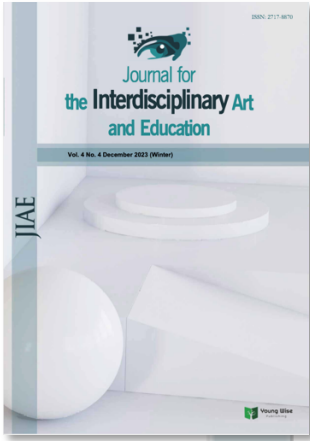




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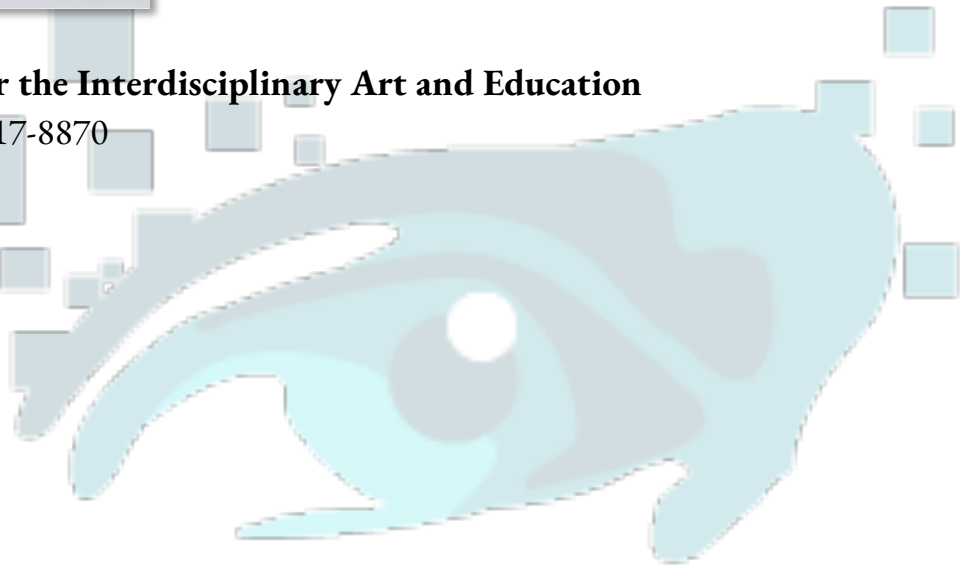
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# Interdisciplinary ART & EDUCATION





## Research Article

# Determining of the voice training students' mindfulness levels

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### Abstract

In this study, which was conducted to determine the mindfulness levels of voice training students, the sample consisted of 120 students who continued their education in state universities in the 2022-2023 academic year and were willing to participate in the study. The data were collected by e-survey method with demographic information and Mindfulness Scale (MAAS). In the analysis of the data, the data of the e-survey from the link sent to the voice educators at the universities in and outside the province of Istanbul to apply to their students were brought together on the google forms system and percentage frequency analyzes were taken. In addition, ANOVA test was applied to the data, t-test was applied, correlations were analyzed and standard deviations were calculated. There was no significant difference in mindfulness levels according to class levels. 30% were at low income level, 50% were at middle income level and 20% were at high income level. In the sample group, there were the least participants from the Southeastern Anatolia Region and the most participants from the Marmara Region. Participants from the Aegean region had a high level of mindfulness. Looking at the average scores of voice training students' perceived mindfulness levels, it can be said that  $\bar{X}=3.90$ , which is at a medium level but partially at a high level of mindfulness. According to gender, the mean mindfulness scores of female students ( $\bar{X}=3.9722$ ) were higher than those of male students ( $\bar{X}=3.7986$ ); when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to their age and classes in the faculty, all of them were at the Partially high-Moderate level; when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to their family income level, all of them were at the Partially high-Moderate level, but the mindfulness level of the students at low income level was lower than that of the students at high income level; when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to the region where they were born, the Eastern Anatolia region was the lowest ( $\bar{X}=3.2000$ ) and the highest in the Aegean region ( $\bar{X}=4.5244$ ); when analysed of the mindfulness levels of the students according to the institution they studied, it is seen that the Faculty of Education students ( $\bar{X}=3.9904$ ) have higher scores than the conservatory students ( $\bar{X}=3.7515$ ).

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## Introduction

Mindfulness has its origins in the 2500 year old ancient Buddhist tradition. Buddhism is the most psychological of all spiritual traditions (Smith, 1991; cited in Wallece & Shapiro, 2006). Buddhism has different stages and two main forms of meditation originate from them: Vipassana (insight) and Samatha (concentration and tranquility) (Ögel, 2012). Vipassana is the oldest of the Buddhist meditation teachings and involves being aware of what is happening at the very

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moment it is happening. Samatha, on the other hand, is a state in which the mind rests, focuses only on one point and is not allowed to wander elsewhere (Kinay, 2013).

Mindfulness, according to Kabat-Zinn (1994), is paying purposeful, nonjudgmental attention in the present moment; according to Linehan (2015), it is the ability to focus the mind on the present moment in a nonjudgmental way, open to the flow of the moment; according to Germer et al. (2005), it is being aware of the experience of the present moment in a friendly, kind, nonjudgmental and accepting way; Bringing full attention to the experience of the present moment with acceptance and compassion according to Marlatt and Kristeller (1999); directing the focus of attention to the experience of the present moment with open curiosity and acceptance according to Bishop et al. (2004).

Mindfulness is directing one's attention to one's immediate internal and environmental experiences without judgment (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). When we are mindfully aware, we are more aware of the present and simply observe our thoughts, feelings and emotions without feeling the need to react to or change them (Fulwiler & de Torrijos, 2011). Many philosophical, spiritual and psychological traditions emphasize the importance of the quality of mindfulness for achieving and enhancing well-being (Kabat & Zinn, 2000; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004; Lykins & Baer, 2009; Mayer, 2000). The most common definition of mindfulness is the state of being attentive and aware of what is happening in the present moment (Brown & Ryan, 2003).

Mindfulness moments have certain commonalities regardless of where on the continuum they are practiced. According to Germer, Siegel and Fulton (2005), moments of mindfulness are;

- Nonconceptual: Mindfulness is a state of awareness that occurs without going through thought processes.
- present- centered: Mindfulness is always in the present moment. Our thoughts about what we experience are one step removed from the present moment.
- Nonjudgmental: If we want things to be different from what they are, mindfulness does not arise freely.
- Intentional: Mindfulness always requires attention directed to a specific place. Redirecting attention back to the present moment gives mindfulness continuity over time.
- It requires participant observation: Mindfulness is not a disinterested observation outside of events, but a closer feeling of mind and body.
- Nonverbal: The experience of mindfulness is not in the thrall of words, because mindfulness occurs before words arise in the mind.
- Exploratory: Mindfulness is always exploring finer levels of perception.
- Liberating: Mindfulness provides freedom from conditioned grief at every moment (cited in Özyeşil, Arslan, Kesici, Deniz, 2011).

Kabat-Zinn (2009). He listed the basic attitudes in mindfulness in seven categories. These attitudes and their characteristics are listed below.

*Nonjudgmental:* We have generalized judgments about our experiences. We have a labeling and classification for almost everything we see. We classify and categorize many emotions, experiences and things around us as "good", "bad", "normal". However, the habit of categorization and judgment in our lives traps us in automatic reactions and we cannot be fully aware and unbiased. It is the awareness of these judgments that can control the stress in our lives. With mindfulness exercises, when we realize that we are judging something in our minds, we don't have to stop it immediately. The only need is to be aware of what is going on in our minds and not to judge our judgments, because this can make everything more complicated (Özyeşil, 2011).

*Patience:* Patience is accepting and understanding that everything happens in its own time. Getting caught up in future plans and expectations will stress one out. The best time for a person is the present. Often our thoughts greatly influence our perception of the present moment and cause us to lose touch with present reality. To be patient is to be open to each moment and each situation and accept it as it is.

*Beginner's Mind:* Often beliefs, culture and societal and personal values get in the way of perceiving reality as it is. It is the "beginner's mind" that enables us to see everything as if it is happening for the first time in order to see the richness

of the present moment. The beginner's mind, with the curiosity of a child, enables us to perceive what is around us and what we experience as if we are experiencing it for the first time, and therefore independent of judgments, as it is.

*Trust:* Developing a basic sense of trust in oneself and one's feelings is an important feature of meditation training. This attitude enables one to be oneself and make choices according to one's own wishes and thoughts without being dependent on any authority. Through mindfulness practices, one learns to take responsibility for being oneself, to trust one's own existence and to listen to it (Özyeşil, 2011).

*Non-Striving:* People often act with plans and goals in their lives. They constantly strive, struggle and plan for their expectations. However, this is contrary to the essence of mindfulness. With mindfulness, one learns not to strive for anything, to observe and just watch the passage of thoughts and feelings. If you are practicing mindfulness in order to achieve something; if you meditate in order to "get better", "relax", "become an enlightened person", etc., again, this is doing one thing for another, and this is contrary to the nature of mindfulness.

*Acceptance:* Acceptance is an important element of mindfulness that enables a person to cope with problems that arise from refusing to accept thoughts, feelings and situations such as fear, anxiety, sadness, depression, physical pain or difficulties in relationships (Siegel, 2008). Mindfulness enables us to accept and see things as they are and this leads to well-being.

*Letting Go:* When a person pays attention to his/her inner life, the mind discovers that there are certain thoughts, feelings and states that it wants to hold on to, and if these are satisfactory, these feelings and states are tried to be maintained and increased (Özyeşil, 2011). This is not the case when these feelings and states are undesirable; we constantly fight to get rid of them and try to get rid of them. However, this fighting is contrary to the essence of mindfulness as mentioned earlier, and through mindfulness practice, we learn to give up this struggle and let go of our mind.

### **Problem of Study**

This study was conducted to determine the level of mindfulness of voice training students. The study started with the hypothesis that voice training is an abstract training and is related to our mood and psychological flexibility because the instrument is inside our body. For this reason, the author wanted to investigate the mindfulness levels of voice training students.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

In the present study, survey technique, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. The data were collected by e-survey method with demographic information and Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). In the analysis of the data, the data of the e-survey from the link sent to the voice educators at the universities in and outside the province of Istanbul to apply to their students were brought together on the google forms system and percentage frequency analyzes were taken. In addition, ANOVA test was applied to the data, t-test was applied, correlations were analyzed and standard deviations were calculated.

### **Participants**

The sample of the study is a group of 120 students who continue their education in education faculties and conservatories from state universities in the 2022-2023 academic year and who are willing to participate in the study. The population of the study consists of all voice education students. Of the students participating in the study, 60% were female and 40% were male. Their ages varied between 18 and 24 years. 16.6% of the students were 1st grade, 41.6% were 2nd grade, 16.6% were 3rd grade, 25% were 4th grade, and 1.6% were graduate students (See Table 1).

**Table 1.** Showing the percentage frequency analysis of students' sociodemographic characteristics

Variations		N	%
Gender	Female	72	60
	Male	48	40
Class Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	20	16,6
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	50	41,6
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	20	16,6
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	28	25
	Master's Degree	2	1,6
Income Level	Low	36	30
	Medium	60	50
	High	24	20
Participants' Region of Birth	Central Anatolia Region of Turkiye	3	2,5
	Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkiye	6	5
	Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkiye	2	1,6
	Mediterranean Region of Turkiye	13	10,8
	The Black Sea Region of Turkiye	18	15
	Aegean Region of Turkiye	30	25
	Marmara Region of Turkiye	48	40
Studying Institution	Education Faculty	76	63,33
	Conservatory	44	36,66

It was determined that 60% of the students participating in the study (n: 120) were female, 40% were male, 41.6% were mostly second graders, and 50% had a medium income. The birthplace of 40% of the students was Marmara region, which is the majority. Participants from the Aegean region had a high level of mindfulness. 63.33% of the participants are studying at the Faculty of Education.

**Figure 1.** Regions of Turkiye

### Data Collection Tool

#### Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

The demographic information form prepared by the researcher to learn the personal information of voice education students and the MAAS developed by Brown and Ryan (2003) were used as data collection tools. The original name of the scale is Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and it was adapted into Turkish by Özyeşil et al. (2011). It is a 15-item scale that measures the general tendency to be aware of and attentive to momentary experiences in daily life.

The MAAS Turkish Version has a single-factor structure and yields a single total score. High scores on the scale indicate high levels of mindfulness. MAAS is a 15 item scale that measures the frequency of individuals' states of awareness in daily life. The MAAS is a 6-point scale (almost always, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, quite rarely, almost never). It is a Likert-type scale. The validity and reliability results for the MAAS show that the MAAS is a highly valid and reliable measurement tool. The scale adapted to Turkish culture can be one of the convenient tools for



determining mindfulness in an individual's behaviors Özyeşil et al. (2011). The internal consistency coefficient of the scale is .82. The item factor loadings for each item of the MAAs ranged between .48 and .81, and the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .80 and the test-retest correlation was calculated as .86 (Özyeşil, 2011).

Level of mindfulness and its scores are below;

1.00-1.82 Very Low

1.83-2.65 Low

2.66-3.48 Partially Low-Moderate

3.49- 4.31 Partially high-Moderate

4.32-5.14 High

5-14-6.00 Very high

**Procedure**

MAAS was administered via e-survey method. The data were collected from the students of the voice education departments of the faculties of education and conservatories where the research was conducted by e-survey method. The data collection form was sent by the researcher as an e-survey link to the voice educators at the universities and received online from all of them within a period of 1 month for them to apply it to their students.

**Descriptive statistics of participant’s mindfulness level according to their characteristics**

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of mindfulness levels according to their characteristics of the participants (Voice Training Department Students)

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Mindfulness Level</b>
Female	3.9722	72	.73113	Partially high-Moderate
Male	3.7986	48	.75544	Partially high-Moderate
<b>Age</b>				
18 years	3.7267	20	.83095	Partially high-Moderate
19 years	4.0627	50	.74169	Partially high-Moderate
20 years	3.7900	20	.69695	Partially high-Moderate
21 years	3.7667	28	.67611	Partially high-Moderate
23 years	4.8667	1	.	Out of evaluation
24 years	4.5333	1	.	Out of evaluation
<b>Class in Faculty</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	3.7267	20	.83095	Partially high-Moderate
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	4.0627	50	.74169	Partially high-Moderate
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	3.7900	20	.69695	Partially high-Moderate
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3.8289	30	.69540	Partially high-Moderate
<b>Income</b>				
Low	3.6389	36	.52575	Partially high-Moderate
2.00 Moderate	3.9722	60	.77720	Partially high-Moderate
High	4.1250	24	.84312	Partially high-Moderate
<b>Region</b>				
Aegean	4.5244	30	.86476	High*
Marmara	3.7819	48	.56010	Partially high-Moderate
Mediterranean	3.6256	13	.44517	Partially high-Moderate
Black Sea	3.7519	18	.60187	Partially high-Moderate
Central	3.4444	3	.37908	Partially Low-Moderate
Eastern	3.2000	6	.67462	Partially Low-Moderate
Southeastern	3.4333	2	.61283	Partially Low-Moderate
<b>School</b>				
Education Faculty	3.9904	76	.69595	Partially high-Moderate
Conservatory	3.7515	44	.80301	Partially high-Moderate
Total	3.9028	120	.74272	Partially high-Moderate

The mean scores and levels of perceived mindfulness levels of voice training students are shown in Table 2. From here, it can be said that the overall mean score is  $\bar{X} = 3.90$ , which is at a moderate level, but at a moderately high level of mindfulness. In the analysis made by looking at the other characteristics of the participants; According to gender, female students ( $\bar{X}=3.9722$ ) had higher mean mindfulness scores than male students ( $\bar{X}=3.7986$ ) and both of them were at the Partially high-Moderate level.

Considering the the mindfulness levels of the students according to age, it is seen that 18 years ( $\bar{X}=3.7267$ ), 19 years ( $\bar{X}=4.0627$ ), 20 years ( $\bar{X}=3.7900$ ), 21 years ( $\bar{X}=3.7667$ ) and all of them are at Partially high-Moderate level. When we look at the mindfulness levels of the students according to their grades in the faculty, it is seen that the first grade ( $\bar{X}=3.7267$ ), second grade ( $\bar{X}=4.0627$ ), third grade ( $\bar{X}=3.7900$ ), fourth grade ( $\bar{X}=3.8289$ ) and all of them are at Partially high-Moderate level.

Considering the-mindfulness levels of the students according to family income level are examined, it is seen that there are low income ( $\bar{X}=3.6389$ ), moderate income ( $\bar{X}=3.9722$ ) and high income ( $\bar{X}=4.1250$ ) and all of them are at Partially high-Moderate level. It is observed that the mindfulness level of low income students is lower than that of high income students.

Considering the mindfulness levels of the students according to their region of birth, it is seen that the Eastern Anatolia region is the lowest ( $\bar{X}=3.2000$ ) and the Aegean region is the highest ( $\bar{X}=4.5244$ ). It was also determined that Central Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia regions were at the Partially Low-Moderate level, while Marmara, Mediterranean and Black Sea regions were at the Partially High-Moderate level. When we look at the mindfulness levels of the students according to their institution of study, it is observed that both groups are at the Partially high-Moderate level, with Faculty of Education students ( $\bar{X}=3.9904$ ) scoring higher than conservatory students ( $\bar{X}=3.7515$ ).

**Mindfulness and Age**

**Table 3.** ANOVA test results of voice training students' mindfulness scores according to age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	3.998	5	.800	1.479	.202
<b>Within Groups</b>	61.645	114	.541		
<b>Total</b>	65.644	119			

Table 3 shows the results of the ANOVA test for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to age. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of music students did not differ according to age ( $F_{(5-114)}=1.479, p>.05$ ).

**Mindfulness and Gender**

**Table 4.** t-test of results of voice training students' mindfulness scores according to gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
<b>Mindfulness Scores</b>	<b>Female</b>	72	3.9722	.73113	118	1.258	.106
	<b>Male</b>	48	3.7986	.75544			

Table 4 shows the t-test results for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to gender. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of music students did not differ according to gender ( $t_{(160)}=1.258, p>.05$ ).

**Mindfulness and Class**

**Table 5.** ANOVA results of voice training students' mindfulness scores according to class

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Between Groups</b>	2.317	3	.772	1.415	.242
<b>Within Groups</b>	63.327	116	.546		
<b>Total</b>	65.644	119			

Table 5 shows the results of the ANOVA test for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to the class they studied at the university. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of music students did not differ according to the class they studied at the university ( $F_{(3-116)}=1.415, p>.05$ ).

### Mindfulness and Income (Family)

**Table 6.** ANOVA test results of voice training students' mindfulness scores according to income

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.981	2	1.991	3.777	.026
Within Groups	61.662	117	.527		
Total	65.644	119			

Table 6 shows the results of the ANOVA test for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to family income level. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of voice training students differed according to family income level ( $F_{(2,117)}=1.415$ ,  $p<.05$ ). According to the Tukey test for the direction of this differentiation, it was determined that voice training students belonging to families with high income levels differed from those with low and middle income levels.

### Mindfulness and School Type

**Table 7.** t-test of results of voice students' mindfulness scores according to school type

	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
Mindfulness Scores	Education Faculty	76	3.9904	.69595	118	1.711	.045
	Conservatory	44	3.7515	.80301			

Table 7 shows the results of the t-test for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to the type of school they study. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of voice training students were higher and differentiated according to the type of school they studied in the faculty of education than those in the conservatory ( $t_{(118)}=1.711$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

### Mindfulness and Borning Region (Hometown)

**Table 8.** ANOVA test results of voice training students' mindfulness scores according to borning region

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.738	6	2.956	6.973	<.001
Within Groups	47.906	113	.424		
Total	65.644	119			

Table 8 shows the results of the ANOVA test for the change in voice training students' perceived mindfulness scores according to the region they were born/lived in. According to this, it was determined that the mindfulness scores of voice training students differed according to the region they were born/lived in ( $F_{(6,113)}=6.973$ ,  $p<.05$ ). According to the Tukey test for the direction of this differentiation, it was determined that voice training students born/living in the Aegean region were at a higher mindfulness level than those in other regions and that they differed.

## Discussion

In this study, it was determined that the mean score of the students' Mindfulness Scale was ( $\bar{X}=3.9028$ ). When other studies on students' level of mindfulness were examined, in Kocaarslan's (2016) study, the average scores of students studying at conservatory, education, fine arts, art and design faculties were found to be  $59.01\pm 11.17$ . In a study conducted by Dubert et al. (2016) with 80 nursing students, the mean conscious-awareness score was found to be  $52.2\pm 0.73$ . In a study conducted by Azak (2018) with 322 nursing students, the mean conscious-awareness score was found to be  $60.14\pm 11.43$ . Howell et al. (2008) found that the mean conscious-awareness score of 305 undergraduate students was  $57.19\pm 10.37$ . In a study conducted by Ramli et al. (2018) with 384 university students, the mean mindfulness score of the students was found to be  $55.92\pm 11.46$ .

There was no significant difference in mindfulness levels according to class levels. 30% were at low income level, 50% were at middle income level and 20% were at high income level. In the sample group, there were the least participants from the Southeastern Anatolia Region and the most participants from the Marmara Region. Participants from the Aegean region had a high level of mindfulness. Looking at the average scores of voice training students' perceived

mindfulness levels, it can be said that  $\bar{X} = 3.90$ , which is at a medium level but partially at a high level of mindfulness. According to gender, the mean mindfulness scores of female students ( $\bar{X} = 3.9722$ ) were higher than those of male students ( $\bar{X} = 3.7986$ ); when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to their age and classes in the faculty, all of them were at the Partially high-Moderate level; when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to their family income level, all of them were at the Partially high-Moderate level, but the mindfulness level of the students at low income level was lower than that of the students at high income level; when the mindfulness levels of the students were analyzed according to the region where they were born, the Eastern Anatolia region was the lowest ( $\bar{X} = 3.2000$ ) and the highest in the Aegean region ( $\bar{X} = 4.5244$ ); when we look at the mindfulness levels of the students according to the institution they studied, it is seen that the Faculty of Education students ( $\bar{X} = 3.9904$ ) have higher scores than the conservatory students ( $\bar{X} = 3.7515$ ).

The mindfulness levels of voice training students were found to be at average levels. When the correlations were analyzed, there were no significant differences between the level of mindfulness and gender, age, grade level and institution of study, but there were differences in the region of residence and perceived income level. The level of mindfulness of students in the Aegean region and students with high income levels is significantly higher.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout our lives, we often face physical and mental challenges. In addition to physical challenges such as illness, old age and accidents, we may also face negative emotional situations. Perhaps because we call them bad situations, they turn into difficulties and negatively affect our daily lives. They make us unproductive and painful in our work, family and social lives. In fact, our main purpose in life is happiness. Our greatest success in life is not correlated with our advancement in business, how much money we make or the titles we receive, but with the peace, satisfaction and happiness we experience in our mental world. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that "the greatest success is happiness". But in today's digital age, where technological developments are fast and business life is intense, even socializing is equivalent to our efforts to look perfect on social media tools. Because of our work, we may not have time to have a coffee with a friend and find peace with a conversation, but sharing a photo of that coffee in a nice cup with chocolate and getting likes is like exchanging the peace we cannot experience for the feeling of being liked. This makes us feel momentarily good and makes happiness relative. However, while you appear strong, successful and happy on the outside, your mind may be constantly ruminating on certain topics, feelings and thoughts. The ruminating mind does not allow the body to be healthy and the soul to be peaceful and happy. The mind may constantly drift into thoughts and feelings about the past or the future, which is what the mind often does. But the body and the breath are always in the present moment. Human beings have spent many years searching for the inner causes of suffering and trying to find solutions.

