CHAPTER 8

Priests emerge from the Holy of Holies in St. Mary's Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Washington, DC, bearing on their heads the *tabot*, consecrated wood or stone tablets that are venerated within each church. On major holidays the priests move through the lines of singing musicians and process down the aisles of the church. In good weather the procession moves outside and circles the church, ending with joyous singing and dancing.

MUSIC AND RITUAL

OVERVIEW

MAIN POINTS

Music serves in ritual settings to:

- shape and order the rituals that celebrate belief;
- enact and convey ritual's symbolic power and meaning;
- empower the participants.

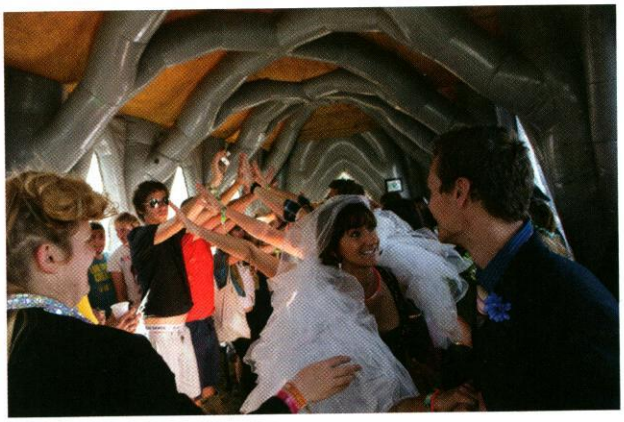
INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, the public celebration of belief has provided an important setting for music. It is scarcely possible to imagine religious rituals without music, which has long shaped ritual form and marked off ritual time. Through song, instrumental music, and dance, rituals deeply impress our senses and signify communication with deities.

We usually think of rituals in connection with religious practice, and that is the sense in which they are discussed in this chapter. But rituals extend well beyond the boundaries of religious belief. Many of their formal characteristics—an established sequence of events, participants with clearly defined roles, and features including special dress, sound, and movement—can also be found in secular settings such as parades, sporting events, concerts, and operas.

In popular usage, we find the words *ritual, sacred service, liturgy,* and *liturgical order* used interchangeably to refer to public acts of worship. All such terms refer to formal events that are performed in specific contexts at particular times. The parts of rituals typically occur in a set order and serve to connect the individual to a broader community.

Whatever their specific textual and musical content, rituals share a common structure. Most rituals—especially those marking life-cycle events, such as initiations and funerals—incorporate a symbolic process or an actual change of state that consists of three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation.[1] For example, a wedding ceremony is a rite of passage that separates the bride and groom from their single



Much of a ritual's power depends on our ability to bracket time in special ways, enhanced by donning symbolic garments for ceremonies in special locales. Certain secular occasions such as festivals can also mark time in ritualized ways by bringing people together regularly for fun and celebration. Among the most unusual global festivals is Bestival, a four-day event held each September since 2004 on the Isle of Wight, England, UK. Bestival is known for ensuring that its participants share a sense of humor, a goal reached in part by mounting rituals such as the fake wedding seen here, which is held inside Bestival's inflatable chapel.

status, takes them through a brief transition, and finally incorporates them into the society of married couples.

Music, sometimes alternating with periods of silence, provides clear markers of the stages in a rite of passage. The jazz funeral in Chapter 5 provides a good example, with the slow hymn played during the procession to the cemetery to mark separation, a break in music during interment, and a celebratory piece on the return marking incorporation.

