival setting.
experience (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998: 247). Introspection accompanies ignorance, while analysis coexists with amazement within the variation of the festival crowd.

Ultimately, the impact of festivalization of sacred world music rests upon the festival-goer’s personal approach to the experience. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett explains that “meaning derives not from the original context of the fragments but from their juxtaposition in a new context” (1998:3). Thus, the festival removes much of the cultural and religious framework for the represented sacred musical traditions. The implications of this contextual vacuum are sweeping. Unencumbered by highly enculturated ritual settings, festival-goers are free to impose their own meanings and create an experience of the sacred from a melange of featured traditions.

3. Faith-Based Convictions

Of the three issues that fuel a festival-goer’s search for participatory identity, 1) the festival frame, 2) cross-cultural communication, and 3) faith-based convictions, it is the faith-based convictions that have the most impact upon the spectator’s ability to experience the sacred. Each person encounters the staged sacred music through his or her own experiential and cultural history of the sacred. These beliefs tell a person whether it is alright to pursue experience of the sacred through these musics, in this festival forum.

As al-Faruqi notes, varying views on the nature of divinity and its manifestations affect theology and aesthetic expressions (1983: 27). Cultural musical aesthetics combine with conceptions of the divine to create distinctive religious musical traditions. If the gods are perceived as warlike and vengeful, then appropriate sacred music is likely percussive, strong, and assertive. If communal homogeneity is emphasized, as in the Amish church, then harmony and individual vocal parts may be discouraged so that no
one person stands out as remarkable. An animistic belief system may spawn a musical
culture that tries to give voice to natural phenomenon, such as Tuvan throat singing.

In other words, how one conceptualizes the transcendent dictates how one
connects to it. For example, Melonnee Burnim explains that the gospel tradition
emphasizes the omnipresence of God, that he is present and accessible to any one, in any
space, at any time. Therefore, gospel music approaches God through a relatively
informal, personal approach in which “not all efforts to transform secular contexts to
sacred ones are readily identifiable, especially to the cultural outsider” (Burnim 1989:
58). Because God is ultimately approachable without any form of intercession, gospel
experience of the sacred is highly participatory and does not rely upon formalized liturgy
and through-composed arrangements preferred by most high-church Anglicans and
Roman Catholics.

Similarly, a believer’s conception of the divine influences his or her ideas about
the genres of music that may facilitate experience of the sacred. For example, a
practitioner of gospel music may feel that the more formal liturgy of Catholicism is not
only musically foreign, but that its nature inhibits true communion with God. The strictly
delineated structure limits spontaneity and universal participation in worship, elements
vital to gospel experience of the sacred. When the All-Male Chorus of Saint Mary’s
Basilica performed with other local choirs at the 2001 Tidewater Gospel Festival, Dr.
Horace Boyer teased them good-naturedly, “Do you sing for services? Do the Catholics
know how to get happy themselves? Hahahaha! That is so wonderful!” (2001). In the
gospel experience, getting happy is tantamount to experiencing God (the sacred).
Boyer’s remarks illustrate that, while the more tolerant devout may passively
acknowledge pluralism, most religious practitioners cling to very specific ideas of how to best experience the sacred.

At larger international festivals of world sacred music, the crowd is faced not only with the performance practices of other denominations, but with sacred musics stemming from entirely contrasting religious systems. In this case, the following question becomes central: can one experience the sacred through a musical tradition that appeals to a conflicting version of the sacred? That is, can a gospel singer connect with his or her conception of God by actively listening to qwalli music? Can a Buddhist glimpse enlightenment through the trance-possessions of Santeria? Can a Tuvan throat singer's animism find expression through a Javanese gamelan?

Following my assertion that the experience of the sacred is highly personal, I argue that the answer to this question of experiencing the sacred through various musics is determined on an individual basis by each congregation member.\(^{42}\) Renowned qwalli\(^{43}\) musician Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan sings, “Which melody induces the ecstasy? The music from the mosque and the Hindu temple has made me aware, has enlightened me.” Speaking, he explains that

Through a musical gathering, you feel union with God. It is the same for every religion, not only Islam. All the different religions follow diverse paths, but our objective is the same. Everyone can learn something from our music – Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs. All religions have a mystic dimension that everyone can learn from.

(I am a Sufi... 1994)

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\(^{42}\) My use of the term “congregation,” rather than “audience” in this case is significant. This discussion of metaphysically meaning is really only applicable to the actively engaged congregants, who are most likely aware of these issues on some level themselves.

\(^{43}\) Qwalli singing is a devotional Sufi genre in which table and harmonium accompany a singer delivering lyrics in praise of Allah.
As Nusrat explains, religious convictions may promote pluralism, or assert a singular absolute, but in the end, each individual defines his or her personal response to conflicting approaches to the experience of the sacred. Festival-goers embrace the introspection and individualism of post-modernism and post-tourism as they consciously place themselves along the audience-congregation continuum of participation.

4. Cross-cultural Communication through Music

The third of the major issues facing the festival attendees is the problem of cross-cultural linguistic and musical communication. Within religious practice, cultural norms clearly establish appropriate styles and degrees of response. Certain genres and styles of music are deemed “sacred,” creating aesthetic ideas about which music and actions are appropriate for worship. Religious ritual is generally conducted in the musical lingua franca of the culture: Moroccan brotherhoods frequently rely upon communal praxis and physical manifestation of spirituality to commune with Allah, whereas Protestant Christianity generally favors a much more individual and intellectual approach, centered upon a spoken sermon.

The guidance of culture and established religious ritual is loosened, however, when sacred traditions are recontextualized in on the festival stage. At a festival of world sacred music, the attendee must reconcile his or her own worship aesthetics with the performative norms and language of the featured sacred musical tradition. Countering complaints against gospel music’s vestiges of religious practice, Mellonee Burnim explains that “only those for whom a secular setting signifies a secular context – those who are unaware of the ritual aspects of gospel music – are surprised or annoyed by the omnipresent religious overtones of all gospel music” (1989: 58). Even when gospel is
transplanted to a secular stage, for the genre to remain true to itself and its God a degree of religiosity must remain. In experiencing gospel music, strongly biased listeners must be willing to deal with the music on its own highly biased terms. Personal preference and phenomenology again take center stage in defining which musical genres can serve as vehicles for the experience of the sacred.

In determining his or her individual experience of the music and the sacred, each festival-goer must address certain linguistic and cultural barriers. Just as in a secular performance, lyrics sung in a foreign language may inhibit understanding and the musical language of the featured group may require some translation as well. In some cases, ignorance may produce a blissful experience of the aesthetic or the sacred. Wycliff Bible Translator’s newsletter shares the tale of a medical missions worker in South Africa. The woman was deeply moved by the “hauntingly beautiful harmonies” of the Zulu women, and “with tears flowing down her cheeks, she...asked, ‘can you please tell me the translation of the words to this song?’” Her friend looked at her and solemnly replied, ‘If you boil the water, you won’t get dysentery.’” (EM News 2000:18). This amusing anecdote reinforces two principles. First, the listener’s act of reception creates to the experience of sacred. Second, although music is hailed as a universal language, meaning is culturally situated, thus necessitating linguistic and cultural translation.

5. Audience-Congregation Response

If meaning and experience of the sacred is created by the observers’ or participants’ perceptions, then the ways in which they respond become immensely important. How does the audience/congregation respond or participate at a festival of
world sacred music? Does, or should, their behavior reflect the performance decorum of
the host culture, the represented culture, the featured religious tradition, or some
combination thereof uniquely appropriate to the festival setting?

When the Eddie Hawkins Gospel Singers performed at the 2001 Fes Festival, the
audience was extremely enthusiastic. The two main demographic segments of the
audience, the native Moroccans and the largely Western visitors, expressed their
enjoyment in similar, yet very contrasting ways. Although they were mostly Caucasian,
the Westerners, particularly the Americans, seemed to be generally familiar with the
gospel performance tradition. Compared to an insider gospel congregation, we were
fairly reserved, but at the appropriate times, we happily clapped along, sang along, and
occasionally someone shouted out an “Amen!”

In contrast, the Moroccan response was at least twice as loud and energetic. The
Moroccans were mostly Muslim, but they clapped, danced, shouted along to the lyrics,
hooted and hollered “Amen!” “Hallelujah!” and “Praise the Lord!” and clamored for
“Happy Day.” A few older matrons, dressed conservatively in jallabas and hijab, even
got to their feet and shouted “Hallelujah! Praise Jesus!” Yet, despite their enthusiasm
and mastery of gospel lingo, the Moroccans did integrate their responses into the
performance framework in an idiomatic manner. For example, some of these hooted
“Hallelujahs” burst jarringly into the soulful, acapella strains of “Steal Away.” Whether
these Moroccans were experiencing the sacred is not for me to say, but they were
certainly creating an innovative response to gospel music.

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44 Some religions also face linguistic barriers, such as the use of Qur’anic Arabic in Islam and Latin by the
Catholic Church. However, the audience at cross-cultural festivals, such as the Fes Festival, is frequently
challenged by multiple foreign languages.
At festival of world sacred music, certain segments of the crowd are highly engaged in the performance, actively seeking the experience of the sacred through their participation in the musical event. Other festival-goers chose to retain a higher degree of academic, aesthetic, or emotional distance from the staged event. In some cases, lack of familiarity with a tradition may diminish response to the sacred music; the concerns of the transcendent may be overshadowed by an outsider's exotica-induced culture shock. Also, although an outsider academically understands the music culture of a certain religious tradition, the style may or may not carry enough musical meaning or resonance to result in an experience of the sacred.

6. Souvenir Mentality

Regardless of their personal response to the music, most attendees of festivals of world sacred music share the common “souvenir mentality.” Festival-goers want tangible mementos of their experiences, whether these experiences were transcendental or merely transcontinental in nature. At the 2001 Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, this desire for physical memorabilia manifest itself in two areas: t-shirts and recordings.

Although the 2001 Fes Festival promoted itself aggressively via advertisements, festival marketers seemed to made no effort to profit through festival souvenirs. Many festival-goers, myself included, voiced dismay at the lack of recordings and other festival merchandise for purchase. Johanna Verbane, a visiting Australian woman, voiced the sentiments of many when she said, “You’d think they’d at least have t-shirts” (Verbane personal communication 6-5-01). Concerns of experiencing the sacred notwithstanding, a number of festival-goers felt the need for physical evidence of their festival attendance.

45 A jallaba is the traditional long, flowing garment worn by Moroccans. It is similar to a kaftan, or an Egyptian gallabiya. The hijab is the headscarf worn by Muslim women.
While the surrounding bazaars in the medina offered thousands of Moroccan souvenirs, these items paled in comparison to "official" Fes Festival of World Sacred Music paraphernalia.

To the joy of many festival-goers, the Fes Festival organizers had anticipated this desire for tangible mementos (and opportunity for profit), and had prepared a selection of past Fes Festival compact discs and t-shirts. For unknown reasons, the Fes Festival chose not to market these items until the last afternoon and evening concerts on June 9, 2001. Despite the limited window of opportunity for purchase, the festival sold out of t-shirts by intermission of the final concert. The souvenir mentality was not only present, but quite powerful.

While festival merchandise catered to concrete, purely touristic urges, the issue of audio recordings begins to address more abstract dimensions of memory. Numerous audience members recorded the 2001 Fes Festival via audio and visual devices, capturing the transience of performance for later enjoyment, or perhaps enlightenment. The recording carries the listener back to the festival via a much more powerful medium than a mere visual souvenir. The recording captures the potency of the musical performance, engaging numerous senses in the process of memory.