Voice training involves an abstract education process in which the instrument is the body and therefore the body, soul and mind need to be tuned. The vocal organs cannot be seen and handled like other instruments. In order for the body to be ready to produce sound during the training process, it will be in the best interest of the person to be ready both physically and spiritually. When Mindfulness-based trainings increase, it is predicted that singers will experience fewer vocal diseases. Breath and body are two indispensable elements of singing. The mind may wander and shift to agendas about the past and the future, but the breath and the body are in the present. The singer's psychological flexibility and surrender to the existing text, music and emotion while singing will enable him/her to fulfill his/her interpretive qualities in the best way. It is thought that the quality of both the vocal training process and the performance process will increase thanks to the three attitudes of mindfulness: attention, intention and attitude. They will also be able to manage performance anxiety. Studies on the prefrontal cortex, the executive center of the brain, show that the left and right parts of this part of the brain regulate emotions differently. The left prefrontal cortex has been associated with resilience to emotional challenges, with the ability to reduce fear and anxiety. It has been observed that brain activation shifts from right to left in those who practice long-term meditation and mindfulness practices. For example, in Davidson's (2012) study, this change was observed in people participating in the MBSR program. Researchers who

want to improve the study are recommended to increase the number of participants and the diversity of institutions. In addition, a study can be designed in which mindfulness practices will be performed while individual voice training is given for 8 weeks in a community where a placebo group and an experimental group are formed. In this way, it will be seen whether psychological, physical and bodily endurance and lesson efficiency can be increased with mindfulness practices in the voice training process.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that researchers who wish to further the present study should work with a larger number of voice training students and collaborate with institutions that provide voice training in different styles such as opera, jazz, Turkish music, ethnic music. There are many scales such as the Mindfulness Scale used by the researcher in this study. Some of them are Freebook Mindfulness Inventory, Kentucky Mindfulness Inventory, Toronto Wise Awareness Scale, Philadelphia Mindfulness Inventory, Cognitive and Emotional Mindfulness.

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**GoogleScholar:** <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Ubsfm-cAAAAJ&hl=tr>

**ResearchGate:** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tugcem-Kar>

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**Appendix 1.** Personel Information Form

**Personel Information Form**

**Gender**

Female  Male

**Age: .....**

**Institution**

Education Faculty

Conservatory

**Class Level**

1st Grade  2nd Grade  3rd Grade  4th Grade  Master's Degree

**Family Income Level**

Low  Medium  High

**Participants' Region of Birth**

Central Anatolia Region

Eastern Anatolia Region

Southeast Anatolia Region

Mediterranean Region

The Black Sea Region

Aegean Region

Marmara Region

**Appendix 2.** Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

<b>Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) Brown ve Ryan (2003)</b>							
Almost always 1 Very Frequently 2 Somewhat Frequently 3 Somewhat Infrequently 4 Very Infrequently 5 Almost Never 6							
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1</b>	I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.						
<b>2</b>	I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.						
<b>3</b>	I find it difficult to stay focused on what’s happening in the present.						
<b>4</b>	I tend to walk quickly to get where I’m going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.						
<b>5</b>	I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.						
<b>6</b>	I forget a person’s name almost as soon as I’ve been told it for the first time.						
<b>7</b>	It seems I am “running on automatic,” without much awareness of what I’m doing.						
<b>8</b>	I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.						
<b>9</b>	I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I’m doing right now to get there.						
<b>10</b>	I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I’m doing.						
<b>11</b>	I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.						
<b>12</b>	I drive places on ‘automatic pilot’ and then wonder why I went there.						
<b>13</b>	I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.						
<b>14</b>	I find myself doing things without paying attention.						
<b>15</b>	I snack without being aware that I’m eating.						





## Research Article

# Opinions of music students about the effective use of music software: a case study

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### Abstract

Music software is a digital tool that supports and facilitates musical creativity, performance and production. This study aims to reveal the opinions and experiences of students who receive music education at universities about music software. The research was designed with qualitative methods and conducted with a case study pattern. In the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 104 students selected from different universities in Turkey. The interviews included questions about the content, duration and frequency of the courses related to music software, the access and usage status of the software, the contributions of the software to musical creativity and other courses, the role of the software in future music production and the problems they encountered in this field. The data were collected with observation notes and semi-structured interviews and coded with MAXQDA24 qualitative data analysis software and analyzed with thematic analysis method. The findings were presented with visual tools such as cross table and matrix and supported by quantitative data. As a result of the data analysis, it was determined that the number and duration of the courses related to music software were insufficient, the students encountered various difficulties in accessing the software and many students did not actively use these software. In addition, the students stated that music software improved their musical creativity and contributed to their other courses. Moreover, opinions were expressed that music software will play an important role in future music production. The students also emphasized that music software has an important place in education and profession, but adequate resources and support are not provided in this field. This study reveals the current situation regarding the effective use of music software and identifies the problems encountered in this regard. The results of the research were discussed by comparing with the literature and some suggestions were presented for future studies.

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## Introduction

Music technologies are widely used in many fields such as music production, composition, performance, analysis and education today. Therefore, the learning of music technologies (the use of software and equipment, etc.) is of vital importance for improving the professional competencies of students studying in the field of music. However, the number and quality of institutions that provide undergraduate education in music technologies are not sufficient. This situation also leads to the neglect of the problems and needs of students who are interested in music software or who want to pursue a career in this field. Firstly, it is essential to recognize the increasing significance of technology in music

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education and the music industry. The integration of computer music software presents both opportunities and challenges for aspiring musicians. As highlighted by (Yan & Qiao, 2017), computer music software poses challenges to current music education, indicating the need for students to develop proficiency in utilizing such tools. Additionally, the study by Gall & Breeze (2005) emphasizes the multimodal affordances presented by music software, providing new opportunities for students to engage with composition work in the classroom. This underscores the importance of students familiarizing themselves with various music software to enhance their compositional skills and creativity. Furthermore, it is crucial for students to understand the evolving landscape of the music industry, particularly with the advent of digital technologies. The study by Leyshon (2009) discusses the decline of the recording studio sector within the musical economy due to digitalization, highlighting the profound disruptions faced by the industry. This suggests the necessity for students to adapt to the changing industry dynamics and develop skills in utilizing digital tools for music production and distribution. Moreover, the career paths available to music graduates have become increasingly diverse, requiring individuals to navigate multiple possible pathways into the industry, manage declining revenues, and balance concurrent roles (Johnson et al., 2019). This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the various career opportunities within the music industry and the ability to self-manage career development effectively. Additionally, the study by Neeser & Huffstadt (2021) indicates that the software used in a prospective job has a positive influence on career choice, emphasizing the importance of students acquiring proficiency in relevant music software to enhance their career prospects. In addition to technical skills, students should also consider the psychological and pedagogical aspects of music education and teaching. The study by Guo et al. (2022) highlights the relationship between school music context and music career choice among adolescents, indicating that students who express interest in music teaching are more likely to choose it as a future career. This suggests the importance of understanding one's motivations and influences when considering a career in music education. Furthermore, the psychological well-being of music educators and professionals is a critical consideration. The study by Kibici (2021) analyzes music teachers' job satisfaction and anxiety levels, providing insights into strategies to increase job satisfaction and reduce anxiety, particularly in challenging circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Music technologies are widely used in many areas such as music production, composition, performance, analysis and education today. Therefore, learning music technologies (the use of software and equipment, etc.) is vital for improving the professional competencies of students studying in the field of music. However, the number and quality of institutions that provide undergraduate education in music technologies are not at an adequate level in our country and some parts of the world. This situation also causes the problems and needs of students who are interested in or want to pursue a career in music software to be ignored.

Music technology and equipment have undergone significant changes and developments in recent years. Especially, there have been great changes in tools such as instruments, studio equipment and software, perceptual audio coding algorithms, duplication software and devices. This has changed the ways of producing and performing music and has led to a technological revolution in the field of music technologies (Lerch, 2018). This change has also offered a variety of opportunities to music educators and students in the field of music. Accordingly, ensuring the continuity of music education with a current approach has become directly related to the active use of music technologies (Rudolf et al., 2002). Especially, it allows students to work on their own with contents prepared on many topics such as instrument, note, ear training, music theory and history, notation writing and recording, accompaniment, etc., facilitates their work and contributes to their motivation (Kasap, 2007: 450).



**Figure 1.** Avid Sibelius note writing program that can be used on computers, tablets and mobile phones (Sibelius, 2023)

Music technology, which is actively used in music lessons, contributes to the positive development of students' attitudes towards the lesson, increases their interest and success in the long term, and contributes to their personal development (Moore, 1991: 5). Institutions that provide professional music education at every level (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral) especially courses such as “music software”, “music and computer” or “music technologies” contribute to the understanding of topics such as notation, recording techniques. Courses that can be related to music technology such as “accompaniment”, “solfege dictation theory” or “musical hearing reading and writing” can also help instructors and students. Özdemir (2017:7) draws attention to the relationship between musical hearing, reading and writing course and music technologies. These courses positively affect the professional development of undergraduate and graduate students. When music technologies are considered in terms of music education, it is clear that there are incentives to increase the quantity and quality of courses such as “music technology” or “music software” in the programs that provide music education in the Higher Education Council (CHET) curriculum.

For students who have a career goal of being a musician, performing music effectively and being accepted is an important issue. However, this acceptance is no longer as popular and profitable as it used to be with traditional tools and intermediaries (releasing albums, etc.). Now, musicians can make professional recordings with their own recording equipment and easily reach people through social media, which can also provide them with financial returns (Everts, Berkers and Hitters, 2022: 3). It is possible to say that using music technologies actively not only provides individuals with financial gains, but also contributes to improvisation and creativity (Watson, 2011: 59; Ley, 2004).

Some of the difficulties that prevent the effective use of music technology are inadequacy, ignorance, complexity of software and difficulty or inability to solve this complexity, lack of equipment and language difference. Tichenor and colleagues (1970: 159) mention digital inequality when digital access is difficult. The mentioned situation, i.e. financial inadequacies, is also valid for access to music equipment (software, tools, etc.). The expensiveness of paid software and equipment sometimes makes it difficult to access music technology. In addition to the financial obstacle to accessing music technologies (equipment, music software, etc.), there are also situations such as complexity and language difference in their use (Thompson, 2012: 54).

It is important to know, understand and be experienced in the terminology in this field in order to use music technology effectively (Holmes, 2008: 335). Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, the use of music technology in music lessons has become one of the prominent issues and has brought up issues such as digital competence and the importance of using music technologies in music education for music teachers, instructors and music teacher candidates (Lankshear and Knobel, 2008).

### **Music Software**

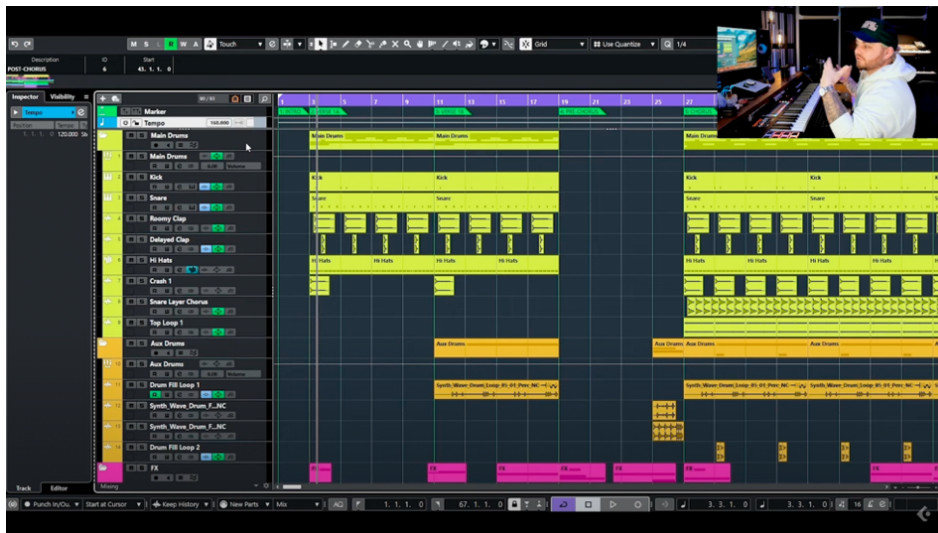
The integration of technology elements with music is expressed as “music technologies” (Chadabe, 1997). The beginning of the concept of technology in music, however, started for the first time in 1877, when Thomas Edison recorded sound on cylinders through a phonograph. In 1886, Alexander Graham Bell patented the first disk-shaped recording medium, and in 1888, Emile Berliner completed an eleven-year process by patenting the first disk recorder

phonograph. The “telegraphone”, which was the first magnetic recording device, was patented in 1898 on behalf of Valdemar Poulsen (Mumma et al., 2003)

Music technologies have developed in three stages: The first one is the start of cassette recording after World War II. The second big step was the developments in synthesizers in the technology revolution. These innovations consisted of many innovations such as pitch, timbre, rhythm patterns and duration. The third big step is called the “Digital Revolution” in the electronic world. Digital circuits have been developed and implemented for use in music. Musicians can store as many sounds as they want with all their features, shape their duration, pitch, timbre, loudness as they wish (Arappirlioglu, 2003).

Music software is a tool that helps to use music technology effectively. With music software, sound recordings can be made, and notation writing and editing of recorded sound files can be enabled. These software can be used in music lessons as well as in sound recording studios. However, of course, these software are used with more professional equipment in sound recording studios than in music lessons (Karaönçel, 2019: 464).

Software for music education can be examined under five categories: Tutorial music software, software that contains theoretical information. “Making Music” and “Smart Music” are some of these software. Exercise and practice software, software that allows students to practice music. “The Violin Tutor” and “Singing Tutor” are some of these software. Game Software, software that aims to teach music through games. “Pattern Block Rock” and “Classics for Kids” can be given as examples. Notation software, software that allows the transfer of musical elements to notation. Software such as “Sibelius” and “Finale” can give examples of notation software. Recording software, software that enables data transfer between electronic musical instruments and computers. “Cakewalk” and “Cubase” are some of these software (Nart, 2016: 79-80).



**Figure 2.** Steinberg’s Cubase 12 Pro Digital Audio Workstation’s interface (Steinberg, 2023)

The active use of music software in music education will accelerate the learning processes of students and provide them with a rich material in the field they want to develop as a complementary and strengthening element of the teaching system (Levendoglu, 2004). In this way, the support of career plans of individuals with technological materials can be ensured. Career development is a series of experiences designed to help develop concepts about professions. It develops skills such as developing concepts about oneself, making the individual aware of himself, developing concepts about professions - becoming aware of them and making career choices (Tuckman and Bruce, 1974: 5). It is possible to say that music software has an important place in the career development plans of students in this context.

### Theoretical Framework

Mcclellan McClellan (2017) presents a comprehensive theoretical model of Socialization and Salient Role Identities that can be integrated with Brewer’s Concepts of Effective Teaching and Role-Identity Development. This framework focuses on the integration of musician and teacher identities, salient features of effective teaching, and definitions of music teacher identity built upon a review of the theoretical and research literature based on the principles of social

identity theory, symbolic interactionism, and role theory. This theoretical framework can offer valuable insights into the effective use of music software from the perspective of music students and their identities as musicians and potential educators. In addition, a study by Nevels (2013) explores the use of music software in the composition process and presents a case study on electronic music composition. This study provides valuable insights into the practical applications of music software and its impact on the composing process, which can be integrated into the theoretical framework for music students' effective use of music software. In this context, the studies conducted by McClellan and Nevels constitute the theoretical framework of this research. These frameworks provide a general insight into music students' effective use of music software.

### **Significance of the Research**

Music softwares have an important place in music education. These softwares can help music students to improve their musical skills, creativity, critical thinking abilities and technology literacy. Moreover, music software can also enable music students to acquire a deeper knowledge of music culture, history, theory and analysis. This research is important in terms of providing scientific data on the role and importance of music software in music education. It also makes the research original and important by revealing how music software affects the learning processes, motivations, attitudes and achievements of music students. The research also carries importance in terms of identifying the needs, expectations, challenges and suggestions of the students for the effective use of music software and guiding the teachers, administrators and curriculum makers for the more widespread and efficient use of music software in the field of music education.

### **Purpose and Problem of the Research**

The aim of this study is to reveal the opinions of music students studying at undergraduate level about the effective use of music software and to evaluate the current situation of the institutions providing education in this field.

#### **Main problem of the research**

How are the thoughts and experiences of undergraduate music students about music software shaped?

#### **Sub-problems of the research**

- What are your thoughts on the accessibility of practical applications and software?
- What is the impact of music software on career development dynamics?
- What do students think about the evolution and impact of music softwares?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

This research was designed with qualitative methods and conducted with case study design. Case study approach is especially useful when a topic, event or phenomenon needs to be understood in depth in its natural real-life context (Crowe et al., 2011). Case study is a research strategy that allows the complex topic to be examined in a multi-faceted and in-depth way in its real-life context. It is a research method that has a long history and is applied in different fields, especially in social sciences. It enables the researcher to understand a specific situation or phenomenon, the factors that affect it and the outcomes associated with it. It is a research design that uses multiple data sources to answer the research question and analyzes the data systematically.

### **Study Group**

The study group of the research consists of students who are studying at the undergraduate level in the field of music. The research is limited to those students who are studying in courses related to music software at the undergraduate level. The study group includes students who are studying in fine arts faculties, education faculties, music and performing arts faculties and state conservatories in Turkey. A total of 104 students participated in the research.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study group by faculties and grades

	Faculty = Conservatory	Faculty = Education	Faculty = Fine Arts	Faculty = Music & Perf. Arts	Total
1st grade	1	2	3	1	7
2nd grade	7	13	11	13	44
3rd grade	8	4	2	10	24
4th grade	11	3	7	8	29
Σ SUM	27	22	23	32	104
# N = Documents/Speakers	27 (26,0%)	22 (21,2%)	23 (22,1%)	32 (30,8%)	104 (100,0%)

The research was participated by 59 female and 49 male students. Of the participants, 56 (53.8%) took the music software course as an elective, and 48 (46.2%) as a compulsory course. The study group included students who studied at fine arts faculties, education faculties, music and performing arts faculties and state conservatories in Turkey. The research was participated by 22 (21.2%) baglama, 17 (16.3%) guitar, 15 (14.4%) violin, 13 (12.5%) vocal, 11 (10.6%) piano, 8 (7.7%) flute, 6 (5.8%) rebab, 3 (2.9%) oud, 3 (2.9%) violoncello, 2 (1.9%) pipe, 2 (1.9%) Turkish folk music interpretation, 1 (1%) clarinet and 1 (1%) nai students. The research had 73 (70.2%) participants aged between 18-23, 16 (15.4%) aged between 24-29, 9 (8.7%) aged between 30-35, and 6 (5.8%) aged between 36-43, and the average age of these participants was  $(\bar{X}) \approx 23.51$  and the standard deviation was calculated as 5.66.

**Table 2.** Study group and the software they can use

	Faculty = Conservatory	Faculty = Education	Faculty = Fine Arts	Faculty = Music & Perf. Arts	Total
Doesn't use any	10	14	8	6	38
Finale	9	3	2	7	21
Mus2	1		1	14	16
Musescore		1	1	8	10
FL Studio		1	4	2	7
Cubase	2		2	3	7
Many softwares in one	3	1	1	1	6
Garageband	2	1	2	1	6
Sibelius		2	3		5
Studio One	2			1	3
Logic Pro x	2			1	3
Maestro		1		1	2
Audacity			1		1
Σ SUM	31	24	25	45	125
# N = Documents/Speakers	27 (26,0%)	22 (21,2%)	23 (22,1%)	32 (30,8%)	104 (100,0%)

It can be seen at Table 2, 38 (36%) of the participants cannot use any music software. The software used by the participants are Finale (24.1%), Mus2 (18.4%), Musescore (11.5%), Fl Studio (8%), Cubase (8%), Garageband (6.9%), Sibelius (5.7%), Studio One (3.4%), Logic Pro X (3.4%), Maestro (2.3%) and Audacity (1.1%) and 6 participants (6.9%) can use more than one software together. Laptops and computers (n=66, 53.2%), smartphones (n=50, 48.1%) and tablets (n=8, 7.7%) are preferred for using the software and therefore 19.2% of the participants can use these devices together. 9 (8.6%) of the participants earn income through music softwares.

**Data Collection Tools**

Data were collected through unstructured observations and semi-structured interviews.

**Unstructured observations**

Through unstructured observations, the natural environments of the participants who have the same status as (undergraduate music education and music software courses) students were observed. In this way, both a pre-preparation was made for the questions prepared for semi-structured interviews, and preliminary codes and categories were created for the research. Analytical notes were created from the behaviors of the observed individuals and recorded for use in the analysis stage.

**Semi-structured interview**

The other important data collection tool of the research is semi-structured interviews. The questions for these interviews were carefully prepared by both researchers and consulted with expert opinions. The interviews helped to understand the participants' experiences, thoughts and feelings in depth and to find answers to the research questions. While

applying semi-structured interviews, an informed consent text was presented to the participants regarding the confidentiality of their information by the researcher. They were informed that participation was based on voluntariness and they were given the right not to answer the desired questions. In addition to a section containing demographic information in the form, 20 questions were included. The questions were prepared by taking the opinions of field experts. In this way, the reliability and validity of the form were ensured.

### **Data Analysis**

While the flexibility of case studies allows for creativity in practice, they are also rigorous in understanding the area of interest in depth (Keyzer 2000, Pontin 2000). Qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory have principles that come from their philosophical foundations, guide the analysis and provide justification for the analytical decisions made by researchers. Researchers who conduct case studies also need to provide the same justification for their decisions and report their findings rigorously with complex data sets from multiple sources (Houghton et al., 2015). In this case study, the study group consists of much more participants than the average number for qualitative research. Therefore, Maxqda, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, was used to process the large amount of data obtained. The opinions of the participants were transferred from excel and word formats to the software and new codes were added to the codes created as a result of unstructured observations by using the in-vivo coding method. With the second cycle coding, the codes were finalized by editing, changing or combining them and categories and themes were created from these codes. During the analysis stage, tools such as cross tables, matrices, code relations tool and other tools available in the software were used to enable a detailed analysis of the dense data set. In addition to the demographic information of the participants, some information they gave about the software was assigned as variables and included in the study group title with quantitative data. The qualitative analyses were presented with numerical units to guide the prediction for future quantitative studies.

### **Process**

Unstructured observations and unstructured interviews were conducted with students who have equivalent qualifications to the participants and findings were made about the general situation. The semi-structured interview form prepared after the implementation of these methods was transferred to the digital environment and made ready for implementation. The forms sent to the participants via Google Forms were downloaded to the local computer after collecting feedback and edited and prepared for data analysis.

### **Ethics**

Prior to commencing the data collection phase, ethical approval was obtained from the KSU Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee in the session held on 12.07.2023, under the protocol number 2023-26.

## **Findings**

The research findings are presented under the themes of practical applications and accessibility, and the evolution and impact of music softwares. The research findings reveal the knowledge and experience of the participants on music software, how they use these softwares, and how they contribute to their educational processes. In addition, the difficulties that the participants face while using these softwares and their thoughts about the future of the software are also examined in detail.

Practical applications in professional music education at universities offer students the opportunity to develop their musical skills and enhance their musical talents. Accessibility is an important issue for music learning. It facilitates participation in music education and ensures that everyone can access education. In addition, students' participation in music education increases.

Music software has evolved with developments in the music industry and is now available in many different types. There are some studies that suggest that students who study music are inadequate in other vocational courses (Doğan, 2019). Therefore, in addition to practical applications for undergraduate music students, it is necessary to focus on other vocational courses as well.