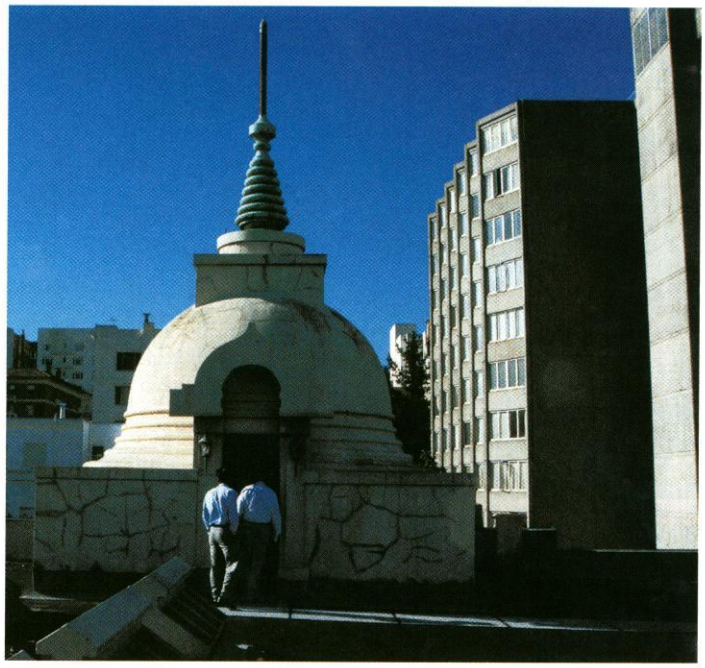
Rites of passage also can incorporate several layers of meaning. For instance, wedding ceremonies mark the official union of a couple or of two families, but in the context of royal lineages, they symbolize new national and political alliances. Rituals transcend the moment at hand to speak at once to the past and the future. Here we can recall the Syrian Jewish *bar mitzvah* ceremony discussed in Chapter 5, which not only marked a thirteen-year-old boy's official passage from childhood to adulthood, but also honored his ancestors, especially his grandfather, and celebrated the future of the community through the dedication of a new *Torah* scroll. These multiple layers of meaning are almost always marked in rituals through texts, music, and movement.

Building on the view of ritual as a process, we see that ritual guides participants through time in special ways, bringing about the perception of an important experience shared with others.[2] The power of a ritual to achieve its goal and to be truly efficacious often rests directly on the impact of its performance. This is especially the case when religious rituals are performed in archaic or esoteric languages little understood by most of their participants, like the *Mass*, the central complex of prayers and ceremonies in Roman Catholic worship, which was until 1970 performed in Latin. In these cases, music and movement are crucial to expressing what cannot be conveyed through words. Moreover, music's role in the ritual process is vital to producing a sense of transcendence, a feeling that the moment has special significance that extends beyond the limits of everyday experience.

The ability of ritual to evoke a strong emotional and physical response is shaped through different means in different cultures. Ritual participants in some soundscapes experience transcendence through strong drum rhythms and dance; an example is the *Santería* tradition discussed later. Others find meaning and move into an altered state through more-subdued performances, as in the case of Tibetan Buddhist chant. There is no single musical pathway to transcendence; in some traditions, decorum and quiet trigger transcendence, while in others heightened sound and movement have the same effect. The ritual process can also have very different outcomes, ranging from perception of a personal connection with a deity to a feeling of moving beyond the self to merge with a broader community—a sensation that anthropologists have termed *communitas*. The experience of an altered state of consciousness is an important part of the ritual process in many cultures and is sometimes referred to as "trance." The use of music to achieve a state of "trance" or "deep listening," is a culturally conditioned response to certain sights, smells, and sounds that leads an individual to feel that he or she is in contact with a spiritual realm and/or is endowed with special physical or mental powers.[3] There are many forms of trance

cross-culturally; within religious settings it can be used to communicate with deities or other spirits, to enlighten, and to heal.

Although rituals are performed in a manner that emphasizes their separateness from daily life, their content and significance are much more closely tied to secular concerns than we might imagine. Religious pluralism is common today in many localities worldwide as an outgrowth of large-scale migration and other forms of cultural mobility enabled by new technologies and travel. Recent research in world religions indicates that the increase in multireligious environments has resulted in changes within denominations and exchanges between them. For example, Buddhist communities that originated in Cambodia, Thailand, China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet have migrated and given rise to communities of "new Buddhists" in many locales, joining with individuals of other ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. In the United States, for instance, one finds the Buddhist Sangha Council of Southern California, the Buddhist Council of the Midwest, and the Texas Buddhist Association, examples of a new "ecumenical Buddhism."[4] In this chapter, we will explore three contrasting religious traditions from far-flung homelands that are active today in diaspora settings. We will explore the different ways music has served to sustain belief and accommodate strong forces of change.



The *stupa* on the roof of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco contains relics of the Buddha; it was presented in 1935 as a gift from Thailand to the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Mission of America.

THE CENTRALITY OF CHANT

There is no better place to begin our discussion of music and ritual than with the quintessential musical form associated with rituals of belief—*chant*, also called *plainchant* or *plainsong*. Chant is a type of vocal expression in which clarity and the precise articulation of the sacred words are of utmost importance.

CASE STUDY: TIBETAN BUDDHIST CHANT

Chant may sound simple, but its musical surface can mask extraordinary depths of meaning. *Tibetan Buddhist chant* provides an example of such complex significance; Buddhists believe that performing chant moves the singer through the ritual process to a transformed state. Once again we encounter, as we did with *khoomii* singing in the Introduction, a distinctive vocal style that generates a deep, fundamental pitch that produces audible harmonics. It has been suggested that Tibetan monks may have learned this technique through contact with Inner Asian *khoomii* singers.

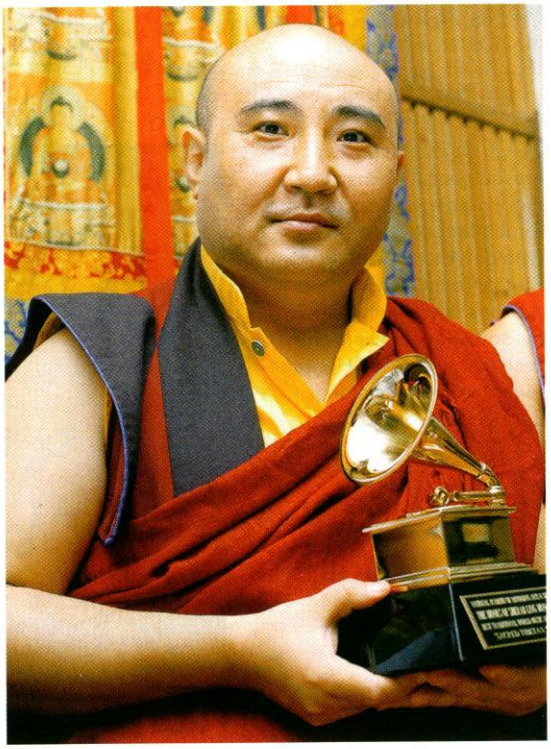
Buddhism entered Tibet over the course of many centuries, during which four Buddhist sects became established there. We will hear a chant sung by Buddhist

Secular Tibetan music and dance are also transmitted in the American diaspora. Here, the Boston Tibetan Dance Troupe performs in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in honor of the Dalai Lama's birthday and World Tibet Day.

continue to sing in a traditional vocal style. They also want their chant to be heard as sacred sound whenever and wherever it is performed. A note on their recording states that the chanting heard there is prayer, not performance, and that each time the recording is played its prayers are "effectively said anew."

Tibetan chant is adaptable to different settings. It can be performed by one singer or by a group, and it can be part of private prayer or a public ritual. The chant has also been performed in recent years to gain political and financial support for Tibetans in exile. In 1991, the Gyuto monks returned to the United States and performed widely. As a result, Tibetan chant has won an increased following and is now associated with the cause of Tibetan independence. The sound of Tibetan chant and the Gyuto monks' distinctive type of harmonic singing has become well known internationally, and many outside the tradition listen to and buy recordings. Tibetan chant is so familiar to a broad cross-section of North Americans that it has been used in a range of popular contexts, including car commercials on television.

Monk Tenam Lama accepts a 2004 Grammy Award in the best traditional world music category for the album *Sacred Tibetan Chant: The Monks of Sherab Ling Monastery*. Sherab Ling is the seat of Tai Situ Rinpoche, a monk of the Karma Kagyu sect, which has a monastery in the Indian Himalayas.



THE CHANGING CONTEXTS OF RITUAL PERFORMANCE

CASE STUDY: *SANTERÍA*

Tibetan chant is not the only ritual music to move from a religious setting to public performance and to acquire new meanings in the last century. Another notable example is

the music of *Santería*, an Afro-Cuban religion derived from the Yoruba cult, incorporating southwestern Nigerian language and practices that were transplanted to the Caribbean and combined with aspects of Catholicism. In Cuba, large numbers of Africans were imported in a final wave of slavery in the mid-nineteenth century to work in sugar plantations, "revitalizing, replenishing, and influencing the religious knowledge of the existing slave population."[10]

Although conditions varied from one sugar plantation to another, slaves in Cuba created social institutions that perpetuated and transformed the traditions they had brought with them. Most important were the *cabildos*, organizations established by various linguistic and cultural groups as mutual aid societies and centers for entertainment. These societies, in which slaves were at first allowed to worship their gods and perform their music, were increasingly regulated by the Cuban government over time and banned by law in 1888. However, many individuals continued to practice these traditions in secret, assuring the transmission of the Lucumi cult, the name by which Yoruba beliefs came to be known in Cuba.

