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Abstract

In 1999, looking back at her 1960s career as a folk performer, Malka Marom commented that she and her former singing partner, Joso Spralja, had reached mainstream success in Canada when it was considered “fashionable to be ethnic.” Here, Malka is referring to the mid-1960s, when she was classified as an ethnic folk singer in Toronto’s Yorkville Village folk scene. She performed alongside Canadian folk “greats” such as Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, and Ian and Sylvia. Malka and Joso released four studio albums through Capitol Records of Canada and were later chosen to host their own CBC television show, *A World of Music*, which aired on Saturday nights after *Hockey Night in Canada* in 1966. This thesis situates Malka, a woman of colour, within the American Folk Revival, the Yorkville Village coffee house scene, and the national-cultural landscape of 1960s Canada. These explorations constitute an argument for Malka’s place in the Canadian folk music canon, which is predominantly regarded as a white, singer-songwriter genre. Analysis of period newspapers, archival footage, and a personal interview with Malka Marom support the conclusions of this study.

**Keywords:** Malka Marom, ethnicity, Yorkville Village, Canadian folk canon, folk music, canon, American Folk Revival, musical genres, Toronto coffee houses, star image, gender and popular music, cosmopolitanism, Canadian Centennial, A World of Music, nationalism
Summary For Lay Audience

This thesis situates Canadian folk singer Malka Marom (formerly Himel) within the American Folk Revival, the Yorkville Village coffee house scene, and the Canadian music scene of the 1960s where Malka performed alongside Canadian household names like Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot. She later had her own CBC television show, A World of Music, with her singing partner Joso Spralja. I explore how her "ethnic" identity was marked, which worked for and against her music and television careers. Despite Malka's popularity in Yorkville, she has been excluded from the Canadian folk canon. This study offers an argument for recognizing Malka's contributions (and those of artists like her) to the Canadian music scene and to widening definitions of Canadian identity. An analysis of period newspapers, archival footage, and a personal interview with Malka Marom are central to this study.
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1.1 Personal Statement

I grew up listening to Canadian folk greats like Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot in a mid-sized Canadian town in B.C. My paternal grandparents immigrated to Canada in the 1980s from Hong Kong, in hopes that a better life could be found here. In 1994 (2 years before I was born), my mother immigrated to Canada after marrying my Canadian father. As a child and teenager, I was comforted by Mitchell and Lightfoot’s introspective folk lyrics that seemed to validate my loneliness. It was as though I knew that someone, somewhere (in Canada) had lived my life already. There was only one problem: I always felt that another part of my identity was not being reflected, and I eventually realized that this was because I wasn’t white.

While I was born in Canada and certainly “felt” Canadian, my peers at school constantly reminded me that I somehow wasn’t Canadian enough. When I brought “ethnic” (Chinese) food for lunch, they made fun of me for not eating sandwiches or sloppy joes. There happened to be one other Asian girl who was my age at our elementary school, and I was constantly told that we looked “identical.” Often, I’d hear giggles, followed by someone muttering or saying “Chinee” when I walked down the hallways to class. I never told any adults, because I feared that telling them would further confirm my Otherness. I kept my head down, stayed quiet, and hoped that if I ignored the comments and bullies, they would go away. I worked hard at integrating and rejecting my Chinese-Canadian identity.

So I grew up believing that all of the Canadian folk music stars I identified with and admired were white. One day, I was reading the author’s introduction of Joni Mitchell: Both Sides Now. The author was Malka Marom (formerly Himel) who, I discovered, had been a folksinger alongside her lifelong friend Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, and Ian & Sylvia in the
1960s. Malka also had her own CBC TV show, *A World of Music* (1966) that aired after *Hockey Night in Canada*. Malka is a non-white, immigrant Canadian woman in the entertainment industry who performed in the Yorkville coffee house scene amongst the Canadian folk greats. In her introduction, Malka shares some of the hardships and discrimination she faced as a racialized female folksinger, television personality, and single mother in 1960s Toronto.¹

As a Chinese-Canadian female musician now making my living in the film industry as a cultural intermediary, I immediately related to the mistreatment and marginalization that Malka recalled in her autobiography and later in our personal conversations. This inspired me to write this thesis and make arguments for greater inclusion of non-white musicians and representations not only in Canadian media, but also in Canadian history and, especially, in the Canadian folk music canon—a canon whose whiteness too often goes unnoted upon. For the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to Marom as “Malka,” since her last name changed from Himel to Marom, and because she was known as “Malka” in 1960s Yorkville Village where my thesis study takes place.

1.2 Introduction and Methodology

The definition of Canadian identity was in flux when Malka’s career as a folk singer was at its peak circa 1963-1967. That said, I begin the thesis with a literature review and summary of the 20th century *American* Folk Revival to understand historical perspectives on the broader folk movement and to better contextualize the Yorkville Village folk scene where Malka first found fame. I provide a timeline of key events, from dust bowl ballads to coffee house folk scenes that flourished across North America. Folk music headed into the mainstream in the 1950s and

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1960s, as witnessed by the formation of hootenannies, folk TV shows, and coffee house folk scenes (notwithstanding the blacklisting of prominent figures like Pete Seeger). I discuss the formation of Yorkville Village as a cultural hub in Toronto. I also point out some of the differences between Yorkville and Greenwich Village in New York City. This helps to identify how Yorkville contributed to the crafting of a new Canadian identity.

The Yorkville scene provided a space for the Canadian arts and culture to thrive. I note also the rise of ethnic folk music that was occurring alongside the mainstream Folk Revival in North America. This helps to situate Malka within the spectrum of folk music activities that were happening in the mid 20th century. Two main arguments are made in the first chapter. I contend that the American Folk Revival was multifaceted, and that several different versions of the Folk Revival existed. I then argue that the various articulations of folk music can be contradictory to each other even though they may be grouped into a single folk genre. To illustrate this, I point out some of the tensions that exist within the definition of “folk” music. In some instances, folk music reflects collective representation. In others, individuality and outsider status are celebrated, as in the story of “Tom Dooley,” and in the music of many “new” folk artists who composed their own material. I refer to folk music as a music that is shared through oral tradition or through records by individual performers or performing groups, and that may undergo a process of communal re-creation.

In Chapter 2, I examine Malka’s Yorkville Village folk singing career, where she became a celebrated live performer. I refer to period newspapers, in particular, *The Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, which provided in depth coverage of Malka’s folk career from the first coffee

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3 Christy Jean Miller, "Peter, Paul and Mary and the Cultivation of Commercial Folk Music in the American Folk Revival," PhD Diss., (University of Kansas, 2009), 11.
house performance in Yorkville. The newspapers also provided context for the other events that were happening in Toronto and in youth cultures at the time. While Yorkville Village presented itself as a folk counterculture, it was also home to many hegemonic values, particularly around race and gender, that disproportionately affected racialized women like Malka. I also survey the media portrayals of Yorkville and discuss the reinvention of the Village that allowed for a vibrant folk scene to emerge.

I provide a brief biographical account of Malka’s life from her early years to her years in Yorkville as a folk music star. I had the opportunity to interview Malka in November 2020 and she recalled many of her experiences in Yorkville Village (see Figure 1). Malka’s firsthand account of her folk career was an invaluable source of information on the coffee house scene and on the treatment of ethnic minorities in 1960s Toronto. In this chapter, I argue that the intersections of gender and race created many difficulties for a woman in Malka’s position, being an ethnically marked, female performer and single mother. By referring to feminist scholars such as Betty Friedan, I make connections between the societal expectations for young women in the mid 20th century and how Malka was treated in Toronto. I then analyze Malka’s image, style, stardom, and performance aesthetic.

In my last chapter, I argue that Malka’s popularity may have played a part in the changing definitions of Canadian identity. I outline key events in mid 20th century Canadian nation building initiatives and discuss the efforts that were made by the Canadian government, particularly so-called Masseyites, to differentiate Canada from the U.K. and the U.S. The massive influence of U.S. media culture on Canada was a central concern to many who advocated a purely “Canadian” culture. I analyze Malka and Joso’s 4 albums and two available

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4 “Joso” refers to Malka’s singing partner during her prominent years in the Yorkville Village scene.
episodes of their CBC television show, *A World of Music*. I compare their performance style to more mainstream Canadian folk artists like Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, and Ian and Sylvia.

Canonical Canadian folk artists are often presented as white troubadour singer-songwriters. This imagery positions the musicians as wandering, rural singer-songwriters from the country, who write and sing songs of self-expression and self-reflection free of urban corruption. This articulation of “folk” conveniently fits into an imagined tradition of Canadian-ness, which features rural landscapes and introspection. For instance, Lightfoot’s “penchant for songs related to wilderness, train travel, and a general sense of spaciousness, elements that were entrenched in the national myth-symbol complex.”

Unlike their contemporaries, Malka and Joso were presented as a continental, polished, ethnic folk duo at home in the city. Their Otherness was frequently highlighted by the media and was a key framing device for their CBC show *A World of Music*. I argue that their portrayal as “ethnic” artists had both positive and negative aspects. I discovered the phrase “fashionable to be ethnic,” coined by Malka herself in a 1999 *National Post* article titled “Folk Singer Heeded the Call of the Desert,” where she briefly describes her appeal in 1960s Yorkville. On one hand, their ethnic marking made them “exciting” and “different,” at a time when globalization and cosmopolitanism were fashionable, hence the title of my thesis, “Fashionable to be Ethnic”. Unfortunately, their ethnic marking also facilitated their marginalization by hegemonic forces within Canadian society. Unlike their white troubadour, singer-songwriter peers, Malka and Joso are not included in the Canadian folk music canon. This thesis is thus offered as a contribution to reimagining that canon, and that Canadian-ness.

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Figure 1: Malka and I in Vancouver and Toronto; paintings on the wall behind Malka are by Joni Mitchell (November 22, 2020). Photograph by Maureen Chow.
Chapter 2: “Chi-Ri-Bim”: The American Folk Revival, Yorkville Village Coffee Houses, and Definitions of Folk Music

2.1 Complexities of the Folk Genre

In a 1971 interview with Malka, Joni Mitchell revealed that as a child, she had taught herself the ukulele using a Pete Seeger songbook that was published by Moses Asch. The virtual meeting of these four folk figures have much to tell us about the complexities and unknown parts of the American Folk Revival in the 1960s. Each one of these figures represents a version of the revival. While Malka is the least famous of the aforementioned figures, her story is connected to all of the others. My thesis focuses on how Malka, a new immigrant, would become a notable part of Toronto’s Yorkville Village coffee house folk scene, and later, a key figure in the Canadian and ethnic folk music scene as a reigning folk star. In the mid 1960s, Malka was a folk star in Yorkville Village alongside Joni Mitchell, Gordon Lightfoot, and Ian and Sylvia Tyson. Mitchell was a mainstream white folk superstar, Seeger was a blacklisted upper-class pioneer of ideological folk purity and one of the most influential North American folk figures in the 20th century, and Asch was an industry insider who sold ethnic folk records, prompting major record labels such as Capitol to take an interest in these artists. What is the connection between these four prominent folk figures? How do these people all meet in the 1971 interview? The connections between these otherwise seemingly disparate figures reveal the complexity of the folk revival, a complexity whose legacy is too often reduced to white singer-songwriters such as Mitchell. What does this suggest about the evolution of folk music in the commercial folk revival? This interaction between these four significant 20th century folk revival participants shows us that there were intergenerational, sub-generic and geographically diverse connections that led to the boom of commercial folk music and spaces for alternative identities.
Even though Yorkville Village played an important role in what is referred to as the
(North) American Folk Revival, the word “American” is misleading because music from the
revival included material that had migrated around the world from outside of the Americas, such
as Celtic or Israeli folk songs. Performance styles travelled within alternative music cultures
between urban centers. As Will Straw notes, “the aesthetic values which dominate local
alternative terrains are for the most part those of a musical cosmopolitanism wherein the points
of musical reference are likely to remain stable from one community to another.” 7 This meant
that cultural pluralism could be found in Yorkville Village, which embraced music from diverse
cultures, including local, national, and international ones. In other words, Yorkville Village was
connected to other folk music scenes around the world.

In this chapter, I will be analyzing the American Folk Revival and folk music culture as a
series of processes and of musical and social inclusion and exclusion. I will explore the
American Folk Revival and the historical events that took place to create space for Malka, a
woman of colour, to thrive in Toronto’s predominantly white Yorkville Coffee house folk music
scene. I am interested in the role of folk traditions and imagined communities in the definition of
folk music. I will also explore the definitions of folklore, folk music, and the “folk” to suggest
contradictions between what folk claims to represent. I will then form a definition of folk music
that I will be referring to in this thesis. Doing so will situate the topic of this thesis, Canadian
ethnic folksinger and CBC star Malka, within the American Folk Revival, the Canadian folk
music scene, and discuss the impact she may have had on the changing definition of Canadian
identity.

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7 Will Straw, “Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes in Popular Music,” in Popular
I will start by discussing the commercial folk revival that Malka was part of. Many historical accounts of the Folk Revival point to the 1958 Kingston Trio song, a rendition of “Tom Dooley” as a significant milestone of the commercial folk revival. In his book *Great Day Coming*, Serge Denisoff explicitly links the start of the commercial folk revival to this track. However, as I will later point out, other folk hits by groups such as the Weavers brought folk music into the mainstream a decade before the Kingston Trio’s “Tom Dooley.” Nonetheless, around the time that “Tom Dooley” gained commercial popularity, coffee houses were appearing rapidly across North American cities in addition to the pre-existing “hootenannies” which also featured folksingers. This suggests that there was a link between the popularity of coffee houses at this time, and the emergence of mainstream coffee house folk tracks. “Tom Dooley” is a recovered Appalachian murder ballad, recorded by the Kingston Trio, that sold nearly four million copies in 1958. It is therefore important to note the track’s relative longevity (lasting 21 weeks on the Billboard Chart), and identify the tone that it set for the commercial folk revival, particularly into the early 1960s. Nicholas Jennings notes that the Kingston Trio’s “clean-cut, folky strains were perfectly suited to North America’s airwaves”. Furthermore, the story found in the lyrics of “Tom Dooley” offers insight into some contradictions of generic folk music philosophies during the 20th century.

Thematically, the story of “Tom Dooley” celebrates a social outcast. There is a complexity here in relation to the communal belonging we associate with folk values, creating tension with other forms of belonging. This is significant because several years later, Malka would emerge in Toronto’s Yorkville Village as an outsider, and as someone who represented an

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alternative identity to the mainstream. This suggests that there are several versions in the meaning of folk that are in tension with one another, and that there are many layers inside the definition of folk. “Tom Dooley” found its way into the mainstream through the re-telling of a story. The song’s subject, war veteran Tom Dula, was hung in North Carolina in 1868 for the murder of Laura Forster. The ballad was likely composed by a journalist named Thomas Land, who was covering Dula’s trial. The song entered into circulation in 1938 when Frank Profitt sang it for Frank Warner, a folksong collector. It was later picked up by American folklorist Alan Lomax through aural transmission and then recorded by the Folksay Trio in 1951 by a Greenwich Village label before it was heard by the Kingston Trio in 1957 and recorded the following year. This was an example of commercial folk music that thematically focused on an outsider, even as the folk genre was presumed to celebrate an inclusive, communal spirit. 10

2.2 American Folk Revival Overview

I will provide a summary of American Folk Revival literature to outline the evolution of folk from simple songs and ballads retrieved by early folklorists to 1960s commercial folk music. Many notable 20th century scholarly works have been written about the American Folk Revival. These retellings of the American Folk Revival, either through experience (for instance, details of personal experience are present in folk performer Oscar Brand’s The Ballad Monger) or through a historical analysis that outlines the events leading up to the commercial folk revival. In the 1930s and 1940s, Black and white folk singers from rural towns in the U.S. were brought to the cities, including Lead Belly and Aunt Molly Jackson, who were considered “noble savages,” and celebrated as the voices of folk “whether or not they sang traditional songs, or

could even sing well in their own traditional style.”\textsuperscript{11} They were fetishized by folklorists as the true representation of American folk, propagating the idea that this was the preferred version of folk.

This is perhaps best exemplified with the popularity of Huddie “Lead Belly” Ledbetter. Lead Belly was a Black blues singer discovered by John and Alan Lomax. John Lomax and his son Alan Lomax are widely regarded among the most important folklorists in American folk music. When the Lomax’s were travelling the Southern U.S. to find songs for the Library of Congress’s Archive of American Folk Song, they found Lead Belly in a Dallas prison, and aided in his release. Lead Belly worked as Alan Lomax’s house servant after Lomax relocated him to New York City in 1940. He would perform publicly wearing prison garb as a visual marker of perceived authenticity, but also as a spectacle of marginalization. While the Lomax’s celebrated Lead Belly’s music and gave him a platform to perform, “rarely did Lomax comment on the poor living conditions, lack of civil rights, and lynch-law rule that most southern blacks endured.”\textsuperscript{12} This demonstrates that the Lomax’s perception of Black performers like Lead Belly was problematic, as they promoted a version of folk that either marginalizes or fetishizes minority culture. This problematic and racist framing of Lead Belly also opens up a greater discussion of authenticity markers in folk music. In her 1966 essay “Cents and Nonsense in the Urban Folksong Movement: 1930-1966,” folklorist Ellen Stekert points out that “still, in the 1960s we can hear echoes of the idea that what comes from the working class—the poor—is necessarily art and folklore,” although many urban folk revival participants and performers during this decade

were from the upper and upper-middle classes. I will later discuss how the idea of “folk” as the music and culture of commoners arose.

As socio-musicologist Simon Frith argues, “the ideology of folk that was developed at the end of the nineteenth century reflected not existing musical practices but a nostalgia for how they might have been.” A connection can be made here to the mid 20th century, where folk claims to pro-left ideals and the experience of folk music in urban centres, may not reflect the experience of an actual “folk” life. However, it forms the “magic” of folk music, which allowed urban youth to believe they were part of something greater and more connected to identities that were not necessarily their own. This was becoming an increasingly attractive way of life for bohemians and urban youth from middle to upper-middle class households.

Prefaced by the previous decade, folk music was becoming a mainstream music for young people by the early 1960s. While sentiments of political ideologies derived from leftist protest music (such as a communal spirit between workers) lingered, new definitions of folk music and folk culture were emerging. Folk music was moving away from being a music for devotees and into the mainstream as it permeated various media streams including nightclubs, radio, and magazines, and TV shows, as television was one of the most popular mediums in this period. In the early 1960s, musicians such as Joan Baez, Judy Collins, and Peter, Paul and Mary would bring folk music into greater popularity and circulate songs of other songwriters, including Bob Dylan. These artists collectively contributed to the commercial folk music boom from 1960 to 1965. By 1963, purists were brought in to the Newport Folk festival to encourage

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15 Ibid, 166.
the spread of traditional material to young people. However, the growing popularity of folk was not without criticism. Revivalists like Pete Seeger were concerned that “the message of the revival was becoming increasingly lost in the commercial morass of the folk boom.”  

While this may have been a valid concern, folk music audiences continued to grow throughout Canada and the U.S.

Alan Lomax would start a radio show called *Back Where I Come* that recorded folk musicians. Notable folk singers such as Lead Belly, Seeger, Josh White, Burl Ives, and Woody Guthrie appeared on this show during the 1940s, which allowed many professional relationships to form. Moses Asch of Folkway Records began recording these singers. Christy Jean Miller notes that “these albums served as a major source of material for many Folk Revival musicians and […] the success of folk albums issued by independent concerns like Folkways led to major record labels taking an interest in folk artists in the 1950s.”  

Asch’s records would also inspire the next generation of folk musicians and curators, effectively expanding the definition of folk music.

Pete Seeger, a Harvard University dropout, formed the Almanac Singers in 1940 with Millard Lampell, Woody Guthrie (after whom Bob Dylan would later model himself), and Lee Hays. The Almanac Singers’ performances were designed to represent the average working American. The singers wore casual clothes when performing, and the members of the group regularly rotated, creating the illusion that any working American could fit into their performance aesthetic. The popularity of the Almanac Singers eventually led to the formation of the Weavers, another group formed by Seeger, Hays, and Ronnie Gilbert, a woman.

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17 Ibid, 238.
18 Christy Jean Miller, “Peter, Paul and Mary and the Cultivation of Commercial Folk Music in the American Folk Revival,” PhD Diss., (University of Kansas, 2009), 17.
Weavers were one of the first folk revival groups to gain commercial popularity, their best-known tracks being “Goodnight Irene” (derived from Lead Belly) and “Tzena, Tzena, Tzena” (an Israeli song), which hit No. 1 and No. 2 on the Billboard Charts in 1950. They were also one of the first commercial folk groups with polished performances and a professional sound that fit well with mainstream tastes. This set the stage for acts like the Kingston Trio and the Chad Mitchell Trio, who sang traditional material along with their own compositions. However, the Weavers were blacklisted in the early 1950s during the Red Scare, which seriously hindered their success and ability to perform. Professional folk singing was prohibited, and Seeger was targeted for his leftist political views.

Media outlets were significant contributors to the popularity of commercial folk music, including the presence of folk music on “Top 40” charts, magazines such as Sing Out!, and various radio shows across the United States. Rachel Clare Donaldson points out that “nothing encapsulated the commercialism of the boom quite like Hootenanny, a 1963 folk music television show on Saturday nights released by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC).”

However, Donaldson further asserts that there was considerable controversy regarding the show, as Pete Seeger and the Weavers were blacklisted and notable artists including Peter, Paul and Mary refused to perform since Seeger couldn’t play. Ironically, it was Seeger who had brought the term ‘hootenanny’ into use when touring with the Almanac singers in Seattle. Hootenanny was also critiqued for portraying folk music as a fad and ignoring the political messages behind the music. Because of the show, the term “hootenanny” entered into the vernacular and was commonly used to describe an informal music-making get-together, even though “hoots” were

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20 Robert Cantwell, When We Were Good, 257.
21 Ibid, 226.
already popular in pro-left circles in the 1940s. In addition to hootenannies, coffee houses and folk music festivals were becoming increasingly popular as venues for folk music in the U.S. and in Canada. While Yorkville Village has been compared to Greenwich Village, one of the key differences between the two is that New York had already been an influential cultural hub with Bohemian enclaves for over 300 years, during most of which Yorkville Village did not yet exist. Comparatively, Toronto was considered an uncultured city until the Yorkville coffee house scene emerged in the mid-20th century.

2.3 “Making the Scene” in Yorkville

In 1951, the city of Toronto was still ethnically and racially homogenous and overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon. The majority of Torontonians at this time were “still ethnically British (73 per cent), religiously Protestant (72 per cent), and Canadian-born (69 per cent).” Compared to neighbouring cities like Montreal or New York, Toronto was not considered culturally vibrant. It experienced a wave of postwar Eastern-European immigrants who were initially considered unwelcome foreigners, which led to many tensions between new immigrants and those of privileged classes. Many Anglo-Saxon Canadians moved out of the downtown core while postwar immigrants inhabited these spaces. Toronto’s changing demographic was caused by the postwar baby boom and new immigration. Until this point, Toronto was considerably homogenous, and its inhabitants were primarily WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant). As John Leland has argued, to be considered “hip” requires “a dance between black and white, the love of an outsider, a straddle of high and low culture.”

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24 Ibid, 23.
framework in understanding how Yorkville Village transformed into an iconic Canadian arts and culture scene where many of the nation’s most celebrated folk musicians began their careers. It became a Bohemian enclave that also contributed to a growing multicultural movement.

This timeline included the opening of Yorkville’s coffee houses. Coffee houses were one of the main establishments that brought musical and cultural diversity to Toronto. European-influenced coffee houses started opening in Toronto’s Yorkville Village in the 1950s, although they did not reach their peak popularity until the late 1950s and early 1960s. Young people were drawn to the coffee houses for several reasons. The first being that the legal drinking age in Ontario was still 21, and most bars were located in a different part of town. The coffee house crowds were mostly in the evenings, once the shops had closed for the day. As the owner of Yorkville coffee house The Mousehole said in 1964, “men are hungry to chase girls and girls are chasing the boys, why else would anyone pay 15 cents for a cup of coffee?,“ implying that one was paying a premium for the coffee in exchange for access to a social network. The coffee houses were hip, intimate spaces for people to interact and in the Yorkville coffee house years, listen to live music. There are some instructive parallels here to 17th century coffee houses in Europe. As Jurgen Habermas notes, these were influential spaces, where people came together to discuss ideas. While there were considerable distances between the coffee houses of the two eras (for instance, women were not allowed inside in coffee houses from the 17th century), they provided a public space for people to gather and share ideas. Buffy Sainte-Marie states that inside the Yorkville coffee houses “it was all talk talk talk, listen listen listen,” pointing out that

27 Ibid, 42.
Toronto coffee houses also became a public space for exchanging ideas, not unlike their European ancestors.\textsuperscript{30}

The Purple Onion was the first Toronto coffee house to let folk musicians play for free, but by 1964, all of the coffee houses depended on musical acts to keep their clientele.\textsuperscript{31} A variety of people and acts came to play on coffee house stages because both amateur and professionals could perform.\textsuperscript{32} This is a likely reason why Malka and Joso found performance opportunities in Yorkville despite their new immigrant status. The lack of distinctions between amateur and professional performers may have contributed to the diversity found in Yorkville coffee houses performers and in Yorkville Village. In 1963, Malka and Joso made their debut at the Purple Onion coffee house, which was generally well-received. This helped generate interest in them and their performance of ethnic music.

Geographically, Yorkville is located in the centre of Toronto’s metropolitan area. In the 1960s, it was adjacent to the largest student body in Canada, near the busy nightlife hubs on Yonge St, and not far from the developing middle class in North Toronto.\textsuperscript{33} This made Yorkville a desirable location, even though the neighbourhood still consisted of run-down Victorian-style houses in the late 1950s. By the early 1960s, there were notable changes to the city, including the construction of a new city hall and the two-line subway system. Many boutiques started to open in Yorkville Village, drawing in a younger, trendier demographic to the area. The housing above the shops was desirable for artists and bohemians who moved to the area for its convenience and initially, the lower rent costs. A \textit{Globe and Mail} article from May of 1963 indicates that a group was formed to protect the uniqueness of Yorkville and one of the main goals was to make

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[30] Nicholas Jennings, 63.
\item[31] Ibid, 39.
\item[32] Christy Jean Miller, 21.
\item[33] Ibid, 34.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Yorkville a pedestrian-centric area. By 1964, there were more than 20 coffee houses in Yorkville, which continued to develop into a flourishing arts scene.

As more and more young people frequented Yorkville, it became a kind of subcultural space and a formation of a counterculture or a subculture for youth in Toronto. The interpretation of Yorkville Village youth as a subculture supports the Birmingham school arguments that subcultures form out of deviance and of hatred for the mainstream and the media. However, following Sarah Thornton’s ideology, one could assert Yorkville as not only a commercial area, but a form of media. Thornton further argues that subculture formation relies on the media and, “a variety of occupations and incomes can be gained as a result of hipness.” This suggests that Malka’s success in the Yorkville scene was in part due to how she could fit into both the Birmingham school’s view of subcultural groups as deviant, but Thornton’s definition of subcultural capital. In a subcultural space such as Yorkville Village, someone like Malka could be simultaneously considered commercial and subcultural.

The folk music revival began as a North Eastern American urban phenomenon, moving through urban centres throughout the continent and then to Western Europe. Individual cities formed their own distinct folk music neighbourhoods and musical styles. This meant that Greenwich Village and Yorkville Village were similar, but not identical. Furthermore, the Canadian folk music boom was not an instance of American cultural dominance, but rather an opportunity to define the changing definition of “Canadian-ness”. The performance of regional music (such as that of American South in the U.S. or the prairie provinces in Canada) became an

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expression of cultural diversity and national pride, fulfilling some of the highly sought-after, traditional folk ideals. As Simon Frith argues, folk music’s claim to pro-left ideals and the experience of folk music in urban centers, not the experience of an actual folk life, formed the sense of identity that became the “magic” of folk. This encapsulates the folk interests of urban youth in the mid 20th century who were seeking alternative identities.

Under this umbrella of eclecticism, Malka was able to build a prominent ethnic folk music career in the mid 1960s. However, some other musicians found that they could not make a full-time career in Yorkville and eventually moved South to the U.S. This is not to undermine Yorkville’s significance, but rather to point out that it was a launchpad as much as it was a destination for many Canadian musicians. As Stuart Henderson notes, “for a period of roughly ten years, Yorkville served as a crossroads for Toronto’s youth, as a venue for experimentation with alternative lifestyles and beliefs, and an apparent refuge from the dominant culture and the stifling expectations it had placed upon them.” This is not to say that Malka did not face discrimination within this alternative subculture, but to show that she could find a place in the coffee house scene in part because the existing subculture sought to value diversity.

2.4 The Ethnic Folk Revival

In addition to the mainstream folk revival, a renewed interest in ethnic folk music was occurring in North America. One of the earliest instances of this was the Weavers hit “Tzena, Tzena, Tzena,” an Israeli folk song composed by a Polish emigrate in Palestine that reached No. 2 on the 1950 Billboard Charts. “Tzena, Tzena, Tzena” was covered by other musicians including jazz singer Jo Stafford. This demonstrates that ethnic folk music was not new to North

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37 Ibid, 166.
38 Ryan Edwardson, Canuck Rock, 101-120.
American audiences in the 1960s, but was marked out despite ethnic music having a longstanding presence in the folk revival. White singers such as Gordon Lightfoot and Joni Mitchell came to represent Canadian folk, strengthening the hegemonic ideals of the country during the 1960s. The music industry supported hegemonic distinctions (such as labelling music “Black” or “ethnic”), creating a division between folk cultures. Ethnic folk and commercial folk music were often treated as separate genres by the music industry, thereby perpetuating an imagined image of an ethnic “Other”. The difference between the two genres created a hierarchy in which ethnic folk (and the ethnic Other) became the subordinate to white commercial folk.

While folk music goes back in time, ethnic music goes to a different place. This is because the white music industry treats them both as forms of escapism. This also explains the marking of ethnic folk music as “world music”, where the listener can imagine themself in a foreign destination through the music, without having to face the difficulties of racialization. For instance, Malka is a racialized Other who sings songs in foreign languages. This was attractive to the young, white, urban folk audiences in the 1960s and the “identity sought by revivalists was frequently not that of their own present or ancestral communities.”

Gillian Mitchell suggests that “the music of other cultures had greater mystique […] that is, the regions in which ‘the folk’ were said to reside.” Malka’s performances promoted an immigrant image, as someone who was not from Canada, and therefore did not sing Canadian songs. The classification of a genre as “world” music also implies that non-white identities exist only in comparison to white ones. Despite the loose definitions of these terms, thousands of ethnic music records (including Israeli records) were released in the 1950s and 1960s. The mainstream popularity of ethnic folk began

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41 Ibid.
in the early 1960s. At the second Newport Folk Festival in 1960, an initiative was taken to feature the music of seven nations. One of the acts included the clarinets of the Oranim Zabar Israeli Troupe.\textsuperscript{42} Five years later, Israeli-Canadian folk singer Malka would release her first record \textit{Introducing Malka and Joso}, with her Yugoslavian singing-partner Joso Spralja.

Secular Jewish culture had played a role in the North American Folk Revival from the beginnings of the American Folk Revival. Jewish folk revival participants included musicologists, folklorists, and musicians such as Theodore Bikel, Israel Young, Moses Asch, Irwin Silber, and Ruth Rubin. The tradition of Jewish secular folk music and musicians in North America that began in the earlier half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century demonstrates that there were many precedents to Malka’s popularity as an ethnic folk singer in 1960s Yorkville. Jewish communities in Toronto were particularly involved in the early folk revival movement. One notable instance of this was Camp Naivelt (Camp New World), a left-wing summer camp and retreat for Jewish children that opened in 1925.\textsuperscript{43} Similar organizations, including sister camps of Camp Naivelt could be found in Quebec and in the U.S, which operated with the intention of fostering ethnic traditions and Jewish community ties. By the time the children that attended had become young adults, their early exposure to Jewish folk traditions led to an interest in the folk revival and student movements in the early 1960s.\textsuperscript{44}

One significant contributor to the tradition of Jewish folk music in North America was the pioneering Romanian folksinger and folklorist Ruth Rubin. Rubin was born in 1906 and moved to Canada with her family before relocating to New York in 1924.\textsuperscript{45} In 1958, she released

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{42} Richard Massimo, \textit{I Got a Song: A History of the Newport Folk Festival} (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2017), 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Gillian Mitchell, \textit{The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada 1945-1980}, 64.
\end{itemize}
an album through Folkways titled *Jewish Life: The Old Country*, which featured a collection of Yiddish songs that she recorded, collected, and edited. In 1974, Rubin published a book titled *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong*. Both of these contributions helped to popularize Jewish folk music in North America. Rubin describes Yiddish folksong specifically as “the youngest offspring of Jewish folk music and one of the richest stores of popular music in modern times.” Many of the Yiddish singers that Rubin transcribed had arrived in North America in the 1940s and were considered “displaced persons.” The people described here would have belonged to the generation of immigrants that came to North America immediately before Malka. Although Rubin has been criticized for her exclusively secular selections of Jewish folk songs, “it is clear that left-wing secular movements were prominent in the folk revival as it unfolded.” Malka and Joso frequently included Yiddish folk songs in their singing repertoire, which is reflective of Rubin’s work and the presence of Yiddish music in North America before the 1960s.