My own experience recording the festival gave me greater insight into the perspectives of both audience members and festival organizers on the subject. Since I was attending the 2001 Fes Festival to conduct research for my thesis, I hoped to obtain recordings of the event for later analysis. Since my interest in the Fes Festival had been initially sparked by the enchanting sounds of *Hamdulillah: Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, Volume II*, I also wanted more festival recordings for my own aesthetic and
spiritual enjoyment. Aware that the Fes Festival does record its performances and markets compilation discs of with selection of each year’s music, I was leery of recording with my own hand-held tape player.

As recording engineer John Schafer revealed, my fears of recording liability were unfounded. According to Schafer, the festival makes no effort to curtail personal recordings of performance events (personal communication: 6-2-01). Thus I fearlessly joined the ranks of festival-goers who prefaced each performance by clicking “record.” Given the number of festival-goers wielding video cameras, minidisk players, and tape recorders, the festival’s policy of leniency is wise. Attempting to enforce a ban on recording would be impractical, and it would compromise the supposedly egalitarian ethos of the festival.

In addition to possessing a souvenir mentality, the majority of festival-goers also share the post-touristic trait of introspective reflexivity. While a significant portion of audience members are tourists in search of entertainment, an equally significant number of festival-goers fall onto the participatory continuum somewhere between audience and congregation. The artificial frame of the festival event and the spiritual nature of the musical traditions represented prompt individuals to evaluate their positions vis-à-vis their experience of culture and the sacred. Operating within a post-modern paradigm of reception, these festival-goers are the epitome of spiritual post-tourism.

7. Post-tourism

In 1985, Maxine Feifer proposed that postmodern sensibilities and reflexivity had plunged the world an ironically self-aware era of “post-tourism.” Armed with

increasing technology, upward mobility, and disposable income, consumers pursue a newer kind of cultural and educational capital, defined by Timothy Taylor as “global informational capital: distinction, knowledge, the ability to travel, learn, and discriminate” (2000: 174). The post-tourist is confident that this global information capital elevates his or her experience. This consumer feels that, as a result of enlightened introspection, his or her “orientation to travel is far more sophisticated that that of mere ‘tourists’” (Lash and Urry 1994: 308). Building on Feifer’s model, Lash and Urry contend that reflexive self-awareness is the defining mark of the post-tourist, “Indeed, most important of all, the post-tourist knows that he or she is a tourist, and that tourism is merely a series of games and multiple texts and no single authentic experience. The post-tourist is ironic and cool, self-conscious and role-distanced” (1994: 275-276).

Embracing the ambiguity and flexible roles of post-modernism, the post-tourist festival-goer faces the difficult task of casting off cynicism, preconceptions, and “knowledge” in order to experience authenticity.

Although it would be nearly impossible to sketch a single profile of an attendee of a world music festival, these events attract a specific clientele. The post-modern pluralism of the festival assigns a uniquely ambiguous receptive role to its guests, appealing to the ironic self-awareness of cosmopolitan post-tourists. Since much of the music featured at a festival of world sacred music generally functions within ritual as religious music, it is normally performed for an actively participating congregation of a single faith. The secularized festival setting, however, transforms an insider’s active experience of the sacred and the religious into a staged spectacle that permits, but does

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47 See Gillespie, Angus K. “Folk Festival and Festival Folk in Twentieth-Century America” in Falassi 1987: 152-161 for an example of an entertaining and insightful typology of festival-goers.
not demand, active audience participation and experience of the sacred. Most festivals of world sacred music emphasize their potential for promoting experience of the sacred, and many festival-goers attend the event with a goal of spiritual experience in mind.