Members of the Lucumi cult and similar traditions from other regions of West Africa worshipped African deities combined with Catholic saints called *orishas* or *santos*. The union of each *orisha* with a specific Catholic saint meant that these rituals were easily hidden. *Santería orishas* are diverse in their natures, origins and personality traits; each is associated with particular herbs and plants, as well as chants, drum rhythms, and dance movements. At the center of *Santería* religious practice is the performance of music, drumming, and dance as part of complex rituals that seek to achieve divination and trance (see "**Sound Sources: Sacred Drums**").

The goal of *Santería* worship is to establish a relationship with the *orishas*, to consult them, and to offer them animal sacrifices in hopes of obtaining their help with the problems of daily life. The worshippers of the *orishas* came to be called *santeros*, and their religious practice became known as *Santería*.

At the end of the 1950s and during the 1960s, following the Cuban revolution, a number of *santeros* fled Cuba and entered the United States. Many settled in

Felipe García Villamil, a master drummer, instrument maker, and *santero* (practitioner of *Santería*), who arrived in the United States from Cuba in 1980, teaches *batá* drumming to his son Miguel. Villamil has received a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

SOUND SOURCES

SACRED DRUMS

In this chapter, we encounter two types of sacred drums: the *batá* drums of *Santería*, which are played in sets of three instruments of different sizes, and the *kebaro* of the Ethiopian Christian church, which can be played alone or together with similar drums.

Both the *batá* drums and the *kebaro* have a drumhead at each end. The shape of the *batá* drum resembles an irregular hourglass, with a larger drumhead ("the mouth") and a smaller head ("the butt"). *Batá* drums are considered to be owned by the *orisha* Changó, and their shape is said to represent Changó's thunder axe. The *batá* ensemble is made up of three drums. A large drum, called *iyá*, is decorated with brass bells strung around the heads. It is the lowest-pitched drum, and it leads with the most complex rhythms. The middle drum, the *itótele*, plays in regular conversation with the *iyá*. The smallest drum, the *okónkolo*, performs mainly ostinatos.[11]

The oval-shaped Ethiopian *kebaro* is held so that the large head, or "voice," can be played with the right hand, while the smaller head, called "rapper" or "knocker," is assigned to the left. The larger heads of both the *kebaro* and the *batá* drums have deeper, more penetrating sounds than the smaller. The heads of the *batá* drums are connected by tension cords that control the pitch, which is carefully tuned within each ensemble; the *kebaro* heads, secured by laces, are untuned.

The *kebaro*, associated with the music of Saint Yared (discussed later), is typically covered with brightly colored, flowered cloth under the lacings. The *kebaro* accompanies (with fixed rhythmic patterns) the final, jubilant repetitions of the chants that accompany liturgical dance. The large *kebaro* is used only within the church; a smaller version is used for secular music and dance.

Followers of *Santeria* in Santiago, Cuba, shown here in 2009, play the three drums of the *batá* ensemble in honor of Saint Barbara, who is associated with Changó, the religion's god of war.

Ethiopian churches patronized in the past by the aristocracy often had *kebaro* covered in silver. Here is the drum played by musicians at one of the rock churches in Lalibela, a town named after the emperor who is said to have built the churches there during the twelfth century.

New York City, as well as in other American urban areas ranging from Miami to San Francisco.[12] As they established *Santería* there, individuals from other ethnic and religious communities began to adopt the religion and to split into different groups or *Santería* "houses." *Santería* also moved beyond the boundaries of immigrant communities of Afro-Cuban immigrants to attract peoples of Caribbean, Mexican, and South American descent, as well as many African Americans.[13]

Within the rituals of *Santería, batá* drums summon the *orishas.* Only people initiated as a *santero* or *santera* are possessed or "mounted" by *orishas.* Possession is regarded as dangerous for those who are not "spiritually developed," including novices and children. If an uninitiated or inexperienced individual shows signs of possession, such as frenzied motions or a catatonic state or seizure, they are immediately taken out of the room where the drums are playing.[14]

In addition to the drums, chanting is an important part of the *Santería* rituals. The chants, sung with or without instrumental accompaniment, are almost always performed in call-and-response style. Like the drum rhythms, a chant is identified with a particular *orisha*; some chants are secret and may be performed only at ceremonies reserved for initiates. Chants differ in their content and function; some criticize or even joke with the *orisha*. Singers of chant are valued not for the beauty of their voices, but for their ability to be heard over the drums, their capacity to engage listeners, their success in engendering *communitas*, and their power to communicate with the divinities—"to bring the *orishas* down."