Moses Asch of Folkways Records, who released *Anthology of American Folk Music*, was largely responsible for the surge in ethnic folk. While Asch’s ethnic folk records did not become as successful as those of the commercial folk revival, thousands of these records were released. Asch was already making connections with ethnomusicologists in the 1940s. He had two record labels: Asch Records, and DISC Records of America, both of which financially failed before the development of Folkway Records in 1947. The records that were released as part of his “Ethnic Series” included several hundred albums of folk music from around the world.

48 Mitchell, 63.
49 Songs from this anthology that may have otherwise been unpublished served as a major source of inspiration for many Folk Revival musicians.
Although a substantial amount of ethnic folk records were released, the albums were not always successful. The production costs of these albums were relatively low and they did not generate large amounts of profit. Often, the ethnomusicologists who developed these albums were not looking for economic remuneration and the performers were largely unpaid, so the release of these albums made economic sense for Asch. This suggests that the new interest in the ethnic folk revival was not necessarily driven by consumer demand. Yet, because these albums were circulating in North America, it also suggests that even if ethnic folk was becoming trendy at the time, it was not necessarily profitable to be an ethnic artist.

While Asch was not successful with all of his releases, these albums became some of the earliest examples of ethnic folk recordings. The records categorized in the world music genre ranged from *Lappish Joik Songs from Northern Norway* (1956) to *Bulu Songs from the Cameroons* (1954). One notable album released amongst these titles, Wade Hemsworth’s 1955 album *Folk Songs of the Canadian North Woods*, can be understood as a precursor to the mainstream understanding of Canadian folk music as a white, singer-songwriter dominated tradition with strong pastoral themes.Looking back at this album, we see that a 1950s Canadian folk album once considered ethnic music; by the 1960s, it was mainstream folk music in Yorkville. This brings the issue of ethnic “marked” vs. white “non-marked,” folk music, such as Joni Mitchell or Gordon Lightfoot. The definition of ethnic folk music was further complicated by Malka, who is at once Israeli, Canadian, an immigrant and by the mid-1960s a mainstream artist in Toronto’s Yorkville Village.

Before Malka’s success, many Israeli folk records circulated in Canada and the U.S in the mid-20th century. Israel had recently become a new nation in 1948, which led to North American

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50 Smithsonian Folkways’ catalogue includes detailed album liner notes of these “World” genre albums.
interest in Israeli music. Precursors to Malka include Folkways Records’ *Tzbar Group’s Israel Dances* (1957) with Dov Seltzer and Geula Gill, followed by Gill’s solo record *Yemenite and Other Israel Folk Songs* (1958), and Vanguard Records (which would later sign singer Joan Baez) later release two Israeli folk albums in 1960, titled *Songs of The Sabras* and *Israel Sings!*. For North American listeners, ethnic folk records were symbolic of cultures they had not previously encountered.

As these records entered the commercial market, Malka and Joso’s music was attractive to those looking for “newness”. To young, white, urban folk audiences in the 1960s, ethnic folk music may have been a novelty that presented unfamiliar styles and traditions. This was extremely attractive to the young urban dweller in North American hip centres, who looked to the identities of the aforementioned Other for an escape from his or her own reality. As noted by Regev and Seroussi, the boundaries between ethnic music and folk music have been largely complicated due to intercultural flow of music, musical elements, and Western influence.51 However, folk and ethnic folk music in urban centers formed what Straw calls “coalitions of musical taste […] as constituencies that value the re-directive and the novel over the stable and canonical, or international circuits of influence over the mining of a locally stable heritage.”52 These tastes were encouraged in the subcultures of urban centers like Yorkville Village and Greenwich Village where ethnic music offered a window into understanding parts of the world that were unfamiliar and previously unavailable to North Americans. However, this was not a new concept. Folk music culture advocated for another time and place, whether or not this was an accurate depiction of the people who represented “the folk.” In Yorkville, the participants of

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the folk scene were also escaping from the dominant culture into new, hip spaces like coffee
houses that they felt better represented them. In the next section, I will discuss folklore, its ties to
nationalism, and some of the problematic aspects of folk music collection.

2.5 Folklore and Nationalism

The term “folklore” was first used in writing by the 19th century British antiquarian
scholar William J. Thoms to describe the customs of pre-civilized customs and manners.53 The
idea of returning to folk culture to find one’s historical or nationalist roots was pioneered in the
late 18th century by the German historian/philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder. Herder believed
returning to folk tradition would help redraw political boundaries and form a self-defining
nation. Unfortunately, the current conditions of the state were often ignored and replaced with
idealized views of the past. As William Wilson notes, “romantic nationalism emphasized passion
and instinct instead of reason, national differences instead of common aspirations, and, above all,
the building of nations on the traditions and myths of the past—that is, on folklore—instead of
on the political realities of the present.”54 A connection can be made here to 20th century United
States, where the folk music revival advocated for simpler times in support of what some framed
as a proto-communist spirit.

For mid-20th century American folk revivalists, the rural working class was considered
the most authentic representation of the proletarian U.S., despite most folklorists belonging to the
educated middle or upper-middle class. Many folk connoisseurs pursued their own interests in
their fantasy identification with the Other, whether this meant an Other from another time, or an
Other from a different place. Most of the time, this resulted in claims of working-class or rural

53 Gillian Mitchell, The North American Folk Music Revival: Nation and Identity in the United States and Canada,
54 William A. Wilson, “Herder, Folklore, and Romantic Nationalism,” in The Marrow of Human Experience (Logan:
Utah State University Press, 2006), 110.
backgrounds from white folk participants since this was an easier identity to claim rather than pretending to be an ethnic Other. Regardless, music claiming to represent the working class was a powerful political tool in America, echoing European interests in folklore from previous decades and centuries.

It must be acknowledged that from the beginning, the act of folksong collection in Western cultures was in large part a realization of the folklorist’s own identity. One may have altruistic intentions for pursuing folklore, but it is important that we consider the personal rewards of these acts in addition to the assumed goal of preserving folk music. As Robert Cantwell asserts, while “folk music and crafts symbolized the grassroots democracy of preindustrial America, they also embodied the values of rootedness and authenticity characteristic of patriarchal aristocracy.”

This is not to devalue the work that has been done, but rather, to stress that the very act of gathering folk music reflects the folklorist’s biases, as the selections of each folklorist are motivated and influenced by personal motives and preferences. It also suggests that what one thinks they are doing may not translate into what they are actually doing. This can be related to the diversity efforts made in Yorkville. While audiences may have thought they were becoming more open-minded by listening to Malka’s music or participating in ethnic folk music culture, this did not make them immune to racism nor prevent them from indulging in stereotypes about ethnic Others.

When Johann Gottfried Herder declared “Denn jedes Volk ist Volk; es hat seine National Bildung wie seine Sprache,” the idea of a nation-state was not yet fully developed. At the time, Herder believed that Germany was behind in developing a national identity in comparison to other European nations. He sought out popular culture and historic literature,

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56 Translates to: “Since every people is a People, it has its own national culture expressed through its own language.”
believing that the nation would find shared experiences and consequently, patriotism. He looked to writers like Shakespeare as a source of inspiration and determined that it was through folklore and literature that a nation could find collectivity, and without it, there would be no language, poetry, or nation.\textsuperscript{57} The publication of the Brothers Grimm’s collection, \textit{Kinder-und-Hausmärchen}, between 1812 and 1815 became a significant contributor to the folk boom in Germany. Patriots of the Slavic lands and Finland quickly followed Herder’s model, looking to the folkloric past towards a nationalist future. The study of folklore is also connected to the development of popular culture in Europe, as the meaning of the word “folk” can refer to common peoples.

Peter Burke notes that middle class people wanted folk culture for their own purposes, “[…] surprising [the folk] when middle class men and women came to their homes and insisted they sing traditional songs or tell traditional stories.”\textsuperscript{58} However, the upper- and middle-class attitude of those interested in the folk (peasants) was often patronizing, and many misrepresentations were created in what Burke calls “the discovery of the people.”\textsuperscript{59} A connection can be made here to Edward Said’s framing of “Orientalism” where the subordination, by symbolic representation, of the “Other” (the folk) serves to validate the dominant class. This suggests that the fascination with peasants or “the people” had less to do with the people themselves, but more with upper-class perceptions and representations of the folk. As John Storey points out, “the pastoral fantasy of the folk offered an alternative to the rather troublesome specter of the urban-industrial middle class […] the intellectual cult of the rural folk was a nostalgic fantasy of a time when working people recognized their inferiority and


\textsuperscript{58} Peter Burke, \textit{Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe}, (New York: Ashgate, 2009), 23.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 23.
acknowledged due deference of the social superiors.” Because of this, peasants, or “the folk” were exoticized by the upper classes, who described them as “everything their discoverers were not (or thought they were not): natural, simple, illiterate, instinctive, irrational, rooted in tradition and in the soil of the region, lacking any sense of individuality (the individual was lost in the community).” The upper and middle classes were not interested in the urban “rabble” working in the city, but looked to rural peasants who were not a threat to them as the revered folk. Not only does this demonstrate the problematic romanizations of the folk, it indicates that folklore collection and our knowledge of folk is also tied to what is known as the “selective tradition.”

2.6 The Selective Tradition and Folklore Collection

Raymond Williams’ analysis of culture proposes three types of cultural tradition: as the lived tradition, the recorded tradition, and the selective tradition. As Williams asserts, cultural selection will always be governed by dominant class interests, inevitably leading to “a rejection of considerable areas of what was once a living culture” when the selective tradition is formed out of the recorded tradition. Williams’ classifications demonstrate some of the issues with the processes of folklore collection. While the “folk” genre may claim to represent ordinary people, folklore collection was often shaped by individual tastes and desires. The fetishization of the folk further propagates the idea that there is only one accurate representation, and ignores the lived traditions that do not survive in the process of canonization. The methodology used to collect folksongs may also rely heavily on the collector’s values. This means that the

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61 Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 31.
62 Storey, 4.
64 Ibid, 37.
canonization of folk music is subjective. This is problematic when individual tastes and preferences then masquerade as collective identity, which folk music is taken to represent.

An example of this can be found in the collection practices of English folklorist Francis Child. Child was a pioneering English professor at Harvard University who collected ballads of English and Scottish origin. His most famous collection, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* was first published in 1882. Child took an interest in folk song as he perceived it to be both authentic and original because of its communal traditions, in contrast to newer musical styles that implied corruption, and was therefore driven to canonize folk ballads. However, there are clear issues with his model of operation. For instance, Child’s collecting practices “were highly selective, but he unfortunately did not live long enough to explain fully his criteria and theories”.

This already suggests that canonization of folk music is subjective, and the methodology is questionable, as it can rely heavily on the collector’s values. Child’s work was succeeded by that of Cecil Sharp, who collected 1,612 tunes over 46 weeks of travel through the southern Appalachian Mountains. There were similar issues in the tone of Sharp’s work, which followed Child’s “reverential and essentialist treatment of the ‘folk’ as a pre-modern people.”

Music that entered the folk canon through selective tradition was shaped by the collector’s values, instead of by the lived experience, of the folk themselves.

In the beginning of the American Folk Revival, folk music was used to encourage “collective representation.” The representation of a community or a group of people are considered the result of “an immense cooperation, which stretches not only into space but into

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66 Christy Jean Miller, “Peter, Paul and Mary and the Cultivation of Commercial Folk Music in the American Folk Revival,” PhD Diss., (University of Kansas, 2009), 7.
67 Ryan Edwardson, *Canuck Rock*, 76.
time as well.”

Prior to the commercial folk movement, American leftist organizations favoured folk music because it could represent post-war, working-class Americans unified in communist spirit. Woody Guthrie’s *Dust Bowl Ballads* (1964) and songs about the Great Depression claimed to represent generations of Americans who had experienced the same struggles. Revivalists like Pete Seeger “believed that folk music revealed the essence of an American national identity,” and that folk music enabled listeners to “understand themselves as Americans.”

Gillian Mitchell notes that the search for true American folk intensified in the 1930s and led many from the urban dwellers “to hanker after the mythical folk who wandered and subsided somewhere in the semi-empirical, semi-mythical folk rural hinterland of the country.” However, this meant that the celebrated worker songs from rural areas, considered a quintessential part of American folk culture, were at least somewhat imagined by the urban north.

The spirit of folk music came from “a mythic past, that the great and noble nation they wished to recreate was in the main the product of their own fruitful imaginations […] and believing so, they made it so—that is, they actually created a new nation in the image of what they thought the old one had been.” This means that a colourful folkloric past may never have existed, but the collective belief in its existence was powerful enough to form a unified nationalist spirit. As Keir Keightley asserts, “the backdrop against which folk developed in the United States was often called ‘mass society.’” The folk revival and interest in folk was built upon this concept, as folk was regarded by the educated, white middle and upper-middle classes.

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69 Rachel Clare Donaldson, 2-4.
71 William A. Wilson, “Herder, Folklore, and Romantic Nationalism,” 120.
as the answer to anxieties about industrialization, urbanization, and conformity. Folk music claims to exist as a genre in “direct contrast to pop music to pop songs—bland, escapist, artificial, produced only for the money.”\textsuperscript{73} The notion of folk as a serious music stems from the imagined communities and invented traditions that folk represents. Folk culture has historically relied on the music and traditions of marginalized peoples as a response and rejection to mass society and the mainstream, a sentiment that remained popular into the commercial folk boom.

2.7 Defining Folk Music in the Commercial Folk Boom

As the previous decade suggested, folk music was becoming a mainstream music for young people by the early 1960s. While the sentiments and political ideologies of leftist protest music lingered on in the folk revival, new definitions of folk music and folk culture were emerging. Folk music was moving away from being a music for devotees and into the mainstream as it permeated various media streams including nightclubs, radio, TV, and magazines like \textit{Sing Out!} In the early 1960s, musicians like Joan Baez, Judy Collins, and Peter, Paul and Mary would bring folk music into greater popularity and circulate songs of other songwriters, including Bob Dylan. These artists collectively contributed to the commercial folk music boom from 1960-1965.\textsuperscript{74} However, the growing popularity of folk was not without criticism. Purist revivalists such as Pete Seeger were concerned that “the message of the revival was becoming increasingly lost in the commercial morass of the folk boom.”\textsuperscript{75} While this may have been a valid concern, folk music continued to gain audiences throughout Canada and the U.S.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 238.
The four categories of folk musicians defined by folklorist and folksinger Ellen Stekert in 1966 provide a framework for the types of folk music found during the commercial folk revival. These categories are traditional folksingers, imitators, utilizers, and the “New Aesthetic”. The traditional folksingers are those who have learned their material and performance style from the oral tradition as they grew up. Singers such as Lead Belly fall into this category. Imitators are similar to traditional folksingers, but they study and learn the style of traditional folksingers, learning the skills of those they admire, often only learning one musical style such as a certain tone or inflection. Utilizers are those who perform folk music but alter the sound (tune, text, and style of presentation) to fit into popular music aesthetics. The Kingston Trio best fits into this description. The New Aesthetic folk performers blended folk with other musical genres and influences to form original songs perceived as art music and folk music hybrids. Some of the best examples of the New Aesthetic performers are Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, who wrote their own songs as hybrids of poetry, political stance, and folk music.

However, this framework shows how not all musicians from the folk revival could be placed exclusively into one of the four categories. For instance, Malka and Joso’s music belongs to more than one of these categories. They were both imitators and utilizers, and became a name act in Yorkville village despite not being part of the New Aesthetic category. Malka and Joso, an “ethnic” folk duo, performed in over fourteen languages, singing folk songs from various immigrant cultures, and often performed with original accompaniments. Their musical style resembled other acts that also fit into more than one category such as Peter, Paul and Mary or the Kingston Trio, in utilizing simple guitar accompaniments and pleasing harmonies. They also made it into the mainstream as name act performers in Yorkville, although their Canadian peers were almost exclusively New Aesthetic performers. As the next chapter will show, period
newspapers suggest that Malka and Joso’s musical aesthetic was popular with white, middle-class youth and Yorkville Village dwellers.

While the definition of folk music was widening and becoming increasingly complex, some common sonic and genre traits can be identified. Folk music is music that is believed to belong to a particular ethnic, regional (national), or historical group that uses traditional or acoustic instruments.\(^{76}\) Honesty and emotional vulnerability are emphasized in folk music, which is conveyed by the lyrics, delivery, and apparent authenticity of the singer and/or the folksong. In some versions of folk music, the focus is placed on distancing oneself from modernity, from rationality, from corruption, technique is considered secondary. As I have argued in this chapter, folk can represent an individual, even if it also claims to represent a community of people. For the purposes of this thesis, I will refer to a loose definition of folk as a music that is shared through the oral tradition or through records by individual performers or performing groups, and that may go through a process of communal recreation.\(^{77}\) This is to account for the many definitions of folk music that exist, taking into account historical meanings of folk and the way in which some of these traditions developed. In the version of folk that I am referring to, folk music can refer to both original compositions and renditions of traditional songs. As we will see in the next chapter, Malka’s music challenges the definition of Canadian and mainstream folk music during the commercial folk revival in Yorkville. In the final chapter, I will explore how Malka may have affected the changing perceptions of ethnic identity in Toronto and in Canada.

Chapter 3: “Kochav Alei Adama”: Malka in Yorkville

3.1 Becoming “TV’s Prettiest Boss Lady”


\(^{77}\) Christy Jean Miller, “Peter, Paul and Mary and the Cultivation of Commercial Folk Music in the American Folk Revival,” 11.
In 1966, the headline of a *Toronto Star* article described a Canadian folk singer as “TV’s Prettiest Boss Lady,” referring to Malka Himel (Figure 2).78 Malka was about to star in her own CBC show with her singing partner, Joso, that aired in a primetime spot following *Hockey Night in Canada*. Malka and Joso were frequently referred to as ethnic performers in the 1960s: a *Globe and Mail* article published in the same year was titled “Juliette’s Successors: Malka and Joso are Ethnic with Capital E.”79 This suggests that Malka, an ethnic Other in the eyes of mainstream media, was rising to fame alongside Canadian folk greats such as Gordon Lightfoot and Joni Mitchell, her contemporaries. How did an ethnic minority emerge as a national celebrity? Malka performed in the 1960s as part of the duo Malka and Joso, but my focus will be on Malka for this chapter. She faced gender-specific issues that intersected with challenges endured by ethnic women who were working in the entertainment industry in a predominantly white Anglo-Saxon, 1960s Toronto. She would remain a public figure as a television and radio journalist after her folk singing career, interviewing stars like Joni Mitchell, and continuing with a solo artistic career once Malka and Joso disbanded. For the purposes of my study, I will only address her on-stage partner Joso as part of “Malka and Joso.” I will refer to her as Malka in my writing since this is the name she was referred to at the time, and because her last name changed in the 1960s. I interviewed Malka (in her early 80s at the time of writing) and research material from the interview is featured in this chapter.

Figure 2: Star feature on Malka, September 24, 1966.
This chapter looks at Malka’s Yorkville career, where she performed in the cultural centre of a growing and increasingly multicultural city. Her career and identity as an ethnically marked female performer brings to light several tensions within the Yorkville scene. In the 1960s, Yorkville presented itself as a folk counterculture, in some ways self-consciously poised as an alternatives to a predominantly white mainstream Toronto. While Yorkville was revered as a site of musical counterculture, it was nonetheless also subject to hegemonic norms in terms of ethnicity and gender. White folk singers like Gordon Lightfoot or Joni Mitchell were not marked as “ethnic singers”, and therefore not burdened with the representation of minority cultures. While Malka’s “ethnic” identity made her distinctive, it also meant that she could be marginalized because of it. Similarly, while women enjoyed certain freedoms within the Yorkville counterculture, there were many gender norms at play in Yorkville, resulting in mistreatment and problematic, sexualized portrayals of women. While Yorkville claimed to be a folk scene that was more multicultural and accepting than the rest of Toronto, it was still Anglo-dominated. Some ethnic minorities like Malka and Joso performed there, but this did not mean that Yorkville was necessarily a progressive or multicultural haven, even if it did help promote alternative voices. I am focusing on the integration of folk and ethnic music, and of sophisticated “showbiz” aesthetics and ethnic Otherness. Malka’s stardom embodied some tensions that grew out of these integrations in 1960s Toronto. Through my study of Malka, I will reflect on what it meant to be marked as an ethnic Other performing in a music scene that is conventionally understood to have been overwhelmingly white and Anglo-Saxon.

As a woman, Malka faced significant gender-specific issues that will be discussed in this chapter. These are exemplified in her personal accounts of womanhood, which reflect the limited

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roles available to women in the Yorkville coffee house scene. These also coincide with the demands that women faced in the mid 20th century, particularly relating to their physical appearance. This raises questions about the expectations around female performers, particularly those from an “ethnic” background. For instance, Malka’s beauty and personal style were frequently articulated in the media in terms of ethnic difference. This was both helpful and harmful: she was distinctive because of her appearance, but this also made her a target of marginalization.

3.2 Brief Biography and Malka’s Yorkville Career

Malka was born in Poland in 1939 before arriving in Israel (then Palestine) at three weeks old. Her mother, who had planned to give baby Malka away to her aunt and uncle, experienced a last-minute change of heart. Had she not changed her mind, Malka would likely have been murdered during the Holocaust like many Jewish men, women, and children in Poland. Her father was a cantor in Tel Aviv and had a performing (singing and acting) career there. As a teenager, Malka was also involved in the Dalia Festival in Israel, which showcased the new Israeli culture through folk songs and dances. She met her first husband, Sydney Himel, when the Maccabean Games were in Tel Aviv, and he convinced her to marry him and move to Canada at age seventeen. In Toronto, Malka first performed what is known today as “world music” in YMHA (Young Men’s Hebrew Association) basements. Soon after, she met her Yugoslavian singing partner Joso Spralja at Club 71, a local coffee house. In April 1963, Malka and Joso had their debut as a duo, performing at the Flaming Grill inside the Lord Simcoe Hotel.81 Malka and Joso quickly rose to fame in Yorkville’s folk scene, performing regularly at coffee houses, music festivals, college campuses, on a 20,000-mile tour across Canada, and

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ultimately on radio and television. It was at another coffeehouse, The Riverboat, that she would meet Joni Mitchell in 1966 and become her future biographer and lifelong friend.\textsuperscript{82} Despite her popularity and presence in the Yorkville coffee scene and her late 1960s CBC television show, Malka is not a household name in Canada like Mitchell. However, historical newspapers show that she was receiving media attention by 1963, which would continue over the next several years.

Malka’s popularity in the 1960s asks us to revisit the tastes and interests of the Yorkville scene and its key audience demographic. The establishment of Yorkville Village as a bohemian area was born out of commercial interests. In the early 1960s, Yorkville was becoming increasingly cosmopolitan. For instance, a newspaper describes some of the new shops along Yorkville where one could find anything from travel clothes to “career girl clothes.”\textsuperscript{83} This shows how young working women were starting to frequent the area around the time Malka was becoming popular. This is significant, as women were a key part of North American consumer culture in the 1950s and 1960s. Malka’s image, like other Israeli stars at the time, often featured beautiful gowns, updos, hair accessories, and jewelry to create a sophisticated, “show business” look, despite some of the bohemian or revivalist stylistic traditions that are typically associated with folk music. I will return to this later in my analysis of Malka’s style, stardom, and performance aesthetic.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, there were notable changes to Yorkville Village that drew people to the area, and eventually into the coffee houses where Malka first found fame as an ethnic folk singer. As Stuart Henderson notes, “in the late 1950s, Yorkville may have still been in a state of disrepair, full of crumbling Victorian houses, but, of course, it was also situated in an

\textsuperscript{82} Malka Marom, \textit{Joni Mitchell: In Her Own Words} (Toronto: ECW Press, 2014), 8-12.
undeniably desirable location: not quite downtown, adjacent to the largest student body in Canada, steps away from the busy Yonge Street bars and theatres, and on the doorstep of a developing middle-class North Toronto.”

By 1961, there were between 45 and 55 clothing boutiques and shops in Yorkville. Most of these were smaller shops that had been edged out of Toronto’s larger shopping districts, particularly after the creation of shopping malls. The crumbling properties on Yorkville’s streets were sold at a discounted price to smaller businesses, and eventually more commercial coffee houses, taverns, and restaurants opened. This made it an ideal location for young people, particularly university students and aspiring non-conformists. Even as this subcultural scene was emerging, it was very much driven by commerce. Coffee houses in Toronto were business ventures first and foremost, rather than purely musical or artistic spaces, but they were largely responsible for making Yorkville a folk music hub with an alternative outlook.

Yorkville coffee houses provided a communal space for young people to gather after hours, given that the legal drinking age in Toronto was still 21 at the time. A Globe and Mail article published in June of 1964 titled examines the new coffee houses established in Yorkville as part of the early 1960s boom and their clientele. As a social networking space, coffee houses brought together people of different cultural backgrounds. For instance, the owners of Yorkville 71 coffee house stated in an interview that over 30% of the clientele were Jewish, and that they kept the business going. This informs us of two things, that religious or ethnic minorities might be drawn to these affordable, alternative spaces because they were affordable (and likely because

84 Stuart Henderson, Making the Scene: Yorkville and Hip Toronto in the 1960s (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 34.
86 Please refer to the previous chapter on the significance of coffee houses, and how they differed from alcohol-serving establishments.
they were more easily accepted there than in the mainstream), and that Toronto was still overwhelmingly white Anglo-Saxon in order for such racial or religious distinctions to merit mention in the press.

3.3 Rising to Fame and Cultural Intermediaries

There was a network of cultural intermediation that helped make Malka and Joso a Yorkville success and later gain national and international recognition. Devon Powers defines cultural intermediation as a “process by which art, music, and other form of cultural production circulate, assume meaning, and gain value.” This is exemplified through Malka and Joso and eventually Malka’s career in Yorkville. Everyone who circulated in the 1960s coffee house scene was important in “making the scene” and creating interest in the arts so that artist and musicians could thrive. In Malka and Joso’s 2000 compilation album *Malka & Joso: Forever* (combining songs from all four of their 1960s albums), they acknowledged some of the cultural intermediaries who helped create their successful run as folk singers. This included guitarist Eli Kassner, who introduced and played with them, former Capitol Records of Canada vice-president Paul White (also involved in The Beatles’ early success in Canada), who “invited [them] to record world music before the term was invented,” their talent agent Sylvia Train, and music critic Nathan Cohen at the *Toronto Star*. In my interview with Malka, she recalled many people that were active in the Yorkville scene at the time, such as the *Toronto Star* writers whom she initially approached to cover Malka and Joso, and Canadian singer-songwriters Leonard [88] Devon Powers, “Intermediaries and Intermediation,” SAGE Publications Ltd, 2015, 271.


[90] Malka and Joso, “Malka and Joso: Forever,” Capito Records of Canada, March 8, 2000, compact disc. Nathan Cohen wrote many articles on Malka and Joso’s tenure, including the article that was released the day after Joso told Malka he was ending their duo after a 4.5-year run.
Cohen and Joni Mitchell, whom she developed lasting friendships with and would go on to interview.\(^91\)

In the midst of Yorkville’s development as a cultural hub, Malka and Joso were starting to gain popularity in the local folk music scene. By June of 1963, two months after their debut at the Lord Simcoe hotel, they were advertised as an “excitingly different […] continental folk singing duo” performing at the Westbury Hotel on Yonge St (near Yorkville).\(^92\) A month later, Malka and Joso played at a benefit concert for Martin Luther King Jr. (I will return to the racial significance of this later in this chapter), where they shared a stage with the Oscar Peterson Trio and folk singer group the Travellers, and were one of two acts to have their picture printed in the Toronto Star.\(^93\) That summer, Malka and Joso performed at the Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia.

In that particular year of the festival, “the stress was on Canadian folk songs and Canadian performers.”\(^94\) However, it was asserted that “the plainly Canadian folk songs were boring to the youthful audience.”\(^95\) Despite this, Malka and Joso were listed as one of the standout duos. According to this article about Mariposa, Malka and Joso “made a strong impression on the crowd without a scrap of Canadiana” even though they didn’t conform to the theme that year. The crowd came expecting Canadiana but nevertheless, liked Malka and Joso, whose set included songs in Hebrew, Greek, and Italian, amongst others. The success of their performance challenged the definition of Canadian music.

Malka tells the story of Mariposa from a firsthand perspective that was not mentioned in newspapers. While backstage, Malka and Joso were ignored by the other performers because of

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\(^{91}\) Maureen Chow, personal web interview with Malka Marom, November 22, 2020.


\(^{95}\) Ibid.
their “ethnic” appearance: no one greeted or acknowledged them when they tried to form connections. As they were about to go onstage, the producer of Mariposa at the time, Sydney Banks, grabbed Malka by her arm and told her that if they didn’t sing a song in English, he would make sure they never again performed anywhere in Canada.96 Malka recalled her shock, but they went on stage anyway and performed their lineup of ethnic songs, making a hit with the audience. She also recalls that the audience was full of youth who were themselves second- or third-generation Canadians. Because of this, many in the crowd knew some of the songs that Malka and Joso sang because their immigrant (Greek, Italian, Hebrew, etc.) parents sang or listened to them at home. Their success at Mariposa helped launch them to the national stage.

Youth-generated crowds dominated other folk performances around Yorkville. In June 1963, folk music was so popular that there was a charity “Folkathon” in Toronto where the winner allegedly sang for 121 straight hours. There was also mention of the folkathon being “too risqué” and “making too much noise.”97 These assertions are suggestive of the rising youth counterculture in Yorkville. At the same time, acts like Malka and Joso were becoming more popular with immigrants and WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) Canadians, helping create a more diverse, cosmopolitan music scene in Toronto.

Not only were ethnic youth attending coffee house performances, ethnic Canadians (for instance, “Greeks, Spaniards, South Africans”) were also opening coffee houses.98 According to Malka, many of her audience members (ethnic, often second- and third-generation youth) would bring their parents and grandparents to Malka and Joso’s shows. There is a parallel here between the coffee houses and ethnic restaurants in Canada. On the page of an article that refers to Malka

96 Maureen Chow, web interview with Malka Marom, November 22, 2020.
as an “ethnic performer,” there is also a “Dining Out” article featuring the Toronto Chinese restaurant, Kwongchow. 99 Like Chinese restaurants across North America, coffee houses in Toronto were spaces of interaction between people of different ages and ethnicities, and this caused structural changes to Toronto’s hegemonic makeup. Lily Cho notes that Chinese restaurants “mark not only the connection between old and new diasporas, they are also spaces of interaction between Chinese and non-Chinese communities” and are one of the few consistently available spaces of cultural interaction between Chinese immigrants and their ‘host’ communities.” 100 The Toronto newspaper advertisements for ethnic-owned coffee houses and restaurants suggests that there was starting to be a greater integration of immigrant cultures into Toronto’s mainstream around the time Malka and Joso were rising to prominence.

In August 1963, two weeks after their first Mariposa performance, Malka and Joso were featured in a Toronto Star article titled “Malka and Joso a Hit at the Onion.” 101 The “Onion” refers to The Purple Onion, which operated from 1960 to 1965 and was considered “the doyen [sic] of Toronto coffee houses.” 102 In typical Yorkville coffee house fashion, The Purple Onion was located in an old house, where alcohol was strictly prohibited. It was one of the first Yorkville performance venues for Ian and Sylvia, Gordon Lightfoot, and Buffy Sainte-Marie, who was rumoured to have written her hit protest song “Universal Soldier” while sitting in The Purple Onion. 103 This indicates that Malka and Joso were situated amongst those now considered definitive of Canadian folk music who also performed there. The article also offers an introduction to their act, and the comments made about Malka’s “exotic” features and foreign

100 Lily Cho, Eating Chinese – Chinese Restaurants and Diaspora (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 12-13.
102 Ibid.
accent prove important for the rest of this study concerning Malka’s performance style and star image.

3.4 “The Feminine Mystique”: Roles for Women in Yorkville

From the beginning of their performance career, Malka was lauded for her beauty, her femininity, and her and Joso’s ethnic backgrounds and ethnic folk-centric performances. Perhaps the most commonly used adjective to describe Malka was “beautiful,” and articles often suggested that this beauty made her difficult to look away from. Malka was described in one of the earliest articles “a classically beautiful Israeli girl—chiselled features, high cheekbones, sultry eyes, and a taunting smile—the type of girl to bring a man to his knees.” She was also “the one with the sense of humour, the animation, the magnetism, and [his] nominee for the backbone of the pair.”104 A different article reads “Malka the Israeli is as lavishly beautiful as ever.”105 The subtitle of another article reads “Folksingers Malka and Joso: She’s the One Without a Beard,” describing Malka as “a very beautiful woman with her hair swept high on her head […] it’s easy to see who will appeal to the hockey fans.”106 That Malka is the one without a beard illustrates a narrative of women as lacking, and is marked out because of it. Here, we also see two stereotypes meet, telling us more about the “hockey fans,” or the viewers, who are assumed to be white, male, and heterosexual. This tells us that part of Malka’s popularity was related to her beauty and sex appeal, commonplace for female stars in the 1960s. By 1966, she was named “TV’s Prettiest Boss Lady” in the Toronto Star. Malka was not only beautiful, she had “Israeli features,” a “lovely olive complexion,” and a “thick continental accent.”107 As an “ethnic”

singer, who and what did Malka represent, and what did it mean that an ethnic woman became a star in Yorkville? I will analyze several key pieces of Malka’s identity to emphasize her role in Canada’s coffee house scene in the 1960s.

A decade earlier, the average woman in mainstream North American media would not have shared many similarities with Malka. As second-wave feminist Betty Friedan notes, the assumed role for a young woman was to “get married, have kids, and live in a nice house in a nice suburb.”108 By the end of the 1950s, the average marriage age dropped to 20 and was still dropping. 14 million girls in America were engaged by the age of seventeen (including Malka herself). The percentage of women attending university had also dropped. Ironically, in the previous decades women fought for access to higher education.109 In the 1950s and 1960s, it was assumed that an unhappy woman only had two problems: “something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself.”110 Many newspaper advertisements that were published on the same page as Malka and Joso performance ads or concert reviews left little room for women who aspired to anything beyond a few common roles. To fulfill even these roles, women were expected to be beautiful and feminine. For instance, one reads “Wanted: Career Girls, Teenagers, Children,” encouraging women to apply for classes to “learn the secrets of professional models.”111 According to the ad, the program was for woman to become a “model, career girl, or successful housewife.”112 This was one of many ads that circulated in the Toronto papers at the time which encouraged women to act and look more feminine, or to become models, to attract husbands, suggesting that success for a woman involved beauty and/or marriage. This shows us

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109 Ibid.
110 Ibid, 19.
112 Ibid.
that real female success in this era was not to become a “career girl”, but to be beautiful and desirable in order to get married and become a suitable housewife. These ideals were opposed by some of the Yorkville and Greenwich village folk dwellers, where “marriage was regarded as a forbidden word,” and according to Gillian Mitchell, most young people that frequented those areas claimed to oppose what they considered a boring suburban life.113

Indeed, Malka fulfilled the more mainstream expectations for women to be married with children by her early 20s, being a mother and a housewife herself before her singing career took off in 1963. Malka also divorced her first husband during this time, becoming a “single mother” before the term existed. This was uncommon in Yorkville Village. In comparison, many young (white) women went to Yorkville to participate in a counterculture and sought lives that they deemed less restrictive than being a housewife. A Globe and Mail feature published in November of 1967 offers some insight into the social positioning of young women in Yorkville. The main articles are headlined “Parents discover Montreal girl, 14, barefoot, penniless, in Yorkville Village” and “City Hall Concerned Over Runaway Girls.”114 The complexity of these images is full of strange implications — modern Canadians in the city of Toronto, fulfilling a lifestyle that might imply poverty by choice. While sexual violence and entrenched misogyny was prevalent in Yorkville, the counterculture also gave certain young women freedom (for instance, partial acceptance of women pursuing “free love”) that may not have been available elsewhere. This echoes the dilemmas of women from Paul Cressey’s study of taxi dancers in the 1920s and 1930s. Taxi dancers were young women (often from underprivileged backgrounds)

who were paid to dance with male customers. They were, in theory, able to see more of the world, but were viewed and treated derogatorily as lower-class, near-sex workers.\textsuperscript{115}

The conditions for female musicians were not dissimilar to those of the average young woman in Yorkville. As Gillian Mitchell notes, “one of the most remarkable aspects of both [Greenwich and Yorkville] communities, and indeed of the folk revival in general, was the large number of female performers who not only participated in the folk revival, but who proceeded to become highly prominent and celebrated professional performers.”\textsuperscript{116} Unlike rock movements and communities, the folk revival actively welcomed and promoted female singers and musicians. Women could have professional folk careers, and were encouraged to contribute to social protest movements through songwriting and performing. Coffee houses also fostered musical communities for women, many of whom performed in Yorkville and Greenwich Village before they gained national or international recognition. This included Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Buffy-Sainte-Marie, Mary Travers, Joni Mitchell, Sylvia Tyson, and Malka.

Despite the opportunities that may have been available to female folk musicians, this did not mean that women like Malka did not have to face the harsh realities of gender discrimination. Even with the more progressive implications of the counterculture, women had limited agency in Yorkville. The Village itself was said to be full of “promiscuous women,” creating a dangerous stereotype for the women who frequented the area. An article written in 1965 mentioned that women were at risk in the village, even when they were accompanied by men. This implies that while women enjoyed different freedoms in Yorkville than in the home as mothers and

\textsuperscript{115} Paul Goalby Cressey, \textit{The Taxi Dance Hall} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932).
housewives, they were met with different gender-specific challenges. This is once again reminiscent of Cressey’s taxi dancers.

Women who had a successful performing career in Yorkville were considered entertainers, and may have been treated poorly because of its historical ties to prostitution. While Yorkville Village gave female folk performers a platform to be heard, they were not exempt from the sexism that was prevalent in the 1960s. Solo female performers like Joni Mitchell were aggressively heckled by men on stage. Women in the Village were frequently referred to in terms of their sexuality and female musicians were also set against each other in being classified as “chick performers.” Female performers were also judged in terms of their looks, their behaviour, and their sexuality in ways that their male counterparts were not. Gillian Mitchell notes that in Yorkville, “many of the most prominent women, such as Susan Jains, Carol Robinson, and Sylvia Tyson performed in tandem with male artists.” There were also limited roles for non-musician females in Yorkville Village. In a 1963 Toronto Star article, the author mentions that Toronto’s “comeliest models have been enlisted as usherettes” for a Martin Luther King Jr. benefit concert (more on this later) that Malka and Joso performed at. Other common roles occupied by women included waitresses or dancers, such as the bikini-clad waitresses or Go-Go dancers that were hired to attract men in particular into popular music venues. This further reinforces the idea that women in Yorkville were frequently considered a spectacle for men, thereby constraining their autonomy.

Knowing this, it is unsurprising that Malka, an attractive, ethnically-marked, young single mother was targeted in Yorkville. For instance, in the introduction of her book, Joni Mitchell: In

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117 “Actress” was once considered a synonym for “prostitute”: see Nussbaum, 2010.
119 Ibid., 125.
Her Own Words, Malka describes two evenings from her Yorkville years where she was followed home by a police officer who asked her what her occupation was, and called her an “entertainer” when she had responded with “singer.” Like the word “actress,” an “entertainer” or woman-for-hire implied familiar narratives of female performers viewed as prostitutes. By calling her an entertainer, the officer insinuated that she was a lower-class sex worker. He followed her home again the next night. On the second night, her friend and fellow Yorkville folk star Gordon Lightfoot told the police officer that Malka was with him and only after this was she was left alone.

Aside from the abuse she faced in Yorkville, Malka was also struggling to make ends meet in a new country, where she was persecuted for being an immigrant woman when the term “single mother” was not yet colloquial. She was also facing the difficulties of finding affordable rent in Toronto, given her status at the time. In an interview with Malka, she recalled being called a “bitch” or a “super-bitch” when she said “no” to anything on the job, while her singing partner Joso would be taken seriously because he was male. When Joso decided to break up the duo in 1967, Malka was left to raise two young children and was hardly able to find affordable rent due to her status. Despite these challenges, she was considered one of the most musically successful folk acts in Yorkville Village.

122 Maureen Chow, personal web Interview with Malka Marom, November 22, 2020.
3.5 Malka’s Star Image and Female Consumerism

Malka’s unique presence in Yorkville is visible through two markers of her image that were frequently mentioned in press coverage. The first was her beauty and style. The second was her ethnicity; being Israeli made her an ethnic minority in Toronto and a second-class figure for the majority culture. I will suggest in the following sections that there were both advantages and disadvantages to her image, particularly in how it represented women and ethnic women in 1960s Toronto. As Richard Dyer has demonstrated, stars must fit into a social “type”, yet have their own personality within it. Dyer also notes that stars are simultaneously just like laypeople and also “special”. In film, the “pin-up” is a social type that “promotes surface appearance and depersonalisation” as a way to dehumanize women by presenting them as a sexual spectacles and sex objects. Given the misogyny and racism in 1960s Toronto, particularly in show business, a woman in Malka’s position was almost required to have a physically attractive image to enter the industry.

Earlier in this chapter, I outlined some of the comments made about Malka and her beauty. Her physical appearance was often the focal point of what Dyer would call her star image. While at times, this may have worked in her favour economically, it unfortunately may have been one of the only ways an ethnic woman could attract initial media attention. Women like Malka promoted fresh, beautiful images that appealed to audiences and advertisers. As we can see from her album covers and photographs of her and Joso’s performances, Malka had a slick look that promoted glamour and professionalism; this contrasted with some of her white folk singer peers in Yorkville who present a more stereotypically “folksy” or laid-back image. Malka’s more polished look may have been used to promote products, as part of the “sexual

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In 1966, a page of the *Toronto Star* incorporated popular local folk acts and the “sexual sell”, encouraging women to take care of their complexions. Malka and Joso were listed as one of several folk acts with a focus on youthfulness. On the same page, an article teaches women how to keep their skin from aging, and the products they should use to achieve this. In the post-World War II era, “over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity […] experts told them how to catch a man and keep him” or “how to dress look and act more feminine and make marriage more exciting.” Advertisers encouraged the idea that “most women have not only a material need, but a psychological compulsion to visit department stores.” Female consumerism was in part driven by the notion that women needed to spend money to feel in control or that they needed keep their faces youthful in order to attract and keep their husbands.

North American marketing was primarily aimed at women (housewives in particular), who were driving the economy, because they often had access to household finances while their husbands worked outside of the home. In 1962, a full-page ad in the *New York Times* was “dedicated to the woman who spends a lifetime living up to her potential.” The ad featured a young woman, possibly a young mother, with an evening dress, jewels. There is a connection here to Malka, also a young woman, mother, and public figure in Yorkville who often dressed in a similarly glamourous fashion. This can be seen on Malka’s album covers and from photos and videos of her and Joso’s performances. This suggests that female figures like Malka were chosen

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125 Reba and Bonnie Churchill, “Ready to Face Up to Spring?,” *Toronto Star*, March 24 1966. This article is also significant later in this chapter, as the woman featured in this article is an Israeli model and actress.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
in part for their visual appeal to the public, in hopes of inspiring women across North America to buy their clothes, their jewelry, their makeup, or whatever else would sell, as key tasks in a women’s life. There is also a sexual component to dressing well. Dyer suggests that while a star’s “sexual image may be fetishistic simply in the sense of being a heightening of erotic/sensual surfaces (fur, leather, satin, etc. being more like skin than skin’), at the same time it links the woman to other images of power and wealth (e.g. fur, etc. as expensive fabrics, frequent linkage to Art, haute couture leisure, etc.).”¹²⁹ Dyer goes on to suggest that a well-dressed woman may be seen as an example of wealth or something that can be obtained through wealth, which the viewer imagines himself or themself to have. It is also fitting that Malka’s look and style were popular in Yorkville, which was increasingly considered a trend-setting area.¹³⁰

While Malka may have stood out in ethnically in Yorkville, she was not the only Israeli star that was prominent in North America. There were precedents to Malka’s image and style, including Israeli folk singers Rakhel Hadass and Geula Gill. Both of these singers released albums just before Malka and Joso via Moe Asch’s Folkways label. On several of their album covers, both Hadass and Gill have a similar, polished style to Malka such as their performer makeup, evening gowns (including more traditional dresses and modern Hollywood-esque gowns), accessories (such as Yemenite-style necklaces or large earrings), and styled hair updos, in contrast to someone like Marie Travers’ seemingly casual look. The content on Hadass and Gill’s albums resembles Malka and Joso’s with an emphasis on Israeli and Jewish songs. The track listings are typically a mixture of sacred and secular traditional folk songs. Earlier, I mentioned an article from the Toronto Star where Malka and Joso shared a page with an article teaching women how to maintain their youthful complexions, accompanied by images of a

woman washing her face and eating an apple. The woman in the photographs is Gila Golan, who was a prominent Israeli model and actress at the time. Her image also resembles Malka’s at the time (see Figure 3), with a sleek updo, gown, and fashion accessories including a headband and umbrella. This shows us that it was, in the words of an article published decades later, becoming “Fashionable to be Ethnic,” in 1960s Toronto.

Figure 3: Malka and Joso performing in Yorkville. Malka’s typical performance aesthetic is shown here (updo, evening gown, jewelry).

3.6 The Ethnic “Other” and Unmarked Whiteness

As I have contended in the previous chapter, Toronto was an overwhelmingly white, Anglo-Saxon city when Yorkville Village’s coffee houses were booming. Even though there were other non-white female singers in Yorkville other than Malka, ethnic women were in the minority and stood out amongst their white peers. This suggests that we must examine racial dynamics of the Yorkville folk scene to see how Malka and Joso fit within it. In 1963, they were
part of the Martin Luther King Jr. benefit concert lineup. Two of the headlining acts were the Oscar Peterson Trio and Black Canadian singer-dancer Joey Hollingsworth. This Toronto Star article, which contains one of the earliest instances of Malka and Joso in print, also noted that “Negro student Charles McDoo also [told of] his part in the race riots in Alabama.”\textsuperscript{131} The audience was notably small, according to the article, but it shows us that there was interest in the 1960s Civil Rights movement amongst Yorkville’s youth, many of whom were more hopeful about and invested in social change.

However, there were issues around the presentation of Malka and Joso’s ethnically marked popularity. They were often expected to fit a definition of “ethnic” that would appeal to white Canadians. There was also a distinct dichotomy between the singer-songwriter folk music of white musicians and the protest songs or ethnic folk songs performed by people of colour. Other women of colour were present in the Yorkville scene, such as Buffy Sainte-Marie or Odetta, but they were not called “ethnic” like Malka because they had other racial markings. Odetta was considered “the voice of the Civil Rights movement” as a Black American blues, folk, and jazz singer, while Buffy was a “crucial spokeswoman for the Native Canadian community, highlighting their plight through songs like her 1964 track ‘Now that the Buffalo’s Gone.’”\textsuperscript{132} These distinctions suggest that the few women of colour in the Yorkville folk scene were expected to represent a collective non-whiteness, while their unmarked white counterparts were free to sing and write personal songs that were free from explicit racial or ethnic markings, and would be later revered as “Canadian” folk. Unlike Odetta and Buffy, Malka sang in 14 languages, but almost never in English. She also did not perform original material, and instead

\textsuperscript{131} Morris Duff, “Big Hearts for Big Benefit,” Toronto Star, June 29, 1963.
sang traditional folk songs of many minority cultures. Malka and Joso’s repertoire represented various “ethnic” identities in Canada, but here the term “ethnic” collapsed diversity into a single category. In performing traditional songs, ethnic folk singers may have been subject to collective representation, while their WASP peers could represent themselves as singer-songwriters, again suggestive of the unmarked and privileged nature of whiteness.

The liner notes of Malka and Joso’s 2000 compilation album *Malka and Joso: Forever* (which includes songs from all four of their studio albums) asserts that the pair were “a major force in bringing about a change of perception that saw the ethnic, the immigrant, and the “newcomer” in Canada not as aliens, but as importers of vitality, hope, daring, ancient and avant-garde sophistication, humour, and culture.” While this is true, it is a rather generous read on the matter, which somewhat simplifies Malka and Joso’s careers as ethnic performers. Ethnicity both enables and constrains agency. Because Malka and Joso were “ethnic” when there were few ethnic performers in Toronto, they could be marketed as new, different, and exotic. However, this would also incur the cost of their Othering, marking them out as less supposedly archetypical Canadian, compared to folk performers such as Gordon Lightfoot. The hegemonic culture in Toronto was strengthened by positioning itself against and above immigrants and ethnic Others. As Edward Said notes, “The Orient [and Orientals] was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity ‘a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences,’” thus creating a surrogate or underground self that was both desired and looked down upon.\(^\text{133}\) The ethnic marking of Malka and Joso, and her intersection of race and beauty, positioned them as separate from and inferior to the stereotypical Canadian folk

performer. Ethnic performers such as Malka were subject to being framed as an alternative to their white peers.

Regardless of these challenges, Malka’s presence in Yorkville set a precedent for Canadian female performers. Her identity as a female, an Israeli, a performer, and a single mother did not hinder her success. She and Joso released four albums, expanding their career beyond subcultural Yorkville Village. In the next chapter, I will discuss Malka and Joso’s cross-country tour, their studio albums and their CBC show, *A World of Music*. I will also discuss the emerging role of folk music to represent Canadian national identity, and some of the political events that helped shape what we now understand as the Canadian mosaic or multicultural Canada. From the present chapter, we can conclude that Malka’s career took flight in Yorkville at a time where immigrants and ethnic minorities were starting to be represented in mainstream media. It was also a period of change, where the reinvented Yorkville Village was permeated by youth who were looking to coffee houses, music, and art in search of anything from a social network to a distinctive personal identity. Like many young people in the 1960s who went to Yorkville, Malka was also in search of an identity. Yorkville allowed her to bring songs from her heritage into the local community and doing so, she was able to reach a larger community of Canadians across the nation.
Ch. 4: Un Canadien Errant?: Canadiana, Ethnic Performance, and *A World of Music*

4.1 “Not beatniks, not folkniks, but ethniks”

This chapter focuses on Malka and Joso’s mid-1960s musical and television career in Canada, and the impact that it may have had on the changing definition of Canadian identity. As “ethnic” folk musicians, they were a part of Canada’s multicultural talent pool in the 1960s. In this chapter, I will highlight the Canadian nationalist efforts that were made in the 1960s, as the backdrop against which I will make my argument for Malka and Joso’s place in the Canadian music canon. Canadian music journalist and author Nicholas Jennings asserts, “long before the term ‘world music’ became a popular catch-all for sounds from around the globe, Malka and Joso were singing in Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Creole French, Macedonian and Russian.”

He also states “Malka & Joso were the first on the scene—back in the days when any song not sung in English was considered ‘exotic.’” In this chapter, I discuss their four “ethnic” folk records released by Capitol Records of Canada that stand as an alternative to canonical Canadian folk music. I was also able to access two episodes of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s late 1960s musical variety show *A World of Music*, starring Malka and Joso and represents, arguably, their moment of widest popular distribution in Canada. I discuss how Malka performed intersections of ethnicity, race, and gender on *A World of Music*.

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“In a way, Malka and Joso represent what has happened in Canada in recent years, claimed a journalist in 1966.” An article published by the *Calgary Herald* (Figure 4) thus argued that Malka and Joso were representative of new Canadian identities. It states “the

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135 Ibid.

population of Canada now includes something like 6,000,000 persons of neither British or French origins” and that “until now, little television programming has reflected the colorful musical heritage that the influx of New Canadians has brought.” The author hints that Malka and Joso were amongst the first non-white performers in Canada to attract national attention, since they had just been awarded a prime-time, Saturday night television slot following Hockey Night in Canada. By “[introducing] the music of many lands” and bringing to Canadian audiences “a whole new spectrum of music,” at a time when the dominant definition of Canadian identity was only just starting to include newcomers, Malka and Joso helped usher into mainstream Canadian media culture some of our current national-cultural ideals of diversity and inclusivity.


138 Ibid.
Figure 4: Calgary Herald article titled “A World of Music to Follow Hockey” on Malka and Joso and their new CBC show, A World of Music. Article published on September 2, 1966.
In the mid-1960s, Malka and Joso were frequently framed by Canadian media outlets as “not beatniks, not folkniks, but ethniks.” While Malka and Joso were considered bearers of hope, vitality, and inclusivity in a widening definition of Canadian-ness, they were simultaneously subject to racism and subordination in a 1960s Canada which was dominated by hegemonic ideals and values that primarily reflected whiteness. Their CBC show, *A World of Music* featured artists and musical styles that were new to Canadian audiences. While the show conceptually promoted ethnic diversity, Malka and Joso’s status as newcomers also marked them as different, alternative, or the Other. This often contributed to their marginalization. The labelling of Malka and Joso as an “ethnic folk” duo created a divide between the duo and “Canadian folk” singers, who would go on to be revered as Canadian folk music pioneers.

Another 1966 article, “Malka and Joso: Two at The Top,” appeared in a magazine widely distributed across Canada. The article states that the duo “clearly belonged on the credit side of the Canadian ledger,” as their fame was “spreading across the country.” They were referred to as “immigrant entertainers” who contributed to Canada’s growing talent pool. The article suggests that the dominant definition of Canadian-ness was widening and beginning to include newcomers. By the time the article was published, Malka and Joso had released four studio albums through Capitol Canada. Eight months later, Malka was hosting her own weekly CBC show, *A World of Music*, with her singing partner Joso. The show, which aired after *Hockey Night at Canada*, featured artists from a multitude of ethnic backgrounds.

Despite the contributions of musicians like Malka, singer-songwriter folk music by white artists like Gordon Lightfoot or Ian and Sylvia were accredited as definitive examples of white

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140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
Canadian folk musicians since they reflected hegemonic Canadian (and Western) values. These artists came from a lineage of singer-songwriter traditions that can be traced back to medieval troubadours. As Marcus Aldredge asserts, “the troubadour was a wandering performer of creative inspiration and musical and poetic expression in medieval Europe” and “the Western motif of musician as a creative but lonely journeyman harkens back to the medieval days of the European troubadour.”\textsuperscript{142} He also states that “singer-songwriters are one version of a modern-day musical troubadour.”\textsuperscript{143} A connection can be made here to canonical Canadian folk singer-songwriters who perform lyrics in English that are either self-expressive or written as a form of protest. In this chapter, I will refer to troubadour-inspired folk music by white performers as “troubadour singer-songwriters.”

In this chapter, I will compare and contrast Malka and Joso’s performances and reception to Canadian troubadour singer-songwriters like Joni Mitchell and to Canadian television star and pop singer Juliette Cavazzi, whom they replaced on CBC television. I will then outline and analyze how Malka performed intersections of ethnicity, race, and gender on \textit{A World of Music}. I will first provide a brief overview of Canadian culture-building leading up to the 1960s to make an argument for Malka and Joso’s place in Canada’s folk music canon.

\subsection*{4.2 Canadian Identity, Technological Nationalism, and The Centennial Era}

Crafting Canadian identity has been a historic struggle for nation builders. The size and breadth of Canada was, and still is, a challenge to the formation of national culture from coast to coast. One solution to this problem is what Maurice Charland calls “technological nationalism.” Charland’s historical analysis identifies the ways space-binding technologies like the Canadian


\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, 288.
Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) were used to link Canada, geographically and culturally. Through this lens, technological nationalism is one solution to the challenge created by the size of Canada and the desire for unity.

In the first half of the 20th century, efforts were made by the Canadian government to centralize national-cultural content, such as the establishment of the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) and the National Film Board (NFB) in the 1930s. These steps were taken to encourage national unity and a sense of “Canadian-ness” that was felt to be lacking across the country. Prior to this, “the national identity [in English-speaking Canada] was of course, one modelled upon ideas of Canada’s British heritage, and ‘two races’; immigrants of non-traditional ethnicity were encouraged to adopt established ethnic norms, with assimilation a gift bestowed on them.” Conceptually, this shaped Canada’s hegemonic values that have persisted to this day. However, Canadian culture has also been formed against the backdrop of the United States.

As a way to meet the challenges of U.S. cultural hegemony in an age of mass media, Canadian diplomat Vincent Massey (who served as the first Canadian-born Governor General of Canada) sought state intervention for Canadian content and culture. Massey pioneered demands for large-scale state intervention and funding on behalf of the government to promote Canadian content and culture. On April 8, 1949, the Massey Commission (named after Massey) was appointed. It was a major effort in the mid 20th century taken to generate, promote, and nurture Canadian content. The commission formed at a time when Canada was increasingly threatened by U.S. cultural imperialism. The U.S. was also its largest trading partner. As Christopher Cwynar notes, “the United States geographical proximity, assertive nationalism, and economic

145 Ryan Edwardson, Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 36
strength have collectively exerted substantial pressure on Canada since even before it achieved
confederation.146 There was also concern over the success of WWII propaganda in totalitarian
regimes.

Canadian cultural advocates like Massey drew upon “a sense of ‘high’ or elite culture
originating in Canada’s cultural heritage in the face of the perceived threat posed by American
mass media systems and popular content.”147 In June 1951, The Massey Report was published,
advocating federal funding for culture-encouraging initiatives. This included the National
Library of Canada (now Library and Archives Canada), the Canada Council for the Arts, federal
aid for universities, and the conservation of Canada’s historic places. Also, by the end of the
1950s, humanitarianism and peacekeeping were becoming a major part of Canada’s self-image
after answering peacekeeping calls in the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution.

The 1960s marked a moment when tensions were rising within Canada’s political
landscape. Canadian culture continued to be threatened by the United States in almost all
entertainment mediums, including television, radio, music, art, periodicals, and popular fiction.
Canadian radio and television stations continued to disseminate American content because it
increased audience sizes. American shows and music remained more popular with Canadian
audiences, despite the government’s attempts to moderate their influence via Canadian content
regulations for broadcasting (foreshadowing the CRTC Regulations of 1971).

Simultaneously, from 1960 to 1970, Quebec was entering a radical period of change,
otherwise known as the Quiet Revolution. The Quiet Revolution was a transformative period in
Quebec, characterized by secularization and the diminishing role of the Catholic Church. This

146 Christopher Cwynar, “Making Canadian Music, or Making Music ‘Canadian’? A Critique of Canadian Popular
147 Ibid.
led to social-cultural reforms in education and industrialization. Sentiments of Québécois nationalism grew significantly against the backdrop of socio-economic change. The rise in Quebec nationalism sparked a rise in separatist movements, as many Québécois were dissatisfied with the Anglo-supremacy that permeated Canada and influenced Quebec. One of the greatest threats to the Canadian government was the Front de liberation du Québec (FLQ), founded in 1963, which was a militant, separatist, and terrorist group fighting for Quebec independence. Fears of Quebec nationalism motivated a tremendous effort in the 1960s by the Canadian government unify Canada.

In 1962, the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) introduced the Foreign Language Broadcasting policy to help assimilate the “great influx of immigrants in the years since 1945,” a group of people that included Malka and Joso.\textsuperscript{148} In 1964, prime minister Lester B. Pearson announced that a committee would choose a new national flag featuring a maple leaf from public submissions across the nation. On February 15, 1965, Canada officially adopted its current flag. The same year, 1965, a Centennial Commission was created to administrate the upcoming Canadian Centennial (Canada’s 100\textsuperscript{th} birthday) in 1967. Each province was given funds for a major project to promote the image of Canada as a progressive, modern nation. Prior to the Centennial, there was a rush to build stages, exhibits, and cultural monuments in Canada so that nation-building events could be held. 1967, an iconic year, included the Centennial train, the Centennial coin, Expo ‘67 in Montreal, and a visit from Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh.

In the 1960s, Canadian content and the arts were redefined with the support of state intervention. The Canadian music scene was “boosted by the government largely as a

\textsuperscript{148} Ryan Edwardson, \textit{Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 91.
consequence of the increase in nationalist sentiment during the 1960s,” leading to a search for a ‘Canadian’ music.”\textsuperscript{149} Canadian media outlets played a significant role in establishing this national music. For instance, \textit{RPM}, a Canadian music industry focused trade paper first-published in 1964, pushed for greater domestic content on Canadian radio stations.\textsuperscript{150} As Ryan Edwardson asserts, “music went from being a means for baby boomers to mediate gender, class, and generational identities to embracing a national identity and membership in a nation as they became politically aware citizens. What transpired was a transition from ‘music in Canada’ to ‘Canadian music.’”\textsuperscript{151} Yorkville Village (where Malka and Joso first performed) coffee houses were fundamental to folk music becoming a national music, since many of the Canadian folk greats began their careers there. Yorkville also created a cultural scene that promoted musical performances by Canadians as well as cosmopolitan ideas.

As coffee house folk was gaining popularity in Yorkville, the creation of a nationalist music policy “brought about a shift in focus and a new emphasis upon the creation of music that was Canadian.”\textsuperscript{152} There was more than one version of folk music that was promoted as “Canadian” in the 1960s. In addition to being a folk duo and a Canadian folk duo, Malka and Joso were referred to as “ethnic folk,” “continental,” and “world music” by the press. They performed in 14 languages, bringing a sense of cosmopolitanism to 1960s Canada. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, the ethnic and racial marking distinguishing “ethnics” from white folk singers in Yorkville reiterated the very hegemonic tensions that the village claimed to reject.

\textsuperscript{150} Ryan Edwardson, \textit{Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 126-127.
The white folk musicians were usually troubadour singer-songwriters who came from the rural or suburban regions of Canada, like Joni Mitchell or Ian Tyson. Ironically, many of them went to the U.S. where they had better opportunities to pursue their musical careers. A U.S. recording of a Canadian singer-songwriter would qualify as “Canadian,” according to the MAPL Canadian content rules, thus to some extent assisting the ongoing hegemony of U.S. media culture at the political-economic level. This helped U.S.-based artists like Mitchell and Young became part of the Canadian folk music canon instead of artists like Malka and Joso.

Gillian Mitchell asserts that in the height of 1960s patriotism, journalists formed a vague definition of “Canadian” music based on the shared nationality of the artists. She states “the [international] musicians to persuade the public that there existed a ‘Canadian Sound,’ a music that was identifiably and tangibly Canadian.” This led to the formation of many Canadian folk music stereotypes, including the idea that the emptiness of Canada’s vast landscapes or the sounds of one’s isolation could somehow be heard in Canadian folk music. This is reminiscent of Herder’s use of rural folklore to encourage nationalism. However, troubadour singer-songwriter music is not the only version of Canadian folk that exists. To treat it as such ignores the fact that ethnic folk musicians like Malka and Joso were once also considered Canadian folk musicians.

153 According to the so-called MAPL rules put forth by the CRTC, only two of four conditions have to be met for music to be considered Canadian content. The MAPL rules are defined as the following M (music): the music is composed entirely by a Canadian, A (artist): the music is, or the lyrics are, performed principally by a Canadian, P (performance): the musical selection consists of a live performance that is recorded wholly in Canada, or performed wholly in Canada and broadcast live in Canada, and L (lyrics): the lyrics are written entirely by a Canadian. Ryan Edwardson, Canuck Rock: A History of Canadian Popular Music, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 147.
155 Ibid.
Songs from the white troubadour singer-songwriter version of Canadian folk, which later became mainstream Canadian folk music, often featured references to Canadian landmarks and rural locations. For instance, in Joni Mitchell’s song “A Case of You,” she sings “I am as constant as a Northern Star” and “Oh Canada,” in reference to the national anthem. Another example of this is in Gordon Lightfoot’s “Canadian Railroad Trilogy,” a CBC radio commission, with the lyrics: “There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run/When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun.” This lyric about the railroad reflects Charland’s theory of technological nationalism, where he contends that Canada is culturally and physically connected by the CPR and the CBC. By the late 1960s, artists like Joni Mitchell or Gordon Lightfoot were “now considered by the press and by nationalists, Canadians first and foremost, and regional musicians secondarily.”156 The regional stereotypes are consistent with Will Straw’s assertion that “for a long time, English Canadians have allowed themselves the conceit that their involvement in U.S. popular culture is multi-layered.”157 By creating a national music that highlighted Canadian landscapes, Canadians could better differentiate themselves from their neighbouring Americans.

A visual depiction of this can be found in colour videos of Joni Mitchell singing in the middle of a pasture (see Figure 5). These videos were broadcast on the Mon Pays, Mes Chansons, a Centennial project, in 1966.158 As the title suggests, the show was narrated in French to demonstrate Anglo and Francophone cultures co-existing in harmony. In one of these videos, Mitchell sings, “The Circle Game,” on a farm with cows and sheep, with sounds of wind added

to the audio. In a different video for “The Urge for Going,” Mitchell stands in front of what appears to be a stream and the Rocky Mountains. This is an example of Canadian iconography intertwining with 1960s folk music, at a moment in time when attempts were made to unify English and French speaking Canada. The imagery of these videos also features Canadian stereotypes—rural landscapes, natural beauty, and depictions of isolation. Here, we see a popular version of Canadian folk music, one dominated by troubadour singer-songwriters. We can also see that this version of Canadian folk minimizes or excludes cosmopolitanism, ethnic folk musicians, and recent immigrants such as Malka.

![Figure 5: Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell performing “The Circle Game” on CBC TV show *Mon Pays, Mes Chansons* (My Country, My Songs) in 1966.](image)

Canadian folk musicians in the 1970s that followed the troubadour singer-songwriter tradition included Bruce Cockburn and Murray McLaughlan. The imagined tradition and pastoral visual depictions of troubadour singer-songwriter like Mitchell and Lightfoot helped establish clichés of Canadian folk as a simple, pastoral music by rural musicians. One significant issue arises with the clichés of Canadian folk music as a pastoral, rural music by troubadour singer-
songwriters: it tends to exclude “ethnic” artists. Favouring “Canadian” troubadour singer-songwriters allows the selective tradition to ignore folk musicians like Malka, despite her historical prominence in the Yorkville scene and in the broader Canadian music scene of the 1960s.

4.3 Malka and Joso Albums and Musical Tourism

In 1964, Malka and Joso were one of three Yorkville acts featured on the Canadian Talent Library album, Folk Songs. According to the album notes, Malka and Joso “were quickly becoming Canada’s favourite folk singing duo.”159 The other acts on the album were Gordon Lightfoot and Adam Timoon. They sang original folk compositions, while Malka and Joso sang traditional ethnic folk songs in non-official languages. This is significant for several reasons. The inclusion of Malka and Joso on this album suggests that their popularity in Canada was comparable to that of Gordon Lightfoot at the time. Malka and Joso had also performed alongside Gordon Lightfoot and Ian and Sylvia at the Mariposa Folk Festival in 1963 and in Yorkville Village during the mid 1960s. All three acts on the CTL album were meant to represent emerging Canadian folk talent at the time of its release. Later, we see that Timoon and Malka and Joso are not included in the canonical definition of Canadian music.

As I have mentioned in the previous chapters, ethnic folk music and cosmopolitanism were popular in the 1960s. This coincided with the “World Music” genre, which seemed to provide the North American listener with proximity to other worldly cultures. For instance, Paul Anka posed in front of the United Nations building for his album Our Man Around the World (RCA, 1963) suggesting that the album would take the listener “around the world.” Albums such

159 Malka and Joso, Adam Timoon, and Gordon Lightfoot, Folk Songs, Canadian Talent Library S5049, 1964, LP.
as this offered listeners “musical tourism” by bringing them to a different place and time.\textsuperscript{160} This was also a trait found in Malka and Joso’s albums, since they performed music from over fourteen languages and cultures.

