

## **USING POPULAR MUSIC AS A MATERIAL FOR WESTERN FLUTE EDUCATION IN TURKEY\***

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### **Abstract**

Unlike music education systems in developed countries, today's Turkish music education system takes place mostly at the university level. This situation causes some critical issues in country's music education life. One of the major issues is; most music majors in Turkey begin learning western music, instruments, and theory after they are 18 years old. This causes critical gaps in music majors' musical achievements and future careers. Most music departments in Turkish universities also have a very limited environments for enhancing the musical atmosphere with such things as wind bands, masterclasses, group teaching sessions, symphonic instruments, and orchestras. General music education also lacks some essential classical music background and approaches as a starting point for classical music education. Through those major issues in music education; music educators should find their way to enhance and customize their education process in order to serve their students more effectively. The purpose of this study was to develop an approach which uses popular and cultural forms of Turkish music in a university-level flute education as a supplement to a classical repertoire in order to engage cultural diversity within music and/or instrumental education. Through the purpose of the study, a popular piece selected and instructive exercises were transcribed from the piece for improving students' desired technical or musical abilities.

**Keywords:** *Music Education, Flute, Cultural Diversity, Popular Music.*

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## Türkiye’deki Flüt Eğitimi İçin Bir Araç Olarak Popüler Müziğin Kullanılması

### Özet

Dünya’nın gelişmiş ülkelerinin müzik eğitim sistemlerinin aksine, Türkiye’deki müzik eğitim sistemi ağırlıklı olarak üniversite seviyesinde yoğunlaşmıştır. Bu durum, ülkenin müzik yaşamında çeşitli olumsuzluklara sebebiyet vermektedir. Bu olumsuzluklardan en belirgin olanı; öğrencilerin müzik teorisi ve çalgı eğitimlerine çoğunlukla 18 yaşından sonra başlamak zorunda olmalarıdır. Diğer taraftan, Türkiye’de eğitim veren birçok müzik bölümü de müzik atmosferini tamamlayıcı ve geliştirici olan nefesli sazlar, grup dersleri, ustalık sınıfları, senfonik sazlar ve orkestra olanakları gibi unsurlardan yoksun vaziyettedirler. Üniversite müzik eğitiminin temelini oluşturması gereken genel müzik eğitim kademesine baktığımızda da, üniversitelerde verilen klasik müzik eğitiminin temelini tam anlamıyla verilemediği görülmektedir. Bütün bu sorunların ve eksikliklerin doğrultusunda müzik eğitimcileri; öğrencilerine daha iyi bir eğitim vermek için eğitim süreçlerini ve dolayısıyla etkilerini geliştirecek yeni yaklaşımlar ve yöntemler aramak durumundadırlar. Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğrencilerin klasik çalgı repertuarlarına ilave olabilecek ve öğrencilerin günlük müzik tüketimlerini ve zevklerini de bu sürecin içine dâhil edebilecek alternatif bir yaklaşım önerisi geliştirmektir. Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda popüler bir müzik parçası seçilmiş, bu parçanın müziksel ve teknik öğeleri kullanılarak flüt tekniklerini geliştirici çalışmalar yazılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Müzik Eğitimi, Flüt, Kültürel Çeşitlilik, Popüler Müzik.*

### 1. Introduction

Today’s music education mostly arises from Kemal Ataturk’s Revolution period back in the early 1900’s in Turkey. After establishing Turkey’s first music teachers’ institution in 1924, Ataturk introduced a new music educational system in Turkey with the idea of “contemporary yet cultural”. Through the political, social, economic and cultural changes in the recent history, Turkey’s music education system has been affected in certain aspects. Even though Turkish music education is primarily based on Western classical music, K-12 schools have a very limited curriculum in regard to western music. This situation lowers the quality of music education standards, especially in the eastern regions of Turkey which lack a classical music.

As pedagogy develops around the World, most music educators become more involved in new approaches, ideas and methods related to music teaching. As a reality of today’s world, popular culture highly affects young generations, influencing their likes and expectations. Music educators around the world, especially in developed countries, are trying to understand the demands of

young people and trends in order to update their teaching styles and attract them back to the classroom. Examining and using popular music is one of those new approaches. It doesn't matter how and by which profession it is used, popular music and popular culture are trendy focus of educators all around the world.

