

FOREWORD

*Çok insan anlayamaz eski musikimizden
Ve ondan anlamayan bir şey anlamaz bizden.*

Yahya Kemal

The importance of producing sense through experience and the imagination of sense making are both mirroring aspects reflected a crowded conceptual field, in ideas and forms of cognition, wisdom and understanding, sensibility, learning and tradition. The process of forming a cultural whole derives from a smaller or larger number of fundamental principles that are less or more complex. It involves themes, focal concerns and key symbols which turn the collections of meaning units into structures with some degree of coherence.

Musical culture holds a complex inventory of differentiated meanings with a complicated ordering that validates social institutions and norms. Though not a universal language, music communicates direct information to those who understand the language in which is couched and functions as a symbolic representation of other things, ideas, and behavior. As an overall phenomenon music is constructed in overt forms of expression that are rendered meaningful because human minds contain the instruments for interpretation.

To study Turkish musical culture is not only understanding the sounds and their production of intervals and pitches, but also construing the ideas which these experiences represent and the relations between the feelings produced by the interpretation of music, and envisioning the conceptualiza-

tion of various themes and styles of music. Another domain of the study of musical culture extends to the language about music, a metalanguage involving the plane of description and methodology. Propositions and values are carried together by the makers of music as well as by the writers about music, so that the entire cultural inventory of meanings is made accessible and spread over the society.

The volume at hand developed initially out of my continuous preoccupation with the written materials on music from the Ottoman period and the overall production of meanings in Turkish musical culture by and large. It is comprised of three essays which deal with the conceptual dimensions of music reflected in modes of thought, forms of externalization and their interrelations in the quest of cultural complexity. The essays draw upon the discussion of the concepts underlying the substance of each specific topic, and pursue the implications acquired with the changes in signification. Meanings operate in contexts and are determined by lesser or more complex notions people attach to things. In Turkish musical culture they bear the emphasis of a distinctive involvement condensed through achieved changes in the course of various epochs.

The first essay concerns the problem of musical notation as an imaginative device of musical literacy. The idea of writing down music with notes has been long time a preoccupation with the Turkish theorists of Ottoman period. When Western staff notation was introduced in Turkey, the old alphabetical notation lost relevance. The alphabetical method did not survive because it was an elitist invention with a limited social distribution not enough probed in actual practice. As for the

Western staff notation, this was by no means adjusted to the substance of expression of Turkish music. Thence the question of an adept notational system remained unresolved. In the same manner, the problem of an ideal notation is open today in the West for trends of contemporary music. The old time conflict between performers and writers of music is still an international quest. Many musicians have proposed innovations to improve the fidelity of the notational system with questionable results. It proves once more that musical notation *per se* is not an ideal method of communication utilizing visual devices to express aural concepts. Apart from this, the ambiguities existing between notators and interpreters of written music have created tensions at all time.

The second essay concerns the complexity of *mehter* music and its integration into the fabric of Turkish society in the Ottoman centuries. Seen in retrospect, the *mehter* appears as a unifying force in the political and social system of the overall Ottoman society with ramificated connotations. As an all-pervading aspect of life, the military band made available to the whole population of the Sultanate a wide array of concepts and values that people of all social strata carried together. The *mehter* was a vectorial dynamic agent of the formation and propagation of meanings within a multinational society sharing a combined cultural inventory. Their performances in time of war and peace were a part of Ottoman life cast across interrelated dimensions. Most above all the *mehter* was a unique affirmation of the meaning of *umma* as shared values and common concerns of the entire community.

The third essay tackles the understanding of intertextuality in musical writings relative to the cross-cultural exchange of values and ideas along with transmitted motifs and the ensuing reformulation of original models. The process of intertextuality is examined in some examples extracted from Turkish musical literature. Specifically, the analysis of textual transformations views musical writings as intertextual objects within a system of formal correlations. The activity of creating a text is then perceived to be a process of consummation of an original model in which the respective writer fixes the flux of separate elements into meaningful wholes in the overall structure of a new creation. Pursuing the dialogue with a series of former authors, the new author is a link in a long line of transmissions.

I have selected the above outlined topics for their meaningfulness in Turkish musical culture. As Yahya Kemal splendidly expressed in his poem, understanding music is a part of a larger process of the mind. It features the different ways people within Turkish society fathomed their ideas and made meanings accessible handing them down through an interfaced distribution of musical culture.

In concluding I extend my profound gratitude to Dr. Bülent Aksoy, who was so generous to take on the task to translate into Turkish the entire book and thank him from my heart for his impeccable translation. I also owe him much appreciation for his valuable observations and comments upon parts of the manuscript.

*Eugenia Popescu-Judetz
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