As the *Santería* belief system was adopted by a diverse community in diaspora, some of its Catholic practices were abandoned, and heightened emphasis was placed on the African aspects of the rituals. But the greatest impact on musical content resulted from new performance settings, as some practitioners opened traditionally secret rituals to the public. One scholar who has studied *Santería* in New York City tells how he handled the issue of secrecy:

> As a researcher, I did not aggressively pursue ritual information that was beyond what I had the right to know at any given time. To have done so would have compromised, if not violated, the relations of trust and reciprocity that bind practitioners together in ritual kinship groups. . . . For example, there were many occasions when my questions about the meaning of a ritual practice or belief would be greeted with the response, "That's something you shouldn't know yet, you're not ready to understand that." On another occasion, a *santera* whom I had interviewed the day before telephoned me that her *orisha* had told her through divination that I should not include the interview in my dissertation.[15]

The transmission of the *Santería* music tradition through public performances has been documented in the activities of the New York–based ensemble Eyá Aránla.[16] Headed by Milton Cardona, a professional drummer of Puerto Rican descent, the group performed *Santería* music—by request—for various organizations in New York City, including the Public Theater and the Museum of Modern Art. The ensemble also participated in international festivals and eventually made the recording *Bembé*, from which the musical example in **Listening Guide 65** is taken.

Cardona is the only professional musician in Eyá Aránla; the other members are drawn from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds in the *Santería* community. The ensemble does not rehearse, according to Cardona's notes for the recording: instead, its members "just make believe you went to a Bembé [traditional *Santería* celebration] and you're singing, and it works."

The percussion parts are performed by a trio of *batá* drums. The rhythmic patterns played by the three drums interlock, producing a "conversation" with the *orisha*. We also hear the rattling of brass bells attached to the drums. What results is a complex polyrhythmic texture in which the drums and bells play different rhythms simultaneously, accompanying the call-and-response of the vocal chant.

The selection in **Listening Guide 65** is based on a *Santería* rhythmic pattern called *toque*, from the Spanish verb meaning "to touch" or "to play an instrument." The *Santería* liturgy includes many *toques*, each associated with a different *orisha*. In this example, the rhythmic call of the *toque* addresses the *Santería orisha* named Changó, who represents virility, strength, sexuality, and thunder.

The chant, sung by a soloist and chorus in call-and-response style, implores Changó to descend, in order to join the congregation, and to mount one of the musicians or dancers so that the individual will be possessed by the deity.

LISTENING GUIDE 65

CHANGÓ (*TOQUE* FROM A *SANTERÍA* SERVICE)

3:39

Date: 1986
Performers: Milton Cardona and his ensemble, Eyá Aránla
Form: Call-and-response
Tempo: Moderate quadruple meter overlaid with complex layers of drum rhythms
Function: *Toque* to call out the *orisha* Changó at a Santería Bembé

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR:

- Three *batá* drums: the large *iyá*, the "mother" drum with its brass bells; the mid-sized *itótele*; and the small *okónkolo*. Play the recording several times, focusing on one drum each time.
- Call-and-response formulas in which the group repeats what the leader sings. Note that the group knows the melodies beforehand, and that their rendition differs slightly from what the leader sings.
- The text of the chant, transcribed according to sung pronunciation

	STRUCTURE AND TEXT	DESCRIPTION
	Section A	
0:00	**Call:** e oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba e, oba yana yana	The first call is without accompaniment until the last words. The *batá* drums enter: the first few strokes are on the small *okónkolo*. A quadruple meter is established, with the *itótele* marking every beat.
0:14	**Response:** oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba e, oba yana yana	The two heads of the *iyá* can be heard, the larger, deeper head on beat 1 of each four-beat pattern, and the smaller head in a syncopated pattern just before the second and fourth beats. The rattle, called *atchere*, also keeps the beat.
0:26	**Call:** e oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba e, oba yana yana	
0:38	**Response:** oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba lube, oba lube oba e, oba e, oba yana yana	At about 0:42, the *iyá* and the *itótele* break their regular pattern.
	Section B	
0:49	**Call:** e, oba i sere, chango iworo, oba i sere chango iworo	The *iyá* soon returns to the established pattern, while the *itótele* switches to a less regular rhythm.
0:56	**Response:** oba i sere, chango iworo, oba i sere	The *okónkolo*, meanwhile, provides a faster pattern; it often plays two-stroke groups with the second stroke on a beat and the first stroke just before it. Changó's name is invoked.
1:01	**Call:** e, chango iworo	
1:04	**Response:** oba i sere, chango iworo, oba i sere	
	Section C	
1:09	**Call:** e, kawo e, alado, kawo e, alufina, kawo e, kavie sile o	

LISTENING GUIDE 65 (CONTINUED)

	STRUCTURE AND TEXT	DESCRIPTION
1:17	**Response:** kawo e, kawo e, kawo e, kavio sile o	
1:23	**Call:** e, kawo e, alado, kawo e, ala afrika, kawo e, kavie sile o	The text refers to Africa.
1:31	**Response:** kawo e, kawo e, kawo e, kavio sile o	
	Section D	
1:38	**Call:** e, selemina in yode, selemina in yode	
1:42	**Response:** selemina in yode, selemina in yode	
1:46	**Call:** chango, selemina in yode, selemina in yode	Changó's name is invoked.
1:50	**Response:** selemina in yode, selemina in yode	
	Section E	
1:53	**Call:** e, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	
2:00	**Response:** alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	
2:06	**Call:** chango, alagada ni w' oba, baba orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	The *itótele* breaks its pattern here, playing several quicker strokes in succession.
2:14	**Response:** alagada ni w'oba, orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	The *iyá* responds to this change.
2:20	**Call:** chango, alagada ni w' oba, baba orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	As the dialogue between *itótele* and the *iyá* grows in complexity, the *okónkolo* also breaks its pattern, playing triplet (three equal beat) patterns and other rhythms with increased intensity.
2:28	**Response:** alagada ni w'oba, orisa lewa o, alagada ni w' oba, orisa lewa o	
	Section F	
2:35	**Call:** lewa e lewa o **Response:** a, o se lewa [repeated several times]	As the chant is repeated by the singers, the dialogue between the *batá* drums continues to develop. Each drum comes to the fore in its turn.
2:55		*Ululation* (high-pitched trill) by women.
3:06	**Section G (Instrumental)**	The *toque* changes substantially, shifting to a new (but related) "conversation." This change is termed a *viro* or *vuelta* ("turn"). The *itótele* plays a three-note pattern (*ostinato*) which repeats throughout. The *okónkolo* joins in with a short-long pattern like a gallop, which evolves into a rapidly repeating short-short-short triplet pattern. Meanwhile, the *iyá* joins in, playing a pattern of two low notes followed by one high note and then a rest.
3:30		Fade-out.

Although no insider terminology exists for discussing *Santería* melodies, analysis by ethnomusicologists working with performers of traditional *Santería* have provided some insights. It is clear that many of the chants, including the one heard in **Listening Guide 65**, tend to use a pentatonic scale that follows pitches 1–2–3–5–6 of the Western major scale. At some moments, especially when the chorus responds to the lead singer, harmony can be heard.[17] A more detailed translation of this text is not available. Chant texts, transmitted mainly by oral tradition, have been particularly vulnerable to change outside Cuba, especially when performed by singers who are unfamiliar with their complex mix of Yoruba, other African dialects, Spanish words, and vocables. Yet while the sung texts of *Santería* are studied and passed on by *santeros* as sacred text, it is through musical performance that hidden or deep meanings of the sacred words are transmitted.[18]

Santería provides a rich example of the use of drumming, dancing, and chant to achieve transcendence and attain trance. It also shows how music with liturgical roots can be adapted and taken outside the boundaries of religious practice. The music retains its significance to *Santería* practitioners, who, in performance and recordings, seek to translate the music tradition for interested outsiders.

Santería has over the course of its history been the target of intolerance and persecution, in part because many *santeros* were active as healers and herbalists. Some outsiders regarded these practices as sorcery or witchcraft. Beginning in the early twentieth century, under Cuban governmental pressure for modernization, many *cabildos* were raided, religious paraphernalia confiscated, and practitioners arrested.[19]

Cardona believes that his public performance of *Santería*

> helps the religion 'cause there's so many negative things written about it . . . this is what happens at a Bembé [religious feast], behind closed doors, so they [the public] can see that this is a religion and that it can't be that bad. We have a feast, people are enjoying themselves, singing and dancing . . . and the chants are beautiful.[20]

CASE STUDY: ETHIOPIAN CHRISTIAN CHANT

Another rich chant tradition that has spread around the world since the 1970s is the ritual music of the Ethiopian Christian Orthodox Church. One of the oldest Christian denominations, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded in the Horn of Africa in the early fourth century (see "**Looking Back: The Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church**," p. 330).

