

neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. (The two genres differ in dress and hairstyle; the movements of *mōhini āṭṭam* are also more fluid and curved, and its tempi are slower.) The director of recording, Brigitte Chataignier has devoted most of the last quarter century to teaching, performing, and generally propagating *mōhini āṭṭam* in Kerala and in her native France.

The CD includes most of the items in a typical *mōhini āṭṭam* recital: *varṇam*, *tillāna*, *jatisvaram*, and *padam* (two examples). The one item specific to *mōhini āṭṭam* (i.e., not shared with *bharata nāṭyam*), *cholkeṭṭu*, an abstract dance set to drum/dance vocables, is not represented here, but the opening track, “Gaṇapati stuti,” is similar to it. The recordings are outstanding, with excellent balance among the musicians. The performances are all fine; I especially enjoyed the *iṭaykka* (Kerala variable-tension drum) playing of Tripunithura Krishnadas and Kalamandalam Nandakumar. The *tillāna*, by nineteenth-century Kerala composer-ruler Svāti Tirunāl, is perhaps the most frequently performed classical composition in Kerala. The liner notes are helpful, containing texts of all the songs (in four Indian languages, French, and English), descriptions of the instruments, *sargam* (solfege) and *vāyittāri* (drum/dance vocable) notation, and historical context. I did miss descriptions of each item’s *rāga*; these are named but not analysed, and the forms of the items were not always clear from the notes. For instance, I could not hear the last four lines of the last *padam* anywhere on the track.

In general, however, the informative notes contribute to this excellent recording of a genre deserving of a much wider audience outside of Kerala.

ROLF GROESBECK

WEST ASIA

Cute Boy, Charming Girl: Children’s Songs of the Modern Hebrew Nation (1882–1948). 2013. Anthology of Music Traditions in Israel, 22. Jewish Music Research Centre, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem AMTI 0113. Annotated by Talila Eliram in collaboration with Ruth Freed and Yaakov Mazor. 188-page booklet with notes in Hebrew and English. English translation by Shira Leibowitz-Schmidt and Jessica Setbon. Illustration, bibliography. CD, 56 tracks (46:49).

These fifty-six tracks record a moment in pre-state Israeli history when songs “anchored in the universe of traditional childhood became objects of a mass culture mobilized by national agendas.” They also offer a surprisingly moving set of memories, of collective youth re-presented through the personal lens of old age (the youngest performer here born 1944, the oldest 1907). This is material recovered from the sidelines of the *Songs of the Land of Israel* canon, whose creators range from the famous (Idelsohn, Kipnis), through pre-school music teachers (Theresa Gotein, Erna Bial), to anonymous Hassidic *nigunim*, and its organization into seven thematic sections convincingly connects the real world of childhood to the music’s original ideological aims. Thus the childlike (though not childish) “Cow, How Now

Cow” meets the stately “Bread, Made in Israel,” and the anthemic “Song of the Port” is countered by the lyrical flower-talk of “Little Miss Gardener.” We are also reminded of the European roots of the Zionist aesthetic, with selections from Noah Pines’s 1903 Odessa collection, borrowings from Mozart and Schubert, and the influence of nineteenth-century Frobelian pedagogy keenly felt throughout. Almost all performances are unaccompanied, few are more than a minute long, and all are unadorned, unaffected, and honest, whether from Israel Prize laureate Gil Aldema, teacher Naomi Abeles, or *kibbutznik* Miriam Cohen. The historically comprehensive liner notes subtly probe the various meanings (and uses) of “children’s” songs, paralleling the poignant elision of private memory and public performance heard in these fifteen elderly, occasionally frail, but committed voices.

PHIL ALEXANDER

Luth arabe / Arab Lute: Omar Bashir; Taqâsîm. 2012. INEDIT / Maison des Cultures du Monde W 260144. Recorded by Gábor Fűri. Annotated by Chérif Khaznadar. 4-page booklet with notes in French and English. English translation by Frank Kane. Colour photographs. CD, 5 tracks (77:39). Recorded at Spirit Sound Studio, Budapest, Hungary.

As might be expected, there is a family resemblance between the approach of Omar Bashir to the improvisatory *taqsîm* form and that of his father, the celebrated Munir Bashir. Although developing a creative personality of his own, he thus exemplifies continuity in the evolution, since the middle of the twentieth century, of the Baghdad *‘ūd* school that, in the process of creating a new role for the *‘ūd* as a solo concert instrument, has radically transformed conceptions of technique and repertoire. Expectations of technical mastery are certainly fulfilled in the five lengthy and ambitious *taqsîms* presented on this CD, and the resonant recording allows registral and dynamic contrasts to make their full impact, and likewise the delicacy and high velocity accuracy of both intonation and plectrum technique. Those with more traditional tastes will find much to savour in the rather more compressed and stylistically uniform presentation of three *maqâms* (*hijâz*, *segâh*, and the closely related *awj*) in a single *taqsîm*, but it is the larger canvas of the more extended performances (two lasting more than nineteen minutes, perhaps best enjoyed on separate occasions) that is the more typical. Here we encounter slowly evolving developments, studied pauses, a conscious acceleration of the pace of events, and also stylistic contrasts involving not only familiar Western features but also conscious borrowings from other traditions, for example in episodes characterized by drone and glissandi effects with an Indian feel, that reveal a change of aesthetic marked by a deliberate if not too obtrusive eclecticism.

OWEN WRIGHT