This explains some of Malka and Joso’s success with their four studio albums. In January 1965, Malka and Joso released their first studio album, \textit{Introducing Malka and Joso}, through Capitol Records of Canada (Figure 6). They were given the opportunity to release an album through connections they’d made in the Yorkville coffee house scene. As Devon Powers asserts, cultural intermediaries are “the whole layer of people who work[ed] ‘between’ production and consumption.”\textsuperscript{161} These intermediaries and processes of cultural intermediation were crucial to Malka and Joso’s folk music career. Malka and Joso were introduced to Paul White of Capitol Records through Sam Sniderman, the founder of “Sam the Record Man” record chain stores. White was responsible for signing a number of Canadian acts, including Anne Murray, Jack London & the Sparrows, the Staccatos, and Malka and Joso. He was a musical trendsetter in Canada, and signed the duo shortly after meeting Malka.\textsuperscript{162} The album sleeve of \textit{Introducing Malka and Joso} featured reviews from various cultural intermediaries in the Yorkville scene, where a vibrant folk scene was at its peak in popularity.

Malka and Joso were listed as the performers, producers, and co-arrangers for \textit{Introducing Malka and Joso}. The album sleeve states “with audiences clamouring for more, and critics applauding, Malka and Joso are becoming one of the most famous duos on this continent.”\textsuperscript{163} The songs were sung by Malka and Joso and accompanied by acoustic guitarist

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Malka and Joso, \textit{Introducing Malka and Joso}, with Rafael Nunez and Fred Muscat, Capitol Records of Canada, ST6108, 1965, LP.}
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Rafael Nunez and stand-up bassist Fred Muscat. The album featured an array of songs that Malka and Joso performed regularly, including songs sung in Spanish, Russian, and Hebrew. Since Malka and Joso did not speak all of the languages they performed in, they often learned these songs phonetically through imitation.\(^{164}\)

In contrast to some of the other musicians in Yorkville who were also releasing records, *Introducing Malka and Joso* featured a style of folk music that was musically and lyrically different from the troubadour singer-songwriter or “new aesthetic” variety. An example of Malka and Joso’s musical style is found on the track “Chi-Ri-Bim” from this album. “Chi-Ri-Bim” is a traditional Jewish Chassidic song that features call and response elements. In Malka and Joso’s arrangement, they sing together in simple harmonies for certain verses, and incorporate call and response by featuring solo lines. They alternate the two roles, often with Joso’s operatic tenor acting as the “call,” while Malka’s softer alto with a taunting tone performing the “response.” In certain moments, the acoustic accompaniment acts as the “response” to Malka and Joso, singing in simple harmony together as the “call.” Thematically, “Chi-Ri-Bim” welcomes the “Sabbath” and celebrates “the vibrant spirit of its people.”\(^{165}\) Malka and Joso reflect the thematic material by starting with a slow tempo that suggests anticipation, and later increasing the tempo dramatically to demonstrate the aforementioned vibrant spirit. *Introducing Malka and Joso* was also released internationally in the U.S and the U.K.\(^{166}\)

\(^{164}\) Maureen Chow, personal web Interview with Malka Marom, November 22, 2020.


When Malka and Joso first became popular in Yorkville Village, the definition of “Canadian” folk had not been fully established. In the winter of 1964-1965, the duo went on a tour across Canada spanning over 20,000 miles, performing in remote regions and small towns across Canada. They were advertised in the papers as a folk song duo, bringing ethnic folk music to Canadian small towns such as Quesnel or Flin Flon, and to the Northwest Territories. Their tour often attracted the attention of people living in small communities. For instance, in 1965, “82 trekkers came over the dark mountains and through the deep forests in two chartered buses” to see them in Nanaimo, BC.” Malka and Joso also sold records on these tours, familiarizing Canadian populations with their music, which included everything from “Israeli

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167 Ibid.
bravery songs” to “gypsy love songs.” For people in these small communities across Canada, this may have been one of the first times these populations were exposed to “ethnic” music. As Malka and Joso became a familiar presence across Canada from touring, their success grew and they released another album, *Mostly Love Songs*.

*Mostly Love Songs* was released in late 1965, following Malka and Joso’s cross-country tour. Malka and Joso’s audience had grown significantly as they had become regular performers at night clubs, concerts, college campuses, folk festivals, and on radio and television. The same year, Malka and Joso had won *RPM*’s “Best Folk Group” award. Thematically, all of the titles from *Mostly Love Songs* were about a love of someone or something, like the sea or a country. Many of the recordings on this album show off Malka and Joso’s versatility. The one French-Canadian song on *Mostly Love Songs*, “Un Canadien Errant,” is a nationalist piece and an ode to Canada. In Malka and Joso’s rendition, they sing entirely as a duet (no solo parts) to evoke unity. All of their harmonies are in thirds, giving off a tender quality, as though they are singing to express their love for one another. Their voices never rise above a *mezzo-piano* here, creating a warm, intimate environment. At this point in their careers, Malka and Joso did not sing in English or French unless it was special material. The same track was later recorded on *Canadian Folksongs: A Centennial Collection* by Jacques Lebrecque, suggesting it might also have been popular with Masseyites. In 1966, Malka and Joso’s third studio album, *Autour du Monde* (*Around the World*) was released especially for Québécois audiences. They later released a fourth album, *Jewish Songs*, a collection of folk songs in Hebrew and Yiddish. Thus, Malka and Joso released albums catering to a wider diversity of Canadians.

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169 Ibid.
4.4 CBC Television, Juliette, and A World of Music

As recent immigrants who rose to fame at a time when cosmopolitanism was trending in North America, Malka and Joso were an ideal duo to represent a new, multi-ethnic Canada. Their popularity, which grew quickly between 1963 and 1966, lead to their own prime-time CBC television variety show, A World of Music. By singing ethnic songs inside the Yorkville coffee houses and promoting music from around the world on their albums, Malka and Joso could provide Canadian audiences with music that offered a transnational experience. The hope seemed to be that Malka and Joso could bring elements of cosmopolitan folk to their TV show, which was broadcast in a time slot with three million viewers across Canada every week.

In the mid-20th century, Canadian television shows struggled to attract Canadian audiences. This was a significant issue, since the television medium was actively shaping the political landscape. Marshall McLuhan states: “With TV came the end of bloc voting in politics, a form of specialism and fragmentation that won’t work since TV. Instead of the voting bloc, we have the icon, the inclusive image. Instead of a political viewpoint or platform, the inclusive political posture or stance.”¹⁷¹ In the Canadian context, “ethnic” content on CBC television may have served to promote images of inclusivity and diversity. While the Canadian government made attempts to provide Canadians with Canadian television content, American programming often dictated pop culture in Canada. Many Canadian shows were made with the primary goal of filling content quotas. As a result, Canadian shows dropped into the background because they lacked viewership, even though Canadian broadcasting regulations were in place.¹⁷² Perhaps the

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¹⁷² Ryan Edwardson, Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 121.
CBC believed putting Malka and Joso on TV would promote a new kind of national inclusivity and thereby generate more viewers.

In the mid-1960s, Canadian shows were primarily low-budget, and more slow-paced than American ones. Attempts were also made by CBC to feature shows with stereotypically Canadian characters. Many of these characters relied upon regional stereotypes in hopes of relating to audiences. Folk culture was a common theme in shows like *Don Messer’s Jubilee* or *The Irish Rovers*, and other programs based on a Celtic-inspired, white folk singer aesthetic.\(^{173}\)

One successful CBC show was *La Famille Ploueffe* which aired in French and English. The show portrayed the lives of a working-class family in Quebec. As Ryan Edwardson notes, “although these shows stand out from the others in terms of cultural brow, they do nonetheless fit with the conservative, slow-paced, and even genteel programming seen as being in the best interest of Canadian audiences.”\(^{174}\) Many of these shows were often reflective of hegemonic white values and aimed towards English or French speaking audiences.

One example of this was the CBC show, *Juliette*, which aired from 1956 to 1966 until it was replaced by *A World of Music* (Malka and Joso). *Juliette* had a weekly audience of three million television viewers from coast to coast. Juliette’s star image and the presentation of her show was popular with Canadian audiences. She sang standards and trending pop songs. This was complemented by “her dramatic entrances and glitzy gowns, and for the wholesomeness of her show, which she always ended by saying goodnight to her mother back in Vancouver.”\(^{175}\) Her sweetheart-esque image, along with her stereotypically Canadian upbringing (born in

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\(^{173}\) Ibid, 122.

\(^{174}\) Ibid.

Winnipeg, raised in Vancouver, later pursuing an entertainment career in Toronto) made her popular with Canadian audiences in the 1950s and 1960s.

When Malka and Joso were chosen to replace Juliette, the decision received considerable press coverage. John MacFarlane noted this difference with an article titled: “Juliette’s Successors: Malka and Joso are Ethnic with capital E.” MacFarlane states, “The switch makes sense. The CBC is doubtless making an ethnic pitch.” Here, he acknowledges that while Juliette was Eastern European and married to an Italian husband, “the image was nevertheless WASPish – soft blond hair, sequined gowns, pop music – in short, run of the mill variety show entertainment.” This implies that WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) hegemony had less to do with one’s actual ethnic identity, and more to do with how they appeared and presented themselves to the hegemonic culture. Even though Juliette was not WASP, she had a WASP image and performed with WASP-normative mannerisms (like saying “hi, honey” or “c’mon’ fellas”) and sang songs in English. This was a sharp contrast to Malka and A World of Music.

Malka and Joso took over Juliette’s time slot only three years after forming their duo in 1963, but were well known through Canada by 1966. Len Starmer, who directed CBC’s English network variety programming, was heavily criticized by the press for ending Juliette. According to Roy Shields, “a lot of people within and without the CBC [thought] Starmer should see a psychiatrist” for replacing Juliette. Juliette was referred to as “a beautiful, blonde CBC star” and the housewife of a musical family. She was a familiar presence and national favourite, who had been active in the Canadian music scene since her teenage years in the 1940s. When she

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congratulated Malka and Joso for being awarded her time slot, Nathan Cohen wrote “that her good wishes are honestly meant are clear to see.” The sentiment that she was wholesome, well-liked, and sweet was shared throughout the country.

Juliette’s (and later Malka and Joso’s) show was in a prime-time slot: Saturday nights, immediately after *Hockey Night in Canada* and broadcast across the country. There are two versions of Canadian culture identified here: one is stereotypical Canadian wholesomeness, represented by Juliette and one is the rest of Canada, represented by Malka and Joso. Malka was “charged with keeping millions of Juliette fans watching CBC-TV after the Saturday night hockey games this year.” As it will turn out, Malka was not able to keep the hockey fans and comparisons of Malka and Juliette were not subtle. Malka was called “a strikingly beautiful woman, with Israeli features, flashing eyes, a sweeping smile, and lovely olive complexion. Not at all Juliette!” Here, “not” suggests a binary: the olive-skinned Malka as the Other in comparison to the blonde, hegemonic Juliette. Roy Shields claimed that fans of Juliette would have to “do without the gooey stuff used to such effect,” and that “Juliette would be right there to haunt them [Malka and Joso].” Unlike Juliette, Malka and Joso were always expected to be outsiders and ethnic performers. For instance, Malka was constantly referred to as “Malka the Israeli” and Joso was “Joso the Yugo-Slavian.” While Juliette had a sweetheart-esque reputation, Malka was marketed as the opposite and called a “boss lady” or a “queen.” There is a connection here to the “Sapphire” stereotype in fictional portrayals of Black women as angry and villainous. While the term “queen” may have had positive connotations, as a “queen,” Malka

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184 Ibid.
was not self-effacing or accommodating like Juliette, but powerful and perhaps threatening to the CBC producers who appeared to target her in response. As noted in the previous chapter, Malka’s distinctly “ethnic” features were often highlighted, many articles made mention of her “rich accent” or olive complexion as a marker of visual difference, while Juliette was always “Juliette” or “blonde Juliette.” The contrast between these two performers added to the media attention around Starmer’s decision.

Malka and Joso were selected by Starmer to “give [Canadians] something different – music from around the world.” The word “different” also marks them as outsiders, even as the show aspired to national unity. This is the same problem that Malka faced in Yorkville, her “ethnic” status drew audiences but also limited her inclusion in the Canadian canon. *A World of Music* premiered on September, 17 1966. As the title suggests, *A World of Music* featured Canadian ethnic performers and guest performers from around the world. Before I begin an analysis of *A World of Music*, I would like to acknowledge that while the 1960s is often characterized by youth culture, rebellion, rock, and the British Invasion, musically, there was an alternative, adult-centered musical 1960s present. As Keir Keightley points out, this 1960s was “one instead defined by jet set travel, musical transculturation, and an idea of the historical present, of a global ‘Now,’ that was privileged as the particular possession of adult consumers in the West.” These taste interests were exemplified in *A World of Music* by the guests, the musical content, and by Malka and Joso’s cosmopolitan take on a newly globalized Canada.

For this thesis, I analyzed the two episodes of *A World of Music* I was able to access through CBC Archives. In my analysis, I will explore the hybridization of ethnic cultures

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through music, and the emphasis on globalization and cosmopolitanism on the show. These elements reflected 1960s adult popular culture, which “might also be characterized as a period ‘When the United Nations was cool.’” By bringing musical artists from around the world to Toronto and onto the TV screens of Canadians, the CBC promoted the image of a cosmopolitan Canada. While this was a positive change initiated by the CBC, I will also point out some of the reasons the show ultimately failed.

The first of these episodes, titled “With Malka and Joso” takes place in in Toronto’s Edwards Gardens and appears in black and white. It begins with an opening number by Malka and Joso in front of a bridge in the garden. Malka is wearing a white gown with her hair down, while Joso is wearing a suit and playing the guitar. Their image, while still show-business-friendly, is significantly plainer than that of Juliette’s. The episode is loosely nature-themed. After the opening performance, there is a commercial about beaver conservation, a stereotypically Canadian trope, encouraging viewers to refer to the Canadian Wildlife Service in Ottawa to learn more. Malka and Joso then welcome the audience to their show, with Malka saying “the accent is on the singing, and vice versa.” There is some irony in this comment because Malka speaks with a heavy accent, and presumably knows that she has been chosen for this role because of her non-white image. In other words, the show is acknowledging their outsider status, even as they are being framed as representatives of a “new,” diverse and inclusive, Canada.

After their introduction, Malka asks Joso where his favourite spot in the park is, to which he responds, “the bridge.” This leads Malka to introduce their first performer, the singer of Brazilian bossa nova, Astrud Gilberto. This is significant because Astrud Gilberto was part of the

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189 Ibid., 117.
190 A World of Music, 1, “With Malka and Joso,” written by Alex Barris, aired September 17, 1966, on CBC.
1960s Brazilian Invasion of the USA and Canada. She was born “Astrud Evangelina Weinert” and was of mixed heritage—her mother was Brazilian and her father was German. Like Malka, she was multilingual and also an immigrant to North America.\footnote{Martin Chilton, “Why Astrud Gilberto is So Much More Than the Girl From Ipanema,” 
Udiscovermusic, March 29, 2020.} On the show, she starts by singing “The Girl from Ipanema” (which sold nearly five million copies worldwide) in English, and then sings “One Note Samba,” partially in Portuguese (both songs by Brazilian composer Antonio Carlos Jobim). After a few other performances, the program returns to another performance by Gilberto, who sings “Corcovado” or “Quiet Nights” in Portuguese and in English. The translator of Jobim’s “Corcovado” was Gene Lees, a Canadian journalist, lyricist, singer, composer, and broadcaster.\footnote{James Hale, “Gene Lees,” The Canadian Encyclopedia, September 22, 2010.} Here we can see how A World of Music attempted to integrate Canadian culture with “worldly” cultures: an Israeli-Canadian folk singer hosts a Brazilian-German-Bossa Nova singer, who sings a Brazilian song with Portuguese lyrics translated into English by a Canadian.

