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Re-Evaluating the Roots of Arabesk Music: Grup Metronom[1]

ABSTRACT

Grup Metronom played a leading role in the development of Turkish arabesk music during the 1970s. Delineating the social and musical relationships within the Band reveals a new perspective on genre blending, challenging the received view of the history of arabesk. Based on in-depth interviews with prominent actors who shaped the scene and witnessed the historical process, the article attempts to illuminate how a group of musicians with diverse backgrounds-from makam (both folk and art), jazz, and Western symphonic traditions- interacted, performed and were perceived by other musicians in the cultivation of arabesk music, thus challenging the assumption that arabesk music was pioneered by a group of marginal musicians who shared a common cultural ground. The argument is also supported by the musical analysis of selected works to define musical tendencies and eclectic structures. Text analysis (e.g., lyrics, melodic contour, scale, and form), performance analysis (arrangement, orchestration, vocal and instrumental interpretation, and timbre), and other musical inputs (recording, use of decorative sounds, and mix) constitute most of the stylistic interpretations in the paper. The article also attempts to elaborate issues related to Arabic influence on arabesk music; and ground some of them through the stories of the actors in the case and analysis of the sonic environment in their products.

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Introduction

Arabesk is a Turkish popular music genre which emerged in the late 1960s as a unique blend of various styles including folk, art, pop, western, middle eastern, and even jazz, rock and world music. Owing to its commercial success, *Arabesk* constantly expanded its territory and became the mainstream pop genre during the 1980s. Although it never lost its significance as a style, its dominance as a genre started to decline after the pop boom of the 1990s. Stylistic elements of *arabesk*, such as the arrangement and singing style, atomized and spread to other genres. Fifty years after its foundation, it still is a burning topic in the Turkish popular music scene.

Arabesk has been studied in terms of its actors, such as mostly well-known performers, arrangers, music directors and composers, as well as the audience. Another point is its relation with Turkey's journey of modernization, which is very much related to the political decisions of the state in various fields. The third group of studies is about the feelings and emotions produced by this genre. The last group deals with the genre in the framework of tension between traditional musics and popular culture.

Those who evaluate the genre as a social outcome of the post-1950s modernization of Turkish society generally tend to focus on its audience. For instance, Nazife Güngör presents *arabesk* music as a product of a transitional period in the journey of modernization (1990: 214); and Caner Işık and Nuran Erol attempt to present the profile and mind-set of Müslüm Gürses's audience (2002). Meral Özbek's pioneering study on *Orhan Gencebay's Arabesk* elaborates on his musical decisions and interprets his music as a social response of the society to post-1950 modernization. Özbek's analysis of song lyrics also unveils the main theme, love - as opposed to pessimistic themes such as sorrow and fate. The sentimentality of *arabesk* was also discussed by Martin Stokes (1989, 2010). His contribution to the field is based on a long-term study of Turkish society. Betül Yarar's contribution to the literature of the genre features several focal points. She seeks to "[...] further develop a critical socio-historical perspective on the relationship between politics and popular culture by looking at these issues in the context of the history of modernization in Turkey [...]" (2018: 179), in which she examines *arabesk* music as a tool for analysis of the social and political scene of Turkey; especially after the 1980s, fragmentation of the *arabesk* into sub-genres also investigated in relation to the politics

of Turkey[2]. Orhan Tekelioğlu, on the other hand, provided a significant perspective on the cultivation and reception of *arabesk*. He evaluated the genre as a liberal modernization process, as an alternative to state-endorsed ones and as a "spontaneous synthesis" of Turkish society (1996 and 1999). Work by Seeman (2002; 2019) and Akgül (2009; 2018) provides another perspective in the study of *arabesk* music; its laborers. Although these authors' scope is not limited to the genre, they shed light on portraits of music practitioners who played significant roles in the cultivation of the *arabesk* music as performers, arrangers, music directors and composers.

This paper focuses on the story of the founders of *arabesk* music, *Grup Metronom*, whose contribution was not elaborated on in the literature. The primary sources of such an inquiry are in depth interviews, conducted in a wider context between 2013 and 2021. The performances selected for analyses are referred by the informants - cited or not - for their representative value. Musical transcriptions and analyses provided in the text aim to ground the discourse in stylistic manners; the method of having a thick description of musical flow supported by the transcriptions constructs the main idea[3]. The transcriptions are intended to reflect the arrangements in unity. Therefore, they were formulated in a continuous score. Performative issues could thus be elaborated on in this approach; as opposed to transcribing only the melodic flow, which would only allow analyses on the level of text. Although some of the matters related to individual transcriptions are mentioned in the following parts, it is crucial to note a few preferences related to all. Both vocal and instrumental performances feature sophisticated ornamentation. The reader will notice that such kinds of performances are notated in detail, but some are left only with ornamentation signs above long sustained notes. Our preference for having such an inconsistency is related to the focus points of the analyses; when an individual performance is analyzed in the text, the transcription provides the detail. At other times, when the unity of the arrangement is prioritized, they appear in a plainer form in the transcriptions. On the other hand, the performances contain unclear points for the transcriber, such as parts that are masked in the mix or shadowed by other instruments. The parts in the strings section bring their own complexities to the task.

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[2] Also see (Yarar, 2007).

[3] This approach is also found in Martin Stokes's narratives (See Stokes, 1989 and 2010) on Orhan Gencebay's music. Although Stokes's transcriptions and analyses are plainer, the method used in this text is parallel to his.

Although they appear as the whole family - violins 1, violins 2, viola, cello and double bass - it is not possible to identify them in individual tracks. Therefore, they appear in the transcription in a reduced format, which displays the main musical trajectory.