**Findings related to the theme of practical applications and accessibility**

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**Table 3.** Coded segments regarding whether the participants have software-oriented career plans

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Software focused	8	5	1	5	19
Non-software	24	18	21	22	85
Σ SUM	32	23	22	27	104

The codes generated from the opinions of the participants regarding music software-focused career plans are included in Table 3. Participants who include music software in their career plans also actively use these software during their student years. Although music software provides convenience for almost all professions in the music field, it is thought-provoking that some participants do not want to include these software in their career plans. It has been found that participants studying at music and performing arts faculties and fine arts faculties also have career goals that only involve the use of music software. Participants studying at education faculties and conservatories stated that they do not have any plans related to these software in their professional lives. These views are thought to be related to the faculties where the participants study, their situations of using music software, and their career choices in the music field.

**Table 4.** Coded segments related to opinions about accessibility of softwares

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Cost	14	11	12	14	51
Complexity	15	7	9	14	45
Equipment	3	3	5	1	12
Limitations	3	2		3	8
Σ SUM	35	23	26	32	116

In Table 4, patterns related to cost, complexity, equipment, and limitation were identified by coding the opinions of the participants regarding the accessibility of music software. Some participants did not express their opinions, while others addressed multiple issues in their opinions. It is seen that the problems encountered in accessing software are high cost (%44), confusion caused by insufficient knowledge about software (%38.8), lack of equipment to support software at a sufficient level (%10.3), and the fact that most software has certain limits (features restricted in free versions) (%6.9). Participants studying at education faculties did not express their views on limitations in software. The findings indicate that participants experience problems related to accessing software. These problems prevent participants from using music software effectively. These problems prevent participants from using music software effectively.

**Table 5.** Coded segments related to opinions about intended use of the softwares

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Note writing	27	11	14	16	68
Audio recording	7	13	10	13	43
Audio editing	8	9	5	9	31
Composing	13	7	8	2	30
Supporting lessons	2				2
Σ SUM	57	40	37	40	174



Table 5 contains codes created regarding the purposes for which music software is mostly used by the participants. A total of 174 sections were coded in this category. It is observed that music software is used by participants mostly for writing notes (%39.1), recording sound (%24.7), processing-editing sound (%17.8), and composing music (%17.2). It has also been determined that participants studying at music and performing arts faculties only use these software to support their courses (%1.1). The findings indicate that users do not specify the various capabilities of the software. This suggests that participants do not have sufficient knowledge and skills about the potential of these software.

**Table 6.** Coded segments related to opinions about the contribution of softwares to musical creativity

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Practicality	8	7		7	22
Development	8	4	8	1	21
Working field	5	6	4	2	17
Perspective	6	3	4	3	16
Perception	5	3	2	4	14
Information	3	3	2	3	11
Σ SUM	35	26	20	20	101

Table 6 contains coded sections from the opinions of the participants regarding the effect of music software on musical creativity. It has been determined that music software provides practical solutions with the convenience it provides and facilitates work related to music. Participants expressed that they focused more on music by getting rid of workload through this convenience. Software is designed taking into account experiences in the music field and offers different opportunities to develop creativity for the user. Participants stated that they found opportunities for new working areas in the music discipline through software, and that software provided them with different perspectives and new knowledge. Participants who did not express their views on the contribution of software to musical creativity also do not use these software. No views have been expressed from participants studying at education faculties regarding the practicality or convenience of software. It has been found that music software supports and/or develops musical creativity in various ways among undergraduate music students.

**Table 7.** Coded segments related to opinions about what is needed for effective learning of music softwares

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Program ceration	7	7	5	6	25
Amount of lessons	3	1	2	8	14
Qualification	3	3	2	2	10
Scope	3	3	1	1	8
Opportunity			2	3	5
Costing	1		2	1	4
Details	2	1	1		4
Sharing	1	1		1	3
Σ SUM	20	16	15	22	73

Table 7 contains coded sections from the opinions of the participants regarding the needs for effective learning of music software. It is seen that programs including courses on music software are needed in undergraduate curricula. In addition, it has been found that an increase in the amount and duration of courses, as well as the development of course quality and scope, is necessary for effective learning. The fact that participants have to pay for these software creates an obstacle to effective learning. It has been emphasized that courses should be detailed to ensure that understandable problems in software are resolved and learning after training on these software is functional. Sharing experiences is suggested to lead to rapid learning and shows that collaboration between students and educators needs to be increased.

**Table 8.** Coded segments related to opinions about contribution of music software to courses

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
☑ Solfege	6	4	7	2	19
☑ Harmony	3	5	2	2	12
☑ Instrument education	3	1	2	3	9
☑ Vocal training	4	3	1	1	9
☑ Composing techniques	5	3			8
☑ Choir	2		2		4
☑ Musical perception and creativity	2				2
☑ Orchestra	1				1
Σ SUM	26	16	14	8	64

Coded segments created by evaluating the contributions of music software to courses in Table 8 are included. It is clearly seen that music software contributes to solfeggio (note reading) and harmony courses. In addition, software also contributes to instrument and voice training courses, as well as composition, choir, musical perception and creativity, and orchestra courses. It is understood that participants studying at conservatories benefit from software in solfeggio, harmony, sound and instrument training courses, while students studying at music and performing arts faculties generally benefit from software in many areas.

**Table 9.** Coded segments related to opinions about extracurricular resources needed to improve the use of softwares

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
☑ Couldn't benefit	17	8	9	15	49
☑ Online resources	12	11	7	5	35
☑ Books or articles	7	3	5	6	21
☑ Courses		1	3	1	5
☑ Educator support		1		1	2
☑ Training videos	1			1	2
☑ Software manual		1			1
Σ SUM	37	25	24	29	115

Table 9 contains coded segments from the opinions of the participants regarding the non-curricular resources they need to use music software effectively. It is seen that there are participants who do not use software or do not benefit from resources. This is a situation that needs to be emphasized when considering that the data was collected from participants who have music software in their curricula. It is seen that online resources, books, and articles are used outside of courses for software. Effective use of online resources for learning experiences or practical applications related to music software also requires evaluating the quality of these resources. It is clear that participants need to know the characteristics of qualified sources to access non-curricular resources for their purpose. No participant expressed an opinion on how to access these resources in music software-related courses. Participants try to access non-curricular resources through their own experience and research.

**Findings related to the theme of the evolution and impact of music software**

Music software is designed to facilitate the music production process and provide musicians with more control. These software have evolved with developments in the music industry and are now available in many different types. The evolution of music software began with the emergence of MIDI technology in the 1980s. MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is a common standard accepted among commercial manufacturers to make their products compatible (Clarke, 2009). Musicians can record the sounds of different instruments through music software and then edit these sounds. In the 1990s, computers became more common for music production, leading to the development of music software. During this period, music software became more user-friendly and more functional by adding more features.

Today, music software has advanced significantly and is available in many different types. Some can be used for notation writing and MIDI recording, while others can be used as a complete digital audio workstation (DAW). Music software is designed to provide musicians with more control and facilitate the music production process.

**Table 10.** Coded segments related to opinions about advantages of music software for undergraduate music students

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Facilitation	13	7	5	8	33
Musicality	3	7	5	5	20
New knowledge	7	3	4	3	17
Musical creativity improving	6	6	2	1	15
Easy and correct musical writing	4	2	5	4	15
Recording	3	3		2	8
Deciphering the notes	3	1	2	1	7
Finding the correct frequencies	2		1	1	4
Harmonic analysis		3		1	4
Archiving	2			1	3
Σ SUM	43	32	24	27	126

Table 10 contains coded segments from the opinions of the participants regarding the advantages of music software for undergraduate music students. One of the most important advantages of music software is that it provides participants with great convenience. Writing and rearranging notes, being able to take digital or printed output of the written note, and sharing it can be done through these software. In addition, it is possible to record and edit sound by creating a suitable environment independently of any recording studio through music software. These situations have been identified as important advantages by participants. Software provides a flexible platform for learning and applying new information. Through software that contributes to the development of musical creativity, these ideas can be quickly transformed into musical notes. The fact that previously written notes can also be played with correct sounds ensures that those who use software decipher notes correctly, support intonation and musical memory. It is seen that software that can perform many notes with different instruments also contributes to harmonic analysis by participants. Transposing, playing fast or slow in notes or works used for note reading, listening or harmonic analysis, being able to reach and listen to the desired note on the interface at any time, and taking notes are important advantages provided by software. In addition, it is possible to archive notes or sound recordings created through software on local computers or internet-based platforms and share them when desired. The findings show that participants can benefit from the advantages provided by music software as needed.

**Table 11.** Coded segments related to opinions about difficulties in using music softwares

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Incomplete experience	6	3	3	2	14
Incomplete information	5	2	2	5	14
Complex interface	2	6	1	1	10
Language			3	6	9
Incomplete equipment	1	1	2	1	5
Σ SUM	14	12	11	15	52

Table 11 shows the coded sections related to the difficulties that participants faced while using music software. It is understood that participants need to have experience with these software even if they are competent in computer use. Among the participants who expressed difficulty in using the software, there are also those who do not have enough information about the software. This may be due to the insufficient number or duration of the courses or the limited opportunities of the students or institutions. Although the software has the same basic functions (sound recording, note writing, etc.), having different interfaces and offering different ways for the same processes makes it difficult for participants to use the software. Considering that the software provides the opportunity to perform many processes on a single platform, it is normal that the interfaces look complex and require information and experience. It is also seen that the codes of not having enough information or experience or having a complex interface intersect with the

participants coded with these codes. It can also be said that these findings are related to each other. One of the important difficulties that participants face is the language problem. Although many software supports certain languages, the number of software that offers Turkish language support is very low. This causes usage difficulties for participants. In addition, special equipment (computer, sound card, monitor, microphone, headset, etc.) is needed to use the software effectively. The findings show that participants can benefit from the opportunities provided by music software when necessary.

**Table 12 .** Coded segments related to opinions about future contributions of music software to musicians and music

Code System	Music & Perf. Arts	Fine Arts	Education	Conservatory	SUM
Helping	6	8	4	6	24
Creativity	5	1	3	3	12
Innovation	2	3	3	2	10
Human need	2	1	1	5	9
Quality		1		2	3
Monotony			1		1
Σ SUM	15	14	12	18	59

Table 12 presents the coded views of the participants on the future of music software. Participants stated that music software could be used as supportive tools for musicians and music production both today and in the future. Also, they stated that more creative works could be produced with these software. New tools emerge with regular updates of the software. According to the participants, these developments in the software will lead to improvements in music as well. Considering that artificial intelligence-based tools are also included in these software today, these improvements are likely to occur. There are also participants who think that there will not be much need for humans with these improvements. The opinions of the participants on whether the software and technological developments will increase or decrease the quality or monotony of music show that they are only personal predictions. Also, they give clues that this situation is a separate topic that needs to be investigated. In the future, software may cause situations that will cause concern for the participants, but they will also provide positive contributions.

Music software is seen as tools that can support musicians and music production today and in the future. It is thought that more creative works can be created with these software. It is predicted that the regular updates of the software to provide new tools will lead to developments in music. The fact that artificial intelligence-based tools are also included in these software today shows that these developments are possible. However, there are also participants who think that these developments will not leave much need for humans. Participants' opinions on whether software and technological developments will increase or decrease the quality or monotony of music show that these are only personal predictions. It also hints that this is a separate issue that needs to be researched. In the future, software may create worrying situations for the participants, but it may also make positive contributions.

### Conclusion and Discussion

There are few students who want to make a career plan related to music software. This situation is also related to the fact that students cannot receive adequate education in this field. Most of the students take this course as an elective and the course hours are limited. Therefore, these courses should be made compulsory for students who want to make a career plan related to music software. In addition, the social situations of the students should be taken into account for the applicability of these courses and suitable environments should be provided in educational institutions. Webster (2011) states that music technologies provide students with learning motivation and guidance. Ruismäki and Juvoven (2009) argue that modern music education requires new methods and that music technologies are a tool for developing, researching and advancing these methods. In this context, it is thought that music technologies can create a culture for the sustainability of music education. For this purpose, institutional supports should be given to music technologies.

It was observed that the participants used music software only for specific purposes and when they needed it. Music software can be a tool for achieving various musical goals as well as contributing to the education process. Vise et al. (2011) state that music technologies have a versatile use area. Therefore, it is thought that music software should be covered more comprehensively in the courses and taught to the students in detail. For this purpose, it was concluded that the curriculum and programs should be created in a compatible way. It was determined that most of the participants had difficulty accessing the software and the most important reasons for this were high price and lack of sufficient information. Cheng et al. (1997) emphasize that music software is costly. Hindle (2019) argues that software should be simple and understandable, while stating that the complexity of software scares individuals. This situation can be said to be valid for music software as well.

It was determined that the participants used music software mostly for writing notes. The students also stated that music software was more organized than paper and pencil in writing notes. Ho (2004) revealed that music students preferred music software mostly for writing notes in his study. It is understood from the findings that the students use music software effectively in writing notes. It was determined that music software provided convenience and reduced workload in musical studies. The participants expressed that they concentrated more on music in this way. Maba (2020) revealed that music technologies and software applications improved the students' creativity, access to information and positive attitudes. He also stated that they helped the students understand topics that require creativity such as composing and enriched the course content.

It was concluded that there should be courses covering music software in music education programs at undergraduate level. In addition, it was concluded that the number and duration of the courses should be increased, and the quality and content of the courses should be improved for more effective learning. Clauhs et al. (2019) suggest providing additional resources and support to students and extending weekly course hours in insufficient situations. It is understood from the findings that music software made significant contributions to solfeggio (note reading) and harmony courses. The software also benefited instrument and voice training, composing, choir, musical perception and creativity and orchestra courses. Rouse (2017) emphasized the need to integrate music software with instrument training and music education.

The participants use various sources outside the class to use music software effectively. Doi (2016) states that students need to research the information they need by using sources such as books, articles, libraries, websites after class. It is possible to say that the same situation is valid for the music software course. This will make learning permanent, improve research skills and facilitate the understanding of the course.

Music software enables playing pre-written notes with correct sounds, understanding notes correctly, improving intonation and musical memory. The software also benefits harmonic analysis skills, as it can play many notes with different instruments. Some of the important advantages of the software are transposing, understanding tempo, accessing and taking notes on the desired note in the interface for notes or works used for note reading, listening or harmonic analysis. The software also allows storing and sharing the created notes or sound recordings on the computer or on the internet. According to the findings, the participants can benefit from the advantages provided by music software when they need it.

The participants stated that the software provided them with many advantages. These advantages are manifested in areas such as writing, editing, printing, sharing, recording and editing sound, learning and applying new information, developing musical creativity, reading, listening, doing harmonic analysis and archiving notes. Music software enhances the students' musical skills and knowledge, supports their musical expression power and contributes to music education. Therefore, it can be concluded that music software should be used effectively in the education process of music department students.

Music software, while offering many opportunities to music department students who receive education, also brings some difficulties. These difficulties arise in areas such as lack of sufficient information or experience about the software, complexity of the software interfaces, lack of language support and need for special equipment. To overcome these difficulties, music software should be more involved in the education process, suitable software and equipment options

should be offered to students and institutions, and Turkish language support software should be developed and popularized. In this way, the contributions of music software to music education can be evaluated more effectively.

## Recommendations

### For Future Research

Music software should be integrated into the education process, and it should be researched which software is suitable for which purposes and how software contributes to students' musical development. Music software should be used not only for writing notes, music production, or recording but also to support musical creativity and expression. In this context, how different musical activities such as composition, arrangement, sound design, sound analysis, and sound synthesis can be performed with music software, which software is suitable for these activities, and how these activities improve students' musical skills and knowledge should be examined. Additionally, it should be investigated how music software can be adapted to different musical contexts, which software can respond to different musical needs, and how these adaptations increase students' musical diversity and sensitivity. The use of music software should also be evaluated according to variables with quantitative research. These variables may include students' knowledge level, attitude, motivation, interest, and expectations; teachers' roles, methods, supports, and feedback. Reliable and valid tools should be developed to measure the usage levels of the software. Feasible and effective strategies should be proposed as a result of the studies conducted.

### For Practitioners

The use of music software makes significant contributions to the learning processes of music students. Therefore, necessary support and resources should be provided for music students to use the software effectively. Workshops related to music software should be organized by institutions, and students should be encouraged to participate in these workshops. The number and quality of Turkish resources should be increased, and students' access to these resources should be facilitated. In addition to music technology programs, the scope and content of lessons related to software in other music departments should be enriched, and students' comprehensive use of software should be facilitated. Platforms that support collaboration and sharing among students should be created, and students should be encouraged to produce together using software. The use of software in other music lessons should also be encouraged, and inter-lesson relationships should be strengthened so that students can fully understand the software in all aspects.

## Limitations of Study

This research was conducted in 2023 and was limited to the current technology related to music software at that time. The software in the research is limited to the software specified by the participants and does not cover all music software. At the same time, since the research is limited to the faculties of different universities in Turkey that provide music-related education, it is not a study that can determine the general situation in different regions and cannot be generalized.

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## Research Article

# Transformation of Turkish images in Mozart's Zaide Opera in contemporary interpretations<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart began composing the opera *Zaide* based on a libretto written by Johann Andreas Schachtner between 1779-1780, but did not complete the work. For the first time, Mozart showed Turkish culture and Ottoman palace life on stage by including Turkish images in his opera *Zaide*. The plot of the work takes place in the palace of Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century. The characters chosen are slaves who were captured for various reasons and brought to the palace. The work is an escape story with love in it, starring *Zaide*, the Sultan's favorite, Gomatz and Allazim, who are enslaved laborers. This work was left unfinished by Mozart at the part where the escaped slaves are captured, brought to the palace and plead for forgiveness from the Sultan. Researchers suggest that Mozart may have designed a scene of forgiveness for the unfinished finale. The missing parts of the opera were gradually completed by musicians and publishing companies and then published over time. The final version of *Zaide* that has survived to our time was first staged on January 27, 1866, in Frankfurt. In this study, the portrayal of Ottomans, Turks, and Muslims in *Zaide* by the composer will be analyzed to understand how these images are approached in the 21st century through the *Zaide* productions of Peter Sellars and Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret. In his contemporary interpretation, Sellars has made a reading of *Zaide* through a much broader social issue, the migrant and refugee crisis. Jauffret's staging was more faithful to the original *Zaide* in terms of time, place and costume design. The manner, the images of Turks in Mozart's original libretto were addressed and transformed in Sellars and Jauffret's contemporary interpretations, was examined to reveal with which dramaturgical preferences the missing parts of the original libretto were completed and interpreted in terms of content, lyrics, themes and music. Thereby, an attempt is made to gain an understanding of how Ottoman, Turkish and Muslim images are approached and perceived in the current age. In order to acquire this information, the aforementioned directors' interpretations of *Zaide* have been comprehensively analyzed in terms of location, setting, time, acting, characters, set design, light design, costume design, music, chorus and the final scene.

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## Introduction

Mozart, who composed more than six hundred works during his lifetime, used Turkish imagery for the first time in his opera *Zaide*, bringing the lifestyle and cultural characteristics of the East to the opera stage. The plot takes place in the

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palace of Suleiman the Magnificent, the longest reigning Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who lived two hundred years before Mozart. The name of this sultan, known in the West as Suleiman the Magnificent, is Sultan Soliman. The characters are slaves who were captured for various reasons and brought to the palace. The work is an escape story with a love story, starring Zaide, the Sultan's favorite, and Gomatz and Allazim, who are enslaved slaves. This work was left unfinished by Mozart at the part where the escaped slaves are captured, brought to the palace and asked for forgiveness from the Sultan. It is thought that a forgiveness scene may have been designed for the final scene of this opera, which is similar to *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in terms of subject and characters, as in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

In order to appeal to the musical taste of the audience of his time, Mozart followed the Turkish fashion that was popular in this period. By blending the Turks and the palace life of the period with eastern culture, he wrote a work in accordance with this trend. However, to think that the composer chose the subject of the work solely to conform to the Turkish fashion would only lead to a superficial perception of *Zaide*. In order to understand Mozart in depth, it is necessary to investigate the reasons behind each of his choices and his view of the East, taking into account the period in which he lived.

Emphasizing slavery in *Zaide*'s story, Mozart built his work on the concepts of Turkishness, Islam, humanism and orientalism. When the historical background of the concept of Orientalism is questioned, it is known that it emerged in Europe and dates back to the Crusades; "*Orientalism is a historical-hegemonic ideology that was first systematically shaped by the image of the 'East' produced by people living in Europe with the Crusades* (Arlı, 2009, p.76)". However, Mozart, with his opera *Zaide*, created a perception of the East that does not coincide with the image of the East in the minds of his contemporaries according to this ideology. Because, according to this ideology, the East is an other that the West has constructed by embroidering it like a needle weaving, and which harbors all kinds of negativity and evil:

Both the East and the West are works of fiction. The East is an imaginary other, a place that fills the gaps of the Western mind.... The Western identity is constructed as the opposite of the Eastern identity.... Orientalism, which does all this constructing, attributes all evil and ugliness to the East within this universe, and reserves the good and beauty for itself. (Metin, 2013, p.51)

Mozart, who prefers to exhibit a point of view opposite to these concepts of Eurocentrism and marginalization at the basis of Orientalist ideology, has taken an attitude contrary to this understanding, which has been tried before, has been successful and has received great support, especially from the audience, by following the fashion of denigrating and humiliating an Eastern sultan just because he is Eastern. Instead, he treated an Eastern sultan in a universal dimension and added all the characteristics of humanism to his character.

When we look at the period of Suleiman the Magnificent, the fear created by the Turks in Europe was not limited to military or political developments. The concept of religion and the fear of the spread of Islam all over the world were behind this policy. Despite the Turkish fashion, the fear of Turks was not extinguished in Europe and Islam continued to be perceived as a threat. As Abdullah Metin points out, Islam "*threatened Europe with its cultural and geographical expansion. Europe, on the other hand, could only counter this threat with the unifying power of Christianity and launched the Crusades (1095-1272), which would last for nearly two hundred years* (Metin, 2013, p.59)". This struggle of Europe was not limited to the military arena, but also continued its impact with cultural wars until today.

Orientalist studies formed the basis of the cultural war. As Metin states, in the first orientalist studies, the East was perceived as Islam with a very wrong generalization and only Arabs were thought of as Muslims. This approach turns into another false generalization after the conquest of Istanbul; "*At the end of the Middle Ages, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul, Muslim=Turk and orientalist studies started to target the Ottomans* (Metin, 2013, p.59)". Later, as the Ottoman Empire grew stronger, Turkishness began to be used as a synonym for barbarism. The concept of barbarian is underlined with all kinds of negative adjectives, and it finds its place in all kinds of works, from travelogues, poems, play texts and history books of the period. Özlem Kumrular explains the situation as "*The Turk is indeed systematically identified with violence, brutality, evil, cruelty and theft* (Kumrular, 2008, p.47)". The writers of the period very consciously fostered this cultural war with their works.

One of the most influential of these works is Richard Knolles' three-volume history book titled *The General History of the Turks*. Orhan Burian made the following statement about the author of this book, which is the masterpiece of

rooting the negative image of Turks in English literature: “...he does not show the impartiality we expect from a historian; he is partial, even prejudiced. He writes with hatred against those hostile to his faith (Burian, 1999, pp.99-121; cited by Özbaran, 2004, p.310)”. The negative images of Turks and Islam created with hatred by R. Knolles and historians, travelers and literary figures like him have found a deep place in Europe that will continue to this day. As Özlem Kumrular emphasizes, Knolles introduced “the Turks as ‘the great fear of the world’” and stated that he wrote this work because he believed that this enemy should be recognized by everyone (Kumrular, 2008, p.54). Knolles is only one of the writers who openly expressed his cultural war against the Ottomans and the Turks.