The show continues its international focus, with Malka saying “nowadays, songs cross borders faster than people.” Once again, she is alluding to the consumption of “worldly music” circa the 1960s, a time when “hundreds of popular music LPs promised virtual voyages around the world.”\footnote{Keir Keightley, “Un Voyage via barquinho … Global circulation, musical hybridization, and adult modernity, 1961-9,” in Migrating Music, ed. Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck (New York: Routledge, 2011), 113.} In the same episode, there is a performance of “Pepito” by a Mexican trio living in Montreal, Los Tres Compadres. After their first number, Malka asks them if they’ve ever thought of having a “girl singer” with them, and she and Joso join the trio for their second song, “Cielieto Lindo.” This is again a combination of musical and ethnic cultures that characterized 1960s cosmopolitanism: Malka and Joso are a mixed ethnicity, Canadian duo presenting the
show in English and singing in Spanish, with a Mexican trio living in Canada. In the next act, underneath a willow tree (see Figure 7), once more suggesting the pastoral aspects of folk culture, Malka and Joso perform a traditional Russian folk song called “Beryozka” which translates to “The Birch Tree.” Here, it is easy to see their appeal. The performance is in Russian and Joso sings with a brilliant operatic tenor. While it would have been easy for anyone to be overshadowed by Joso’s incredible vocal ability, Malka’s on-stage presence is equally captivating. She responds to his lines with by singing with liveliness and we see her moving naturally to the music, bringing an animated, almost theatrical quality to a harmonically simple, homophonic folk song. Malka and Joso’s high energy performances bring an imagined peasant or folk culture to life within the context of a modern, staged, highly-technologically mediated performance in Toronto.

**Figure 7:** Malka and Joso performing “Beryozka” underneath a willow tree in Toronto’s Edward Gardens. This episode aired on September 7, 1966 on CBC television.

Malka and Joso’s only performance in English for this episode is the song “I Will Wait for You,” from the 1964 French musical *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (*The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*). It was written by the French composer, Michel LeGrand and was an international
success in the 1960s. At the 38th Academy Awards 1966, “I Will Wait for You” was nominated for “Best Original Song.” The song was performed by many vocalists around the world, including Astrud Gilberto. Once again, this is a strategic choice. “I Will Wait for You was an internationally recognized, popular song that merged the English and French languages, at a time when Quebec separatist movements were rising in Canada. By broadcasting this song on national television, the CBC may have been trying to demonstrate how Canada was also a merger of Anglophone and Francophone cultures, notwithstanding the English-translated lyrics.

While the show appeared to celebrate diversity, Malka recalls that she and Joso were discouraged from giving an authentic “ethnic” music performance. Malka was asked by producers of the show to tone down her Israeli accent, after a girl in the CBC office said she couldn’t understand her.194 Malka responded by saying that in 11 years in Canada, only two people had been unable to understand her and that she refused to tone down the accent for them.195 She and Joso were also snubbed by CBC management, and told to learn how to sing and speak in English fast. 196 In Malka’s introduction to her book Joni Mitchell: Both Sides Now, she states “the mores of Colonial England were so deeply rooted in Canada in those days [1966] that almost as soon as the cultural epicentre of English Canada decided to promote cultures that were now penetrating its boundaries, it started to pull a Pygmalion on us, the ambassadors of those cultures.”197 Malka’s reference here to the Pygmalion effect tells us a lot about her experience. Here, she suggests that ironically, the framing of her and Joso as an ethnic Others was the reason

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195 Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Malka Marom, Joni Mitchell: In Her Own Words: Conversations with Malka Marom (Toronto: ECW Press, 2014), 12.
they were chosen for the show, but this differentiation was precisely what triggered their mistreatment when they refused to be remodelled and reshaped like Pygmalion.

The second episode viewed for this analysis titled “Josh White” aired on October 22, 1966. This time, Malka and Joso look significantly more polished. The program takes place in what appears to be a soundstage. Malka is wearing a sparkling evening gown with a coiffed up-do and Joso wears a tuxedo. Malka later changes into a different gown. This was also the first episode to be broadcast in colour. There are many significant performances in this episode that could be interpreted as seeking to promote an ethnically diverse Canada. For instance, Malka and Joso introduced the evening’s program after a performance by dancers from the Filipino Association of Canada. Two of the dancers later perform a traditional Philippine folk dance, called “Tinikling”. Tinikling originated in the Spanish colonial era and is the national dance of the Philippines. In this traditional folk practice, and on this episode of the show, the dancers step in and out of long bamboo sticks, imitating lovebirds. There is some irony in featuring a Filipino traditional dance, since the Philippines was under U.S. possession from 1898-1946.

The featured performer on this episode is Josh White, an African-American blues and folk singer and civil-rights activist, whom Malka calls a legend. White had previously performed as part of the Almanac singers with Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie. His presence on the show is significant, considering he was blacklisted in the U.S. during the McCarthy era. This explains why he was singing on a Canadian show, and his presence on the show implicitly highlights the difference between peace-keeping Canada from the United States, which was currently fighting a

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198 A World of Music, 6, “Josh White,” written by Alex Barris, aired October 22, 1966, on CBC.
war in Southeast Asia. Another significant choice for this episode was Malka and Joso singing the Beatles song “Michelle.” The choice of song demonstrates the show’s goals and perhaps the failures of the producers. One significant point is found in the lyrics: “Michelle, ma belle,” another instance of Anglo and Francophone cultures implicitly merging. The second point of interest is that the inclusion of a mainstream song by a band that defined 1960s youth culture, suggests that the producers were likely hoping to connect with young listeners. However, this was a poor choice as the Beatles were entering into their psychedelic period by 1966, and the song “Michelle” was almost two years old when this episode aired, making it, by the standards of the period’s rock culture, almost “old-fashioned.”

*A World of Music* did not receive great reviews. Dennis Braithwaite wrote, “[their] show is so inferior to Juliette’s as to make us all ashamed that we ever said a harsh word or harboured an unkind word about Our Pet [Juliette]” and called Malka and Joso “tacky, old-fashioned, cheap, and plain dreary.” By describing their show as “tacky,” Braithwaite may have been referring to the contrast of glamorous showbusiness qualities (for instance, evening gowns to demonstrate professionalism) on a thematically “folk” program. By calling the show old-fashioned, he was likely alluding to the fact that *A World of Music* was ultimately aimed at adult tastes, as musical cosmopolitanism tended to be an adult-oriented listening experience in the 1960s. Once *A World of Music* aired, a *Toronto Star* article read “judging from its opener, the CBC had better put in a call for Juliette and say they were sorry.” The show was cancelled after nine episodes despite “a lot riding on ‘A World of Music’ in terms of what CBC is all

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Here, “what CBC is all about” refers to the CBC’s efforts to promote Canadian cultural content that is more diverse and inclusive. On a later episode, go-go dancers were brought in to try and keep audiences watching. This indicates that while the CBC made attempts at fostering multicultural inclusivity as part of the 1960s state intervention in the arts, in this particular case it was not particularly successful. White singers and singer-songwriters who sang in English and had no ethnic markings were considered better indicators of quintessential “Canadiana,” while ethnic folk singers like Malka and Joso, tasked with representing a non-white ethnic Other, were cancelled. While Malka and Joso were sometimes referred to as “the Israeli” and “the Yugoslavian,” their presence on the CBC on a show titled A World of Music implied that they represented “the world.” Here, “the world” exists in direct contrast to Canadian hegemonic culture and values, and simultaneously marginalizes performers like Malka and Joso.

It appears that Malka and Joso were subject to Othering by the CBC. In addition to being told to learn English, their program went through several changes to try and appeal to audiences who were more familiar with stereotypically “Canadian” performances and mannerisms. For instance, Joso was asked to wear a toupee, to fill the gaps in his teeth, or to refrain from jutting out his hips in any way that might undermine his manhood. When Malka made attempts to correct the producers on cultural inaccuracies, such as, arrangements of a Greek song having the wrong rhythm on an incorrect translation of an Italian song, she was called a “stupid bitch.” Joso seemed more willing to accommodate the CBC’s requests, but as I have argued in the previous chapter, the gender inequality made him less vulnerable to criticism. The relationship

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205 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
between Malka and Joso showed some of the inequalities between men and women in the 1960s. Malka and Joso also had disagreements about how they would present their respective ethnicities on *A World of Music*. Joso seemed willing to abide by the CBC’s requests, perhaps for financial reasons. On the other hand, Malka was unwilling to compromise her artistic integrity, and would speak up to and challenge the producers.\(^\text{208}\) This strained their relationship, and the duo eventually separated in 1967. They honoured their Centennial commitments, where they represented Canada internationally and at Expo 67 in Montreal.\(^\text{209}\)

### 4.5 Cosmopolitanism vs. The Canadian Folk Canon

The labelling of Malka and Joso as “world music” or “ethnic folk” also segregated them from other Canadian folk performers. Unlike their white troubadour singer-songwriter peers, they were not known for singing in English or writing their own lyrics. However, artists like Gordon Lightfoot, with whom Malka and Joso they shared the 1964 Canadian Talent library album, would later help form a mainstream definition of canonized Canadian music, which was “gentle, introspective, and folk-based.”\(^\text{210}\) At the Canadian Centennial, both Lightfoot and Malka and Joso were chosen to represent Canada. Lightfoot wrote the CBC-Commissioned “Canadian Railroad Trilogy,” while Malka and Joso performed at the Canadian Centennial Ball (alongside Juliette, whose CBC show they had replaced the previous year) in London for Princess Margaret and recorded for the BBC. While Malka and Joso were working and representing Canada alongside many of the Canadian folk “greats” in the 1960s, they did not receive the same recognition for their contributions once the Centennial era faded.

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\(^\text{208}\) Ibid.


The Othering of Malka and Joso left them out of what Raymond Williams calls the selective tradition, in this case, the Canadian folk music canon. Raymond Williams’ analysis of culture proposes three types of cultural tradition: the lived tradition, the recorded tradition, and the selective tradition.\textsuperscript{211} As Williams asserts, cultural selection will always be governed by dominant class interests, inevitably leading to “a rejection of considerable areas of what was once a living culture” when the selective tradition is formed out of the recorded tradition.\textsuperscript{212} While non-white Canadians and immigrants like Malka and Joso were part of the 1960s Canadian music scene, they were excluded from dominant class ideals because they did not fit into historically hegemonic stereotypes of Canadian identity.

Malka and Joso are not credited with contributing to the formation of Canadian folk music, despite their popularity in Yorkville Village and, via their touring and TV work across, Canada. While the CBC may have wanted to promote diversity by awarding a show to Malka and Joso, ethnic musicians were clearly expected to cater to hegemonic tastes to be considered a success. Ethnic artists were expected to perform their ethnicity instead of their Canadian-ness. For instance, Malka was frequently asked if she carried a gun with her since she was Israeli, and Israel had just won the War of Independence.\textsuperscript{213} The highlighting of Malka and Joso’s ethnic backgrounds in the 1960s as different, new, or exciting ultimately lead to the near erasure of their contributions since they could not claim a “folksy,” or more stereotypically Canadian heritage. Once again, this paradox is reminiscent of the “Pygmalion” effect that Malka was referring to.

From studying these episodes of \textit{A World of Music}, Malka and Joso’s albums, and their performance career, we can see that they fit perfectly into a version of 1960s cosmopolitanism.

\textsuperscript{211} Raymond Williams, \textit{Raymond Williams on Culture & Society: Essential Writings}, (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014), 35.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid, 37.
\textsuperscript{213} Ralph Thomas, “Portrait of TV’s Prettiest Boss Lady,” September 24, 1966.
that was trending at the time. Unfortunately, once that version of musical cosmopolitanism went out of style, their ethnicities became more of a commercial disadvantage. Since Malka and Joso were marked as “world music” or “ethnic folk”, they were less able to portray Herder’s pastoral version of nationalistic folklore. This role was instead given to artists like Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot, since their version of folk music had much closer ties to Canada’s hegemonic values. Malka and Joso were tasked with representing minorities from around “the world,” while artists like Mitchell or Lightfoot only needed to represent Canada. In the 21st century, as Canada continues to claim a multicultural “mosaic” identity, artists like Malka offer a definition of Canadian music and heritage that is too often overshadowed and overlooked.
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Future Research

5.1 Conclusions

In this thesis, I have sought to situate Malka, an “ethnic” Canadian folksinger within the American Folk Revival, the Yorkville coffee house folk scene, and the Canadian music and culture scene in the mid-1960s. Malka’s folk-singing career began at a time when folk music and ethnic folk music had recently entered the mainstream. Precursors to her “ethnic” musical style such as Geula Gill helped to popularize ethnic folk music and promote an alternative, cosmopolitan definition of folk music. As I have contended, there are several definitions of folk music that contradict one another, despite all belonging to the “folk” genre. For instance, Malka and Joni Mitchell were both folk musicians in Yorkville, but Malka was considered an “ethnic” folk musician while Mitchell’s version of folk was not explicitly ethnically or racially marked.

Malka navigated the limited roles that were available to women in Yorkville and in mid-20th century North America. Although she married at age 17 like many young women of her era, Malka challenged the housewife role that was expected of her by also working as a singer and performer. Her career emerged at a time when ethnic minorities and immigrants were starting to be recognized in mainstream Canadian culture. During Malka’s years as a folksinger in Yorkville, she became a single mother (considered taboo at the time) and had to provide for her two young children. While Yorkville Village was positioned as a more inclusive, youth counterculture in contrast to the rest of Toronto and Canada, there were many hegemonic tensions at play. Young women, in particular, performers and women of colour like Malka, were often subject to mistreatment, harassment, and marginalization.

Malka and Joso’s musical career challenges canonical Canadian folk music by offering a cosmopolitan, “ethnic” folk alternative. By replacing Juliette with Malka and Joso, the CBC may
have been making an “ethnic pitch,” since Malka and Joso were representative of demographic changes happening in Canada at the time. On their CBC television show, *A World of Music*, Malka performed intersections of ethnicity and gender that were considered new, cosmopolitan, and trendy. Unfortunately, the marked nature of “ethnic” folk and their performance aesthetic ultimately became a source of marginalization, and that is likely why the show did not succeed. When ethnic difference was no longer considered a cosmopolitan trend in Canada, they did not fit into Canadian hegemonic stereotypes unlike their white troubadour, singer-songwriter peers.

On May 4, 1967, Malka and Joso announced their split in the *Toronto Star*. The decision came a few months after their CBC television show was cancelled. In my personal interview with Malka in 2020, she recalls that she never knew the true reasons why Joso initiated the split. The two remained friends until Joso’s death in 2017, at the age of 88. After Malka and Joso split, Malka became a solo singer, CBC TV and radio journalist, documentary filmmaker, and author of two books. She stayed lifelong friends with Joni Mitchell, whom she would interview over the course of almost 50 years. Malka also interviewed musicians like Leonard Cohen, Pablo Casals, and Nana Mouskouri. She currently resides in Toronto and Israel.

In 2019, I attended a docu-concert performance by Soulpepper theatre in Toronto titled *Riverboat Coffee House: The Yorkville Scene*. This was a musical-theatre production that documented performers in Yorkville coffee houses. I was pleasantly surprised to see the inclusion of racialized artists like Odetta and Buffy Sainte-Marie, but the majority of the songs were written by white Canadian folk artists. In another instance, I saw a poster inside of Toronto’s BMV books promoting a live music folk singalong (see Figure 8). It read “60s Folk

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216 Maureen Chow, personal web Interview with Malka Marom, November 22, 2020.
Revival: Where Have All The Folk Songs Gone?” The accompanying photographs were predominantly of mainstream Canadian folk artists (including, of course, Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot). The irony is that the event was held at Free Times Cafe, which serves Jewish and Middle Eastern fare. It is my hope that Malka and Joso can finally be included our 21st century understanding of Canadian folk music.

Figure 8: “60s Folk Revival” poster found at BMV Books in Toronto (September 21, 2019). Photograph by Dante Andrés-Kahan.
5.2 Future Research

While my work focuses on Malka’s career as a musical performer, there are many other ethnically or racially marked performers in the Canadian music scene that could be studied in a similar fashion. The first person that comes to mind is Joso, who performed alongside Malka but was not subject to sexism. Joso was a painter, sculptor, photographer, and musician who later became a prominent restauranteur in Yorkville after his folk singer career.\(^{217}\) I would also be interested in studying the career and protest songs of Indigenous Canadian singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie. Outside of folk music, a notable Canadian jazz singer of interest to me is Judi Singh, a Black-South Asian singer who had a prominent musical career from the 1950s to the 1970s in Edmonton.\(^{218}\)

In this thesis, I have written from a feminist perspective and would like to continue my studies of women and female musicians in the mid 20\(^{th}\) century who defied conventional housewife roles that were expected of them. Reflecting on what Gillian Mitchell has noted, many female singers in the Yorkville and Greenwich folk scenes performed with male performers such as Sylvia Tyson (née Fricker) from Ian & Sylvia, and Mary Travers of Peter, Paul and Mary.\(^{219}\) I am interested in comparing the careers of female folk performers who performed in a group, to those who performed solo such as Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, and Buffy Sainte-Marie.

I used many period newspapers to facilitate this study. As a former music journalist, I am interested in the role that journalists and cultural intermediaries may have had on shaping canonical Canadian music and cultural aesthetics. I am also curious about how race and gender


were represented by the media. I am interested in the formation of the white troubadour singer-songwriter aesthetics I have discussed in this thesis. Finally, I would also be interested in the media representation of other minorities and cosmopolitan trends in 20th century Canada that may have contributed to the Canadian cultural mosaic.
Bibliography


**Selected Discography and Audiovisual Recordings**


# Curriculum Vitae

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