

THE ART OF TURKISH MUSIC

Turkey, rich in musical heritage, has developed this art in two areas, Turkish classical and Turkish folk music. When describing Turkish music today it is generally said that Ottoman composers availed themselves of the rich musical heritage found in the cultural centers of the Abbasid and the Timurogullari, where Turkish, Arab and Iranian musicians performed and created music known as Ottoman court music. This music was based on mode and human voices.

The mode and musical instruments of Turkish music can be found in all middle-east countries. However, with the passing of time, there have been changes in the mode from region to region. Although written sources indicate 600 modes, only 212 have survived to our day. These can be divided as follows:

1. Simple modes,
2. Combined modes,
3. Modes with changing pitch.

Through the centuries many instruments have been used in Turkish music, such as the ud, tanbur, kemence, ney, kanun, kudum, bendir, def, halile, lavta, santur, rebap, musikar, cenk and sinelkeman.

The various types of Turkish music differing in modes and pitch include tunes and spirituals and are classified as kar, murabba beste, agir semai, yuruk semai, sarki, pesrev, saz semai, taksim, gazel, ilahi and kaside.

Turkish music is also graded under the four headings below:

1. Non-religious music (with or without words),
2. Military music,
3. Mosque music,
4. Islamic mystic music.

The history of Turkish music, especially in regard to melodic variations, can be divided into four periods. The first is the formation which goes back to the years 1360-1453, when the Turks adopted Islam. After the conquest of Istanbul, but prior to the period of classical music, Ottoman music was influenced by Byzantine music, mainly in the years 1640-1712. The greatest proponents of the Ottoman style after the exemplary classical music created by Itri were Ebubekir Aga, Tab'i Mustafa Efendi, Kucuk Mehmet Aga, Sadulla Aga, Padisha III Selim and Ismail Dede Efendi. The period from 1955 onwards has been designated as the reform period.

Intended reforms in the field of music during the Republican period led to debates on the subjects of European, Turkish, polyphonic and monophonic music. During this period composers who were noted for their work included Refik Fersan, Cevdet Cagla, Sadettin Kaynak, Selahattin Pinar, Suphi Ziya Ozbekkan, Lem'i Atli, Rauf Yekta, Suphi Ezgi, Huseyin Saadettin Arel and others.

Currently, three groups represent Turkish music. The first group favors polyphonic music. The second group prefers an individual interpretation of classical music. Numbered among this group were the Nevzat Atlig chorus, Bekir Sidki Sezgin, Meral Ugurlu, Niyzi Sayin, Necdet Yasar, Ihsan Ozgen, Erol Deran, Cinucen Tanrikorur and others. The third group preserves traditional ties coupled with high quality and includes Yalcin Tura, Mutlu Torun, Ruhi Ayangil and others of the "new wave."

Turkish music is a product of Turkish thoughts and feelings and of migrations and changing geographical positions. It expresses the changes in the ways of life of the Turkish people throughout history.

Ballads and songs are especially important. Turkish folk music encompasses all natural and communal events. It branches out into "Kirik Hava" and "Uzun Hava" and makes use of wind, string, and rhythm instruments.

From 1926 onwards various state enterprises have conducted research into Turkish folk music.

In 1826, Sultan Mahmut II attempted to modernize the Turkish Army and organize a military band similar to the bands of western armies, and in 1828 the Imperial Band was founded.

After the proclamation of the Republic, the orchestra was renamed the Riyaseti Cumhur Musiki Heyeti, and in 1958 it was again renamed the Presidential Symphony Orchestra, its current title. The Music Teachers Academy was opened in 1924 and the Ankara State Conservatory in 1936. Today there are conservatories in both Istanbul and Izmir.

The flow of pop music from the west has also influenced Turkey, and since the 1960's Turkey has followed world trends and produced artists in this field of music.

Today, Turkish music is a fusion of classical art music, folk songs, Ottoman military music, Islamic hymns and the norms of western art music. Classical Turkish music is the courtly music of the Ottoman sultans that is an offspring of the Arabic and Persian traditions. This music is not written down in scores; with only the maquam, which is a similar pattern of major-minor scale system, being marked down. Improvisation (taksim) is a traditional variation technique, featuring the form. One of the characteristics of Turkish classical and folk music, as well as the military music and the hymns, is being monophonic. There are about 24 unequal intervals and almost numberless modes.

Aksak is the irregular meter typical to Turkish folk music. This metric pattern provides a rich texture to the doubles, triples and quadruples of time measures of the western music. The tradition of regional variations in the character of folk music prevails all around Anatolia and Thrace even today. The troubadour (singer-poets) contributed to this genre for ages anonymously.

Turkish military music of the Janissary Band influenced 18th and 19th century European music, with its percussive character, aksak rhythms and mystical tones. Inspired by the Janissary bands, both Mozart and Beethoven wrote Alla turca movements; Lully and Handel composed operas.

Western music became known in the 19th century because many foreign musicians visited Istanbul and performed concerts. Giuseppe Donizetti was one of them. He founded a band in 1831 after Sultan Mahmut II abolished the Guild of Janissaries in 1826.

The proclamation of the Republic in 1923 by Ataturk heralded a new era under his leadership. Turkey underwent such reforms that transformed her from an oriental empire to a western nation. In the early years, a group of talented young musicians was sent to European cultural centers for training. As they returned, they became the founders of modern Turkish art music. Conventional approach considers five of these composers, commonly called the Turkish Five as the first generation of the polyphonic school. Namely, Cemal Resit Rey (1904-1985); Ulvi Cemal Erkin (1906-1972), Hasan Ferit Alnar (1906-1978), Ahmed Adnan Saygun (1907-1991) and Necil Kazim Akses (1908-) are the members of this group. Their torch illuminated the way for successive generations. Their common aim was to use Turkish art and folk music tunes to compose in Western norms. Later compositions became more spontaneous in inspiration with each composer exhibiting the color and mysticism of folk tunes in his style. While direct inspiration becomes less and less obvious, the original tunes remain detectable nonetheless. The composition styles of some of the leading composers of polyphonic music can be explained in short such as:

Cemal Resit Rey (1904-1985) a pioneer among polyphonic Turkish composers, Rey is also known as a conductor, pianist and teacher. He is the founder of the Istanbul City Orchestra. He studied in Paris and Geneva becoming a student to Gabriel Faure. His compositions are all in a modal structure, tonal and melodic.

Ahmed Adnan Saygun (1907-1991) is a hallmark in Turkish music as a pioneer in polyphonic composition, an ethnomusicologist and an instructor. Saygun studied on pre-modal and modal music. His compositions are all in a modal structure but sometimes with a pentatonic character.

Ulvi Cemal Erkin (1906-1972), a pioneer of modern Turkish music, he was a composer, pianist and teacher. His works are a blend of elements that were drawn from Turkish folk dances, traditional modes, mystical Islamic philosophy and the norms of western music.

Bulent Arel (1918-1991) installed the electronic music studios at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Most of his works are derived entirely from electronic sound material.

Ilhan Usmanbas (1921-) belongs to the second generation of Turkish polyphonic composers. His first international success came with FROMM Music Award in the in 1955. His composing method is a direct

product of his eclecticism. His tools find a wide spectrum from neo-classicism to aleatory; 12-tone to serialism; blocs to minimalism.

Kamran Ince (1960), Aydin Esen(1962) and Fazil Say (1970) characterise the new generations of Turkish polyphonic music. Their compositions are quite eclectic with the traces of traditional Turkish music as well as the modern western trends, including the pop and jazz elements.

In Turkey, there are six state conservatories, four symphonic orchestras and three opera houses. Bilkent University has a private music school and a private symphonic orchestra in Ankara. Music festivals that are held yearly in Istanbul (for 25 years) and Ankara (for 14 years) are the members of European Festivals Associations.