Europe, which first learned about the Ottoman Empire from authors who wrote with this ideology, encountered a very different reality from the image of the Turks presented in the works they read, listened to or watched as their commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire increased. Kumrular wrote about the contradictions experienced in these encounters as follows;

It is clear that the comments and descriptions of the Turks had a complex, inextricable and contradictory effect on the European people of the period. The Westerner, who had difficulty in drawing a portrait of his enemy, did not know where to look at him and was astonished by these contradictory, incompatible and incompatible characteristics of the Turk. This exotic, mysterious, warlike, cruel, savage and “strange” being baffled the European to say the least. The confused Christian did not know how to define the “other”...when he saw the sultan in his own environment, in his own capital and visited him in his palace, his bewilderment grew. Those who got to know him closely did not hesitate to praise the importance he attached to justice in his own lands and underlined this in their reports. These diplomats, travelers, ambassadors and others took home with them that classic portrait of the sultan. In contrast to the aggressive, frightening image of the “Gran Turco”, this time a more mild, neutral image was emerging. (Kumrular, 2008, p.82-83)

Despite the positive developments mentioned by Kumrular, many historians, travelers, writers and artists continued to use negative Ottoman, Turkish and Muslim imagery in their works in order to feed the prejudices of their Christian audiences or readers about Turks and Muslims and to respond to their conventional expectations about Turks. William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes are the best examples:

... it is no coincidence that both literary giants immortalized the negative characteristics of the Turks... Likewise, in Shakespeare’s England, where the Turk was synonymous with all kinds of barbarism, it is no surprise that the great poet and playwright, like many of his contemporaries, used the Turks to depict “evil”. (Kumrular, 2008, p.47)

One of the most important characteristics that distinguishes Mozart from the great artists before him and some of his contemporaries is the way he handled and interpreted Ottoman, Turkish and Muslim images in his works. It would be correct to look for this characteristic in his oppositional character. Because Mozart always stood against the aristocracy, criticized court life and opposed class distinction. One of the best examples of this is his denunciation of the aristocracy by giving leading roles to characters from the lower classes in his opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. On the other hand, in his opera *The Magic Flute*, he frequently included the elements of humanism; equality, freedom and brotherhood, showing that he prioritized human love and tolerance above all else. In *Zaide*, he emphasizes the sense of compassion by drawing attention to the problem of slavery in his time.

When the root libretto is analyzed, it is seen that Mozart, while including the slavery system in *Zaide*, does not use it to show the Sultan or the Ottoman Empire in a negative light. On the contrary, the Sultan is portrayed as tolerant and merciful towards his slaves. However, when slaves break the rules, the Sultan’s authority, power and ruthlessness are shown through his strict attitude and severe punishments. This is because such opposition and resistance was considered as interference in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, when they were captured, the Sultan sentenced Gomatz and Zaide to death. However, when the true situation is revealed, the Sultan pardons the slaves. Thus, the Sultan is once again portrayed as a forgiving, merciful and tolerant statesman. The Sultan not only allows Gomatz, Zaide and Allazim to return to their country, but also provides them with a team of guards and rich gifts to make their journey safe and comfortable. In this way, the Sultan’s compassion is emphasized and the concept of the ‘great-hearted Turk’ is brought back to the agenda. Although the end of the work was not completed by Mozart, an ending in which slaves are killed or severely punished has never been written. Researchers analyzing the opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*,

which was written after *Zaide* and deals with a similar theme, suggest that Mozart may have designed a forgiveness scene for the unfinished ending of *Zaide*. This gives the impression that if Mozart had had the chance to finish *Zaide*, he would have ended the work with a similar finale by painting a positive image of the Turks.

### **Problem of Study**

Although Mozart was well aware of the prejudices and expectations of his audience, who had been fed with the images of despotic and barbaric Turks that had been in vogue for years, he had the courage to paint a positive picture of the Ottomans, Turks and Muslims, in short, the East, instead of feeding these prejudices. Even when talking about slavery in *Zaide*, he subtly inserted the virtues of compassion, tolerance and forgiveness in Islamic philosophy into the plot. He criticized palace life with the same subtlety. Considering Mozart's approach, it would be correct to conclude that if he had been able to complete *Zaide*, he would have attributed the image of the merciful and magnanimous Turk to the Sultan and introduced the Turks as tolerant, as in the opera *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.

In this article, the way in which the Ottoman, Turkish and Muslim images in *Zaide* are handled in the 21st century is tried to be explained through Peter Sellars and Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret's productions of *Zaide*. In this way, it has been tried to reach information on how Ottoman, Turkish and Muslim images are handled and perceived today.

### **Method**

In the contemporary interpretations of Sellars and Jauffret, it is investigated how Mozart's Turkish images in the original libretto are handled and transformed, and it is revealed with which preferences the missing parts of the original libretto are completed and interpreted in terms of content, lyrics, theme and music. In order to reach this information, the aforementioned directors' interpretations of *Zaide* have been comprehensively analyzed in location, setting, time, acting, characters, set design, light design, costume design, music, chorus and the final scene.

### **Findings**

#### **Plot of *Zaide* Opera**

The story takes place in Istanbul in the 16th century. The protagonist *Zaide*, who gives the opera its name, is sold to the palace as a prisoner and becomes the favorite of Suleiman the Magnificent. However, *Zaide* falls in love with Gomatz, who is a Christian and works as a slave in the palace. Allazim, who was captured by pirates fifteen years earlier and sold to the palace, suffers the same fate. Allazim helps *Zaide* and Gomatz plan their escape. When the Sultan learns that *Zaide* has escaped with other slaves, he is furious and orders their capture. The efforts of Osman, who brings him other beautiful girls to appease the Sultan's anger, do not help. *Zaide* and Gomatz are captured and sentenced to death. In the root libretto of *Zaide*, there is nothing after this scene. Therefore, the continuation and finale of the work is left to the interpretation of the directors.

In the productions of *Zaide* in Turkey, in other words, in the performances by the State Opera and Ballet, there is a common choice for the finale of *Zaide*: Allazim is captured before the death sentence for *Zaide* and Gomatz is executed. Saying that he was the Italian commander who saved the Sultan from pirates years ago, Allazim demands their release. Upon this, the Sultan forgave them all and allows them to return to their countries. (DOB, 2015-2016, p.5)

Despite this dramaturgical approach preferred for the finale of *Zaide* in Turkey, an examination of *Zaide* productions abroad reveals that the work has been staged with very different forms and contents. For example, Peter Sellars has shown that the problems of our age can be brought to the stage through opera, while Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret has shown that the art of opera can offer a fairytale world to adults with a simple and minimal set design using technology. They designed the final scene according to this approach. While Sellars does not prefer an ending in his finale by sticking to the libretto, in other words, he leaves the end of the work to the audience's imagination, Jauffret completes the work with a scene of forgiveness. Both productions are analyzed in detail in the following sections.

#### **Peter Sellars' *Zaide* Production**

Peter Sellars is an American opera and theater director born in 1957. He is one of the most written about directors in American theater. Directing classical and contemporary works with the influence of 20th century avant-garde theater,

Sellars later went beyond the avant-garde and became famous all over the world for his innovative and unique contemporary staging.

Influenced by the European tradition of avant-garde drama, Sellars draws upon movements as diverse as symbolism, futurism, constructivism, cubism, expressionism, dadaism, and surrealism. As a director, he has moved away from plot and linear action, toward abstraction and spectacle in combination with older, more visual forms.<sup>4</sup>

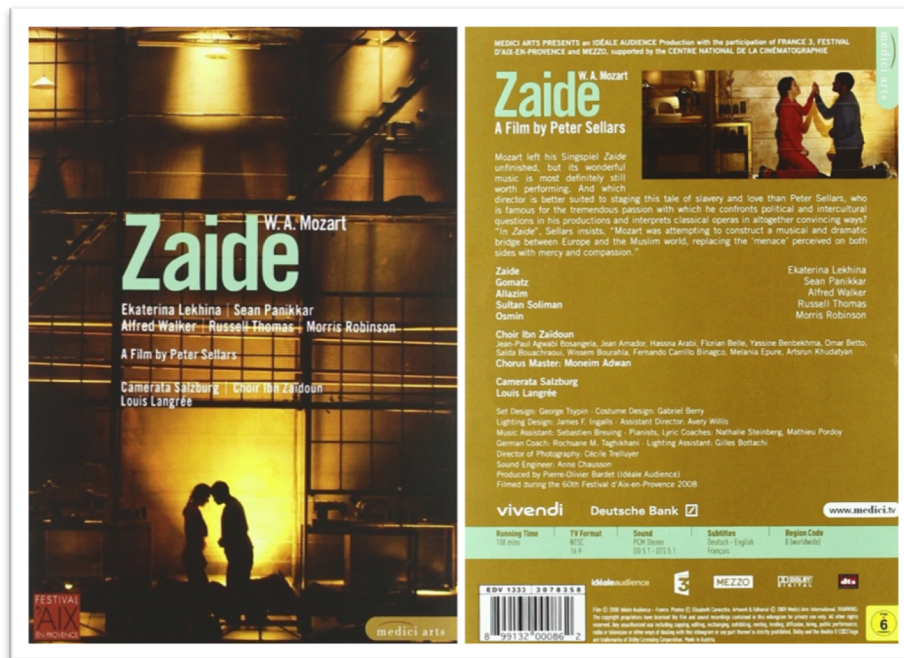
Sellars has an astonishingly creative visual virtuosity. In his opera works, he always brings a real conflict and social problem to the agenda. Staging opera and theater works with a very bold and contemporary interpretation and receiving many awards, the director has succeeded in bringing his extraordinary projects to the audience thanks to the five-year “genius grant” he received from the MacArthur Foundation in 1991. Sellars, who adapts Mozart’s works to the present day with striking methods, bold and original interpretations, is among the directors that critics and experts in the field of opera art do not keep off the agenda with positive and negative articles written by critics and experts with his interesting staging.

Sellars first worked on Mozart’s trilogy of operas *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*), *Così fan tutte* (*Women Are Like That*) and *Don Giovanni*, written in collaboration with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. In 1980, his career took off, and in the same year he gave a stunning production of the opera *Don Giovanni* at the Monadnock Music Festival in Manchester, New Hampshire. In the work, the character of *Don Giovanni* appears almost naked on stage as a partying heroin user, in what Opera News described as “an act of artistic vandalism”. With a similar innovative approach, he also directed Mozart’s opera productions of *Die Zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*), *Idomeneo*, *La Clemenza di Tito* (*The Mercy of Titus*) and *Zaide*.

Sellars first staged *Zaide* in 2006 for the Ruhrtriennale festival in Germany. This was followed by *Zaide* at the Barbican in London in 2007, the d’Aix-en-Provence festival in France in 2008, the Lincoln Center in New York in 2009, the Paris State Opera in 2010, the Wiener festival in Vienna in 2011, the Netherlands State Opera in 2012, the Adelaide festival in Australia in 2014, the Festival de Otono in Spain in 2015 and the contemporary interpretations of *Zaide* at Art Basel in Basel Switzerland in 2018. Since only the performance of *Zaide* at the d’Aix-Provence Festival in the South of France was available among the productions listed above, the article is limited to the analysis of this performance. The direction of the *Zaide* production at the d’Aix-Provence Festival is the same as Sellars’ 2006 direction. Some changes were made to the opera’s cast, while the staging was kept the same. The recording of the performance is available on Medici TV ([www.medici.tv](http://www.medici.tv)) and the present study was prepared by analyzing this recording.

Louis Langrée conducted the Camerata Salzburg orchestra, while Moneim Adwan conducted the Ibn Zaidoun choir. The stage design was created by Georges Tsy-pin, costume design by Gabriel Berry and lighting design by James F. Ingalls. Ekaterina Lekhina as *Zaide*, Sean Panikkar as *Gomatz*, Alfred Walker as *Allazim*, Russel Thomas as *Sultan Soliman* and Morris Robinson as *Osmin*.

<sup>4</sup> MachArthur Fellows Program (February 1, 1983). Peter Sellars. MacArthur Foundation.



**Image 1.** Festival d'Aix-en-Provence 2008 - *Zaide* DVD front and back cover (Web 1)

When we interpret Peter Sellars' direction in general; we can define it as a reinterpretation or re-imagining of Mozart's unfinished root libretto with a very different reading. Sellars has transferred his own artistic vision to the production with the theme of the migrant and refugee crisis, the most urgent social, economic and political problem of our time, and has brought together modern staging elements such as projection and the use of shadow to create a thought-provoking and provocative effect on the audience. In Mozart's *Zaide*, the themes of captivity, freedom, and love were featured. Instead of presenting the same theme to today's audience with a contemporary interpretation, Sellars has made a reading of *Zaide* through the immigrant and refugee crisis, which is a much broader social issue. In this way, the modern audience followed the themes of bondage, freedom and love in the original libretto through much more contemporary, social and political issues such as the refugee crisis, intercultural relations, belonging, modern slavery. The success of Peter Sellars is that he is able to convey today's conflicts and concerns to the modern opera audience by using opera art as a tool and to connect with the opera audience through contemporary concerns. One of the best examples of this is the production of *Zaide*.

The story of the opera is placed in a metal container made of a large iron construction and integrated with the colors in the lighting and costumes to create the material world of the play. The gray iron material used in the decor represents hardness, rigidity, sharpness and power. At the same time, the violent sound and noise when the rebelling characters hit the iron gates conveys the feeling of anger to the audience in its most striking form. The setting is a multi-story textile warehouse in Los Angeles where a tailor exploits immigrants who have entered the country illegally. The setting, which is advantageous in terms of functionality and visuality as it shows different events at the same time, is also quite challenging for the artists who sing their arias up and down the stairs.

In addition to the iron construction, Sellars, who brought the visuals of today's refugee crisis to the stage with projection, has realized a bold and original staging by drawing parallels between the problems of the characters in the original libretto and the problems of today's refugees and immigrants through the concepts of being a prisoner in another country and modern slavery.



**Image 2.** Peter Sellars's Zaide Décor

As seen in Image 2, this textile workshop where migrants work resembles a prison rather than a workshop. With this arrangement, Sellars has revealed the atmosphere of oppression, exploitation and modern-day slavery that separates, excludes and categorizes in its most striking form through immigrants.

Light design is another important element to be emphasized. The division of the iron construction into sections, giving the appearance of cells, and the fact that these cells symbolize different spaces in the workshop allowed the light to be used in the same fragmentation. In this way, only the place where the action takes place is illuminated when needed, while the other spaces are darkened and the audience's eyes and the place they look at are tried to be managed as in the cinema. Thanks to this use of light, the viewer's attention was controlled by directing it to the scene and character the director wanted, thus allowing the viewer to focus only on the moments the director wanted.



**Image 3.** Using light in the décor

In Sellars' direction, the storyline takes place mostly in darkness in the first act. On the other hand, in some scenes of the second act, a brighter image is provided and a very successful lighting design is made, especially in creating a day-night contrast.



**Image 4.** Day-night contrast in set design

Another tool Sellars utilizes to create atmosphere is the use of cages. This iron construction, which forms the center of the set design and looks like a prison cell, creates a cold atmosphere of imprisonment with the appearance of strangely disconnected, independent cages. On the other hand, the stairs that reach each floor of the iron construction create an image of interconnectedness and accessibility, and manage to implicitly place the connection and hope between the characters in the audience's subconscious, even though they are imprisoned behind bars and isolated in cages. This connection established through the stairs breaks the gloomy atmosphere created by the cold iron construction with the support of the yellow lights used inside the cages in the scenes required by the libretto, and supports the fragility of the human being that the system tries to dehumanize, his struggle against slavery, that is, his effort to become human again. The dramaturgy of the production is built on this construction. The image of iron bars, cell, cage is the most important metaphor that constitutes the main character of Sellars' staging. The entire opera is performed behind these iron bars. Even if a human being is imprisoned in a cage, he or she will manage to escape this imprisonment because he or she is human. This is precisely why, in Sellars' direction, *Zaide* is able to initiate love between them by sending her picture to Gomatz with a rope through the bars. While the cage they are in emphasizes the difficulty of reuniting the two lovers, it also hints at their common destiny.





**Image 5.** Using lattices in the Décor

Another characteristic of Peter Sellars' production of *Zaide* is his cinematographic interpretation of the stage. He not only used light design to support the lighting, space, characters and atmosphere, but also included the shadows of the characters in the staging. Thus, he brought the concept of shadow in psychology to the stage quite successfully. In Sellars' dramaturgy, shadows are used to bring the dark aspects of human beings or the aspects that they do not want to show to others to the stage. In addition to this, the emotions and thoughts that the characters cannot express because they are afraid of expressing them are magnified on the stage thanks to the shadows, turning them into a means of conveying the dilemma, pressure, fear and passion of the characters to the audience in a much more concrete way. The subconscious and different characteristics of the character, which the audience is unlikely to see, hidden in the subtext, are embodied on the stage through the use of shadow.

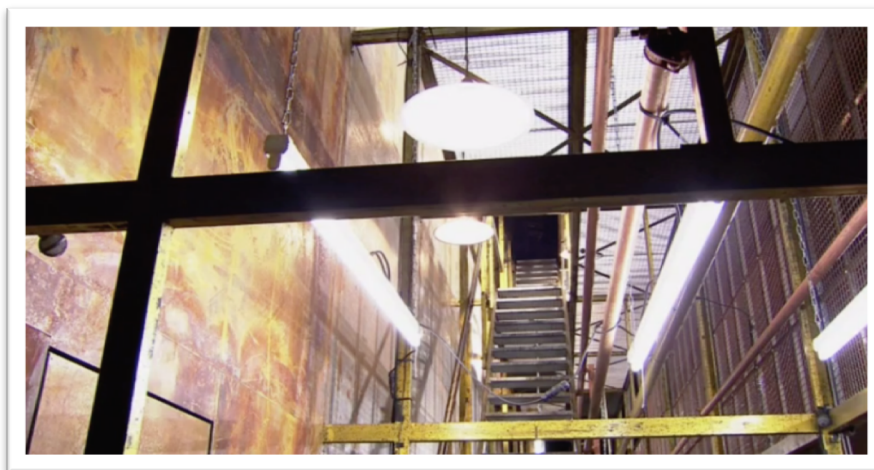
In order to understand the place of the use of shadow in philosophy, which Peter Sellars often includes in his staging, it is necessary to look again at Carl Gustav Jung's approach to the concept of shadow:

The shadow contains the basic instincts of man. It is the animal-like side of our personality. It is our inheritance from the lower forms of life. We need to tame the animalistic tendencies in our shadow in order to become civilized. The positive side of the shadow is that it is the source of the spontaneity, creativity, insight and intense enthusiasm necessary for human development. When the ego and the shadow cooperate, one feels full of life and vitality. The rejection of the shadow leads to a deflated personality (Ukray, 2015).



**Image 6.** Using shadows

As can be seen in Image 6, Sellars has always brought his characters into existence through their shadows. While the subconscious and instincts of the characters, which are reflected through the shadows, are sometimes made gigantic with the light technique, sometimes they are deliberately reduced in size and left stunted. This is why Sellars' use of light is very harsh and shadowy. This harshness has been successful in making the audience feel the sharp, angular, contrasting and aggressive tone of the story. As in Image 7, the use of light in the decor as if it were the natural light that belongs to that place also increased the realism.



**Image 7.** Using natural light in set design

The lighting design of *Zaide*, which contains very sharp emotional states such as violence, fear, love, passion and anger, has skillfully reinforced these emotions on stage and made them multi-layered and sub-textual through shadows. Sellars also supported the use of shadows with the use of projection. He created one of *Zaide*'s most original staging by

projecting the visuals of the refugee crisis, one of the biggest social, political and economic problems of our time, onto the stage.

When the costume design was analyzed, two important elements emerged. The first of these elements is related to Sellars' interpretation of Mozart's purpose in writing *Zaide*. Emphasizing that *Zaide* is not a historical story, Sellars states that Mozart wrote about "Europeans in the Muslim world throughout his life" and that even at that time Europeans were concerned with "the 'threat' of the Muslim World". He argues that Mozart wrote the opera *Zaide* to show how Europeans could have a positive relationship with Muslims and to emphasize that in order for this relationship to succeed, there must be a sense of "compassion" (Arendt, 2006) on both sides. Due to this approach, Sellars chose costumes for Soliman, the most important character of the opera, which emphasizes Turkishness, and caused the audience to perceive Soliman more like a Moroccan or an Indian. With this conscious choice, he brought Soliman closer to the Muslim image, which he saved from the Turkish image.

The second important element is the call for mercy in Mozart's opera *Zaide*. Sellars believes that in the 21st century "the relationship between the Muslim world and the West will be determined by the response to this cry for mercy (Arendt, 2006)". Therefore, by emphasizing the Muslim image instead of the Turkish image in his work, he emphasizes that the ongoing problems between the Muslim world and the Western world in the 21st century should be approached through the concept of mercy.



**Image 8.** Soliman's Costume

Zaide's modern style red espadrille pants and the hooded cardigan she wears on top are in stark contrast to Soliman's style. The red color in Zaide's outfit represents love, passion, violence and blood.



**Image 9.** Zaide's Costume

When Zaide, Gomatz and Allazim are captured, the headscarf on Zaide's head is another detail emphasizing her Muslim identity. In the picture Zaide sends to Gomatz in the first act, she is wearing the same headscarf. This picture, which is shown for a very short moment, is actually the identity of Zaide, an illegal immigrant. Here the director emphasizes that Zaide is a Muslim. In addition, while all the characters have dark skin color, a white Russian soprano was chosen for the character of Zaide.

A blue costume was preferred for the character Gomatz. Since blue is considered a color that symbolizes freedom, Sellars emphasized Gomatz's longing for freedom through costume and color.



**Image 10.** Gomatz's Costume

The second Turkish character in Mozart's *Zaide* is Osmin. But Peter Sellars used a black actor for this character. He chose a sporty jeans and a t-shirt for his costume. The character also wears earrings with shiny stones and a wristwatch. In this way, all Turkish characters in the root opera were eliminated and an African character was created, emphasizing the diversity and richness of the Muslim world.

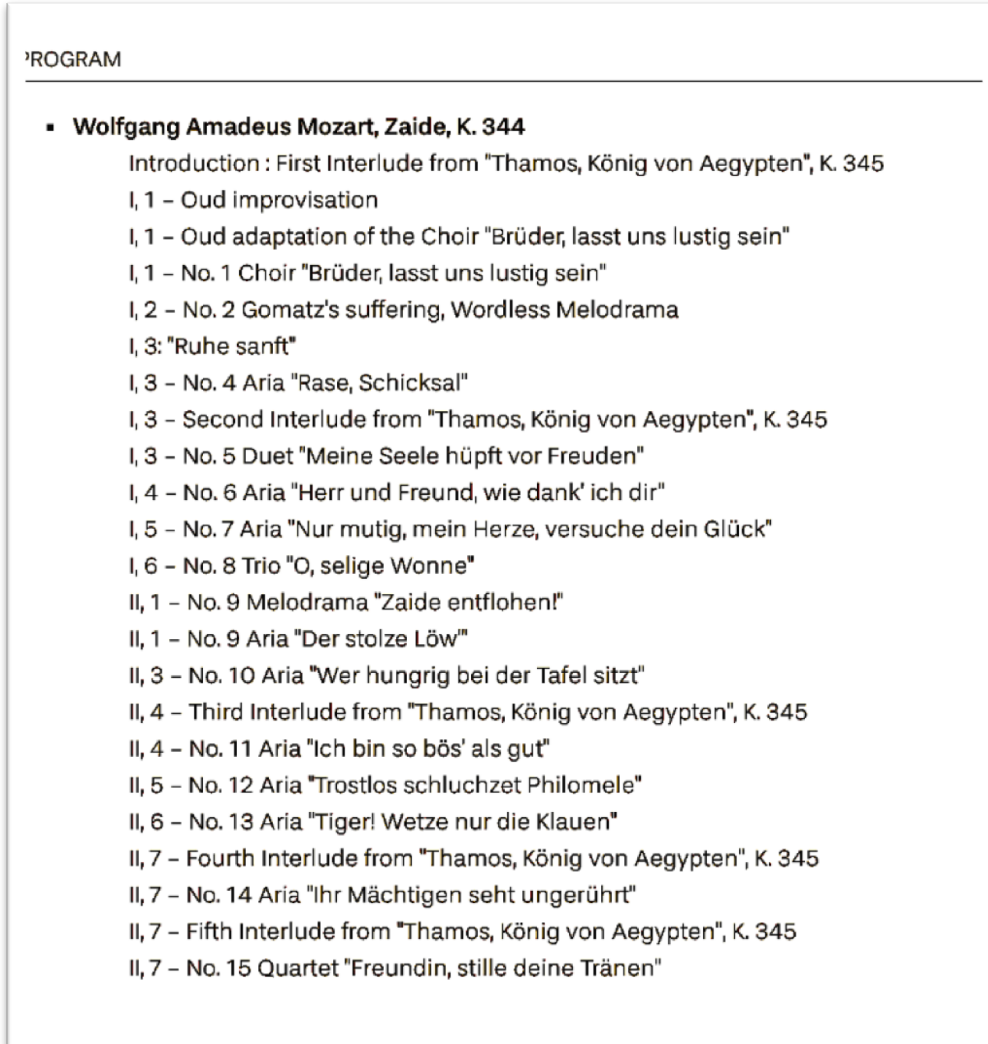


**Image 11.** Osmin and Allazim's Costumes

All costumes in the opera are adapted to the present day in accordance with the staging. Like Soliman, much more traditional clothes were chosen for the character of Allazim, similar to Soliman's. In Sellars' staging, neither Soliman, the tailor who employs illegal workers, nor the character Osmin has anything to do with being Turkish. The underlining theme has always been the Muslim world. Peter Sellars, who is known especially for his mastery of directing actors in opera, displayed the same success in this staging. The actors successfully performed strong emotions and actions that required a lot of movement. Peter Sellars removed the most important feature of the singspiel style, the speaking parts,

from the work and allowed the singers to emphasize their acting skills only with gestures, mimics and actions without words. In this way, Peter Sellars has succeeded in explaining *Zaide* to today's audience with a striking interpretation of the immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker problem, which is the political, economic, social, cultural agenda of this audience, through the Muslim world, the West and the concept of compassion.

The director took great risks in making changes to the score. Sellars added to both the overture and the interludes of the orchestral score. These additions are some parts from the opera *Thamos, King of Egypt*. In addition, at the beginning of the opera, another melody with Turkish instrumentation, which does not belong to *Zaide*, is used. The musical differences that stand out when compared to the original are listed below.



**Image 12.** Peter Sellars' *Zaide* Musical Program (Web 2)

Sellars added a passage from the Egyptian King Thamos for the opening music of *Zaide*, whose overture was missing. As this music plays, the opera begins with the character's faces bearing the same hopeless expressions. Although not in the original text, these faces shown at the beginning of the opera belong to the other illegal immigrants who witnessed the story in Sellars' direction and had to share the same fate and work there.



**Image 13.** Illegal immigrants

In the original work, a new piece was added before the choral part “Brüder, lasst uns lustig sein”, which Sellars created and arranged. This piece is a variation of the melody using the oud. The oud is an important instrument of the Middle Eastern and Central Asian musical tradition. With this choice of music, Sellars has managed to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity that best suits the atmosphere of *Zaide*'s story. This instrument, which may be unusual for a conventional opera work, emphasizes the interaction of different cultures and cultural diversity in Sellars' *Zaide*. The cultural diversity made visible by the choice of costume is made audible by Sellars' choice of instrument. The lute, which has its own emotional tone and unique character, adds a new musical richness and depth to the production with its impressive sound, while bringing a different perspective to the opera. Sellars claims that Mozart wrote the opera *Zaide* to bridge the gap between the West and the Muslim world, and reconstructs this idea with the sound of the oud, which acts as a bridge between eastern and western music. In addition, the original text of the chorus, written for male voices only, is accompanied by a new part for women in Images 14 and 15. The characters singing this melody with Turkish motifs as they wake up from their sleep are actually on strike. The original score for this section was then played and repeated. Only this section was changed by adding female voices to the chorus, which was originally written for male voices. The subtext of this choice lies in the fact that while in Mozart's time only male slaves were employed in hard labor, today women are also employed in hard labor. Thanks to this point of view of Peter Sellars, the situation of the migrants is brought to the stage in a much more holistic and realistic way.



**Image 14.** Other female characters in choir



**Image 15.** Male and female characters sing in the choir

The plot of Sellars begins with Soliman taking out illegal immigrant workers one by one from the locked warehouse. In this scene, the character understood to be Osmin is the person responsible for the security of the workshop. When the character changes in the script are analyzed, the character of Osmin is initially shown on Soliman's side, but after Gomatz's shooting scene, he evolves for the better and takes the side of the lovers.

Sellars' direction, which portrays the bad characters as bad and the good characters as good, leaves unanswered the question of whether Soliman frees the captured Gomatz and Zaide after his violent treatment of them. Sellars remains faithful to the original libretto in its finale, ending *Zaide* with Quartet No. 15, which Mozart interrupted to write his opera *Zaide* (Image 16). The unfinished ending of the root libretto parallels the narrative style of 20th-century novels and films that leave the work to the audience's judgment through a question or deliberate ambiguity, rather than bringing it to a definite end. Similarly, Sellars leaves *Zaide's* ending to the conscience of the audience with a plea for mercy. The audience will decide what the next step will be. In Sellars' *Zaide*, mercy is the only way to bridge the gap between the Muslim world and the West. Bringing the 21st century's cries for mercy to the stage through the migrant crisis, Peter Sellars leaves the concepts of the Muslim world, the migrant crisis and mercy to the mind, conscience and decision of his audience through the art of opera.



**Image 16.** Final scene

### **Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret's *Zaïde* Production**

Genevan scriptwriter and director Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret staged *Zaïde* at the Geneva Opera in 2005. The video recording of the work is available on the website [www.operaonvideo.com](http://www.operaonvideo.com). The work was accompanied by the Geneva Chamber Orchestra conducted by Franco Trinca and the artistic director was Sarah Ventura. The stage sets were prepared by Mathieu Reverdin and costumes by Patricia Vatre. Liliane Schneider: Zaïde, Valery Tsarev: Gomatz, Gerardo Garciacano: Allazim, Jean-Louis Meunier: Sultan Soliman, Alexandre Diakoff: Osmin and Claude Vuillemin: Cin (speaking role).



**Image 17.** 2005 Geneva Chamber Opera *Zaïde* representative (Web 3)

In Jauffret's staging, the events are handled in a spatial form created with the light technique projected on the curtain by utilizing technology. The background curtain, which turns into a shadow play curtain, is the main element of Jauffret's staging. Because the director used both the front and the back of this backdrop curtain as the play space. Thus, all the actions on the stage were realized around this curtain without the need for a décor, with only set pieces and props. In this way, Jauffret managed to create different spatial perspectives and layers of meaning at the same time by involving both the actors and their shadows reflected on the background curtain.

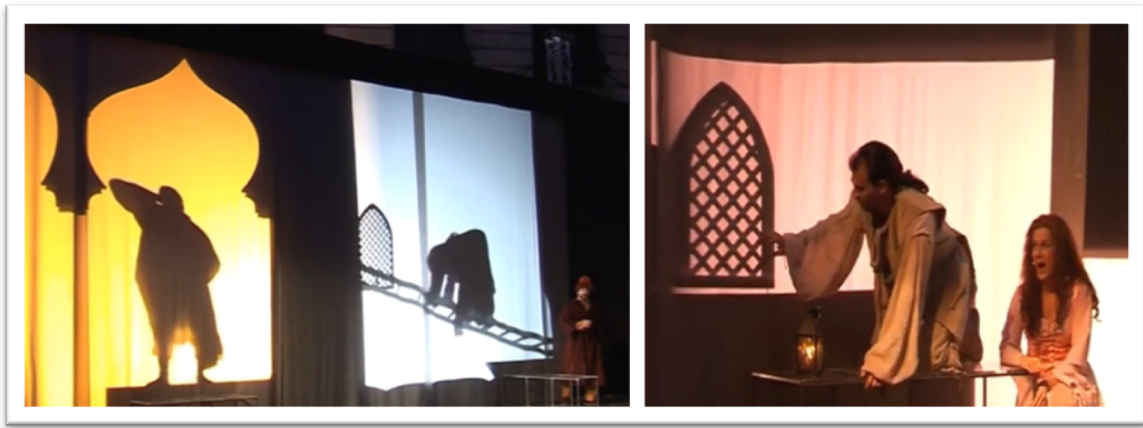
Thanks to the lighting design, the stage plastic created behind the background curtain has become as important as the front stage plastic. In this way, with a simple use of technology, different spaces and atmospheres are brought together with the audience in a fairytale-like narrative. Likewise, the backstage actions of the characters are made as important as the frontstage actions with light and shadow plays. In his production, Jauffret did not use light design with the delicacy of a painter. Instead, he preferred to use shadow and emphasis, which Adolphe Appia emphasized, in a very



simple and functional way. Adolphe Appia, who laid the foundations of the use of light in contemporary stage practices, described light as “*the highest painter on the stage* (Simonson, 1999, cited by Saadati, 2022, p.77)”.

He defined three types of stage light. These are diffused light that covers the entire stage space, creative light that composes shadows and accents on the stage, and painted light that creates painted shadows and accents on the two-dimensional decor. (Benedetto, 2012, p.43, cited by Çevikayak, 2015, p.8)

Here, the functionality of light, shadow and darkness mentioned in Appia’s theory is fully implemented. Thanks to the use of only shadows in some parts of the work and the narration of some parts with both the shadows of the characters and the characters themselves, the production has been made multi-layered with 2D and 3D narration. Thanks to this use, the theme of the root libretto has been made more fairytale-like without changing it. The functionalization of light with this technique resolves the creation of the perception of space to a great extent (Image 19). In addition, the use of time is facilitated by a few simple props used in front of the curtain. Thus, behind the backdrop curtain, one space is quickly transformed into another without any shift in meaning. For example, in the escape from the palace scene, the back of the background curtain used as a wall shows the outside of the palace, while the front shows the inside (Image 18). Thus, the audience can see both the interior and exterior at the same time.



**Image 18.** Slaves’ Escape scene

In order to reflect the emotional states of the characters and the related atmosphere, dim light was preferred in some scenes and bright light in others in the selection of the color tone and saturation of the lighting. Sometimes these preferences were used simultaneously (Image 19). In order to create a dramatic mood and environment, gloomy lighting reinforces the feeling of imprisonment by creating a stuffy and depressing environment, while bright lighting, such as in the final scene, expresses the feeling of happiness and hope. The direction and angle of the light can enlarge or reduce the size of the projected space and the characters acting behind the curtain. Thus, Jauffret has realized a staging that is far from the conventional approach we are used to seeing on the traditional opera stage.

Image 19 shows a photograph of the stone-breaking slaves and Gomatz’s scene. The slaves breaking stones behind the curtain are deliberately made faint and blurred. In this way, slaves are dehumanized. Gomatz, on the other hand, is kept in front of the curtain and separated from the other slaves. With this technique, the actions of the slaves, who turn into mere shadows on the screen, are made to appear larger than normal. Thus, the emphasis is not on the slaves themselves, but on the hard work they do and the situation they are in. The different spaces created by the shadows on the screen facilitate the actors in terms of using time and create a functional space for dramatic action.



**Image 19.** Creating place in décor

As can be seen in Image 19 of Jauffret's staging, with a simple shadow play, very different places are brought to the stage in a simple way. Places such as the sea, the boat, the palace rooms, the roof, the window, the quarry, which are difficult to be shown on the stage, were projected on the background curtain in a very practical way and embellished the audience's imagination.

With the perception of space created on the background curtain with the light-shadow technique in Image 20, the state of captivity is emphasized, not the dungeons of the palace.



**Image 20.** Gomatz locked in dungeon



**Image 21.** Using place in décor

The costume choices in Jauffret's direction are quite simple and far from detail in parallel with the use of shadows. The costumes do not reflect the splendor of the costumes of the period in which the work is set. The director, who prefers simplicity and functionality in his production, has used only costumes that refer to the period and signify the characters of that period in costume design. As in the décor, splendor and detail were avoided in the costumes. For example, in the costume design for Sultan Soliman (Image 22), while the character is implied to be a sultan, no effort was made to reflect his splendor. Similarly, Gomatz's costume design (Image 22), while implying that he is a slave, is far from reflecting the clothing of the slaves of that period.



**Image 22.** Costumes of Sultan Soliman, Zaide, Allazim, Gomatz and Osmin

As can be seen in Image 22, Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret designed the characters of Allazim and Osmin, especially *Zaide*, to the extent that we can relate them to their own identities and periods, but without elaboration.

In his interpretation of the work, Jauffret has remained faithful to the original text. Only in two places simple changes have been made. For example, when Gomatz is sleeping, Zaide covers him with the sash around his waist instead of leaving a bag of gold on his lap. Another change is the scene in Image 23 where Zaide looks at Gomatz through binoculars and takes his picture. This scene is not in the original libretto, but it does not contradict the addition. Because considering the training given to the concubines in the harem, Zaide's painting is in accordance with the Ottoman harem tradition. It is thought that Jauffret made this addition to reinforce Zaide's love.



**Image 23.** Zaide painting

In Jauffret's direction, Mozart's Symphony No. 26 in E flat major (KV 184) is played as the overture. The choral part in the first scene is completely omitted. One of the slaves sings "Brüder lasst uns, lustig sein". In addition, a character has been added that is different from the original work. This character is a genie that is not in the original libretto. This genie, dressed in black clothes as in Image 24, appears in the melodramatic parts of the opera. He voices the characters' speech texts as if they were their inner voices. In addition, while the parts in *Zaide* are sung in German as in the original text, the genie character is made to speak in French.



**Image 24.** Genie and Gomatz

The expected character change for Soliman appears in Jauffret's staging. As seen in Image 25, Jauffret concludes the opera with a scene of forgiveness that could have been designed by Mozart. This ending is also in line with the image of the forgiving, tolerant Sultan that Mozart had drawn. In the opera's finale, the slaves regain their freedom thanks to the Sultan's mercy.



**Image 25.** Zaide's final scene

### Conclusion

When the staging of Sellars and Jauffret for the opera *Zaide* are analyzed, it is seen that both directors brought completely different interpretations to the work. As a result of the above-mentioned analyses, the information obtained about these two stagings of *Zaide* staged in Europe in terms of location, setting, time, characters, set design, light design, costume design, music, overture, melodrama, chorus and final scene is summarized in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Differences between Zaide Directors

	<b>Peter Sellars</b>	<b>Pierre-Alexandre Jauffret</b>
<b>Location</b>	Los Angeles	İstanbul
<b>Setting</b>	Textile Workshop	Ottoman Palace
<b>Time</b>	21st century	16th century
<b>Characters</b>	Zaide, Gomatz, Allazim, Soliman, Osmin and Illegal Immigrants	Zaide, Gomatz, Allazim, Sultan Soliman, Osmin and Genie
<b>Set Design</b>	Grey iron construction	Background curtain and cubes
<b>Light Design</b>	Cinematographic illusion	Creating space with the use of shadow on the curtain
<b>Costume Design</b>	Traditional and contemporary	Period clothes
<b>Music</b>	Before the choir party, a melody with a variety was added using the oud, which is an instrument of Turkish music. Both in the introduction and in the work, excerpts from King Thamos of Egypt are played.	Faithful to the original
<b>Overture</b>	Thamos, König in Ägypten (King Thamos of Egypt) (KV 345)	Symphony No. 26 in B flat major (KV 184)
<b>Melodrama</b>	Melodrama episodes have been completely removed	All melodrama episodes were sung in French by the Genie
<b>Chorus</b>	Originally written only for the male voice, the choir party is sung by men and women together	The choir part of the first scene has been completely removed. One of the slaves sings the part "Brüder lasst uns, lustig sein"
<b>Final Scene</b>	What slaves say after their capture ends with No.15 Quartet	It ends with the scene of the Sultan forgiving the slaves

Based on Table 1, the cinematographic illusion created by Sellars, as opposed to Jauffret's almost scenery-less direction, reveals how the same work is presented in a completely different form with a different dramatic setup. The most important feature of Jauffret's direction is that it is more faithful to the original work in terms of time, place and costume. In addition to this, he avoids conventional staging approaches that include magnificent sets and sumptuous costumes, and completes the entire opera from beginning to end without using any sets on the stage, using only the background curtain, light plays, decor, props and costumes that signify the period and place, in other words, with a minimalist approach.

In terms of substance and form, Sellars's version offers an original and contradictory interpretation. On the other hand, Jauffret's direction was more faithful to the original work. Because while Sellars moved the storyline, which in the original work takes place in the Ottoman palace, to the other side of the world, to a cage-like textile workshop made of iron construction in Los Angeles, Jauffret did not compromise on the original work and did not give up the palace atmosphere in the space fiction.

Although Jauffret's visual technique of projecting shadows on the screen differs from Sellars' direction, it has a similar function in terms of dramatic action and the use of time. Peter Sellars created the space with a single iron construction and compressed the action into this space. The choice of a single location reinforced the immigrant phenomenon, the concepts of slavery and captivity, and made the location much more effective. The dungeons of the palace in Jauffret's staging were conveyed to the audience with the light and shadow technique created on the background curtain. Considering the use of light and shadow, Sellars' design is not as multidimensional as Jauffret's in terms of time and space. While Sellars used light and shadow to display more social, psychological and class situations, Jauffret used them to show the audience different times and places far away from each other. In this way, the audience can see all the actions of the characters, sometimes in the palace, sometimes at sea, sometimes in the dungeon.

When the musical evaluation of these two stagings is made, it is seen that Peter Sellars took more risks than Jauffret and made bold choices in the music of the opera. For example, he chose a section from Mozart's *Thamos, König in Ägypten* (*Thamos, King of Egypt*) (KV 345) for the overture. Jauffret used the Symphony No. 26 in E-flat Major (KV 184). Sellars added a melody to the opening of the opera, which was not in the original, performed on the lute and varied before the choral part. In addition, the choral part, which Mozart had originally written only for male slaves, was performed with a choir of male and female immigrants. He removed the spoken parts from *Zaide*, which was written in German singspiel style. Jauffret, on the other hand, made the work more fairy-tale-like by narrating the events with a French-speaking genie character. The choral part "Brüder lasst uns, lustig sein" in the first scene was sung by one of the slaves instead of the chorus.

In Jauffret's staging, acting is demonstrative. The audience is not expected to empathize with the characters. The audience follows what is told on the stage as an observer. For this reason, the characters are often transformed into shadows with light plays and staged as two-dimensional characters instead of three-dimensional characters. Thus, not only the characters but also their actions are emphasized. The choice of costumes and decor also supports the demonstrative acting style. In Sellars' production, a simulative acting style was preferred. The characters, created in three dimensions, are treated in depth, and it is aimed for the audience to empathize both emotionally and intellectually with the pressure and difficulties experienced by immigrants. While the development of the events proceeded in a straight line, the audience's heavy emotional and questioning action was handled through the concepts of East-West, Muslim-Christian immigrants, asylum seekers and compassion. This is precisely why Peter Sellars, like Mozart, did not add an ending to his performance. This choice of the director is a conscious attempt to put the responsibility of how the work should end on the audience. What is projected on the stage is not an illusion, but a crisis that Western societies must decide and take urgent action to resolve for the sake of world peace.

Today, there is no Ottoman, Turkish threat for Europe. In parallel with this situation, in both *Zaide* productions analyzed within the scope of the research, it is seen that the Ottoman and Turkish images have lost their power and splendor, or even disappeared completely. In Sellars' interpretation, *Zaide* was almost rewritten. The Ottoman and Turkish traces have been removed from the work and replaced with the problem of the immigrant, even Muslim

immigrant crisis, which Europe now perceives as a threat to itself. In this way, this interpretation, which is quite far from the original *Zaide*, has not changed Mozart's libertarian approach, his anti-slavery attitude and his belief in compassion.

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## Research Article

# Exploring the challenges of e-learning for music in Iraq

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### Abstract

The article explores the challenges faced by music instructors in Iraq while using e-learning for music education, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic. The research aims to identify and assess the main obstacles encountered by music educators in applied disciplines, particularly in solo performances on instruments such as the piano and violin. The research used a descriptive-analytical technique, especially content analysis, to examine and evaluate the difficulties encountered by music educators in Iraq during the transition to e-learning. The study sample consists of four faculty members who were chosen from the Department of Musical Arts at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Baghdad. These faculty members used e-learning to teach solo instruments. The process of data collection involves the distribution of a questionnaire consisting of 30 questions, particularly tailored to gather instructors' viewpoints and understandings about the challenges faced while using e-learning for practical music courses. and analyzed using statistical measures in SPSS. The results highlight the difficulties encountered by music educators in Iraq while using e-learning, including the lack of direct human interaction and limitations in practical learning. Practical disciplines, including solo performance on instruments, provide unique challenges since they require specific equipment, exact instructions, and exceptional skills. However, e-learning in music education offers advantages such as convenience, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. The research emphasizes the need to integrate technology and develop innovative methods to effectively provide both theoretical and practical teaching in music education. The declaration acknowledges the efficacy of combining online and conventional approaches to enhance learning results, optimize communication, and save expenses. During the pandemic, e-learning has become essential. Nevertheless, it is crucial to emphasize the delivery of accurate information, appropriate assignments, and ongoing student involvement. This research aims to improve understanding of the challenges and benefits associated with e-learning in music education, particularly in the context of Iraq. This resource provides significant insights for educators, policymakers, and organizations seeking to enhance music teaching via the implementation of state-of-the-art technology approaches.

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## Introduction

The emergence of e-learning is a direct result of the scientific and technological progress made in the last century. The surge in demand for education, along with a limited number of educational institutions, the surplus of readily available information, and the need to integrate technological advancements into the education sector, is the impetus behind this response. E-learning refers to the use of electronic media, namely computers and the Internet, for the purpose of

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providing instructional knowledge. It is now a widely used educational strategy (Abdel-Aziz, 2009). The roots of e-learning are subject to ongoing discussion, with some ascribing it to computer-assisted learning and others to the utilization of computer networks, such as the Internet, in the field of education. The concept has progressed with contemporary technologies and continues to endure modifications and advancement (Dawoodi, 2018). E-learning is defined as using the Internet and computer-based tools to study educational content and facilitate interaction between teachers, learners, and the subject itself (Abdel-Aziz, 2009; Al-Ghareeb, 2009). The name "e-learning" is favored over "virtual education" to emphasize its resemblance to conventional education through the utilization of electronic media. Emphasizing the results and efficiency of e-learning is of utmost importance, rather than making comparisons with conventional approaches (Dobbs & Philip, 1997). The prevalence of e-learning is seen in the increasing abundance of online institutions, schools, and courses accessible on the Internet. Many educators and students worldwide already used e-learning before the COVID-19 pandemic (Koumi, 2006). Its benefits include overcoming geographical barriers, offering flexible learning schedules, and leveraging technology to enhance educational experiences (Roddy, 1996; Yulia, 2020). E-learning can be classified into different types. Synchronous education involves real-time connectivity between teachers and students, allowing immediate feedback and interaction (Amer, 2014). Asynchronous e-learning, on the other hand, does not require real-time interaction and allows learners to access pre-developed materials at their own pace (Amer, 2014). Blended education combines online and traditional face-to-face education, utilizing various tools and systems to create a comprehensive learning experience (Al-Ajrash, 2017).