Related to this main subject, many researchers/teacher around the world try to understand trending aspects of modern culture and take advantages of this understanding in their classroom. Dunbar-Hall's (1999) study focuses on analysing a popular music piece and developing popular music studies (pp. 40-55). Snell (2006) reviewed a book by Carlos Xavier Rodriguez, which examines the gap between popular music and the music education system (pp. 188-189) while Seifsried's (2006) study aims at understanding the impact of rock and popular teenage music on public school music education programs (pp. 168-177). Another study by Allsup (2011) carries out a study which examines the increasing demand for popular music in schools and different strategies for teaching this genre to classically-trained music teachers (pp. 30-34). Green's (2006) study discusses popular music and its effects in classroom (pp. 101-118) also Freer (2011) discusses popular music, teaching and learning processes in his article (pp. 28-29). Grashel (1979) aims at developing and evaluating instructional strategies using popular music and selected band literature to teach concepts of musical form to intermediate instrumentalists (pp. 185-191). Hebert and Campbell (2000) also discussed rock and popular music's effects on music curricula (pp. 14-22)

## **2. Method**

This research was conducted at the Erciyes University College of Fine Arts School of Music. Sampling was limited as the flute studio consisted of only 11 students. A semi-structured interview was designed for the research. Collected data was coded with a qualitative open coding method. Emerging results were discussed. Through the responses from the students, it was decided to choose from songs by the Turkish pop singer BarisManco. His song "GibiGibi" was selected for use in this study. After examining the song, the instrumental intro was extracted to be used as a material for flute education. Using the melodic and technique characteristics of the song, the following flute techniques were defined for arranging new exercises; single tonguing, double tonguing, legato, grace notes and fingerings. At the end of the study, 3 sample exercises were arranged for use in a western flute education program.

### **3. Music education in Turkey**

Historically, formal music education in Turkish culture goes back to the Seljuks and Ottomans (Ucan, 2005). Over time, the Ottoman Empire became more involved with western culture, not only in social, political, and economic aspects, but also in music. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century could be considered as a westernization era of the Ottoman Empire. Sultan Mahmud 2<sup>nd</sup> was one of the pioneers of cultural and social revolutionists in Turkish history, not only for his revolutionary changes in politics and military but also for his drastic reforms in musical atmosphere of the country. In the 1830's, a military band known as "Muzika-iHumayun" directed by the Italian composer Giuseppe Donizetti started a new musical tradition which included both traditional Turkish music and Western music in their repertory. Second most important change in music history of Turkey was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's music reform through his Revolution. In this era, music teachers' institution's establishment was the milestone of young republic's music education future. This institution started a new process of training young music teachers and spreading them around the country to train new Turkish generation. However, by the time music education couldn't maintain the standards that Atatürk had defined for a modern music education.

Today's music education in Turkey can be divided into two main stages: K-12 general music education and university-level music education. In Turkey, K-12 general music education is supervised by the National Ministry of Education while university-level music education is supervised by the Council of Higher Education. K-12 general music education includes a basic knowledge of Western and Turkish music theory, basic music history, Western and Turkish songs. Additionally it incorporates the use of soprano recorder, melodica, guitar (pop style), and electronic keyboard in classes. However, limiting it to 1 to 2 hours a week makes it difficult to develop a comprehensive western music background for the students.

#### *3.1. Instrumental education in Turkey*

Most K-12 schools in Turkey lack effective music education and instrumental education programs. Government schools have their music education on very limited class hours in limited music environments. Orchestral

and traditional Turkish instruments mostly lack in music classes, thus ensemble playing is also very rare or limited to a few instruments. Many educators and researches attribute this to different reasons. One of the most significant reasons is the unsystematic music curricula which are determined by music council assigned by government. This is compounded by the gap between traditional Turkish culture and western music culture. On the other hand, while university-level institutions are more active in terms of the music education, starting a professional music education at the university is too late for many students which lead to students' future musical adequacy and musical identity problems.

In Turkey, most university music students whom major in music education or performance, excluding those studying in conservatories; start their education without any professional instrumental training or with a very limited knowledge of western instruments. This situation creates major problems for the entire music education system to deal with. The gap between the western music culture and the traditional Turkish culture is another major issue that the Turkish music education system faces. Additionally, Turkey's different regions, including both urban and rural areas, are vastly different from each other in terms of economic conditions, social life, cultural texture, and the demand for fine arts. Consequently, achieving world standards in music education becomes difficult, sometimes impossible. Considering these circumstances, a question emerges: how could instrumental education be supported within the existing music education system in Turkey?

#### **4. Interview findings**

Subjects in this semi-structured interview were flute students at the Erciyes University College of Fine Arts School of Music. As its characteristics, Erciyes University students mostly come from Kayseri area and closer regions which are located to middle Anatolia part of the Turkey which makes the cultural layer of the university much more local and traditional. Nevertheless music school's social profile tends to be more social and urban style although city's limited social/cultural diversity. Thus flute students were interested in and willing to participate when they learned about the purpose and main goals of the study.