The analyses provided in the text are intended to lay the foundations for the discussion on stylistic features of *arabesk* music. A narrative based on the musical flux from beginning to end is generally given. When the narrative is interrupted at certain points, it is to detail a musical moment or interpret the musical sound. As the reader will notice, some of the musical features emphasized in the text are parallel to the main tendencies, but others are unique to the selected examples. Therefore, it is hoped that the analyses will develop an overall vision of the genre.

Musicians Gathered in *Grup Metronom*

Apart from ensembles that were recruited for individual works, *Grup Metronom* is considered to be the first music band on the *arabesk* music scene both in studio and stage works. Özgür Akgül interpret *Metronom* as a "symbolic orchestra", which is based on Egyptian or eastern orchestras, in the development of "*serbest çalışmalar*" [free works][4] (Akgül, 2009: 85-86). Uğur Küçükkaplan also cites the importance of *Metronom* in the history of *arabesk* music (Küçükkaplan, 2015). Without excluding those views, the paper

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[4]The term *serbest çalışmalar* - instead of arabesk - is used by a few in the literature in reference to Orhan Gencebay. Generically, Orhan Gencebay prefers to use the term free works [*serbest çalışmalar*] to refer to his musical compositions as opposed to the widespread term *arabesk*. In this way, he shifts the emphasis on his music from imitation of Arab musics to reinterpretation of traditional music by using internal and external musical elements freely. According to Ayhan Erol, Gencebay emphasizes the distinction between freedom [özgürlük] and looseness [serbest] in terms of the reception of outside influences by urban people and draws attention to Gencebay's term [serbest çalışmalar] (Erol, 2002: 260-262). Gencebay rejects the term *arabesk* for several reasons. Firstly, he considers himself as part of Turkish music tradition. For him, his musical innovations are not deviations or a degeneration of local practices as *arabesk* implies. Furthermore, he shares similar goals with other attempts at modernization; to create a synthesis of the local and the global. Lastly, the influences that are found in his music are not limited to Arab traditions. Musical elements from Western, Mediterranean and Turkish local traditions appear in his music in certain ways. Therefore, he concludes his position in the tradition as being open to any innovation that he may find musically valuable. On the other hand, The term arabesk is a label for a variety of popular musics. The *arabesk*-ness may originate from the text or most likely from the performance. However, in many cases, it is difficult, even impossible, to find common musical peculiarities to determine its features. One might suggest the mixture of art, folk, Western, or world music instruments; oriental string and percussion ensembles; melodies that are ornamented in Middle Eastern fashion; and sentimental lyrics are among characteristics of *arabesk* music. However, it is not possible to take them as definitive features since they do not always appear. It seems that the biggest commonality of *arabesk* repertory lies in its "negative description"; Gencebay suggests that what labels his music as arabesk are "characteristics which go beyond the borders of existing official music politics" in his interview with Meral Özbek. She, on the other hand, insists on orientating him towards determining pure musical features of arabesk music. (Özbek: 1991: 250-252).

will elaborate other dimensions of *Metronom*, such as the lineup and collaborative nature of the orchestra and influences from diverse traditions, such jazz and *makam*, in reference to selected performances.

The founders, *bağlama* player and composer Vedat Yıldırımbora, jazz drummer Burhan Tonguç and singer Mine Koşan firstly aimed to form a stage group for *gazino* and club performances. Over the course of time, the group hosted 15-18 accomplished and gifted musicians from jazz, western classical and *makam* circles; jazz musicians Burhan Tonguç on drum and percussion, İsmet Sıral and Süheyl Denizci[5] on flute; western classical musicians Günnur Perin and Hüsamettin Demiray on double bass, Betül Demiray and Selçuk [?][6] on violin, Nizamettin Demiray on horn and keyboard; *makam* musicians Mustafa Sayan, Mehmet Şenyaylar, İskender Şencemal, Selçuk Tekay and Yaşar Işın on the violin, Arto Tunçboyacıyan and Faruk Tekbilek on percussion, and Hacı Tekbilek on *kaval*[7]. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013, and March 27, 2014; Mustafa Sayan, personal communication, 21 June 2017.)

Metronom was formed in 1971 and was active between 1972 and 1978[8]. Vedat Yıldırımbora and Mine Koşan stayed in Cairo for two years to collaborate with the Abdelhalem Novara orchestra. They reformed in a looser format in 1980 until 1985[9]. Having Mine Koşan as their vocalist, *Metronom* was truly a music band. They shared their earnings equally and the group name was highly valued. Of course, the group's instrumentalists were also active in other stage and studio works outside *Metronom*.

Yıldırımbora told in our interviews how *Metronom* performed in *gazino*s and clubs as follows:

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[5] Süheyl Denizci's participation in *Metronom* is suggested on a web page. Since all other information in the text is consistent with our knowledge from the field, it is possible to assume that Denizci might have collaborated with the group on several occasions including the flute performance in *Anlatamıyorum* analysed in the following part.

[6] None of the informants could remember his last name.

[7] Between the 21st and 23rd minutes, one might observe the lineup of *Grup Metronom* in a Turkish movie, *Dikiz Aynası*, in which Mine Koşan takes part as a singer actress (See Erakalın, 1973).

[8] The time period coincides with the heyday of group music in Turkey, especially Anatolian pop and rock. (See Tireli, 2005; Meriç, 2006)

[9] The group disbanded probably due to the separation of the couple. Other musicians of Metronom gathered separately for Burhan Tonguç's daughter Biricik Tonguç, whose boom period was in the mid 1970s, according to Biricik's statement in a biographical radio programme. (See Kuyucu, 2019)

> In our repertory, we would play an intro for one and half or two minutes; there was a famous [song] Caravan, