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The comparison of methods used for oud education in Turkish music

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Abstract

Comparing of Oud Methods in Oud Instrument’s Education of Turkish Music In Turkish music has both voice and instrumental basis, but specifications of instrumental basis has different significances. In this regard, as being used an instrument of traditional Turkish Music, Oud is an important role in terms of performing. It is important that interplaying between Oud performances in Turkish music and other musical genres which is coming from centuries. People who wanted to know playing Oud with effects of different cultures and geographies made up new methodologies. Here, musical abilities such as ear training and finger techniques has primary role at instrumental performance. In additional, teacher and methods that are make of used are great effect on learning Oud performance. Nowadays, methods are being used for Oud education at institutes such as conservatories and music divisions. In 1910, first Oud method was written by Udi Hoca Ali Salahi Bey in the end of the Ottoman era. After that, method writing custom was spread. The custom are kept by Şerif Muhiddin Targan, Kadri Şençalar, Cınuçen Tanıkör, Mutlu Torun, Onur Akdoğan ve Gülçin Yahya Kaçar. In all of this methods; preferences of the writer' musical abilities, knowledge, performing specifications/choices can be seen. In this paper, how current Oud methods are useful and how methods increase performing specifications for students will be comparatively gone over.

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1. Introduction

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Art of music has always been in the centre of mankind’s worldly and other worldly life. In Islam geography it has played an important role from the ezan which is sung in the birth of mankind to the sala which is sung in death of a person. In performing music human beings used his voice first. Musicologists accepted human voice as the most perfect instrument. Later, mankind invented instruments.

In the world when compared to other types of music, Turkish music has a different place with the effects of its sound intervals, traditions and the geography in which it appeared. Turkish music depending on its rhythmic and the instruments used has attracted the greatest attention in eastern music category. So the importance of the voice and the instrument performance of Turkish music can’t be denied. This has shown the importance of Turkish music education. Since the beginning of Turkish history, Turkish music has used modern music education methods together with “meşk” known as traditional music education. In voice and instrument education, traditional method includes listening and repeating while modern method includes listening, repeating, comparing, analyzing and more.

In this context in our article we are going to compare the oud education methods.

2. A Brief History of The Oud

The Arabic origin Oud takes its name from an agalloch tree called el-oud. Turks transformed the word “Oud” to “Ud” in accordance with their language structure. Westerners met this instrument during the Crusades between 11th and 13th centuries and they named it “lute in English” “luth in French” “laute in German” “liuto in Italian”. Çınuçen Tanrikorut stated that although it is an Arabic origin word that does not mean it is an Arabic instrument and he supported his idea with this statement:” Araps saw this instrument for the first time in seventh century in Baghdad while turks were playing it who came from khorassan, the main body of the instrument was made of agalloch tree; thats why it was called el-oud, In illetarete period for the arabs who didnt know any other instruments than def and rebab this was an instrument similar to Turkish kopuz Turks had been using since huns.(Tanrikorut, 2001:176).

In Turkish culture and history there can be found written resources about oud dating back to Uigur civilization. According to the Wang Yeri-Tü’s records. a ruler of Uygur civilization, which is accepted as one of the most important resources of that time written in 981, kopuz and oud is an instrument which turks always used to carry with them wherever they went. In Ravzatlı’s- Safa it is stated that in Horasan during the first immigration the instrumentalists playing ud had an important place in the society. And in the same work, it is explained that the name “ud” was used for the first time during by Muhammed Ibn-Harezmi (Gazimihal, 1975: 29). In the Works of El-Kindi, Farabi and Harezmi which were written in 9th and 10th centuries, important information about ud is available. In the same works, how to accord and perform ud and its effect on people are mentioned. Besides, ud is used as a music theory’s instrument.

