

Halali, Salim

The musician Salim (Shlomo, Simon) Halali, a celebrated bandleader, singer, and percussionist in post-independence Morocco, was born on July 30, 1920 in Annaba, Algeria and claimed to be a descendant of the Chaouia Berber tribe. He began his career in 1930s Paris, quickly becoming a sought-after singer of Spanish-inflected music. To avoid Nazi deportation during the World War II occupation, Halali obtained a certificate of conversion to Islam from the rector of the Paris mosque, Kaddour Benghrabit. While in France, Halali released a recording as bandleader, *Halali en Arabe*, that portends his developing talent in synthesizing diverse forms like flamenco, chanson, ghranati, and Egyptian dance music.

After the fall of Vichy France, Halali returned to Casablanca. Performing extensively, he founded *Le Coq d'Or*, a music club in the old medina of Casablanca. During this period he released enormously successful recordings on radio and LP, establishing himself as a prominent contributor in the vanguard of the burgeoning *chaabi* (Ar. *sha'bi*) musical genre. His innovative role in establishing rhythmic elements fundamental to the *chaabi* genre, drawn mainly from rural Berber musical traditions, helped to make *chaabi* popular in the urban centers of Morocco and Algeria. Moreover, through his willingness to explore ensemble instrumentation, Halali brought together traditional Arab and European instruments. During this period he sang almost exclusively in Maghrebi Arabic, sprinkled with only a few words in Judeo-Arabic.

In 1965 Halali retired to Cannes, but he returned to music five years later, incorporating electronic instruments and songwriting elements drawn from popular French styles. Included on both *Salim Halali en public* (Montreal, 1975) and *La Babouche* (1978) is the Yiddish favorite *My Yiddishe Mama*, an explicit example of Halali's sense of a transnational Jewish identity. Halali remained in semi-retirement until his death in Cannes on June 25, 2005.

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Halevī, Menaḥem Shemu'el

Menaḥem Shemu'el Halevi was born in 1884 in → Hamadan. He was educated at the local religious *maktab* (Heb. *heder*) and then at the Alliance Israélite Universelle school when it opened in 1900. He was subsequently employed at the Alliance school for twelve years, first as a teacher, later as its vice-principal (1907) and principal (1910). His education and communal activism soon made him the Jewish community's civil leader and representative to the municipality of Hamadan as well as its chief rabbi.

Halevi fought zealously against assimilation and conversion to Islam or → Baha'ism, a common phenomenon in his time. As part of his effort to persuade Jews who had abandoned the faith to return to Judaism, he helped found the *Agudat Hoveve Yeshurun* (Heb. Association of the Lovers of Jeshurun) and *Hevrat Me'ore Yeshenim* (Heb. Society of Awakeners), both of which promoted knowledge of Judaism, the Hebrew language, and Zionism. His zeal and love of Zion echoed in his weekly sermons and motivated many Iranian Jews to return to their faith and settle in Israel. A short time after the Balfour Declaration, Halevi founded a branch of the Histadrut ha-Ṣiyyonit (Zionist Organization) in Hamadan.

In 1923, Halevi emigrated to Palestine, followed by many of his townspeople. There he soon became the head of the Iranian community and an important member of the Va'ad ha-Sefardim