

Sounds as signs.

On the role of musical instruments in multicultural Sweden.¹

Introduction

In February 1990 the Swedish "Immigrants Cultural Center" (Invandrarnas Kulturcentrum, IKC) celebrated its 20th anniversary by organizing a folklore show in the Stockholm City Hall. Artists from well over 20 different nations paid tribute to the organization by performing their traditional music and dance to an audience consisting of members of the organization, friends and relatives of the artists, and not least important, specially invited celebrities of the Swedish cultural bureaucracy. In this article, I will take this event, a well rehearsed orchestration of the new ethnic diversity of Multicultural Sweden, as a point of departure for a discussion of music and musical instruments as a means of dramatizing and giving symbolic form to ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.²

The Immigrants Cultural Center, founded 1970 by immigrated artists and intellectuals, is a small and rather insignificant organization. But its 20 years of existence marks off a period of great and significant changes in the Swedish society. Up to the 1970s the image of Sweden that Swedes liked to present to themselves as well as to others, was that of a very homogenous country, indeed one of the most homogenous in Europe. Today, in newspapers, magazines, books, TV and radio, all the information channels which together constitute "the public debate," Sweden is often rhetorically represented as a multicultural society. The equation may seem simple enough: as immigrants and refugees have become more numerous during the last 20 to 25 years, the variety of people, languages, styles,

genres, and entire cultures have increased. This in turn has led to the transformation of Sweden from "monocultural" to "multicultural".

But is it really all that simple? The questions about Sweden as a multicultural society are many and difficult. What is multiculturalism? Is it only, as some maintain, a rhetoric phrase, formulated for obscure political reasons?³ .If not, in what realms of the Swedish society is the new social and cultural diversity being enacted? How, where and when does the diversity become visible, relevant and meaningful? Which are the expressive forms that people make use of to foreground themselves as culturally or ethnically different?⁴

Theoretical discussion

My interest here concerns the expressive forms of diversity. However, a study of how diversity is organized necessarily also implies a theory of how social categories arise and are maintained, because social organisation requires and is based upon social categorisation. My approach is based on the view that social categories are results of complex and continual negotiation processes. The different parties involved in interaction try to interpret the impressions they get of one another, at the same time as they try to control the impressions that they themselves give. It is not at all certain that any actual accord arises. The interaction can continue as if all the parties were in agreement about how one should understand one another, even if that is not actually the case. This implies not only that one *is* someone, equally one *becomes* someone, as a result of interaction taking place within given interpretive contexts or *frames* (Goffman 1974). The frames provide important guidelines for how the interaction is to be interpreted. By being placed in a specific frame certain categorisations become more relevant than others.

From this follows that cultural, social, ethnic or any other type of identity have to be displayed, enacted, or expressed in some way to become relevant in everyday social life. One may have deeply rooted feelings of group identity (ethnic, regional, national etc), but if these feelings are not expressed publicly in an appropriate form, they may have little importance for the way in which one is regarded and treated. An important methodological implication of this is that studies of social and cultural diversity must derive from observations of interaction in specific situations, where attention is paid both to what is actually done and said and to how the interaction is framed and assigned meaning. Especially important to study are situations where the agents themselves have chosen to present and dramatize their social and cultural differences, in word and deed. An example of such a situation is the folklore cavalcade organized by the Immigrants culture center in Stockholm 1990.

Relevance is thus an important key word. Another is *visibility*. As Fredrik Barth argued in his now classical introduction to "Ethnic groups and boundaries" (1969), ethnic groups can be seen as results of contrastive boundary maintaining processes. One such process is what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has called "cultural foregrounding", by means of which the groups stress their internal differences (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1983). But not all differences are equally useful in the struggle for social recognition, and it is not possible to make all of them visible. In every society you may find certain types of behaviour, certain types of situations and arenas that are utilized more than others to display social and cultural differences. By using a limited number of forms and modes of expression within certain given frames, different groups and categories in a society will find themselves standing side-by-side on a set of specific social scenes and arenas. They thereby not only become visible for one another,

but also comparable, their internal differences being temporarily reduced. These activities and arenas function as the necessary background, against which the differences may be made visible.

It is the society at large that defines these appropriate activities and arenas through which the groups can display their distinctiveness. Whatever forms of music and dance the groups understand as their own, when striving for social recognition as distinctive groups "with their own cultures", they have to adapt to the forms used by the majority of such groups already recognized. As a consequence you may find groups that maintain their traditional forms of music and dance for their own purposes, at the same time as they develop new and other forms that can be used to present themselves to the society as a whole. Another important consequence is that the "ethnic scene" develops specific national profiles: The many immigrant groups in Sweden may consider themselves Non-Swedish, but when compared to the same immigrant groups in other countries it is not difficult to see that they in many respects have become typically Swedish

In the foregrounding processes that makes social and cultural diversity visible, by foregrounding the boundaries between groups of various kinds, forms derived from culture's expressive domains seem to have received special importance, forms which emphasize body, ears, eyes, smell taste, rather than the mind and intellect.⁵ At the center we typically find food, clothes, decorative art, visual symbols such as flags, and of course songs, dances and instrumental music. (cf eg Klein 1988, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1992). Studies in western Europe and USA convincingly show that it is by arranging events with "typical" food, dance, music, in "typical" clothing and with certain "typical" symbols strongly foregrounded, that ethnic/social/cultural identity most often is publicly presented.⁶ The

groups thereby acquire or are ascribed a set of stereotyped "trademarks", which both concretely and symbolically summarizes what it means to belong to a certain group. To a high degree ethnic categorisation thus come to depend on the competence of certain specific expressive specialists to present and perform such trade-marks and brandnaming activities in the right way. This is an important reason why *authenticity* have become such a central concept for immigrants in Sweden, when trying to find ways of presenting their relative differences to the Swedes.

In this nexus of strongly typified forms of publicly dramatized diversity dance and music seem to play a crucial role. There are of course many reasons for this. One concerns the rapidly increasing extent and importance of music and dance in society as a whole. The abundance of radically different forms, styles, and genres, both live and mediated, has enabled individuals as well as groups to express even the finest nuances of existing social and cultural differences through music and dance.

Furthermore, in Sweden, as in many other Western countries, using music and dance for boundary maintaining purposes is not only accepted, but often also requested and required.

Another, but related, factor, as ethnomusicological research from many parts of the world has shown, is that music and dance seem to possess a special capability of simultaneously giving rise to and becoming the expression for social solidarity and conveying feelings of group identity.⁷ Music and dance are multivalent expressive systems that can be charged with multiple meanings, emotions, and values on many different levels simultaneously. By dancing and singing together, people can experience a strong feeling of identity and communality without ever needing to be confronted with the question of whether they have anything else in common besides these experiences and the music and dance which were

their source. This perhaps helps to explain why so many groups in Sweden (as in many other countries), spend so much time, energy, and money on music-making and dancing.⁸ It is not difficult to find examples of groups that not only use music and dance as their most important, or even only, communal activity and group symbol, but that are built solely on the fact that members enjoy the same kind of music and dance.

Not all types of music and dance, however, lend themselves easily to foregrounding diversity. Some types are considered to be "everyones and noones", such as for example the music of Mozart, Bach and Beethoven, Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones etc etc. Other are more closely linked to a common national or ethnical heritage and therefor considered as distinctive and typical.⁹ To these belong most types of folk music and dance and some of their popular derivations

But even not all types of folk music and dance can be used to display cultural differences. This again has do with contrastive character of the processes involved. The types actually used are necessarily formed and framed by the perceived differences between the majority of a society and all the different minorities and ethnic groups.

To sum up, what interests me are those expressive forms of behaviour that make categorisation in terms of ethnic and other social groupings relevant, expressive forms that in one way or another serve as symbols for such groups, and the arenas where such behaviour is possible and appropriate. The main keywords for my studies are not 'roots' 'heritage' 'cultural identity' or any other phrase that implies that culture is a specific commodity or something inscribed in the individuals through socialisation. Instead the keywords are 'visibility' 'relevance' and 'competence', which gives more room for investigation into how behaviour and artefacts, such

as music, dance and musical instruments, are being used strategically to create and maintain boundaries between groups, raise their position in society at large, to fight for social recognition, political rights etc. With all this in mind, let me now return to the folklore show in Stockholm City Hall, and look at some examples of the role of sounds as signs, how music and musical instruments can be used as a means of expressing "we are different, we are an ethnic group, we have our own culture".

The event

"Welcome to the famous Blue Hall of the Stockholm City Hall. The Immigrants Cultural Center celebrates its 20th anniversary by giving an INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC -SONG- DANCE -CAVALCADE with hundreds of artists from various countries!".

As advertised in newspapers and on posters all over Stockholm, the festival of the IKC was held in "the famous Blue Hall", well-known all over Sweden and in many other countries as the hall of the illustrious Nobel prize winner banquets. Built for receptions in honour of visiting politicians and statesmen, this hall is one of the most formal and representative in Sweden. It is large, splendid, exquisitely decorated, with an almost dignified overall character. However impressive it may be, from an acoustical point of view the hall is close to a disaster, thus not at all suited for an "international folk music- song-dance- cavalcade". However, for the leaders of the IKC there were strong symbolical and strategical reason for disregarding the miserable acoustical conditions. The message sent was obvious: "Yes, we are immigrants, but we have the same right to the formal and representative arenas of the Swedish society as anybody else".

But to the researcher, observing this event from a distance, there was yet another important symbolic message implicit. The Stockholm City Hall, crowned as it is by three golden crowns (a national symbol of Sweden), can be seen as a concrete representation of Sweden as a state and nation, the Sweden that surrounds, defines and also restrains the possibilities of the many different ethnic groups to create and maintain a culture of their own in their new home-country. Whatever kinds of life they would want to build for themselves, whatever expressive forms they would want to use to communicate their cultural differences to others, the immigrants in Sweden have to adjust to the given limits of the surrounding society. As already mentioned, a consequence of this is that when performing their diversity, the ethnic groups not only become different in one respect or the other, they at the same time become less different and more Swedish.

The main overall frame and keyword for the event was representation. All the groups were given 10 minutes each to represent their nation or ethnic group in the way they found best. The first to enter the stage was a group announced as "Barozda - Hungarian music ensemble", consisting of five young men dressed in jeans and large white shirts of a common European "folklorical" type. During rehearsals this group had opened with a set of dance melodies from Transsylvania. But the chairman of the IKC, himself originally from Hungary, then requested them to play something "more typical and representative" of Hungary. Responding to this request the band chose to perform a set of *ugros* dance songs from Transdanubia, on hurdy-gurdy, violins, a *kontra* (bratsch) and a double-bass. A main reason for imposing this change of programme on the musicians was that they made a too generally "Eastern European" impression, dressed up as they were in clothes which Western European folk musicians most likely would not use at formal representative events like this; using violins of different

sizes, instruments that belong to the most common of all in Europe, therefor simply not distinctive enough as a mark of Hungarianness; and performing instrumental dance tunes of a type played both by the Rumanians and Hungarians of Transsylvania. Given the special circumstances of the performance, this "indistinctiveness" was something that both the chairman and the musicians must have been aware of. A solution which was possible for both parties to agree on was to perform songs in a more "classical Hungarian" folk music style, with the hurdy-gurdy at the center of the stage and of the music. Here the hurdy-gurdy was foregrounded as a more specific and typical visual and audial sign of the 'folk' or group that was to be represented, in short, a kind of Hungarian "brand-name"

The second group showed a similar case. The Estonian group "Erü Kassari", consisting of some twenty members of young and middle age, performs Estonian folk dances and folk music in a style that to most people in Sweden is very similar to that of most Swedish and Finnish folk dance groups. The Estonians also use the same kind of instruments (mainly accordions and violins) to accompany their dances, and basicly the same type of folk costumes as their Swedish and Finnish counterparts. As a result, when performing their Estonian songs and dances the members of this group often find themselves having trouble to be recognized as Estonian. But there are ways to solve this problem and one is to foreground the *jauram*, a stick with bells attached which is beaten rhythmically at the floor. This instrument, once played in different versions all over Europe, was appropriated and nationalized as "typically Estonian" during the first half of this century and has today become a "trade mark" for many Estonian folklore groups. Thus, in "Erü Kassaris" performance of Estonian quadrilles and round dances at the Blue Hall, the *jauram*, played by one of

the leaders of the group, fulfilled two equally important roles, that of a musical instrument and that of an ethnic symbol, a mark of Estonianess. A little later on in the programme the Turkish music ensemble "Sameyda" entered the stage to perform first a semi-classical tune and then a well-known song about Istanbul, "Kiz sen Istanbul'un neresindesen", belonging to a genre of modern urban popular music. The musicians had deliberately chosen not to play Turkish folk music on Turkish folk music instruments, as they formerly often had done¹⁰ on similar occasions, nor did they want to perform in Turkish folk costumes. Rejecting the stereotyped standard image of Turks in Sweden as "simple and ignorant peasants from Anatolia", they instead tried to create an image of themselves as a kind of "classical chamber ensemble", by wearing black trousers, white shirts and black ties; by performing seated on chairs arranged in a half circle; by placing a music stand in front of the singer; and by performing Turkish semi-classical and modern urban popular music. The intended message to the audience could be summarized as: "We are Turks, but we are not the kind of Turks you think we are. We are modern, educated, urban, we know how to read music and the music we play is as good as any western classical music!" But the musicians also knew that a large part of the audience probably would nevertheless have difficulties to categorize them as other than "generally Middle Eastern", and that because of their choice of instruments: *qanun*, *ud*, *clarinet* and *darbuka*. Although being used in Turkey these instruments are not considered as typical of Turkey, neither in Turkey nor in Sweden. But in the ensemble there was also another instrument, a Çümbüs bowed tanbur, a modern Turkish derivation of an old classical instrument, which by the musicians, and most likely also by most other immigrants from the Middle East more easily could be recognized as typically Turkish. Here this instrument became a kind of

"brand-name" for the Turkishness of the ensemble, in a similar way as the hurdy-gurdy and the jauram for the Hungarian and Estonian ensembles. Still later in the cavalcade the "Södra Bergens Balalajkor", a group from Stockholm consisting of some 30 men and women dressed up in Russian styled folkloric costumes, performed an arrangement of the Russian folksong "Bjelolitsa, kruglolitsa", accompanied by balalajkas, domras and a bayan. Because of the balalajka's position as a symbol of Russianness known to almost everybody, it was not difficult for this group to be recognized as Russian, even though it was announced both on the posters and by the speaker as a "Swedish orchestra". Of course the character and language of the song, the type of accompaniment and the clothes are of importance here, but again, most probably it is the instruments that visually and audially functions as the most important sign or symbol of the folk or ethnic group that is represented on stage.

After the Russian group the floor was given to a three-member Mexican band, singing well-known Mexican or "Latin" songs (such as "La Bamba"), accompanying themselves on acoustic guitars. The guitar, once a symbol of the music culture of Spain and to a some extent also of the Spanish speaking Latin world, today is commonly used in many parts of the world. Therefore, the band performed their songs dressed up in ponchos and big sombreros, thus to completing their Mexican image.

What is important is that all these groups have access to a small and well codified repertoire of representative signs and symbols which are known to most of the parties involved in interaction in the Blue Hall, and most likely also to a large part of the inhabitants in Sweden. Using this knowledge, "that we know that you know that we know" (cf Hannerz 1983), during the evening many of the artists were able to create new and very subtle

meanings out of this indeed very stereotyped repertoire by playing with it, ironizing about it, putting up against it and so on.

There are however also groups without direct access to such well-known symbols. The Syrian ensemble "Tor Abdin", consisting of a folk dance group and a small band, performing Middle Eastern style dance music on ud, darbuka and synthesizer, belong to a rather large group of Syrians and Assyrians¹¹, who settled in the area south-west of Stockholm. The Syrians/Assyrians are Suryoyo, Arabic and Turkish speaking Christians, originally from Turkey, Lebanon and Syria. In their former home countries, as Christians in Moslem surroundings, their religion was their main cohesive force and focus of identity. After settling in Sweden, this group of people soon divided into two fractions, the Syrians sticking to their religion as main focus of identity, and the Assyrians trying to develop a more secular ethnic identity. Within their own circles, both groups have retained much of their old musical traditions, on the one hand the sacral liturgical music of the Nestorian church, on the other the popular songs and social dance music of their different countries of origin (Hammarlund 1990). When being asked to participate in representative shows of the kind which is discussed here, the Syrians as well as the Assyrians have found themselves facing serious problems, lacking a music that could represent them as an ethnic group in Sweden. The only music which they themselves could regard as exclusively their own, the liturgical sacral music, is of course out of question for use outside the Nestorian churches. The profane folk and popular music used at their social events cannot be considered typically Syrian/Assyrian, since it is the same type of music that most Turks and Arabic speaking people in Sweden listen and dance to. So for the reason of establishing themselves as an ethnic group among other ethnic groups in Sweden, which of course is of great social, political and

economical importance, the Syrians/Assyrians simply have had to invent a new type of folk music and folk dance for representative use. This have been done in Sweden from the late sixties, and the important thing about this music and dance is of course not only that it is typical of Syrians/Assyrians, but that it is typical of Sweden, invented as it is to meet the demands of the Swedish society. Still however, much of the problem of becoming ethnically distinctive persist, as could be seen by the performance of the "Tor Abdin" in the Blue Hall. There is simply no instrument, no singing style or musical genre that in the such a context could create an exclusively Assyrian sound, thus preventing the ensemble from being categorized as Turks, Arabs or some other kind of "Middle Eastern".

After five hours of dance and music from all over the world, the time at last came to the last ensemble, a group of youngsters from an Eritrean association in Stockholm. As so many young people today, these youngsters prefer electric guitar, electric bass, saxophones and the drum-set instead of the old traditional instruments of their countries of origin. But this preference for the modern and electrically amplified instruments creates problems. First, these instruments are not considered as "folk" instruments in Sweden, therefor they may not easily be used as formally representative at occasions like this. Secondly, in most cases they simply can't be made to sound distinctive enough of the ethnic group that is to be represented. This is well known by these youngsters and their teachers. Therefor they choose to foreground two "African looking" instruments, a small hand drum and the *krar*, a plucked lyre used by many ethnic groups in North-east Africa. As these instruments are likely to be recognized as "folk" by almost anyone in Sweden, they could also be used for strategical purposes, as both a signal of formal representation of an ethnic group, and

a clue to which ethnic group that is represented. And that was what the Eritrean "Keih Bahri" ensemble did. Musically the drum and lyre played no significant role at all, as they barely could be heard among the amplified guitars, bass, saxophone and drums. Instead they played another and, in the given context, equally important role as visual signs of ethnic representation.

Conclusion

The roles of musical instruments as signs is complex. They can be used as visual or audial symbols, or both. The important thing is that the symbols are typical enough to be recognized by both insiders and outsiders as representative for a specific group. And, as we have seen, it whatever traditions immigrants bring from their former home countries, whatever forms of expression they use within their own communities, when it comes to publicly displaying a cultural heritage, they have to adhere to the forms considered appropriate in the society at large. As a result every society develop more or less its own forms of stereotyped representative music, dance, clothes etc.

Also important to recognize is that this type of publicly presented representative behaviour stems from a well codified repertoire which is not inherited or learnt through socialization in the early years. On the contrary, this is a repertoire transmitted through formal training, rehearsals, which implies that anyone who has access to such training or, who is interested in it, can learn it. Therefore, the cultural identity model known as "roots", one of the most important parts of the ideology of "being ethnic" ethnic, and indeed also of "folk music", simply is not adequate. To substantiate this general point, let me again briefly return to the examples I have presented. When examining the artists and their repertoires more carefully it could be noticed that they all share a somewhat peculiar relation to the music and

dance they are performing, and to the ethnic group they are representing. The Hungarian ensemble "Barozda" are Rumanian citizens, of the Hungarian minority of Transsylvania. They learnt to play Hungarian folk music in Rumania, as a part of the Hungarian "dance-house movement". Since they for political reasons were cut of from the center of this movement, Budapest, one of their main musical sources was records and cassettes. A large part of the "dance-house music", as for example their Transdanubian repertoire, actually stems from the same records as their Swedish kontra player brought back home from Budapest and learnt to play here. Thus, it was not difficult for him to join in with the other members of the band, since they all knew the same songs, in the same keys, with the same number of repetitions etc. Most of the members of the Estonian ensemble "Erü Kassari" are born in Sweden. They have learnt their Estonian folklore through participating in the weekly rehearsals of the Estonian associations. Many of them speak little or none Estonian and have had, up to very recently, few other concrete relations to Estonia than folklore. The members of the Turkish group "Sameyda" have come together from different corners of the musical world: The clarinetist came to Sweden to play jazz, but found few jobs since Turks are supposed to play Turkish music, which in Sweden means folk music; the qanun player is a former saz teacher, the ud player is a guitar teacher, the darbuka player is a former folk dancer who earlier in his life for ideological reasons heavily opposed to the kind of popular and semi-classical music he is now performing. All of the musicians have begun to play this music only rather recently, and they have learnt most of it in Sweden. The Russian choir and orchestra consists only of Swedish members, who have no other relation to Russia than their affection for Russian music. The leader of the Mexican band, performing in poncho and big sombrero, is Chilean. He is a man

who likes to sing, and he successfully performs Mexican, Chilean, Spanish and sometimes also as Italian. The members of the Syrian/Assyrian and the Eritrean ensembles are nearly all of them born or raised in Sweden and most of them have also acquired their competence to perform their representative ethnic music in Sweden.

Through these examples I have tried to show how, in a multicultural society such as Sweden, music instruments may take on new and important roles as signs, symbols of ethnic groups. The important keywords in the processes I have been discussing are visibility, which means that the symbols must be typical and possible to identify as such by large parts of the society, competence, which means that the repertoire used as formally representative is learnt through formal training, which in turn means that it is not all certain that the people performing are what they appear to be; and lastly relevance, which means that whether the people performing are what they appear to be or not is not a relevant question as long as they are identified and categorized as such by the others. As a consequence, 'authenticity', this concept so often invoked by folk musicians and indeed also by ethnomusicologists, becomes relevant not as a question of origin, but as a measure of competence, that highly elaborated and very specific competence of certain expressive specialists to perform and display the right kind of symbols and signs, in the right kind of circumstances.

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¹ This is a report from the current research project "Blandsverige-social and cultural organization of diversity in Sweden" at the Institute for folklife research, Stockholm University. The object of this study is Sweden as a multicultural society. My part is devoted to the expressive forms which people use to foreground themselves as culturally or ethnically different. The main fieldwork has been conducted in the Stockholm area, where people from more than a hundred nations recently have come to live together. See Ehn 1989, Ehn et al. 1990.

² Music as an expression of identity has since long been a persistent theme in ethnomusicological research (cf Bohlman 1988). A large number of studies have been devoted to music as a symbol for feelings, affects and identities, individual as well as collective, social as well as cultural. However, it seems that the bulk of these studies has taken the perspectives of the individuals or groups that are being studied, while very few have considered the role of music in the social and cultural organization of diversity in a society as a whole. In her article The processes and results of musical cultural contact (1981) Magaret Kartomi attempts to establish a vocabulary for such studies. In a series of articles Mark Slobin has discussed the role of music in complex multicultural societies (e.g. Slobin 1984, 1992). Especially interesting is his attempts to identify basic processes, such as "domestication", "reinterpretation", "ethnic convergence" and "replacement" (Slobin & Ronström 1989). An interesting attempt to survey the ethnic music scene of a large modern city is the "Klangbildern"-project run by Max Peter Bauman in Berlin.

³ In a heated debate in leading Swedish newspapers 1992, several influential debaters claimed that "multiculturalism" is nothing but an attack on the Great Cultural Traditions of the Western civilization. Similar ideas have recently been launched also in many other European countries, and especially in the USA, where the idea of cultural pluralism has been fiercely attacked by conservative politicians and intellectuals.

⁴ These questions are discussed and developed in Ronström 1990a, 1990b, 1992a, 1992b, 1992d.

⁵ To use Merleau-Ponty's well-known distinction, you could say that displaying diversity is not so much concerned with "I know" or "I can", as with "I do".

⁶ Among articles dealing with the Swedish situation are Hammarlund 1990, Einarsson 1990, Ronström 1988, 1990a, 1992d.

⁷ Cf Spencer 1985

⁸ One aspect which is developed in my study of dance and music among Yugoslavs in Stockholm (Ronström 1992c). Cf also Finnegan 1986. Another aspect of the same problem is discussed in Csikszentmihalyi 1975.

⁹ 'Typical' has at least two aspects: 1) common to all, 2) distinctive, that is "what we have but what you don't have". Here it is the second aspect that normally is underlined.

¹⁰ "Sameyda" started as a Turkish folk music ensemble. Among the instruments used were saz, mey and davul, which instrument names, in a shortened version, also became the name of the group.

¹¹ Syrians and Assyrians are two fractions of the same people, the former stressing their religious identity, the latter stressing their profane cultural or ethnic identity.