In Selçuklu and Ottoman states Turk İslam musicologists started to write music edvar and risale making use of the resources of the works of ancient Greek musicologists such as Pythagoras, Aristotle and Euclid. In El-Kindi’s music books, it is written that Oud belongs to Prophet Adam’s 6th generation Lamech, its cord length must be 30 fingers’ length (about 35 cm) and its width must be a third of its cord length, it is named as “Melikül-Alat” which means the king of instruments and it is used as a theory instrument (Turabi, 1996: 69-70). In the 10th century, Farabi gave information about how the Oud and kanun were invented and how to accord and perform them in his work of Kitabül-Musical-Kebir (Jebriini, 1995: 162-163). In 13th century Safiyuddin Urmevi in his work named Kitabül-Edvar studied Oud in three parts; accord styles, arrangement of cords and producing sounds and made use of Oud to talk about the music theory (Uygun, 1999: 214, 224). In the 11th century Ibn Sina explained Oud in
his book Eş-Shifa, Cevamül-musiki part, 6th article, 2nd section. There can be found information about the structure of Oud and its music pitches calculation in this work (Turabi, 2004: 108, 117). In the 15th century in Jamül-Elhan of Abdulkadir Meragi, analyzed Oud and Oud-like instruments (Oud-I Kadim, Oud-I Kamil, Tuhfetul-Oud, Pipa and Shahrud) in terms of structure and performance and he showed the oud plectrum using techniques and “Terjat” (Sezikli, 2011: 235-252). In Fatih Sultan Mehmet’s Palace, the information in Nekavetül-Edvar which was written by Udi Abdülaziz, The Son of Meragi are similar to those in his father, Meragi’s work (Koç, 2010: 46, 50). From the end of 15th century to 19th, Oud’s position in music was almost replaced by tanbur and ney (Tanrkorur, 2001: 189). That’s highly because Ottomans liked tanbur and ney and the effect of spread of “Mevlevilik”.

At the end of 19th, Udi Violinist Şakir Pasha made the Oud gain the deserved the value and added it the 6th sore spot. Since this term, Cınuçen Tanrkorur categorizes Oud instrumentalists into three; classic, fantasist-innovative and marketable style (Tanrkorur, 2001:189). We can see all the performers from Nevres Bey up to Sherif İıliş as the representatives of classical style. Performers of this style follow the way of Tanburi Cemil Bey. The latest representatives of this style have been Cahit Gözkan, Cınuçen Tanrkorur, Osman Nuri Özpekel, Necati Çelik and Samim Karaca. The representatives of fantasist-novative stye are Sherif Muhittin Targan, Yorgo Bacanos, Bayram Coşkun, who is in search of different styles, Münir Nurettin Beken, Mehmet Emin Bitmez and Yurdal Tokcan. Oud performers of popular style are Selanklı Ahmet, Kadri Şençalar. Their performance is under the effect of arabesque music which is played in night-clubs. According to Cınuçen Tanrkorur, the most successful Oud performer of the 20th century is Yorgo Bacanos (Tanrkorur, 2001). The performance feature of Bacanos is that his right hand can get the sound of “anvil-hammer” sound from the cord and he can use the traditional performance and virtuosity skillfully.

3. Oud Methods

In Turkish Music; the need to write methods with high efficiency levels in order to grow good performers in Oud instrument is occupied after Turkish Music part has been departed from Darül’Elhan in 1924. For this reason there has been a breakdown in the system of meshk that adopts a line of conduct the style of transforming master to student and there has been deficiencies in Oud training. In 1974 with the establishment of Turkish Music Conservatory and the other conservatories; some Oud method and learning ways have began to be written. Turkish Music and Oud training between 1924-1974 have been by the help of personel effort and civil establishments. Oud methods which are published in Turkish music history are generally written to gain main technical performance skill. Any methods are written in order to advanced technical performance but, some records and writings that teachers wrote for their special students are used as methods. At this point oud performers can be seen unlucky up to western music instrumentalists but may be lucky up to the other Turkish music instrumentalists. Student who wants to take Oud training must have a very good music hearing because Oud is a pitchness instrument and he/she have to be patient, hard working and have to take lessons from a master who has already trained with traditional performance school. These are the desirable elements for Oud training and without these elements following a method may be though as useless.