The interview consisted of 7 questions and was designed for collecting students' basic demographic information, music listening preferences and their opinions about using popular music as a material for flute education. Interviews

were recorded with a voice recorder; collected data was transcribed and coded. Emerging concepts were discussed and led to a sample popular music piece transcription for use in flute education.

Participants (N = 11) comprised; 5 freshmen, 1 sophomore, 2 juniors, and 3 seniors. One of the students was male while 10 of them were female. Six of the students had flute playing experience between 1 and 3 years prior to beginning as music major at Erciyes University while 5 of them had experience between 5 and 8 years.

Table 1. Families' music genre preferences

<b>Category</b>	<b>Genres</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>f</b>
Turkish Music	Folk	8	26%
	Turkish classical	7	23%
	Pop	7	23%
	Arabesque	2	6%
	Rock	1	3%
	Protest	1	3%
Western Music	Pop	2	6%
	Classical	1	3%
	Rock	1	3%

Table 1 shows that students' families mostly listen to Turkish Music genres. Their listening preferences significantly focused on traditional genres which were folk music and Turkish classical music as the 3<sup>rd</sup> mostly listened preference was Turkish pop music. These results were probably related to their cultural identifications and a limited western music atmosphere in that region. Especially the central part of Turkey has a characteristic cultural texture which still preserves traditional colors in every aspect of daily life like musical preference. Our music school's student profile mostly consists of the students coming from central Turkey; consequently their musical background is mostly structured with Turkish genres. As seen in Table 2, compared to their parents,

students prefer much more Pop and Rock than Turkish classical and folk music. The students also seemed to listen to more Western music genres than their parents, related to their western classical music interactions in the school. When they were asked “why they prefer the music genres that they listened to”; students pointed one common reason: “we learned from each other and teachers, we also search from internet”. This answer emphasizes the importance of interactions and popular information trends in learning process. Thus, teachers’ relations and empathizing with their students plays the key role on attracting them to the learning environment. Another reason was “they listen to a particular genre, because they like to”, which showed us, liking a “music” is one of the basic reasons of spending time with that music. In the instrumental education, liking and understanding the music which is played, is very important for achieving success. Through the purpose of this study, bridging students’ “likes” and “interests” with their instrumental education involves finding out students musical preferences.

In the “informal” part of the interview, some students claimed that; their parents and other family members tend to learn/listen to different music genres such as classical, jazz and western easy listening. 2 of the students also told that their family members learn musical terms, instrumental technique related words with their children, mostly when they practice at home and during holiday times. This information shows us that; students interest and effort on their instruments and area, draws attention from their relatives, mostly from family members. On this point, the importance of educating students properly and attracting them with different teaching methods is one of the key points of transforming the society culturally in a positive way.

Table 2. Students' music genre preferences

Category	Genres	n	f
Turkish Music	Pop	11	22%
	Rock	7	14%
	Folk	6	12%
	Turkish classical	4	8%
Western Music	Pop	5	10%
	Classical	5	10%
	Rock	4	8%
	Movie	4	8%
	Jazz	3	6%

The next stage of the research was to decide a sample piece that students know popularly and arrange it for educational use. In this stage; students' preferences, piece's musical structure, defined goals for using that piece were all important for turning a popular piece into an educational material effectively.

When students asked about the idea: "using popular music as a material for flute education", most of the students were interested in this idea in an approving manner. I told them about the philosophy of the study and its purposes, what it aimed to change and what other ideas could be implemented from this basic idea. Students seemed interested in this idea and almost all of them got curious about how this method could contribute their flute education. Since there has been a common prejudice about popular music, especially in the Classical music community and from an academic standpoint, students were willing to participate in such a learning experience. Summary of their comments were brief;

Student 1: It's interesting, I mean different. I haven't heard about such a teaching idea!

Student 2: Sir, this could be fun and useful for us.

Student 3: I think it would be worth it to try this because this is a different idea. We like trying different things; I hope we can do it.

Student 4: Wow! This sounds wonderful and wouldn't be boring like the daily exercises. To be honest, I sometimes have difficulties keeping on the track

## Using Popular Music as a Material for Western Flute Education in Turkey

with my daily routine. It is hard to bear when they are both difficult and boring. I would love to try something more fun and light. I can also continue practicing the other stuff but this new idea can make me relax when I get bored.

Student 5: Sir, this could be fun to play and practice, especially when we have to spend more time on them. I usually can't keep repeating technical etudes too long.

Student 6: I am sure that kind of exercises and routines would enrich our flute studio's repertoire. Nice idea! Student 7: This could spice up our boring daily exercises if there are nice examples in it.

Student 8: This could be more effective than the boring stuff.

Student 9: Are you planning to change all of the exercises to those?

Researcher: No! This is planned to be additional material for our curriculum.

Student 9: O.k. So it depends on the context, we will see!

Student 10: It may not be better than French methods but it could be tried. Didn't they write almost everything for the flute? (Smiling in a humorous manor)

Student 11: This sounds innovative and also different. This is the first time I have heard of using popular music for a classical instrument! Teacher generally hate when we play popular songs on our instruments (Talking for the general)

The highlights from students' comments showed that; they were open to my new idea to be used in their flute classes. As I explained them the idea and told them about my intent to enhance their flute learning and practicing process, they became more supportive and curious about this approach. While collecting their thoughts about the purpose and method of the study, I also witnessed their willingness to be participating in new learning approaches with my supervision. Even though this study was an offer about this alternative approach to a technique developing process in their instrumental education, most of the students also discussed their additional positive ideas and piece offerings for the further studies. Majority of them were mostly aware of the cultural differences between their environment and music they make. Thus an idea which blends cultural/popular essence with the traditional instrumental technique could be interesting for them.

In The last interview question, the students were asked to choose a singer for an example piece to transcribe for the flute education. Before receiving their responses, I made an explanation about how I will use the information about a singer in the study. I told them about the procedure from selecting a song, analysing and cropping it if needed, defining techniques that will be used to be developed, to turning it into simple exercises. Before they answered, they were all knew that this answers should be reflecting their listening preferences in their daily life. Responses were around 5 singers; all singers were popular and singing pop/rock music in general. Sertap Erener and Barış Manço were the mostly selected singers while Barış Manço was on the top of the list. Their responses are shown in the Table 3. After the receiving their responses, the highest-rated name, BarisManco, was determined as a subject of exercises. His songs were examined to find a suitable one to start with. After examining a number of his songs and evaluating them in terms of technique, musical structure, and applicability, *Gibigibi* was selected from numerous of pieces.

Table 3. Students' singer preference to be developed as a sample for use in flute education

<b>Singer</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>f</b>
Barış Manco	4	36%
Sertap Erener	3	27%
Sıla	2	18%
Kıraç	1	9%
Teoman	1	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **5. Popular music sample to be used in flute education**

The last stage of this study also represents the main idea of the study. This section involves implementing the philosophy behind the purposes which aimed at “Finding a way between daily music consumption and flute practice of the students”. The importance of this part is maintaining a balance while choosing a piece and transcribing it for desired techniques in an effective and useful way. This procedure may not be consistent and effective on every piece of the same composer/singer. Piece selection should be completed carefully

concerning the purposes. Two different approaches can be applied during this process. The first one is selecting emerging techniques from the piece; the second one is selecting pieces in the context of pre-defined techniques. Both approaches can be used either individually or together regarding to the workflow. Pieces should be examined carefully and purposefully in order to extract correct passages which could create a musical/technique sequences without losing its original essence. Created exercise should include both technical/musical aspects and the musical taste of the original piece at the same time as much as it can. While doing this, teacher can inspect regarded method or etude books to get an idea for a proper exercise structure. Teacher could also use variation of different and combined articulations as well as modulations and register changes. In the end, produced exercises would become a fun yet constructive addition to teachers customized flute program. These exercises could be varied according to students' different likes and different pieces in the future.

This procedure consisted of selecting a song, defining target musical subjects and techniques, and transcribing the selected song in a way that would foster improvement of the target musical subject or technique. BarisManco's song *Gibigibi* was transcribed from the newer version because of its clearer sound and high quality recording. The intro section of this song, which was originally played on flute, was extracted from the whole piece. Intro section was originally scored for flute, which made transcription process easier. The extracted intro section included some techniques and musical subjects which made our choice more useful for the purpose of this study. The intro starts with 16<sup>th</sup> notes in whole step and half step intervals around a repeating E<sub>5</sub>. The first 4 measures have combined double tonguing and legato techniques. The rest of the intro has combined staccatos and slurs in descending melodic patterns. This second part of the intro also has grace notes within the second octave, a fairly easy exercise to start with.