The evolution of educational forms and disciplines has led to the development of various music education methods. Music education is considered as important as other academic subjects and contributes to cognitive development and various aspects of personal and social skills (Wangphanich, 2013; McPherson & Zimmerman, 2011). The content of music education encompasses diverse musical knowledge and skills, which can be acquired through interaction with teachers and instruments (Hoffer, 1977). Evaluating music education's outcomes involves cognitive and emotional aspects, including intellectual growth and changes in attitudes and values (Leonhard & House, 1972). In traditional music education, the teacher is vital in guiding and instructing students in instrument-specific techniques and theories. The curriculum and teaching methods vary depending on the instrument and the professor's approach (Maysam & Kuna, 2008). Overall, e-learning and music education are dynamic fields that continue to evolve and adapt to the changing educational landscape. Integrating technology and the diverse approaches in these areas aim to enhance the learning experience and provide valuable educational opportunities.

Due to technological improvements, e-learning has gained significant prominence in education globally in recent years. Nevertheless, the use of this method in arts education, especially in hands-on disciplines, is restricted, and instructors encounter several obstacles. Baker (2011) asserts that online learning is not widely used in arts education since it is not practical and does not include physical interaction. Nevertheless, Graham (2006) supports the idea of combining online and conventional techniques in music education to enhance learning results, facilitate communication, and save expenses. The COVID-19 epidemic has necessitated the transition of several institutions, including music education, from conventional classroom teaching to online learning. Nevertheless, the use of e-learning in music education requires a distinctive methodology that encompasses both theoretical and practical instruction. Music education is unique compared to other fields of study since it specifically concentrates on instructing students in the art of sound or playing musical instruments in order to develop their talents. Furthermore, music education requires students who possess exceptional talents, unique skills, specialized equipment, and clear explanations. Notwithstanding the difficulties, e-learning in music education offers notable advantages, especially in regard to accessibility and cost-effectiveness. While e-learning has become essential during the pandemic, it is important to ensure that students are provided with accurate information and appropriate activities to effectively acquire skills. The absence of connection and engagement might provide a substantial obstacle to sustaining student motivation and interest in the topic. Nevertheless, a study conducted in Turkey by Güzel, Çakır, and Çelen (2020) revealed the efficacy of e-learning in the pedagogy of instruments such as the violin. The study demonstrated that video-assisted violin lessons on YouTube yielded positive results when integrated with conventional in-person instruction and supplementary assignments.

However, these lessons were insufficient. This research demonstrates their use of asynchronous e-learning. Kristin Shoemaker and Gertjan van Stam conducted an experiment in the field of e-learning piano education. They used Internet MIDI, a software tool that enables two piano keyboards to electronically regulate, synchronize, and communicate data using MIDI technology (Shoemaker & van Stam, 2010). The objective of this project was to use the Internet as a medium for piano instruction in order to tackle the scarcity of conventional piano teachers. These endeavors signify continuous efforts to ascertain the most efficient e-learning techniques for instructing music. Within Iraq and the Arab world, there are many approved technology instruments for the purpose of electronic music instruction, such as the Zoom program, Google Classroom, and Google Meet. Researchers and educators have looked into the use of these applications for video conferencing in the context of music instruction. "Consequently, educational institutions have embraced these programs as a pedagogical instrument" (Dammers, 2009). Amidst the coronavirus epidemic, these apps have gained more popularity since most educational institutions depend on them for e-learning. The Department of Musical Arts at the University of Baghdad has implemented a program that offers theoretical and practical courses via the distribution of texts in PDF format, audio clips, or synchronous e-learning.

The technological revolution has given rise to e-learning as a means of enhancing educational systems by creating efficient and effective learning environments. Developed nations have made significant advancements in e-learning, which offers flexible learning opportunities that are not time- or location-bound. E-learning is now considered integral to education and is widely used in many universities as an auxiliary system.

However, some countries, like Iraq, have faced numerous crises hindering their educational progress, resulting in reliance on traditional methods with limited innovation. The COVID-19 pandemic further impacted education globally, leading to the adoption of e-learning as an ideal solution.

In response to the pandemic, Iraqi educational institutions suspended in-person activities, prompting the use of electronic means for continuity. The shift to e-learning posed challenges for music teachers, students, and faculty members, including increased effort, unusual obstacles, and difficulties in practical study subjects, particularly.

### **Problem of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify and assess the difficulties encountered by music educators in Iraq while providing E-learning music instruction during the COVID-19 outbreak. The study aimed to address the following inquiries:

- What are the main obstacles encountered by music educators in Iraq when using e-learning for music instruction?
- How do these obstacles become evident in practical disciplines such as solo performance on instruments like the piano and violin?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

In this study, a descriptive-analytical technique, especially content analysis, was used to examine and analyze the obstacles experienced by music educators in Iraq when applying e-learning music education during the COVID-19 epidemic. This approach was chosen because of its capacity to give both quantitative measures and qualitative interpretations of data, thereby providing a holistic view of the research investigation (Latif & Marot, 2020). This aligns with the academic intent to generate a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study.

### **Sampling**

The study involved a research community of ten professors from the Department of Musical Arts at the University of Baghdad's Faculty of Fine Arts. From this community, a sample of four faculty members was intentionally selected. These faculty members were permanent members of the Department of Musical Arts and taught solo playing (piano-violin) during the transition period for e-education, which occurred from March 18, 2020, until the end of the academic year in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Data Collection Tools

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher developed a questionnaire consisting of 30 items. The questionnaire was designed to gather teachers' opinions and viewpoints regarding difficulties when using e-learning for practical music courses focusing on solo playing. The questionnaire design was based on thoroughly reviewing the theoretical framework literature and relevant references. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured through two methods. Firstly, the questionnaire was evaluated by three experienced and specialized arbitrators in the field of scientific research and teaching at the University of Baghdad's College of Fine Arts. Their feedback was utilized to modify several items, enhancing the clarity and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire. The amendments resulted in a 100% agreement percentage. Secondly, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated, yielding a validity score of 82.1% based solely on the closed questions in the questionnaire. The constancy of the questionnaire refers to its ability to produce consistent results when administered multiple times under the same conditions. In other words, constancy ensures that the questionnaire's results remain stable and unchanged, even if administered multiple times within specific periods. To verify the constancy of the questionnaire used in the study, the researcher employed the Cronbach Alpha coefficient method, which was calculated 0.674. the coefficient value is 0.674, indicating that the questionnaire items demonstrate a stability rate of 67.4%. This is a positive indication of the questionnaire's constancy.

It is observed that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient falls within a range that warrants scrutiny. With regards to the questionnaire's validity, it denotes the extent to which the scale assesses its intended construct, and can be ascertained through the stability coefficient. The validity of this questionnaire is determined to be 0.801, signifying an 82.1% level of validity.

**Table 1.** Shows the value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient in case the question is omitted

Items	C.A.
1 Has the educational institution identified any particular e-learning applications	0.675
2 Have you received any training in e-learning	0.675
3 Had you engaged in e-learning prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic	0.630
4 Do you utilize a single type of e-learning with all of your students	0.619
6 Does e-learning provide productive feedback for practical training	0.698
8 Is the internet speed sufficient for delivering online lectures	0.573
9 Are there any challenges in monitoring the number of students during e-learning of practical music subjects	0.816
10 Do students participate interactively in e-learning for practical subjects	0.675
11 Does the e-learning system align with the teaching of music for practical subjects	0.651
12 Is the delivery of educational materials to students through e-learning platforms both seamless and convenient	0.573
13 Which specific electronic devices are utilized for music instruction in the context of e-learning	0.675
14 Are you getting ready for the virtual class session	0.619
17 Do you utilize any safety measures during virtual music classes	0.675
18 Does the employed software offer satisfactory visual and auditory quality	0.573
19 Are there options within the application's settings to eliminate both continuous and intermittent background noise and echo	0.675
20 Which specific form of e-learning is utilized in practical music instruction	0.675
21 What specific elements of practical music instruction (individual) do you favor	0.675
22 Do you engage in playing the musical instrument alongside the student during the virtual lesson to provide clarification	0.573
23 Is the audio and video lesson inclusive of both genders	0.661
24 Do you employ particular tools and software to aid in individual practical music instruction	0.573
25 Do you request that your students capture a video recording of their exercises and submit it via an electronic platform	0.675
26 Do you encounter challenges in assessing students' proficiency in practical subjects in the context of e-learning	0.735
27 In your view, does e-learning impede the progress of students in practical subjects	0.735
28 Does the implementation of e-learning in practical subjects alleviate the workload of teachers	0.651
29 Are you able to discern the movement of the hands and fingers of the student during their musical exercise with clarity	0.675
30 Do the applications you utilize capture all the sound frequencies produced by musical instruments	0.651

C.A.: Cronbach Alpha

By referring to Table 1, it is evident that the Cronbach Alpha coefficients vary when a specific question is excluded from the questionnaire. Specifically, if item 9, which pertains to the challenge of monitoring the number of students during e-learning of practical music subjects, is removed from the questionnaire, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient will change from a range of 0.674 to 0.816. This change indicates that the questionnaire's reliability has improved from questionable to good, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated 0.816. Regarding the open-ended questions, the researcher relied on the experts' viewpoints to ensure their validity.

**Data Analysis**

The data was gathered through the employment of a questionnaire as the research tool and, subsequently, inputted into an Excel file, arranged, and imported into the statistical software (SPSS) for data analysis after the answers were coded. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the study's data, and precisely, arithmetic means and standard deviations. During the statistical analysis, the researcher depended on the acquired data and information, in which four questionnaires were distributed and subsequently retrieved. The researcher utilized the relevant statistical indicators to align with their research hypotheses and inquiries, which are arithmetic mean; this measure determines the extent of concurrence among the study sample's responses to each item in the questionnaire. Standard Deviation; this metric is employed to determine the extent of variation among the responses of the study sample from the level of agreement.

**Observation**

The significance value (sig.) was employed in testing the research hypotheses instead of tabulated values due to the precise outcomes obtained through its application. These measures were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSSV20) software.

**Statistical indicators**

The sections of the questionnaire were coded to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire, and the corresponding statistical measures are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Displays the coding of the resolution sections

<b>Answer Coding</b>	<b>Paragraph</b>
2-1	Yes - No
1-2-3	Yes - Sometimes - No
1-2-3	Yes. - Too much. - No.
1-2-3	Yes. - A little bit. - No.
1-2-3	Yes. - Not at the required level. - No.
1-2-3-4	Computer - Tablets - Mobile - Other

The statistical measures were computed for the questionnaire items, as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Presents the statistical measure values of the questionnaire items

	Items	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Degree
1	Has the educational institution identified any particular e-learning applications	2.00	2.00	2.0000	0.00000	high
2	Have you received any training in e-learning	2.00	2.00	2.0000	0.00000	high
3	Had you engaged in e-learning prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic	1.00	2.00	1.2500	0.50000	high
4	Do you utilize a single type of e-learning with all of your students	1.00	2.00	1.7500	0.50000	high
6	Does e-learning provide productive feedback for practical training	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
8	Is the internet speed sufficient for delivering online lectures	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
10	Do students participate interactively in e-learning for practical subjects	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.000	high
11	Does the e-learning system align with the teaching of music for practical subjects	1.00	2.00	1.2500	0.50000	high
12	Is the delivery of educational materials to students through e-learning platforms both seamless and convenient	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
13	Which specific electronic devices are utilized for music instruction in the context of e-learning	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.000	high
15	Are you getting ready for the virtual class session	1.00	2.00	1.7500	0.50000	high
17	Do you utilize any safety measures during virtual music classes	1.00	1.00	1.0000	0.00000	high
18	Does the employed software offer satisfactory visual and auditory quality	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
19	Are there options within the application's settings to eliminate both continuous and intermittent background noise and echo	1.00	1.00	1.0000	0.00000	high
20	Which specific form of e-learning is utilized in practical music instruction	3.00	3.00	3.0000	0.00000	high
21	What specific elements of practical music instruction (individual) do you favor	1.00	1.00	1.0000	0.00000	high
22	Do you engage in playing the musical instrument alongside the student during the virtual lesson to provide clarification	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
23	Is the audio and video lesson inclusive of both genders	1.00	2.00	1.7500	0.50000	high
24	Do you employ particular tools and software to aid in individual practical music instruction	1.00	2.00	1.5000	0.57735	high
25	Do you request that your students capture a video recording of their exercises and submit it via an electronic platform	2.00	2.00	2.0000	0.00000	high
26	Do you encounter challenges in assessing students' proficiency in practical subjects in the context of e-learning	1.00	2.00	1.7500	0.50000	high
27	In your view, does e-learning impede the progress of students in practical subjects	1.00	2.00	1.7500	0.50000	high
28	Does the implementation of e-learning in practical subjects alleviate the workload of teachers	1.00	2.00	1.2500	0.50000	high
29	Are you able to discern the movement of the hands and fingers of the student during their musical exercise with clarity	2.00	2.00	2.0000	0.00000	high
30	Do the applications you utilize capture all the sound frequencies produced by musical instruments	1.00	2.00	1.2500	0.50000	high

After examining Table 3, it becomes apparent that questionnaire paragraphs (1, 2, 10, 13, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25, 29) obtained a standard deviation value of (0.000), signifying unanimous agreement among the respondents regarding these paragraphs. The remaining questionnaire paragraphs were observed to have received nearly unanimous agreement. As for the open-ended questions, the collected responses were as follows:

**Table 4.** The following presents the responses to the open-ended questions

	<b>Identification paragraphs</b>	<b>Summary of answers</b>
5	Is instruction delivered exclusively through a single medium, or are there approaches to accommodate diverse learning preferences	Employing multiple programs
7	In the context of e-learning, what is the methodology utilized for the assessment of students in practical subjects	Analogous to evaluating attendance
14	What visual programs or applications are utilized within the pedagogy of practical musical materials	Google Meet & Zoom
16	What methodologies do you employ within the domain of e-learning	Electronically distribute the lecture to the student

Based on the aforementioned responses, it is evident that educators employ various instructional approaches and assessment methods in e-learning, resembling traditional classroom methodologies. The primary platforms used by teachers for conducting lectures are Google Meet and Zoom, while the distribution of recorded lectures electronically is the prevailing practice.

## Results

### **Results of the first question: Has the educational institution identified any particular e-learning applications?**

According to the outcomes of this inquiry, the educational organization has recognized specific e-learning tools, which exhibit a considerably high degree of prevalence, as evidenced by an arithmetic mean of (2.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000).

### **Results of the second question: Have you received any e-learning training?**

As per the findings obtained from this query, it was revealed that the faculty had undergone training programs in e-learning, as depicted by an arithmetic mean of (2.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.

### **Results of the third question: Had you engaged in e-learning before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic?**

The outcomes of this inquiry indicated that most of the teaching staff had not engaged in e-learning prior to the pandemic, as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (1.2500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

### **Results of the fourth question: Do you utilize a single type of e-learning with all your students?**

As per the findings obtained from this query, it was revealed that most respondents employed the same e-learning modalities for all their students, as demonstrated by an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

### **Results of the fifth question: Is instruction delivered exclusively through a single medium, or are there approaches to accommodate diverse learning preferences?**

According to the outcomes of this inquiry, it was found that diverse techniques were utilized in delivering educational content to the students.

### **Results of the sixth question: Does e-learning provide productive feedback for practical training?**

The findings obtained from this query demonstrated a dichotomy in the effectiveness of e-learning for practical training, with some observations being fruitful while others were not. The results were reflected in an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

### **Results of the seventh question: In the e-learning context, what methodology is utilized to assess students in practical subjects?**

According to the outcomes of this inquiry, it was found that the evaluation methods utilized in e-learning were analogous to those employed in traditional face-to-face instruction.

**Results of the eighth question: Is the internet speed sufficient for delivering online lectures?**

The findings derived from this query revealed a split opinion regarding the adequacy of internet speed for delivering lectures. Some respondents considered it suitable, while others did not, as evidenced by an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

**Results of the tenth question: Do students participate interactively in e-learning for practical subjects?**

As per the outcomes of this inquiry, it was identified that the level of interaction exhibited by students in e-learning sessions for practical subjects was not up to the desired standards. This was reflected in an arithmetic mean of (2.00) and a standard deviation of (0.000), with a high degree.

**Results of the eleventh question: Does the e-learning system align with teaching music for practical subjects?**

The findings obtained from this query revealed that most respondents believed that the e-learning system was not aligned with the practical components of music education. This was reflected in an arithmetic mean of (1.2500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twelfth question: Is delivering educational materials to students through e-learning platforms seamless and convenient?**

The findings from this inquiry revealed a split opinion regarding the ease of delivering educational material to students through e-learning platforms. Some respondents found it effortless, while others did not, as evidenced by an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

**Results of the thirteenth question: Which specific electronic devices are utilized for music instruction in e-learning?**

As per the outcomes of this inquiry, it was observed that the computer was widely employed for practical lessons in e-learning, as reflected by an arithmetic mean of (4.00) and a standard deviation of (0.000), with a high degree.

**Results of the fourteenth question: What visual programs or applications are utilized within the pedagogy of practical musical materials?**

According to the outcomes of this query, it was found that Google Meet and ZOOM were the preferred platforms for delivering lectures.

**Results of the fifteenth question: Are you ready for the virtual class session?**

Based on the findings of this survey, it was observed that most of the respondents are preparing for their online lessons. The results showed an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

**Results of the seventeenth question: Do you utilize any safety measures during virtual music classes?**

The results of this question indicated a lack of usage of protection measures during practical lessons conducted via the internet, with an arithmetic mean of (1.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.

**Results of the eighteenth question: Does the employed software offer satisfactory visual and auditory quality?**

The results of this question revealed a dichotomy in the quality of the picture and sound provided by the software used, with an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

**Results of the nineteenth question: Are there options within the application's settings to eliminate continuous and intermittent background noise and echo?**

The results of this question indicated that the program settings do not offer the option to eliminate continuous and intermittent background noise and echo. The arithmetic mean was (1.0000) with a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twentieth question: Which specific form of e-learning is utilized in practical music instruction?**

The outcomes of this question indicated that blended e-learning is the type utilized in practical music lessons, with an arithmetic mean of (3.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-first question: What specific elements of practical music instruction (individual) do you favor?**

The results of this question revealed that blended e-learning is the preferred mode for practical lessons involving solo playing, as indicated by an arithmetic mean of (1.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.



**Results of the twenty-second question: Do you play the musical instrument alongside the student during the virtual lesson to provide clarification?**

The findings of this inquiry have indicated a clear contrast in the level of teacher involvement with the student in utilizing the musical instrument for clarification purposes during the instructional session. Notably, a marked difference between active participation and non-participation was observed, resulting in an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-third question: Is the audio and video lesson inclusive of both genders?**

The outcomes of this inquiry have shown that most participants opted for delivering the lesson through audio and video formats, with the inclusion of both genders. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-fourth question: Do you employ particular tools and software to aid in individual practical music instruction?**

The outcomes of this inquiry have unveiled a clear bifurcation in the employment of specific tools and programs to bolster the solo playing lesson. Notably, a marked contrast between the use of such tools and their non-usage was observed, resulting in an arithmetic mean of (1.5000) and a standard deviation of (0.57735), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-fifth question: Do you request that your students capture a video recording of their exercises and submit it via an electronic platform?**

The findings of this inquiry have revealed that students are mandated to document their exercise in the form of a video and submit it via an electronic application. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (2.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-sixth question: Do you encounter challenges in assessing students' proficiency in practical subjects in the context of e-learning?**

The outcomes of this inquiry have shown that most respondents encounter challenges when evaluating students in practical subjects using e-learning. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree. Indicating moderate variability in responses.

**Results of the twenty-seventh question: Does e-learning impede students' progress in practical subjects?**

The findings of this inquiry have demonstrated that a significant majority of respondents believe that e-learning impedes students' progress in practical subjects. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree.

**Results of the twenty-eighth question: Does the implementation of e-learning in practical subjects alleviate the workload of teachers?**

The outcomes of this inquiry have revealed that most respondents believe that e-learning for practical subjects does not alleviate the teaching workload. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (1.7500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree. They indicate moderate variability in responses.

**Results of the twenty-ninth question: Can you clearly discern the movement of the hands and fingers of the student during their musical exercise?**

The findings of this inquiry have shown that the movement of hands and fingers during the student's exercise can be distinctly discerned. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (2.0000) and a standard deviation of (0.00000), with a high degree. They suggest a lack of variability in responses.

**Results of question thirty: Do the applications you utilize capture all the sound frequencies produced by musical instruments?**

The outcomes of this inquiry have demonstrated that most respondents believe that the applications used do not capture all the sound frequencies of musical instruments. This resulted in an arithmetic mean of (1.2500) and a standard deviation of (0.50000), with a high degree. indicating moderate variability in responses.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The educational institution opted for several e-learning programs and applications without considering the uniqueness of e-learning for music-applied subjects. This omission can be traced back to the deficiency of deliberate planning and design, lacking a systematic model, which is of utmost importance given that music education requires specialized programs and applications that can fulfill the music lesson's requirements. Macrides and Angeli (2020) state that technology can only be effective if it is carefully planned and integrated into the design of the lesson that targets curriculum objectives and explaining specific features and procedures of music.

The findings indicate that most teachers have undergone training in e-learning (i.e., utilizing electronic applications and programs). This development can be attributed to the concerted effort to enhance the educators' competencies, potentially aiding them in the electronic music lesson.

The findings revealed that most teachers had no prior experience with musical e-learning before the pandemic, rendering its implementation a challenge requiring significant effort from educators and the academic institution. This observation indicates that e-learning was not previously integrated into the educational system before the pandemic outbreak.

The study found that teachers employed various methods of explanation to communicate information, particularly during the solo playing lesson.

The teachers employed the same evaluation methodology as that used in traditional education for students in e-learning, which can be attributed to the lack of e-learning curricula and specific evaluation criteria for this mode of education.

The teachers held differing opinions regarding the necessary internet speed for the electronic music class, indicating a variability in the quality of the internet service. Ensuring a precise and accurate presentation of hand and finger movements, tones, and other factors related to solo playing is particularly crucial in the context of electronic music lessons, as it requires a specific internet speed.

Most teachers expressed that e-learning is incompatible with the musical education of solo playing. The present result exhibits similarities with Bondarenko (2020) findings, who found that the most challenges were found in the educational areas related to acquiring practical musical skills such as singing and playing an instrument. Additionally, they observed that student engagement did not meet the expected standard compared to in-person instruction. This situation can be ascribed to the instructor's and students' insufficient familiarity with online learning.

The College of Fine Arts' Department of Music utilized Google Meet and Zoom programs to facilitate solo lessons for their students. The teachers had mixed opinions on the efficacy of these programs in producing high-quality sound and images. They also noted that the programs could not remove extraneous noise during the lecture due to their unsuitability for e-learning solo playing.

The research revealed that most teachers face challenges in delivering solo lessons electronically. This can be attributed to the fact that e-learning necessitates specialized efforts, prior experience, and an integrated infrastructure to implement this mode of education effectively. Furthermore, most teachers prefer a blended e-learning approach due to its wider range of options in the education process. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Ruokonen and Ruismäki (2016), which posits that combining online study with traditional classroom interaction in music education provides supplementary learning prospects.

The findings showed that the teachers could clearly observe the hand and finger movements during the lesson, which could be attributed to the screen size of the device used.

The success of e-learning relies on a complex web of interrelated factors, and the form of education utilized by the educational institution can be regarded as an emergency measure that focuses solely on information transfer without exploring the broader educational landscape.