3.1. Ali Salahi Bey’s Oud Method

In Turkish music history the first pressed Oud method was written by Udi Ali Salahi Bey by name of “Learning of Oud Method Without Teacher” in 1910. This method was published again with the added studies by name “Oud Teacher with Bound Insert” in 1924. (Targan, 1995:1) In this method simply presentation of Oud, how to hold it, plectrum technic, open string and position studies have took place.
3.2. Kadri Şençalar’s Oud Method

Kadri Şençalar, after telling the short Turkish music history; says that his main goal for writing Oud method is to teach the youngs in conservatories and radios who wants to learn Oud instrument and also educate them as experts on their instruments. While preparing this method Kadri Şençalar has profitted from notes of Sherif Muhittin Targan’s students Cemil Beşir, Ali Salaht, Fahri Kopuz and Sadettin Arel. Method is consisted of three parts and in the 1st chapter the short history of Oud, 2nd chapter the effect of Oud in human being and legendary stories about Oud, information about production and in the 3rd chapter it has been mentioned about scales. Also in all of the three chapters 50 etudes are existed. In these etudes there are open string etudes, finger etudes and maqamic etudes. At the end of the 3rd chapter Kadri Şençalar has given some of peşrev, saz semaisi, şarkı and taksim notes (Şençalar, 1978).

3.3. Şerif Muhittin Targan’s Oud Method

This Oud method is published by Zeki Yılmaz by combining manuscript notes of Şerif Muhittin Targan. Method is consisted of the manuscript notes of Şerif Muhittin Targan between years of 1919-1956. It is composed of three chapters: In the 1st and 2nd chapter information about Oud training and etudes and in the 3rd chapter it has been placed to information about Targan’s own style and compositions. In the first chapter it has been mentioned short, positions, plectrum beats of Oud and etudes related to these units. In the third chapter, Targan, who is also a master violoncellist and has very well information about western music area, tries to teach his style—near to western music- with his own compositions (Targan, 1995).

3.4. Cimuçen Tanrıkorur’s Oud Method

This Oud method wasn’t published but the students of Tanrıkorur has made copies for distribution of his own manuscripts. It consisted of 1 to 190th etudes. In 1 to 60th there are string etudes, 60th to 190 there are maqams and the other pitches which are hardly performed. Tanrıkorur has betrayed his own musical terms such as s:means that finger will be in stable finger position, k: shows that the pitch which is in different column must be hold without raising finger. The position numbers are shown with the roman numbers that are written at the beginning of the scale (Tanrıkorur, Unpublished Oud Method).

3.5. Mutlu Torun’s Oud Method

Mutlu Torun has prepared this method while he was giving lessons in conservatory. He say that this method especially has been written to make cleanly the voices’ pitches. This method consists of information of Oud’s structure, tuning, string wiring, maintenance and etudes in three chapters. In the first chapter technics of plectrum, open string etudes and position etudes, main column etude, In the second chapter side columns, In the third chapter style, nuance, modulation and taksim (Torun, 1993).

3.6. Onur Akdoğan’s Oud Method

Onur Akdoğan has written his method in the form two boks. He wrote second book in memory of Şerif Muhittin Targan. The First Book includes six chapter, The Second Book includes eleven chapter and instrumental compositions. In: The first chapter of first book The history of Oud and the prior knowledge of oud are allocated. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6th chapter include plectrum technics, position, maqamic and same sound etudes. In the second book, it has been showed the maqams’s common and seperated using according to 1, 2 3. and the other positions.
It also has been described the position’s using from 7th position till 12th position by means of etudes for virtuosity (Akdoğan, 1992).

3.7. Gülçin Yahya’s Oud Method

In this method Yahya has been addressing to wide music community and aiming at training without the turkish music’s style. The method consists of five chapters. it is allocated general informations, seat, holding of oud, concept of position and open string etudes related to oud in first chapter; the position’s introduction, main columns, maqam knowledges and the etudes of first position in second chapter; second position, side columns and the using of first and second position together in third chapter; the various performance technics and enrichments in fourth chapter; the application of performance technics that is trained on the Works in the fifth chapter. In additon to this method, Gülçin Yahya’s the book called “Oud Etudes” covering all technics was published (Yahya, 2001).

4. The Comparison of Oud Methods

The comparison of methods which we have advertised above will be done by caring of many points. All of the writers which we have take in hand their methods are master on their instruments and oud performers who knows Turkish music both theoretically and practically. While comparing methods; it has been taken into consideration that the style and tradition of method writer, the technic of using plectrum, positions, and nuances, his virtuosity, agility and feasibility of his technic by students.