Although the Ethiopian church always maintained close relations with the Coptic church of Egypt, even having a Coptic patriarch, the Ethiopian Christian sacred language ("Ge'ez," pronounced "GUHZ-uhz"), liturgy, and music tradition grew out of its own creativity in a unique cultural context. From its beginning the church stood at the center not just of Ethiopian religious life but also of its political and cultural life; the emperor also headed the church.

Ethiopia's location in the rugged plateau of the Horn of Africa protected it from invaders and helped preserve its independence, except during a sixteenth-century invasion from the south and the Italian occupation of 1935–41. The region along Ethiopia's Red Sea coast, Eritrea, became an independent country in 1993 following a long civil war.

new music "was the response of youths to the politics of the regime. The reaction was for youth to join churches. They became the backbone of the church. And women now play the drum."

Sacred music remains a vital part of the life in the Ethiopian diaspora. Some of the music traditions that sustain belief have been maintained with great care and at great sacrifice; at the same time, changes in the sound and concept of performance have been accepted. Familiar chants are retained but in shortened forms and modified styles, sung by musicians new to their practice. Chant performance has also moved from ritual to concert, as secular performers adapt chants for purposes of entertainment and commemoration. Strikingly, Ethiopian chant also continues to influence music in the popular realm, inspiring musicians to draw on Ethiopian chant, psalm texts, and vocal styles as the inspiration for new compositions. The composer Mulatu Astatke has since the 1960s innovated a distinctive style called "EthioJazz," which includes instrumental pieces such as one titled *Lent* inspired by Ethiopian Christian chant. In recent years, Mulatu Astatke's music has circulated internationally through recordings and provided the soundtrack for Jim Jarmusch's 2005 film *Broken Flowers*.[24]

CONCLUSION

Clearly, it takes care and sacrifice to maintain the music traditions that sustain belief. To keep these traditions alive, there must be an institutional structure in which musicians are trained and music can be regularly performed. In all three of our case studies—Tibetan chant, *Santería*, and Ethiopian church music—migration has prevented the establishment of secure institutional settings. Thus, although Tibetans and Ethiopians have sought to sustain ties with their past through ritual music, the meaning of that music is surprisingly vulnerable to change. Change raises questions—will new and abbreviated rituals still be able to effect transcendence? Ongoing ties to the historical homeland, whether broken, as in Cuban *Santería* and Tibetan Buddhism, or once again accessible, in Ethiopian Christianity, are an important factor in the practice of diaspora religious and music traditions.

Over time, the settings of rituals have shifted and the musical styles of chants have changed. The heirs of Saint Yared now include women as well as men; *Santería* incorporates women in ritual chanting and drumming, domains once reserved exclusively for men. Ethiopian churches in diaspora have now divided according to ethnic and linguistic communities that have long been adversaries in the homeland. The Eritrean church has also been separate since Eritrea became an independent country in 1993.

One aspect of traditional ritual performance that has been enthusiastically maintained by the *Santería* and Ethiopian communities is dance, the single area of traditional rituals in which all can participate, whatever the congregants' grasp of the liturgical language or knowledge of its musical system. Here we must acknowledge again the power of dance, in union with music and sacred text, to incorporate individuals into a larger community.

All three case studies vividly demonstrate the impact of political events on the transmission of rituals and their music. The displacement of the Cuban *santeros*, Ethiopian *debtaras*, and Tibetan monks from their homelands in the face of political upheaval and revolution serves as a reminder of the influence of politics on all aspects of life, including music. Music and politics will be our subject in Chapter 9.

FURTHER FIELDWORK

One of the most accessible sites for musical ethnography is a public ritual held in a local house of worship. You can start the process of identifying where to go by inquiring through word of mouth or investigating websites. Most houses of worship—whether churches, synagogues, mosques, Hindu temples, or other institutions—hold public rituals that welcome newcomers.

