

KİTÂBİYAT / BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Greve,

Makamsız: Individualization of Traditional Music on the Eve of Kemalist Turkey,

Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2017, 320 pp., ISBN: 978-3-95650-278-1

Dating back to Ancient Greek and Mesopotamian musical cultures, the Ottoman court music and folk music traditions not only reserved their place among the best established traditional musics in the world, but they also kept their influence on the experience of music in the aftermath of the empire. Martin Greve's book is an extensive compilation of the traditional music production during the late Ottoman period and throughout the republican period up until "the eve of Kemalist Turkey." Dealing with such a broad historical scope, Greve adapted Evrim Demirel's wording so as to explain the disintegration of tradition and to overcome the theoretical considerations related to the term "post-traditional." "Musical traditions in contemporary Turkey... are seriously disintegrating." (p. 12) says Greve in an effort to explain why he went through an ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary experiences of historical music in Turkey.

İstanbul as the setting of the research is explained with further depth. Besides reasoning why İstanbul is a "world music city", the author gives with picturesque details the background of public music life which emerged during the 19th century.

The ethnic and religious communities which were part of the public music life during the Ottoman period spread across the globe throughout centuries and the book covers not only the production of Turkish music beyond the borders of Turkey but also the music production of neighboring countries and communities in relation with the contemporary Istanbulite music life. The complexity of Istanbulite music life to day is further explored under the title “world music”, ranging from early music to contemporary music covering a variety of genres, composers, performers, albums, music festivals and international cultural projects.

The third chapter digs further into the history of traditional music in relation with the claim in the first chapter that the music traditions were more or less abandoned and their fragments keep influencing -if not dominating- the artistic music in contemporary Turkey (p. 11). Emphasizing the relationship between the past and the present, the author explores the historicization of Ottoman music traditions and the revivals of the musical traditions of minorities with a focus on Alevi and Kurdish music traditions. While doing so, Greve does not ignore the musicological accumulation and mentions the contemporary shift from musicians to historians in the study of traditional music. What is in common in the revived and reconstructed traditional musics of today is the sense of obligation in hybridization, which inevitably leads to individual interpretations of the tradition. The Livingstonian scheme of analysis concerning traditional music revivals is connected to the global and local effects identified in the analysis of the individualization of traditional music in contemporary Turkey. This leads to the main argument as put forward by Greve: “that individual musical projects today more and more replace coherent musical traditions” (p. 220). The author concludes the book with a question mark signaling the continuation of questions, with the equivoque of forthcoming trends which will probably be influenced and manipulated by the expected regime change as it was the case during the foundation of the Turkish Republic following the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

With an ethnographically richened concept as the title, *Makamsız* can be considered as an extensive bibliography of traditional musics of, around and about Turkey. The book provides photographic descriptions of the contemporary Istanbulite music scene. The public music life before contemporary practices was also vividly described; from Phanariot songs to early examples of opera by Dikran Çuhacıyan, a wide range of genres and communities were taken into account in a holistic manner. Although some information provided might be found debatable depending on theoretical and ideological backgrounds of the readers and

researchers, it should be admitted that the holistic understanding of traditional music of Turkey, including both folk music and court music, with a variety of ethnic and religious orientations enabled the author to cover such a broad field of research. Greve managed to bring together musicians and music researchers among whom several names have not been pronounced next to each other ever since.

The extensive literature covered behind the compilation of such a high variety of traditional music genres and practices makes the book attractive for a large audience, spanning from musicians to experts on Turkish traditional music. Seemingly unrelated genres and countries are analyzed under umbrella titles, which from time to time makes the text difficult to follow especially for newcomers in the field of Turkish traditional music. However, the material covered throughout the book is already quite complex and difficult to categorize; Roma music and Sufi music for instance intersect in the context of world music in Burhan Öçal's case, which the author cleverly covers under the title "World Rhythms" (pp. 79-80).

The holistic perspective of Greve in analyzing the diverse traditions in a way reflects the historical understanding of music in which transmission and individuality went hand in hand allowing the awareness of music history to start roughly in late 19th century. "Music hence was transmitted in a holistic way, including performing techniques and style, melodic ornamentation and aesthetics" (p. 110) states Greve when explaining the historicization of tradition. The literature he covers also touches upon sources from the 2000s which show how the historiographic invention in early republican period due to dominant ideology was internalized by contemporary authors. The intermingling relationship between history and tradition emphasized certain aspects while ignoring others and Greve boldly points at the ignored aspects, as for example the shift from musicians to historians resulted in a focused research on manuscripts while scientific editions of notation are still lacking (pp. 120-122). While attracting the attention of notation researchers, Greve also addresses manuscript researchers with an inclusive list of publications on treatises.

Although the presence of such a list of the Ottoman musicological sources enriches the book, lack of an index of the musicians and albums covered throughout the book stands as a weakness. Some sources keep reappearing in different contexts and the text might turn out to be difficult to follow if the reader does not keep track of the material of interest, be it a musician or an album. Besides,

the editing of the book should be relentlessly criticized. Some locally significant concepts and their English translations could only meet one another after the second appearance in the text while typographical errors dominate the book together with some grammatical errors. Errors in English, Turkish and German make it distracting and even disappointing to read the text while some typing errors might cause confusion in meaning as well.

Despite the editorial weakness, the stylistic differences between chapters stand as a miscellany. It is not clear whether different preferences in different chapters mark different historical or theoretical aspects of the traditional music emphasized or merely relate to the complexity of the material covered in that chapter. Internal summaries in the fourth chapter for instance provide readers with an un-blurred image of different genres in the process of hybridization. On the contrary, the second chapter gives the summary of “International Turkish Music”, which is by far the most extensive and complex chapter of the book, in the conclusion, forming a discrepancy of comprehensibility favoring hybridization over historicity. The readers are thus exposed to a kaleidoscopic representation of the progress of traditional music in Turkey through a gradient script.

Greve’s work is the outcome of a years-long ethnographic research including interviews of musicians, participation in a wide range of events from conferences to festivals, collection of thousands of music samples and the review of an extensive literature. In this sense, the book relates well to Martin Stokes’s *The Republic of Love* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), which also rests upon long-term research with a focus on traditional music. While Stokes’s approach puts individuals before the prism so as to come up with cultural and national sentimentalism, Greve’s approach takes its stance from the exact opposite, starting from a national and cultural basis to reach dispersed individualizations.

Overall reviews in *Makamsız* offer possible research questions for a better understanding of the individualization of traditional music from the Ottoman times to the republican times such as the re-definition of musical periods of Turkish music from a form-based understanding or the analysis of the development of voice techniques in Turkish music. It seems Greve’s work is prone to upcoming questions and further research, ushering vivacity in the field of Ottoman music and the plethora of its contemporary appearances.

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