4.1. The Comparison of Methods in Terms of Holding and Using Technic of Plectrum

The purpose of holding plectrum in performance of Oud is to achieve clear and fine sound. The level of treble and lowness of sound, it’s nuances and impetus must be worked through with plectrum. When the methods have been compared according to holding plectrum and technic of usage, it has been understood from his own studies that Targan uses agility frequently and he uses plectrum softly and perfectly. His interest to western music is affective in this situation. Sometimes guitar style can be seen in his plectrum usage. He has used bottom-above plectrum expertly and showed it in his studies. Students which have difficulties using plectrum fastly must use the plectrum exercises in Targan method (Yıldız, 2005:39). In Şençalar, it has been heard hard usage of plectrum and this is seen in study performances. Plectrum exercises of Targan and Şençalar resemble to each other. In Oud plectrum we can hear the traditional plectrum technic and exercises in Tanrikorur’s method. In this performance style, classic ambiance of Oud and the style that is near to Tanbur can be seen in study performances. Tanrikorur has used plectrum above-bottom up to the notes and done the performances with tremolo (Yıldız, 2005:41). Torun, Yahya and Akdoğan’s methods resemble to each other because of usage of plectrum technics and sameness of their working conditions.

4.2. The Comparison of Methods in Terms of Using Position

Oud’s usage of position area is substantially wide. In this 3.5 oktave instrument, from one double string there can be achieved sound with 19 positions. Clear and fine sounds are possible with first 7 positions. Targan’s skill about using these 19 positions is admirable by musical enviroment. This is observed in his compositions such as “Running /Runner Children” and “Caprice”. For this reason, Targan’s position studies are fairly difficult according to other methods and persons whose perform Targan’s position studies are admitted as command of oud positions completely. In Şençalar method, position studies are not complex as Targan’s. Şençalar has found sufficient only 7 positions. (Yıldız, 2005:45) Tanrikorur has written his studies and made usage of positions
considering agility, style and traditional performance. In his method he used 7 position too and has showed the other positions as nuances. Yahya, Torun and Akdoğu’s position studies resemble Tanrıkorur’s technic. It has to be carefully about the usage of maqams as Hüzzam, Saba which are performed hardly. The desirable sounds cannot be corresponded in every position. The persons that follow Tanrıkorur’s method have written methods considering this. It is very important to use positions in Oud training. It is so hard to get an oud performance better which begins with a wrong position. Style and interpretations of performers may cause differences in usage of positions. On the way of student to be a good Oud performer, every performer creates his own position technic and he makes his own.

4.3. The Comparing Methods in Terms of Oud Style

When we compare the methods in terms of oud style, we see that Udi’(Oud performer)s style reflects to methods after main studies. It may be though that studies in Targan’s oud method are prepared about virtuosity after the main education. Although Targan is a very good performer, because of his western music education; his style is lack of traditionalism. This is so natural. His virtuosity is reflected to his method but spirit of maqams are though to be as deficient. This method is not demanded for traditional oud performers because of Targan’s style. Targan appropriated soloist performance, had’nt participated collective performance and avoided from performing traditional maqams as saba and hüzzam (Yıldız, 2005:42). In his studies he has mostly used his own compositions. Because of the reason Şençalar performed his instrument in places as casino ,his own style of identity is not clear. In Tanrıkorur’s method soloist performance is came out but he has a traditional special style. The missed style which is near to tambur is seen in Tanrıkorur’s method. Tanrıkorur is known with his resitals and he does not participate to collective performances. He has used the traditional Ud style expertly in his method. However Torun has used his own style in his method other than Targan and Tanrıkorur. In consequence of Akdoğu is a good researcher other than being a good oud performer, his style is not clear in his method. But Yahya shows in her method that she follows the trace of Tanrıkorur.

5. Conclusion

In this research, oud methods have been analyzed and compared. As the method of Oud performer Hoca Ali Salahi Bey is quite simple we haven’t been in need of comparing it with the others. Actually Oud methods are categorized in two groups. In the first category Targan, Şençalar and Akdoğdu methods are close and similar. As for second category Tanrıkorur, Torun and Yahya methods are close and similar. When the studies compared, the western music effect on the first category and the traditional effects on the second category are highly seen. But the common feature of all methods is that in some parts they initially involve an introduction of Oud, a short story of it and the technique of plectrum then they give information about open string and position studies. One of the most important requirement of Oud training is having a musical ability inherently and the other is the work discipline. That is, the higher the capability the higher the contribution of the educator, the work discipline of the pupil, the school or the methods. Besides, together with the contribution of methods, for Oud student listening to skillful Oud performers will make a major contribution to his self-improvement.
References