However, the audience member is keenly aware of the constructed atmosphere of the sacred music festival. To varying degrees, he or she recognizes that the sacred music presented for mass enjoyment comes from enculturated religious practices and that its nature is transformed by presentation on a public stage. Embracing the reflexivity and ambiguity of post-tourism, the festival-goer relishes the power and autonomy of defining his or her own role in the recontextualized performance. This high degree of self-determinism also emphasizes the individual’s authority to define his or her conception of and relationship to the sacred. The non-confrontational nature of the festival allows interaction with the sacred to remain a highly individualized phenomenon, resting entirely upon the individual’s level of participation, mental openness, and suspension of disbelief and skepticism.
VI. Conclusion

Festivals of world sacred music create a unique outlet for post-modern experience and expressions of spirituality. With varying degrees of mediation and explanation, these festivals present the culturally and religiously specific for mass consumption. The tension between maintaining performance authenticity, yet presenting the music within an accessible frame, is the main challenge facing festival patrons, producers, and performers.

In Chapter One, I used the title of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music to introduce some of the main issues of staging sacred music. Generated by well-established religious systems, sacred music is imbued with added value. Ritual specialists are present in nearly every culture, and the importance of such a role in preservation and transmission of performance practice is respected cross-culturally. By framing these culturally specific traditional sacred musics, festivals lend additional value to the music. Inclusion on the secularized festival stage implies that this music holds something spiritually valuable which is accessible to a broad base of listeners. As the titles of the Fes Festival and the Tidewater Gospel Festival illustrate, festival location frequently further validates the festival construct by referencing the event's spiritual geography.

Chapter Two explores the impact of staging the sacred on musicians. Do they modify their repertoire and/or performance practice in response to the festival venue? The musicians who I interviewed at the Tidewater Gospel Festival agreed that the secular context of the festival forced them to temper their style of delivery. However, they also firmly asserted that the core message of their musical ministry remained unchanged.
Although I was unable to interview many of the performers at the Fes Festival, my observations of performances and the few musicians with whom I did speak revealed a slightly different atmosphere. Operating from a premise of pluralism, the Fes Festival encourages cultural specificity, performance authenticity, and religious tolerance. Thus, for example, the gospel performances at Fes contained even fewer elements of religious ritual (such as testimony, witnessing, and scripture reading) than the already tempered performances at the Tidewater Gospel Festival. In order to maintain the integrity of their religious traditions, however, musicians can only slightly modify their repertoire and performance practices in conformity to festival ideals of tolerant pluralism.

In Chapter Three, I addressed the roles of patrons and producers in festivals of world sacred music. Festival patrons and producers exert considerable influence in constructing the festival frame. They define the boundaries of the festival and then tailor the event to their own personal tastes by selecting the cultural traditions, particular performers, and modes of musical communication for display. This recontextualization of the sacred within a secular context raises a number of issues regarding authenticity. These questions are summarized with great clarity by a small child’s reaction to taxidermy display at a natural history museum: Did they have to kill it to bring it here?

Chapter Four investigates festival attendance as pilgrimage from the post-modern perspective. Like the Dalai Lama’s World Festival of Sacred Music, The Fes Festival advertises itself as a spiritual forum with high potential for experience of the sacred. Although a number of world sacred music festival-goers are simply hoping for quality music or a cross-cultural experience, a segment of the festival crowd bases their attendance on a post-tourist spirituality. These pilgrims journey to the likes of Fes,
Essaouira, Los Angeles, or New York, hoping to experience a higher level of culture and spirituality through the world sacred music festival. The nonconfrontational environment of the festival encourages for individual pursuit of the experience of the sacred, allowing each audience member to engage the music and spiritual content on whatever degree he or she finds appropriate.