Afşın Öner

**Gibi Gibi\***

Bariş Manço

The musical score for 'Gibi Gibi\*' is presented in a single system with six staves. The first staff is labeled 'Intro' and contains six staves of music. The first three staves of the Intro are in 6/8 time and feature a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The last three staves of the Intro are in 4/4 time and feature a simpler rhythmic pattern. Exercise 1 is a single staff of music in 4/4 time, consisting of a sequence of eighth notes. Exercise 2 is a single staff of music in 4/4 time, consisting of a sequence of sixteenth notes. Exercise 3 is a single staff of music in 4/4 time, consisting of a sequence of eighth notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

\*From Baris Manco's studio album "Mancoloji" released in 1999

Figure 2. Music sample and exercises

As shown in the Figure 2, three different exercises were written using the rhythmic and melodic ideas of the intro. The first exercise is derived from the main 5 notes of the melody. Similar to Taffanel&Gaubert's (1958) fingering exercises, this exercise has challenges such as; fingering equality, 2<sup>nd</sup> octave D fingering, 2<sup>nd</sup> octave F<sup>#</sup>-G<sup>#</sup> fingering position, and quality of tone (p. 49) . This exercise should be played both slurred and tongued. Fingerings should be even and confident without losing the tone quality. One of the most important part of producing consistent tone on the flute is, holding flute in balance no matter which finger position the player is in. When the player plays between different notes, this situation becomes more difficult because of the changing fingers. Players' fingers should be moving freely regardless of the number of the moving fingers. Thus players should develop their fingering skills, especially on difficult-to-hold positions with practicing specialized exercises. "Exercise 1" especially focuses on a critical holding and position of the flute. On this fingering position, two weakest fingers of the right hand make a cross movement which are; ring finger and pinky. With this exercise, students can focus on desired fingering and improve their movements. Second half of this exercise also focuses on the left hand weak fingers. On this part especially G<sup>#</sup>-A interval is the most important focus point which requires moving both weak

fingers equally together. Students can concentrate on equality of their fingers and achieve evenness practicing this exercise as well as the other exercises from different method books.

The second exercise is derived from the main musical and rhythmic pattern. This exercise reflects the original melodic pattern much more than the “Exercise 1” The main pattern was arranged as a three measure double tonguing exercise which has a repeating E between D and F, aimed at developing clear and even double tonguing using the advantage of repeating notes. Practicing “Double tonguing” on repeating notes is one of the tricky part of developing this technique. On double tonguing technique, one should reach a balanced, equally articulated and sounded tongue movements as well as producing a good tone. This is why repeating notes are very suitable for listening yourself playing “te-ke” and trying to attack both movement of the tongue freely and equally. This exercise should be played at a slow tempo with good control of tone and tonguing. Tonguing and fingering should be even and smooth. The tempo should be increased as the technique improves.

The third exercise focuses on grace notes around descending quarter notes. This exercise is derived from the last part of the intro section. While grace notes are placed between quarter and eighth notes/two quarter notes, in the original piece, I only used them between quarter notes which are more suitable to start with. Placing grace notes before/between quarter notes gives player enough time to understand what they play yet progressive enough to keep things going and placing them in music. In the exercises, grace note examples are limited to 4 different patterns; this could be chromatically extended to the all three octaves as desired. This is a simple exercise which would be suitable for beginners whom are new to grace notes and ornamentation. This exercise should be played with a slow tempo until developing a good tone and equal/precise finger movements. Player should avoid accenting on the notes excursively which may cause playing longer than their proper durations.

## **6. Conclusions**

As technology pervades the Turkey, music students around the country become able to share with different cultures, making them more confident, social and globalized. Therefore, a shared culture which is broadly called “popular” grows bigger in Turkey day by day. Most music educators are aware

of this new picture of the popular world which breaks traditional boundaries also in music as well as the other areas. Since it's difficult to isolate students from that interesting new shared culture, it may be more useful to understand recent changes and customize our educational principles accordingly. This study selected researcher's flute studio as a sample for using popular music as educational material. After telling them about the purpose of the study; students were mostly interested in this idea. A song was selected and 3 sample exercises were written for a purpose similar to those used in internationally accepted traditional method books. Preparing 3 simple exercises from the intro part of a popular piece showed us that, any purposeful exercise or melodic sequence could easily be produced using different musical pieces from different genres. The procedure involves blending teacher's musical and instrumental experience with students' likes and musical preferences. Many different techniques could be transcribed from popular pieces. They can be a good addition to students' daily routine. This study showed that, from a careful and professional point of view, any instructor could customize their curricula towards their student profile, culture and music education standards, which could make lessons more fun and attractive for them.

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Using Popular Music as a Material for Western Flute Education in Turkey

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