

Zwischenzone Ost : Aus der Sicht der Komponisten

Onur Yildirim : „One of the biggest artistic challenges I have faced—as a Turkish composer of contemporary classical music—has a lot to do with the relatively young age of the Western European music tradition in Turkey. Due to Turkey’s distinctive geopolitical position in the world, a discussion of the country’s Europeanization process and its effects on the arts often goes beyond the anticipated friction stemming from the synthesis of two different artistic traditions.

Like many other young Turkish composers, I feel somewhat like a *musical immigrant*. Even though I am formally educated in Western classical music and more proficient in it than I can ever be in traditional Turkish music, I can’t fully embrace either genre as my own—much like a second generation immigrant who is used to hearing his/her native language in the household, yet prefers the language of the host country to talk about matters too intricate to be expressed in the limited vocabulary s/he inherited from his/her parents. Therefore, in most cases, the influence of traditional Turkish music in my work is comparable to a (slight) foreign accent rather than a component of a fully formulated synthesis.

While it is true that many other Eastern and South Eastern European countries are also relative latecomers to the Western classical genre, the presence of a fully developed Turkish/Ottoman art music tradition prior to the introduction of Western influence and its continuing practice alongside the Western classical style set Turkey apart from countries where Western classical music largely replaced whatever art music that was present before. The reality of the continuing practice of the Ottoman art music tradition is an issue that any modern-day Turkish composer of classical music has to reflect upon in one way or another, whether it takes the form of reaction, embracement or any other stance in between.

For the early classical music composers of the Republic of Turkey, the issue of European belonging was a bit less complicated. They had a clear vision of a “Western” Turkey and chose to disregard those elements which they thought were incompatible with it, such as Ottoman art music with its strong ties to the wider Islamic culture. Even though the forefathers of Turkish classical music produced some extraordinary works, their legacy hasn’t fully provided the current generation of Turkish composers with an established tradition that they can comfortably adopt and build upon.

Today, many young Turkish contemporary classical music composers, including myself, are once again interested in Ottoman music as well as many other aspects of the Ottoman culture. This revived interest is not necessarily something that emphasizes the non-European aspect of the Turkish identity in a reactionary way, but in some cases, it is actually a reinterpretation of Ottoman art music as a tradition which flourished in Southeastern Europe as much as it did in Asia Minor. While it is hard to talk about a general consensus among Turkish artists when it comes to the national ethos of Turkey, a common pattern arises: Many are—just like immigrants—in a state of constant, yet, in some ways, artistically stimulating confusion in regard to the place of Turkey in Europe.” - *September/November 2012*

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Panayiotis Kokoras : „The Italian writer and semiologist Umberto Eco said in Guardian newspaper some months ago: ‘we must remember that it is culture, not war, that cements our European identity’.

To that extent, although the last years Greece looks more and more distant to Europe, it cannot go that far. I feel nothing can defeat the European identity of Greece. It seems the European identity cannot be defined easily in geopolitical terms. It has been curved over centuries, even millenniums by values and ethics in society, art, politics and philosophy that no war can destroy.

Being both composer and Greek this identity crisis makes me wonder; am I member of a National (Greek) school in contemporary music today or am I member of the European contemporary music scene?“ - *Denton, 8 September 2012*

Helmut Oehring : „Ich stelle mir die Frage, wie sich Kunst in die Lebensfragen der Menschen einmischen soll. Darf. Oder muss. Das historische Gedächtnis spielt dabei eine entscheidende Rolle. Nicht nur als Katalysator. Inwieweit hat ein Künstler die Verpflichtung, wahrzunehmen, zu sehen, erkennen und zu reagieren. Oder einfacher gefragt: Wie weit darf er sich aus dem Fenster lehnen?“ - *aus: Mit anderen Augen, Verlag btb 2011*