A number of questions are raised by the recontextualization of religious ritual on the secular stage and the subsequent transformation of the roles of patrons, performers, and audience members. First, does recontextualization within the festival frame compromise the authenticity of the musical performance? In ethnomusicology, we speak of the featured acts on a festival stage as “presentations of” or “representations of” a particular culture. This language reveals a poignant awareness of the extraordinary elements of festival performance and acknowledges that festival is indeed a “time out of time.” The intensification of culture and religion that occurs within this temporally and physically demarcated space can be seen in a positive or negative light. From one perspective, the colorful folkloric costumes, attention to “authentic” performance details, and strong sense of group identity created by festival performance is a positive encapsulation of community ideals. Conversely, the heightened attention to providing “authentic” performance may be challenged as an contrived display intended for cultural outsiders and tourists.

Second, these questions of authenticity must be posed within the context of specific festivals; that is, how does this particular festival present itself? Categorizing an event as “overly religious and proselytizing,” “too pluralistic,” or an “incoherent conglomeration of spirituality” says more about the commentator’s preconceived biases
than the festival itself. Festivals of world sacred music spring from a wide range of religious, philosophical, political, economic, and social roots. The various goals of these festivals in promoting arts agendas, highlighting ethnic minorities, proselytizing, worship, and increasing tourism shapes their content and presentation. Depending on the producer’s artistic and spiritual vision, the festival may be presented as a primarily spiritual event, as the epitome of the organizer’s concept of "sacred music;" or the same performances may be framed as more secular expressions of tradition or culture.

Adding the element of sacred performance further complicates issues of performance authenticity. If the festival advertises itself as a forum for spiritual discovery, as the majority of large international festivals such as the Fes Festival and the Dalai Lama’s festival do, then the featured musicians must retain their characteristic (religious) approach to the experience of the sacred. In an apparent contradiction, the accessible festival frame encourages this religious specificity while simultaneously encouraging an overarching atmosphere of spiritual pluralism that validates myriad individual approaches to the experience of the sacred.

The inviting forum of the world sacred music festival encourages all of its participants, producers, performers, and audience members alike, to join in a post-modern search for identity. By positioning themselves in union or opposition with the festival’s definition of the exotic and authentic, audience members, as well as, performers, and patrons, cultivate a sense of self. The stable definitions captured by the festival frame provides a welcome forum for such introspective discovery, for as Torgovnick explains,
mix...the “them” is much more like us now, and us, often garbed in clothing and living amid objects that evoke “their” traditional forms of life.

(1990: 38).

Embracing the stabilizing framework of the festival setting gives individual participants the rare chance to create firm notions of self-identity and spirituality within the tolerant ambiguity of pluralism in the post-modern world.
Figure One. Bab Makina, Fes, Morocco
Appendix B

Figure 2. Dar Batha Museum, Fes, Morocco.
Figure 3, Volubilis, Morocco.
Appendix C

The Organization Committee

Mohamed Kabbaj*, President

Ahmed Réda Laâmarti*
Kamal Kanouni
Abdallah Lahlou
Faouzi Skali*
Maitre Hamid Benmakhlouf*
Sidi Mohamed El Alaoui
Thami Bennani
Gérard Kurdjian*
Omar Marrakchi
Ahmed Belkhayat Zouggari*
Mohamed Berrada Ghemmaz*
Ali Diouri*
Doctor Mohamed Marouni Alami
Jean-Paul Ichter
Mokhtar Khalifi
Abdelkarim Oucheikh

Mohamed Laraqui Houssaîni*
Abdelfattah Bouzoubâa*
Mohamed Mezzine
Abdellhaï Belghazi
Mustapha Raguigue
Réda Berrada
Jawad Hjiej
Mohamed Oufir
Driss Faceh*
Abdelhay Bekkali
Lahcen Chakib
Mohamed Moufid
Ahmed Kostas
Agnès Amrani
Marc Boudet
Mohamed Zemmouri

(* denotes member of the Executive Committee)

(Fes Festival Program 2001: 16)
His Majesty MOHAMMED VI, King of Morocco
Sa Majesté MOHAMMED VI, Roi du Maroc

Figure One
Appendix D

Figure Two

صاحب البلدة محمد السادس، ملك المغرب
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Videos


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Interviews