Try to attend a ritual of a religious tradition with which you are unfamiliar. Do some reading about the tradition in advance and find out about the history of the religious denomination, the particular institution, the size and constitution of its congregation, what language(s) are used in the service, and, of course, what musical content you might anticipate hearing. See if there are invitations to a service or guidelines for visitors on a website. If not, you should telephone or e-mail the institution's office in advance to inquire if you may attend and to ask what sort of dress would be appropriate. For instance, in most Ethiopian Orthodox Churches, people dress modestly and all attendees are expected to remove their shoes at the door, so it is advisable to bring or wear socks. Married women also tend to cover their heads with a scarf. In many religions, women and men are seated separately, customs that you should assess on arrival and observe carefully. If you are in doubt about where to sit or how to comport yourself, ask for advice from an usher or from someone who is clearly an insider.

You will often find that there is a flyer or bulletin distributed at the ritual informing you about the order of prayer or musical selections as well as any special observances that day, such as blessing of a newborn child. In most rituals there are moments in which only members of the congregation or church can properly take part. Be aware that traditions vary greatly between religions and even among denominations within a single religion. Do not assume anything based on your familiarity with another religion. If you have any doubt about these ritual moments, which may range from taking communion to saying a prayer of commemoration, ask a congregant nearby for clarification. It is better to do nothing, sitting quietly and respectfully, than to risk participating inappropriately in a ritual moment about which you are uninformed.

Many religious institutions take advantage of a particular ritual moment to pass a basket for donations, while others, notably Jewish synagogues, do not permit the handling of money on the Sabbath. It is polite to contribute a few dollars if given an opportunity when all those around you do so. As a fieldworker, you may wish to take fieldnotes, but be aware that in some denominations (such as Jewish synagogues) writing is not permitted and that writing during a religious ritual of any type may offend someone nearby deeply engaged in prayer. You may be well advised to restrict yourelf to "head notes," consciously remembering important details and writing down these memories only after returning home. As in all field situations, it is important to behave in a way that is proper and congruent with comportment of the congregation.

Almost all rituals will involve musical content and you will need to keep your eyes and ears open to absorb what is going on. Try to observe if congregants participate in the musicmaking and in what ways. Who performs the music? Is there a head musician, a choir, or others responsible for leading musical aspects of the liturgy? Are books or other technologies such as notation used to help musicians or congregants remember texts or tunes? What musical instruments are used? Is there patterned movement or dance? The order of ritual events tends to help the observer remember its musical content and to reward an ethnographer's close observations. Attending a religious ritual provides an experience with rich potential for further fieldwork.

IMPORTANT TERMS

general
- ritual (sacred service, liturgy, liturgical order)
- *bar mitzvah*
- *Torah* scroll
- *communitas*
- Mass

Tibetan Buddhist chant
- *sadhana*
- *mantra*
- *dbyangs*
- *dbyangs-yig*
- *rol mo*
- biphonic singing
- *Tantra* voice
- *mdzo* voice
- *Mahalaka* ritual
- *mandala*
- *brdung*

Santeriá
- *cabildos*
- *orishas (santos)*
- *santero*
- *batá* drums
  - *iyá*
  - *itótele*
  - *okónkolo*
- *toque*
- *viro (vuelta)*

Ethiopian Christian chant
- Hymnary
- *Mahlet*
- *kebaro*
- *zema*
- *dewel*
- *melekket*
- *debtara*
- *marigeta*
- *angergari*
- *qum zema*
- *rekrek* (slide)
- falsetto
- melisma
- cadence
- antiphonal style
- Sunday School songs

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

Reading

For insights into the life and career of Cuban *santero* Felipe García Villamil, see María Teresa Vélez's *Drumming for the Gods*. For a different perspective on the same tradition, *Divine Utterances: The Performance of Afro-Cuban Santería* (with CD) by Katherine Hagedorn focuses on the blurring of boundaries between *Santería* ritual and theatrical performances.

Viewing

An introductory education video on *Santería* is available from National Geographic Education on line. The BBC Series *Under African Skies* has an excellent film on Ethiopia, surveying a wide variety of Ethiopian music traditions, sacred and secular, during the late years of the Ethiopian revolution. Visit The Pluralism Project's website, which presents an overview of the changing religious landscape in the United States through various online resources, multimedia, and selected links. The Pluralism Project site also has an elaborate search function with exhaustive research materials in all media on most world religions. The film *Tantra of Gyuto* traces the history, religious practice, and musical style of the Gyuto monks.

Listening

The Gyuto Monks issued a new album in 2013 titled *Chants: The Spirit of Tibet*. John Amira's performance book titled *The Music of Santería: Traditional Rhythms of the Batá Drums*, provides transcriptions and recordings of *batá* drum rhythms.

Don't forget to access the online recordings, resources, and review materials for this chapter.