### Recommendations

- The researcher suggests the implementation of blended e-learning in solo playing education to utilize technological advancements in the teaching process effectively.
- It is recommended to develop courses for teachers in the field of e-learning as part of their professional development and to enhance the skills of all those involved in the educational process.
- It is necessary to address the internet speed issue to utilize it in the field of e-learning fully.
- There is a need to identify more suitable programs and applications to facilitate e-learning practical aspects of music education.

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## Research Article

# A research on social phobia affecting the quality of vocal performance in classical Turkish music

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### Abstract

In this study, there are many technical dimensions that should be present in a quality vocal performance in the field of Classical Turkish Music. In addition to these musical dimensions, social phobia, which is an important branch in the field of psychology, is one of the factors affecting interpretation. In this study, it is aimed to contribute to the determination of a certain method by voice performer candidates or instructors with this approach created within the framework of determined variables. With this research, the relationship between the 5 dimensions of social phobia affecting vocal performance in Classical Turkish Music and performance success was analysed. For the application of these criteria, the Turkish Music State Conservatories in Turkey, which are large with their student capacities, were limited. A total of 181 people, 94 male and 87 female, studying in these conservatories, were applied data collection technique through a questionnaire. In addition to descriptive statistics, T-test, Anova, Correlation, Item analysis and structural equation analysis methods were used to analyse the data. The findings of the descriptive analysis on the effects of social phobia on qualified interpretation in Classical Turkish Music vocal performance show that the psychological dimensions of vocal performance and social phobia are directly related. In terms of social anxiety, avoidance of social environment and physical reaction in social environment are below the average levels, while other criticisms in social environment, phobic attitudes and sense of surveillance are at medium level. In other inferential statistical analyses, those who have more social phobia tend to have lower performance success. There is a strong negative correlation between the anxiety of being observed in social spaces and liking music and immersion in music. A positive relationship was found between criticism in social areas and difficulty in music. According to these results, it has been determined that students who say that it is difficult to study music have more criticism and humiliation anxiety, which are important dimensions affecting success in vocal performance.

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### Introduction

Individuals who are unintentionally exposed to negative attitudes and behaviours experienced in social areas are brought up as the subject of research in many different dimensions in the field of Positive Psychology. These dimensions are analysed in 5 sub-dimensions in the field of Psychology. These are social anxiety, physical reaction, avoidance of social environment, criticism, etc. It is seen that individuals experience in daily life with involuntary reactions they give when they appear in front of almost all large and small communities in society. These involuntary psychological reactions

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inevitably affect individuals who perform in front of the public or make a speech in any environment. With this research, it is predicted that by examining the dimensions of social phobia levels of individuals who perform especially in the field of voice performance, it is predicted that these individuals can create a basis for creating awareness and solutions for individuals to develop solutions when they enter voice performance environments.

### Social Phobia

The definition of social phobia is a marked and persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to unfamiliar people or possible scrutiny by others (American Psychiatric Association, 1994, p. 246). The concept of Social Phobia is analysed in the subclassifications of the concept of anxiety. Sigmund Freud is the first person who presented us the formulation of phobic neurosis and introduced social (human-specific advanced phobia) and specific (simple phobia) phobia under the term "Anxiety Neurosis" with analytical approach methods. According to Freud, he argued that a type of anxiety comes from an uncontrolled "Libido" source. In other words, it is shaped according to the physiological symptoms in sexual tension in the increase of libido, which occurs with the mental reflections of physiological phenomena. Freud stated that the normal manifestation of the finale of such tensions is through sexual intercourse. In other words, the absence of all sexual practices plays an important role in the development and onset of anxiety levels as it prevents the transfer of tension on the individual (Özakkaş, 2014, p. 78).

In Table 1, the classifications used in the disease diagnoses of anxiety symptoms including social phobia in DSM II-R and ICD 10 guidance are given.

**Table 1.** Diagnosis table for normal and severe anxiety disorders

<b>DSM II-R (Anxiety disorder at normal level)</b>	<b>ICD 10 (Anxiety disorder at pathological level)</b>
Social Phobia	Phobic Disorders
Simple Phobia	Social Phobia
Agoraphobia without Panic Attacks	Simple Phobia
Panic Disorder with Agoraphobia	Agoraphobia
Panic Disorder (without Agoraphobia)	Other Anxiety Disorders Panic Disorder
Generalised Anxiety Disorders	Generalised Anxiety Disorders Mixed Anxiety Depressive Disorder
Obsessive Compulsive Disorders	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Consistently generalising the findings in the literature, it has been suggested that the personality disorder of individuals with social phobia is not qualitatively different, but the significant difference is seen as severity. In other words, avoidant-personality disorder is a more severe expression of the disorder (Heimberg et al, 1993, p. 56). Turner et al. (1992, p. 59) stated that the common point linking these conditions is the fear of negative evaluation. Therefore, rather than perceiving the two disorders as qualitatively different, it seems more accurate to evaluate these diagnoses on a continuum with non-generalised social phobia at one end and personality disorder at the other.

In the process of this psychological problem, along with the tendencies caused by genetic and biochemical imbalances, the environmental factors that cause social phobia are the individual's past socially bad experiences and misguidance. At the same time, negative criticism and rejection situations also form the basis. People with social phobia have negative feelings of regret, anxiety, shame, embarrassment, disgrace, complex, anger, loss of control or embarrassment in individuals with symptoms such as "incompatible behaviours such as inhibition, avoidance, withdrawal, tendency to run away, unnecessary apologies, inability to establish interpersonal relationships, decrease in school success, health problems, substance abuse, emergence of problems related to profession and marriage" (Gümüş, 2006, p. 72).

### Social Phobia and Music Performance

Performance phobias can begin in the early stages of music education, often in parallel with sensitive new performance experiences, and it has often been reported (Osborne & Kenny, 2008, p. 76) that anxiety levels in music performance are

higher in solo performances compared to playing in a group setting (Robson & Kenny, 2017, p. 38). However, Kenny (2009a, p. 84) clarified the possibility that student ensemble musicians may also have severe performance anxiety as follows:

"Music performance anxiety is the experience of marked and persistent anxious apprehension about music performance. It is manifested by combinations of emotional, cognitive, somatic and behavioural symptoms that are elicited by specific anxiety conditioning experiences. It can occur in many performance settings, but is often more severe in settings involving high ego investment and threat of evaluation. It is important to identify the effects of other anxiety disorders that may be focal (i.e. focussed solely on music performance) or other anxiety disorders, especially social phobia. The effects that musicians are exposed to over the lifespan and are in part completely independent of years of training, practice and level of musical achievement. It may or may not impair the quality of music performance" (Dobos, Piko & Kenny, 2019, p. 2).

It covers a multidimensional structure that includes psychological (emotional), physiological, cognitive and behavioural components of music performance anxiety. While mild stress before going on stage may be normal and may not lead to performance deterioration, some musicians may experience anxiety at a level that interferes with the quality of the music or their performance and may involve other harmful consequences. The intense fear caused by a public performance is often conditioned by previous negative experiences (Kenny, 2011, p. 67; Osborne, Kenny & Cooksey, 2007, p. 54).

Regarding the physical, behavioural and cognitive characteristics of perceived performance anxiety in music students, Yöndem (2012) concluded that perceived performance anxiety in music students is related to the negative evaluations of the individual in relation to the competence and personality traits that the individual determines about himself/herself, the fear of not being liked, as well as the best state of perfectionism is associated with social phobia (Yiğit & Duruer, 2018, p. 78).

Ekinci (2013, p. 44) analysed some variables of music teacher candidates' self-confidence perceptions regarding solo stage performance. Ekinci (2013, p. 44) found that male students developed higher self-confidence perception than female students in solo stage performance. In another result, a significant difference was found between the self-confidence perceptions of students according to the type of high school they graduated from, in the direction of a significant relationship between adequate technical level in the field of performance and self-confidence perception (Yiğit & Duruer, 2018, p. 95).

Most researchers have stated that musical performance anxiety, especially musical performance anxiety, is often a culturally or socially learnt phenomenon within performance anxiety, and in this context, different methods are applied in terms of solution because the anxieties in musical performances on stage vary culturally (Savaşır, Soygüt & Barışkın, 2009, p. 65). Treatment methods applied abroad may be insufficient for musicians in our country to overcome the problems of stage fear or phobia, and it is stated that original studies are needed to reveal the cognitions underlying the musicians of our country to experience this problem (Topoğlu, 2013, p. 38).

In this context, a study examining the anxiety levels of talented young musicians shows that in addition to more mature performers, certain anxiety levels that need to be addressed are important for all performers, including miscarriages. Many professional musicians suffer from acute levels of pain, anxiety before or during the performance makes it very difficult for a person to perform. In a proposed statement, instead of instrumental teaching, which makes unnecessary demands on the student, the types of graded performance exams offered in many parts of the world should increase (Margaret et al., 2008, p. 79).

In the literature, it is found that the environmental factors that cause social phobia affect the development process of individuals from a very young age. Increasingly in the United States and the Western world, individual development and progress in many areas are taking advantage of the opportunities that environmental stimulation can provide. Placing children in high-level enriching environments as stages of cognitive development will advance the clear advantages of such concerns faster than has traditionally been the case. This shows that after encountering certain experiences that help children mature, individuals can only move to higher levels of conceptual assimilation (see

Children's cognitive assimilation). Gardner, 1982, For a discussion useful for understanding Piagetian approaches to mental development). However, Radford (1991, p. 34) interprets this situation as attempts to create extraordinary musical achievements. The findings of his research have shown that ideal social and emotional environmental conditions prevent individuals from social phobia situations (Sloboda, Davidson & Howe, 1994, p. 125)- (Margaret et al., 2008, p. 163).

Although not specifically developed as a treatment for performance anxiety, the Alexander Technique has naturally received reviews, as it is widely used by musicians for this purpose. For example, Watson & Valentine (1987, p. 48) Found that more than half of British orchestral musicians use some kind of complementary anxiety reduction medication, and of these, they are the most common (43%). Anxiety in music performance is an issue that is clearly important for every musician and music educator. As a result of their research, the best approach for treating anxiety is cognitive behavioral therapy, but drug therapy, clinical hypnosis, and the Alexander Technique also seem to be useful to some extent.

In a study of opera singers, Sandgren (2002, p. 33) he identified some special problems for opera singers: the risk of voice discomfort that causes excessive vitamin use, the risks of excessive use of herbal products, and infections occur as a result of not staying away from places that are thought to pose problems. It includes factors such as constant concern about other people's thoughts about their performance, too much self-criticism of individuals, and the need to constantly test the presence of voice quality. By finding positive correlations between these identified factors and anxieties, some gender differences arise in the dimensions related to somatic problems, depression and performance anxiety as variables of opera singers who experience other anxieties. For example, men are associated with strong emotional singing experiences with very few emotions, but women show expressions of their feelings that "technique obeys" in full control of the voice with a feeling of complete presence as a sensitive audience (Margaret et al., 2008, p. 97).

It has been revealed that some musicians "have performance anxiety at a level that will affect their profession badly, and the presence and status of listeners cause anxiety most often in solo performance, then in small group performances and then in orchestras. The monitoring of the evaluated performances by expert juries or a foreign eye has been identified as the situations in which the anxiety is the most. Çırakoğlu and Şentürk examined that the performances that cause the most anxiety for musicians are solo performances and revealed that women have more performance concerns than men in the results" (Özgür, 2017, p. 30).

Social phobia or social anxiety, which is one of the most common disorders in the field of psychology, is the most important factor that students, artists, instructors in music performance departments cannot cope with. Stage performance anxiety can sometimes also appear as a concrete reactive anxiety, such as the inability to prepare adequately. It can be concluded that applying a disciplined work program during the preparation stages of stage performance with technical and musical aspects will minimize anxious emotional states by increasing the performer's self-confidence. Western societies have more advanced therapy methods on these issues compared to our country and there are programs that serve in many institutions under the name of "Music Psychologist" and apply professional methods and treatments related to performance. The presence of at least one music psychologist affiliated to art institutions in our country will create a healthy environment for future qualified solo performances by preparing a therapeutic basis for individuals who have problems in directing or anxiety in performing solo voice performance in the future. For this reason, it can be seen as an important element in terms of contributing to the creation of healthy grounds for future performances by expert trainers working in these areas and controlling the anxiety situation in voice performance by bringing new research to the agenda.

### **Voice performance and gender - age**

The gender variable is divided into two classes consisting of male and female. Gender variables are one of the factors that are asked and evaluated in most studies. In a research describing the effects of gender variables on performance in recent years, indicating that the values of perfectionism differ according to gender; as a result of a regression analysis conducted to see the effect of perfectionism and success orientations on performance anxiety in women, it was found that not being



sure what you are doing, avoiding performance, success orientation and error-making anxiety have a positive effect on performance anxiety, while performance approach has negative effects on success orientation. In the model obtained for men, it was found that not being sure what you are doing and familial expectations positively affect performance anxiety, and personal standards negatively affect performance anxiety. It has been observed that the variables differ according to gender in the findings. While performance avoidance, performance approach success orientations and anxiety about making mistakes are significant variables in women, familial expectations size and personal standards size are seen as significant variables in men (Gencer, 2019, p.74).

In the Tokinan (2014) study on the examination of music performance concerns of voice performer candidates in terms of individual characteristics, it was determined that women have more music performance anxiety compared to men. Furthermore, by determining that music performance anxiety does not differ according to age, type of high school graduated and class level, it was concluded that there is a significant and negative relationship between music performance anxiety and self-confidence (Yiğit & Decuer, 2018, p. 138).

In recent studies, various information has been provided about the sources that show the musical abilities that people have. In previous studies, there are increasing studies in which opinions supporting that the genetically brought musical ability is later caused by the environment are effective. Since musical talent is nourished by both natural and external conditions, environment and heredity both contribute to this field at unknown rates (Göğüş, 2009, p. 94). For this reason, music guidance in the early childhood years with the environment is an important element in developing this potential of a child whose talent has been determined at an early age faster and more effectively. Age, which is important in almost all studies, is an important variable that comes at the beginning of the qualification elements in terms of discovering the skills of a performer candidate by dealing with music at an early age.

In the study conducted on voice performers, laryngeal changes in voice development begin after the age of twenty-five. After this period, the ligaments lose their properties, while the joints lose their elasticity, and the laryngeal cartilage begins to harden during these periods. Considering that the human voice develops until the age of twenty-five, it is thought that voice development continues in the students in the study and they show common voice characteristics because their ages are close to each other (Yiğit & Doğanıyigit, 2011, p. 76).

The results of a research conducted by Sergeant with professional musicians, on the other hand, it was found that there is a relationship between absolute pitch ability and the age at which a conscious musical education begins. While 92% of those who started receiving this education at the age of two to four (professional musicians) had absolute pitch ability, it was found that only 6% of those who started at the age of 12-14 had such an ability. Among those who started training at an older age, there was no one who had the ability to Decouple absolute pitch or absolute tonality (Sadie & Stanley, 1980, p.142).

According to the general literature, it is seen that music is important at an early age and at some age periods. Although the average age related to the position of the larynx changes in voice performance, the beginning of learning the development processes in general musical performance skills provides an advantage to the performer at an early age. It is pointed out that the importance of age and education is that music should be learned at an early age and that music education should be an indispensable acquisition for people. It is emphasized that music education is an indispensable skill for people and that it prepares the ground for qualified performances both at an early age.

### **Voice performance and music education-voice note**

It is the most important element in the music journey of an individual who is progressing towards becoming a qualified voice performer with music education. Education is the process of creating a change in an individual's behavior through his own life and intentionally (Ertürk, 1972, p. 57). Music education, on the other hand, is based on three main dimensions in general. These are; musical hearing-writing education, instrument and voice education. The art of voice performance is the act of controlling all the muscles related to the singing business in our body and using these muscles as necessary to November to November to reach the secrets of the human body and soul (Davran, 1997, p. 203). For a qualified education, a person must be able to use physical, vocal and technical capacities and gain fitness for himself

(Miller, 1996, p. 220.). The acquisition of certain habits for the voice performer's control over vocal fitness is a prerequisite for the training for qualified interpretation (Yiğit, 2012, p. 961)

Usually, indicators of natural talent are sought for individuals who want to receive professional vocational education in the fields of art. While talent is a relative concept and differs from person to person, it is defined as "a mind or learning power that is believed to be the determinant of success, especially in a certain area" that an individual is born with, is slightly affected by environmental influences and covers almost every field" (Kurtuluş & Aksu, 2017, p. 39).

In the process of interpretation and evaluation of the performance by the instructors, where the musical performance is determined by the grade, the attention of the voice performer may be distracted during the exam. If these comments and evaluations are negative (such as I can't do it, I can't do it); doubt about success creates negative emotions in the student, such as the fear that I can't play as well as other friends. The mental energy that should be focused on the exam is diverted away from its goal and the student may present a presentation that is much lower than his actual performance, which may cause the student to get a low grade. High grade anxiety makes it difficult for the working process of the mind, rationality, adaptation to the situation and therefore reduces exam performance (Kafadar, 2009, p. 43).

According to the results of the literature, the voice performance grade in qualified voice performance should be shaped by the dimensions related to anxiety, self-efficacy, practice, stress, drowsiness, motivation and intelligence tests, at the same time, educators should conduct descriptive research on students with these elements and apply an educational method according to the levels of their individual skills. It is seen that these methods to be applied will be effective both in the qualified performance of the student and in the exam grade achievement scores.

Voice performance and love of music

When we talk about the existence of a system of thought that puts man at the center of the universe, that is, humanism; it never seems possible that a human-oriented structure and thought can be realized without human love. For this reason, love comes from the power it receives from humanism. The trust, respect, compassion, solidarity that every human being needs and deserves unconditionally, a peaceful life is only possible with love (Dönmez& Şişman, 2017, p.239).

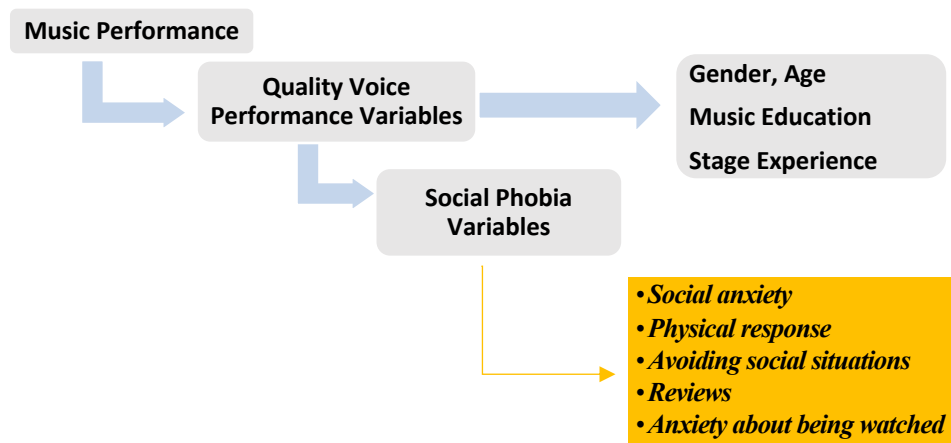
It is seen in many studies that there is a positive relationship between the development of music appreciation in individual educational processes and many activities in music lessons. For example, it is generally stated that singing is the most important of the musical activities that will increase an individual's interest and love of music in individual lessons, arouse the need to listen to music, make music, and create a perception of good musical appreciation for him. The fact that the work is suitable for the student's taste and emotional state, which makes a student who wants to perform school songs love music, shows that its original and artistic value is high in terms of its melodies (Çuhadar, 2016, p. 221).

Studies show that the success of students in their own professions is highly related to loving their profession. The main factors that cause this relationship are family, teacher and social environment. Within the framework of these factors, disciplining an individual through love by educating his soul, not his brain, will prepare the ground for that individual to do his job willingly with love in music education and vocational field education life. In summary, the love of music is an important factor that increases success in qualified voice performance.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

This study, which prefers the quantitative main method, will be a cross-sectional research (cross-sectional) created depending on the survey data collection method.



**Figure 1.** Research model and variables

### Sampling

The universe of this study consists of about 2500 students studying at 35 Turkish Music Conservatories located in Turkey. The sample of the study was taken from the Conservatory of Turkish Music 2. 3. and 4. the class consists of 181 students selected according to the convenience sampling method among these students studying at the Department of Classical Turkish Music Voice Education for Bachelor's, Master's and within the scope of the study, the gender distribution of 181 students consists of 94 people male and 87 people female. The lowest age group of the students participating in the application is 20 and the highest age group is 51.

### Data Collection Tools

In this study, 3 scales were used as a data collection tool together with demographic variables (gender, age) as the social phobia scale, the music education experience scale and the voice performance evaluation scale (measured within the framework of 4 variables). Information about the scales is given below.

### Dependent Variables: Voice Performance Performance Variables

The voice performance of the students was evaluated in 4 categories.

Voice Performance Grade: This variable was measured by how many grade point averages the participants received from the voice education course were over 100 as of the moment in the class and time in which they completed the questionnaire.

### Liking Music Scale

This scale was developed by the author and Özateş in order to learn the participant's love of music. The answers given by the participants to the expressions such as "I feel happy during my music studies", "I would like to study music even when I have to devote myself to myself" were searched for the answers to the related variable. The answers to 9 questions with 5 options were structured in the order of (1) I disagree at all, (2) I disagree slightly, (3) I agree by half, (4) I agree with most of them, (5) I agree completely in order to measure the extent of participants' liking music.

### Motivation in Music Scale

This scale was developed by the author and Özateş for this thesis study. The scale was used to measure the participants' levels of enjoyment, self-absorption and self-giving to music while studying music in order to learn, and the answers they gave to the statements "I forget everything around me while studying music", "I disappear into my music studies" were searched for with the answers they gave. This variable was measured with 3 questions with 5 options. The answers are in the order of (1) I disagree at all, (2) I disagree slightly, (3) I agree by half, (4) I agree with most, (5) I agree with all.

### The Flow Scale in Music

This scale was developed by the author and Özateş for this thesis study. It was formed from 2 items in order to measure whether the participants experienced difficulties while working in their fields. The answers to the aforementioned variable were searched by the responses of the participants to the statements "Music is a difficult job for me compared

to other jobs I take part in”, “The workload required by music studies for me is excessive”. The answers to these variable 5-choice questions are formed as (1) I disagree at all, (2) I disagree slightly, (3) I agree by half, (4) I agree with most of them, (5) I agree with all of them, respectively.

#### **Positive Psychology Variables: Social Phobia Variables**

The social phobia scale was developed by Liebowitz (1987) as a Social Anxiety Scale in order to evaluate the severity of fear, anxiety and avoidance experienced by individuals in social environments and areas requiring performance. The variables of the Social Phobia Scale in a total of 5 dimensions were adapted to Turkish by Özateş for this study. The Social Phobia Scale; The Social Anxiety Scale, the Social Environment Avoidance Scale, the Social Phobia (Physical Reaction) Scale, the Social Phobia (Criticism) Scale, the Social Phobia (Surveillance) Scale

#### **Independent Variables: Variables of Music Education**

There are 3 variables in this section. Each of these variables was measured with a question.

**Music Education (Year):** It was measured with a 5-option question. Participants have been taught so far at school, university, family, private, etc. in total, they were asked to indicate the duration of music education they received. The options of the problem are structured in the order of (1) two years or less, (2) 3 years, (3) 4 years, (4) 5 years (5) 6 years and above.

**Stage Experience:** Participants were asked how often they experienced voice performance performances. The 5 generated options are configured sequentially as (1) none, (2) 5 times, (3) 10 times, (4) 15 times (5) 20 and above.

**Public Stage Experience:** The participants were asked about the amount of voice performance experiences on stage as a non-school public open space until now. The 5 created options are configured as (1) none, (2) few, (3) a little, (4) many (5) many in order.

#### **Data Analysis**

Besides descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation), t-test, Anova (the relationship of two equally spaced variables, one categorical and the other equally spaced), Correlation (the relationship between the variable and the ordered one, both equally spaced), Factor analysis (for the structural validity of the scales), Item analysis (to test the internal consistency of the scale items) structural equality analysis methods were used in analyzing the data. In addition, the reliability analyses and structural validity of the scale items were reviewed locally.

#### **Procedure**

The criteria and independent variables by which the “qualified voice performers”, which constitute the dependent variable of our study, are evaluated, have been created together with expert voice educators and psychologists, and data collection techniques have been planned with questionnaires to be applied to students. After the data collection tools were given their final form, the related questionnaires were distributed to the students in other places deemed appropriate. The necessary permissions from the institutions were prepared in the form of a “Data Application Permission Letter” and submitted to the relevant department heads. Institutions where the application is made; Istanbul Technical University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Aegean University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Selcuk University Dilek Sabanci Turkish Music State Conservatory, Hacı Bayram Veli University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Gaziantep University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Ataturk University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Dicle University Turkish Music State Conservatory, Haliç University Turkish Music State Conservatory.

### **Results**

Within the framework of the research questions, the results obtained primarily on dependent variables, demographics, experience in music education and social phobia variables are presented with descriptive statistics.

## Descriptive Statistics

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistical results

	N	Alpha	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	S.D.
<b>Demographic Variables</b>						
Gender	181					
Age	181		19	56	26.12	6.40
<b>Experience in Music Education</b>						
Music Education (Year)	181		1	5	3.87	1.32
Stage Experience	179		1	5	3.61	1.48
Public Stage Experience	181		1	5	3.51	1.34
<b>Dependent Variables</b>						
Voice Note (1)	181		50	100	88.99	9.65
Loving Music (9)	181		1	5	4	.80
Flow in Music (3)	181		1	5	3.55	1.01
Difficulty in Music (2)	181		1	5	2.40	1.06
<b>Positive Psychology Variables</b>						
<b>Social Phobia</b>						
Social Anxiety (4)	181	.81	1	5	2.36	.87
Avoiding Social Environment (4)	181	.83	1	5	2.01	.81
Social Phobia (Physical reaction) (4)	181	.73	1	5	1.96	.83
Social Phobia (Being Criticized) (4)	181	.79	1	5	2.59	.94
Social Phobia (Surveillance) (2)	181	.83	1	5	2.45	1.09

As can be seen in Table 1, it was determined that men participated in the study more than women (94 people were men - 87 people were women). The overall grade point averages of the students in the hundred systems are quite good (average: 88.99). Here, perhaps, it can be shown that students have quite high overall grade point averages, students' own exam performance has almost the same grades, which is a reason for being reviewed by educators through a more detailed examination. Taking into account the average of 2.4 students, it can be said that a considerable number of student groups are forced to perform music in classes or in their studies.

Among the dependent variables, students' liking music (4) or doing it willingly is one of the highest criteria of the average. As a result, it shows that they make the voice performance sections conscious and voluntary. However, the fact that they experience difficulties in their performances as a flow variable (2.40) and motivation levels in music (3.55) are not related may be related to the discovery of new methods and tools by instructors to prevent students from experiencing difficulties in their field. In other words, for those whose level of desire, skill and self-absorption towards their profession is intermediate, their methods are a suitable subject for re-evaluation.

When the average of the music education (3.87) that the students received in the criteria measuring their musical equipment is taken into consideration, it shows that all of them have the most educational year history. In this context, students show that they can stay intertwined with the educational environments in their past.

The averages of Stage Experience (3.61) are at the ideal level and it is concluded that there are individuals who attach importance to stage performance experience. Public stage experiences also show that they are on a close level (1.51) with their level of participation in other normal school stage experience settings, but it may result that they are less present in public stage experiences and their preferences are usually small scenes.

In terms of social anxiety, avoidance of social environment (2.01) and physical reaction in social environment (1.96) are below their average levels, while criticism in other social environment (2.59), phobic attitudes (2.36) and sense of surveillance (2.45) are at medium levels.

### Classical Turkish Music Voice Performance

Within the framework of research questions, the inferential results in their relationships with each other within the framework of 4 variables, which primarily include dependent variables, are presented below.

**Table 2.** The relationships between the voice performance indicators

	Voice Note	Loving Music	Flow in Music
<b>Voice Note</b>			
<b>Loving Music</b>	.22**		
<b>Flow in Music</b>	.18*	.70***	
<b>Difficulty in Music</b>	-.03	-.12	-.03

As can be seen in Table2, participants' liking music with voice note (.22, p = .01) and the positive relationship between immersion in music (.18, p = .05) are available. There is a strong relationship between immersion in music and liking music in the painting (.70, p = .001) is being observed. However, it is also noteworthy that students who have difficulty in music do not have a relationship with all other variables.

A stronger relationship can be expected between voice note and those who love music decently. For this reason, when experts evaluating students' voice performance evaluate a student, it can be considered that the instructors are caused by differences in performance performance criteria when determining course success grades among themselves. In addition to these criteria, the level of works performed by unsuccessful individuals can also be reviewed again. At the same time, a separate approach method can be applied to unsuccessful students.

**Vocal Performance in Classical Turkish Music**

The table showing the comparison of the participants' vocal performance work with their music education background is presented below.

**Table 3.** Relationship between voice performance and its variables

	Voice Note	Loving Music	Flow in Music	Difficulty in Music
<b>Gender</b>	.01	.05	-.06	.12
<b>Age</b>	.11	.09	.09	.00
<b>Music Education (Year)</b>	.00	-.06	-.08	-.02
<b>Stage Experience</b>	.15*	.10	.03	-.14
<b>Public Stage Experience</b>	.16*	.23**	.19**	-.07

In terms of gender and age, men are more successful at performing than women (.15, p = .05) they appear. In contrast, it seems that relatively older participants were more successful than younger people. Those who have studied music for more time are more successful in performing (.23, p = .01) have been found.

It may be remarkable that there is no meaningful relationship with the fact that students with high stage experience love music and immerse themselves in music. Students who are on the public stage are seen consistently in other voice performance success indicators.

It is a remarkable factor that the years spent by students in music education do not have a meaningful relationship with other variables.

**Interpretations between Success and Social Phobia in Classical Turkish Music Voice Deceptions**

The table containing the comparison of the participants' voice performance success and social phobia levels is presented below.

**Table 4.** Correlations between voice performance performance and anxiety.

	Voice Note	Loving Music	Flow in Music	Difficulty in Music
<b>Social Phobia</b>	-.06	-.06	-.09	.01
<b>Avoiding Social Environment</b>	-.06	-.06	-.06	.11
<b>Social Phobia (Physical reaction)</b>	-.02	-.02	-.02	.10
<b>Social Phobia (Being Criticized)</b>	-.03	-.03	-.12	.15*
<b>Social Phobia (Surveillance)</b>	.00	-.22**	-.21**	.08

As can be seen in Table 4, although not as high as expected, some relationships have been observed between social anxiety and voice performance in general. Apart from social phobia and voice note, variables such as liking music, flow in music, have a positive correlational relationship with difficulty in music (.15,  $p = .01$ ) has.

Although they are not statistically strong, those with more social phobia tend to have lower executive performance success (-.06,  $p = .10$ ) carries. Liking music with anxiety about being spied on in social areas (-.22,  $p = .01$ ), a strong negative relationship between self-deceptiveness (-.21,  $p = .01$ ) is observed. A positive relationship between criticism in social areas and difficulty in music (.15,  $p = .05$ ) has been determined. According to these results, it can be said that students who say that studying music is difficult have more anxiety about criticism and humiliation.

In general, it turns out that social phobia and its subtypes, whose effects are remarkable on the stage and individual performances, are an important psychological problem for a performer.

**Music Education and Hardware Features and Social Phobia Variables in Classical Turkish Music Voice Deceptions**

The table in which the comparison of the participants' voice performance success and music education experiences is presented below.

**Table 5.** Correlations between music education and social phobia variables.

	Social Phobia	Avoiding Social Environment	S.P. Physical reaction	S.P. Being Criticized	S.P. Surveillance
Music Education (Year)	-.03	-.03	-.08	-.05	-.15*
Stage Experience	-.16*	-.25**	-.11	-.13	-.17*
Public Stage Experience	-.11	-.24**	-.13†	-.10	-.11

As can be seen in Table 5, there was no relationship between the year spent in music education and those with social phobia, while there was a negative relationship with anxiety about being spied Decently in social settings (-.15,  $p = .05$ ) has been determined.

On the other hand, there is a negative relationship between stage experience and social phobia (-.16,  $p = .05$ ) those who avoid social environments while being seen (-.25,  $p = .01$ ), fear of being criticized (-.13,  $p = .10$ ) and its relationship with the anxiety of surveillance in social environments (-.17,  $p = .05$ ) is in the negative direction. According to this result, it can be said that the anxiety of being spied on in social environments negatively affects almost every dimension of social phobia, especially the year spent in music education and the stage experience, while the stage experience negatively affects almost every dimension of social phobia.

In general, social phobia variables that affect both the individual performance of students and their performance in front of the community seem to be a serious problem. It may result in parallel depending on the literature, where it also negatively affects the development of students' individual skills.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

In the comparison of the participants' voice training grades and music equipment scores, it was found that men were more successful than women. According to the literature, this result is parallel, but Tokinan (2014) found that women have more music performance anxiety compared to men, and the fact that men have more anxiety states confirms this result.

According to the age variable, it was found that older participants were more successful than younger participants. When looking at the literature, it was found that there is a relationship between the absolute pitch ability and the age of initiation of a conscious musical education in the results of research conducted by Sergeant with professional musicians, and this is explained directly by the accumulation of experience formed by years (Sadie & Stanley, 1980) it is seen to be directly related.

According to the research, the overall grade point averages of the students are quite high and show that they have almost the same grades. Although the student's voice performance scores are high, the fact that the majority of students are forced to study music performance courses is a result of contradiction. Kafadar (2009)'s research shows that high grade anxiety can make it difficult for the mind to adapt to the working process, rationality, and therefore reduce exam

performance. With this result, it can be confirmed that study motivations are related to psychological processes with voice performance notes.

It is understood that the highest score averages of the participants in the study appeared in the variables of liking music and doing music willingly. These results show that Çuhadar (2008) confirms the literature by stating that many activities in music lessons have a positive relationship with the development of music appreciation in individual educational processes. This situation may be an indicator of how effective students' liking the work they work on in choosing their professional lives and developing their executive capacities is in the success criterion. Therefore, this finding actually indicates the importance of the candidate performer to do his job with love and respect.

An important relationship was observed in the general stage experiences of the participants. The results show that one of the main reasons why performer candidates do not have sufficient performance experience in voice training processes is that they evaluate themselves inadequately in front of the audience. According to these results, according to research conducted by Kenny (2011) and Osborne, Kenny & Cooksey (2007), while mild stress before going on stage may be normal and may not lead to impaired performance, it supports that some musicians may experience anxiety at a level that interferes with the quality of music, as well as performances and other harmful consequences. This point indicates that educators should develop their approaches from the very beginning with an understanding aimed at increasing the experience level of executive candidates.

A very strong positive relationship has been observed between the time spent on music education and stage experience and public stage experience. According to these results, it can be said that the development of students' performance capacities is directly related to the increase of stage experiences in some dimension, and for a qualified education, a person can use physical, vocal and technical capacities and gain fitness for himself the acquisition of certain habits for the control of the vocal performer over the vocal conditioning of the year spent in music education and the fact that it is considered a prerequisite for training for qualified interpretation (Yiğit, 2012) supports this result.

There is a relationship between the participants' preference for school stage experiences instead of public stage experiences. According to the research of Dobos, Piko & Kenny, (2019), parallel relationships are observed with the result that it is important to determine the effects of other anxiety disorders that can occur with social phobia that focus only on musical performance. According to these results, it can be said that students' avoidance of performing their performance in front of large groups directly increases their level of social phobia.

There is also a positive relationship between criticism in a social environment and difficulty in music and music making below the Decency level. According to these results, it can be said that students with social phobia are worried about being spied on the stage or in the classroom, in front of the community. According to Topoğlu (2013), treatment methods applied abroad may be insufficient for musicians in our country to overcome stage fright or phobia problems, and undoubtedly, they are seen as parallel results with the statement that original studies are needed to reveal the cognitions underlying the musicians of our country experiencing this problem.

In general, according to the results, it can be said that students with social phobia may be closed to stage experiences and do not show a desire to acquire the necessary qualifications in voice performance equipment, while it is understood that students with high anxiety like music, their motivation levels, the grade point averages of voice education they received at school are negatively affected by anxiety. This seems to confirm many studies in the literature that anxiety is a factor that negatively affects education in almost all conditions.

### **Recommendations**

All performance arts students may be offered the help of psychotherapists to solve the underlying problems of social phobia.

In determining the voice performance grades more healthily, it may be suggested by educators that the voice performance candidate's voice education success criteria at school should be evaluated according to common ideas and certain criteria, and that they should act more carefully in this evaluation.



It may be recommended to take a position in institutions related to the fact that there is at least one art therapist who is considered the most important deficiency in the art institutions existing in Turkey and specializes in the fields of “music psychologist” in the west.

### Limitations of Study

The most important limitation of this study is that the sample was limited to eight Turkish Music Conservatories studying Classical Turkish Music voice. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized in terms of the provinces and the entire country where the relevant study was conducted. The research is the first study that deals directly with the subject of Classical Turkish Music voice education in Turkey. It is the use of new criteria in addition to the criteria of the studies conducted on the subject. Oct. Classical Turkish Music is important in terms of giving a psychological and interpretive perspective to the field of voice performance. Classical Turkish Music is a study that gives the perception of certain criteria and methods to voice performance.

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## Interview Article

### An interview with Jason Paulk: the choir and the voice

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#### Abstract

Jason Paulk is Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Music at Eastern New Mexico University. He conducts ensembles of University Singers, Chamber Singers, and Swanee Singers and teaches beginning and advanced conducting classes in addition to choral methods. He has received awards from important institutions in the field of music education. In this interview, he shares important codes about music and music education about choir and voice.

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**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Dr. Paulk, can you please tell us a bit about your education and experiences?

**Jason Paulk:** I grew up in Cartersville, GA, and was blessed with amazing music teachers in the school system. From Cloverleaf Elementary school, to Cartersville Middle School and High School, the education and enrichment was outstanding. Some of those wonderful teachers include Ms. Stockhausen, Ms. McDonald, and Charles Nelson—who truly ignited my passion for conducting and teaching, and gave me my first opportunities to learn how to lead.

I was elected the “student director” of the CHS Choirs and took this role seriously; from about 7<sup>th</sup> grade on, I knew I wanted to enable others to make great music.

Stetson University in DeLand, FL, was my undergraduate collegiate destination. It’s still a hidden gem in central Florida, approximately 20 miles from Daytona Beach. My mentors there included Duncan Couch, Bob Rich, and an amazing voice teacher named Mollie Rich. She was a bulldog and wouldn’t accept less than the best from her students. Duncan

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gave me so many incredible opportunities as a young and aspiring conductor, including rehearsing and conducting our concert choir in performances from my freshman year forward. While at Stetson, I founded our student chapter of the American Choral Directors Association and won the 1997 National ACDA Conducting Competition. This opened some doors for graduate school after my graduation that spring.

I attended the world famous Westminster Choir College for my master's degree and sang in the Westminster Choir. Joseph Flummerfelt was my main teacher, but I had the opportunity to work with so many amazing musicians—including Andrew Megill and Frank Abrahams. As a matter of fact, one of my master's colleagues was a teacher from Farmington—Virginia Nickels Hircock—and continually talked about how amazing the Land of Enchantment was. Years later, I would learn she was right. I graduated in 1999 with two masters degrees—one in Conducting and one in Music Education.

My first teaching job was in Deltona, FL, where I was the choir director at Deltona High School. I had a very supportive administration, eager students, and we all learned so much from each other. For three years, we explored amazing repertoire, worked diligently, and during my third year we were honored to sing in a festival at Carnegie Hall—during which we sang a feature “recital.” It was a really wonderful experience to share these experiences with my kids from Deltona. They were hard workers and I could have stayed there forever and been happy.

As it happened, I had a wonderful opportunity to pursue my doctorate in choral conducting at the University of Oklahoma on a University Fellowship from 2002-2005.

Dennis Shrock was my mentor and director of choral activities at the University of Oklahoma. He was also the director of the Santa Fe Desert Choral, which allowed a rich blend of educational and professional work with him during that time. I was the director of the OU University Chorus and assistant director of the Chorale while in Norman. I had the opportunity to complete my dissertation during the third year of my studies there, as a contingency of the fellowship, which was an incredible blessing.

Since 2005, I have been the Director of Choral Activities at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. During these 18 years, I have been constantly supported by our administration and have been surrounded by dedicated and gifted colleagues. My professional life has been very rich, and our choral program has experienced some wonderful successes: we've traveled for performances in China, London, Paris, Spain, New York, and regularly throughout the southwest. And the choirs have been invited to perform for national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and National Association for Music Education (Oklahoma City and Dallas). We host over one thousand public school students on campus each year for choral singing events—including a men's choir festival, all-state prep days, solo and ensemble, and a very successful choir camp each summer.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Your most recent accolades- tell us about them.

**Jason Paulk:** I was just named the 2024 Music Educator of the Year by the New Mexico Music Educators Association. I'm very humbled and appreciative of the recognition and it has been a really nice opportunity to pause to reflect on the incredible mentors I have had throughout my life. Similarly, it has been nice to reflect on all the great students I've had the opportunity to teach in New Mexico since 2005, many of whom are now in classrooms throughout the southwest and who have gone on to do some wonderful performing.

There are too many to name individually, but one of my most enjoyable activities yearly is visiting with them and their own students, and hearing the progress they are making with their choirs. It's incredible to work in a field where you can continue to have contact with your students, and they continue to send their own students to ENMU. And so it is that the proverbial “song” never ends—it just continues on through the lives of so many. I think that's what keeps me going: I know my work has an impact and will continue to inspire and shape others for many years.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Now conducting a choir-where does one begin?

**Jason Paulk:** There are as many departure points to conducting a choir as there are opinions about music. LOL. In my opinion, most importantly we begin with the composers' intentions as the baseline. Then we enable our singers to

uncover the structural and musical elements and lead them to sing it as artistically and beautifully as possible. This process is really enjoyable because uncovering great art in rehearsal is probably my favorite thing to do.

Conducting, in my opinion, equals empowering others to accomplish great things. That's my job. It's about providing a format, structure and an environment where the ensemble can excel. It has little to do with my physical gesture—except in the ways the gesture allows them to sing artistically and freely and beautifully. Too many get caught up in how beautiful their gesture is, when in reality if it's not efficient and functional it often just wastes precious rehearsal time. I try to teach my own conducting students to be precise, pithy, and efficient gesturally and verbally.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** How do you go about choosing students to actually perform? I mean, not all students are good singers?

**Jason Paulk:** I think most people have the raw skills to become good singers. There are very few I've encountered who cannot be taught to match pitch—at the very least. That said, no—not everyone is a great singer. However, not everyone needs to be a great singer to be part of a choir. An ensemble is a beautiful democratic environment, which allows everyone to be greater as a whole than as an individual. No “single singer” can accomplish the power of Mozart's “Requiem” or Beethoven's “Missa Solemnis,” but as a group of committed ensemble members, absolute sublimity can be achieved. To answer your question more specifically, I don't usually choose the singers—but I empower those who choose to sing in the ensembles. At ENMU, we have a large non-auditioned choir and a couple of smaller ones that are by audition-only. Those ensembles are chosen by auditions that allow us to hear the voices that are most compatible in a chamber setting.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Bass, tenor, alto, soprano- how do you combine them and get them to “work together”?

**Jason Paulk:** Harmony makes the world go round! It's incredible to see students' faces light up when they hear chords sung in tune, sometimes for the first time in their lives, during rehearsal. The rehearsal experience is really enjoyable and I think singers always enjoy trying to improve—both as an individual—and as a corporate ensemble

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Choice of songs- how long do you labor over the choice of music?

**Jason Paulk:** Oh my, that is a good question. I've just finished programming for the fall semester and is truly a labor of love. Millions of pieces of choral music exist from throughout history and one could be overwhelmed by the options available. I sometimes program around a theme. Other times, I try to offer a balance of historical and contemporary choral music with varied styles, keys, modes, etc. The number one goal is to provide students with diverse repertoire that will help them be successful throughout their careers as musicians. A secondary consideration is audience development and enjoyment. Mostly, though, audiences love what is performed well.

This semester, I think our repertoire will include Latin, French, and English languages, and encompass music from the Renaissance era (Chansons by Jannequin and Passereau), Baroque era (Zelenka, a contemporary of Bach), to music composed within the last year.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Sadly, Tony Bennett just died the day I wrote this. How would you mentor a student with a voice like his?

**Jason Paulk:** Truly a sad day to lose a singer like Tony. To be honest, we have probably 20 singers in our program who could have the career of a Tony Bennett. It just depends on what they choose to do with their natural gifts and in what context. I try to provide a context for improvement, continually challenging them to put in the work to improve. Many will recognize the “10,000 Hour Rule” of Malcolm Gladwell. If they put in the work, no doubt they will develop the skills they need to be a professional singer. When I've had individuals who exhibit outstanding potential, I have often tried to provide solo opportunities to feature them. One experience comes to mind. Probably ten years ago, the Santa Fe Symphony came to Clovis for a much-anticipated performance of Handel's Messiah.

I conducted the performance and had hired professional soloists from New York and Oklahoma, but we had student “understudies”—who prepared the solo arias and recitatives. One of those understudies was a wonderful young mezzo-

soprano from Albuquerque (Angela Rudd) and at the very last moment, she had stepped in to perform the alto solos in our performance with the SFSO because our soloist was unable to make it due to illness. As it is said, “luck favors the prepared mind.” (Louis Pasteur)

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** Often, a choir has to rehearse extensively- but how much is too much?

**Jason Paulk:** Good question. Too much would probably be when boredom sets in or there is no more excitement about the repertoire. I have heard stale performances at conferences and I think that just comes from singers who have become tired of singing the same repertoire ad-nauseum. We rarely have that problem with our ensembles: in an academic environment, we rarely have enough time to become bored. For example, our first concert this year—in early October—will happen after about seven weeks of rehearsal. That’s not much time: ten or so rehearsals for our large choir and about twenty for our chamber ensemble.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** New York- Carnegie Hall- just about says it all- ever been there or performed their with your students?

**Jason Paulk:** Carnegie Hall is an amazing venue in which to perform. Fortunately, I have sung there probably a dozen times during my time at Westminster Choir College and have had the opportunity to conduct a number of performances, including several with ENMU Choirs over the years. Last spring, our Chamber Singers performed a feature recital and had the opportunity to sing Vivaldi’s Gloria with a choir of about 200 from around the country. What fun that was! While we were in New York City, two of our amazing supporters from the community paid for our singers to attend TWO performances at the Metropolitan Opera (Eugene Onegin and Madame Butterfly).

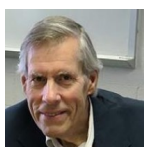
**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** How much training does one need to professionally conduct a choir?

**Jason Paulk:** This is quite subjective because folks arrive in leadership positions by various paths. There isn’t a set curriculum or specific training program designed to end with all the skills one needs to conduct a choir. The most important skills include the following: good interpersonal skills, empathy, enthusiasm, creativity, listening, sensitivity, artistry, and some ability to model good singing. I certainly would recommend to any young people reading this article that a music education degree is beneficial, but it’s not a requisite.

**Michael F. Shaughnessy:** What have I neglected to ask?

**Jason Paulk:** Lots of great questions, Mike. Thanks for the interview. I’ve really enjoyed it.

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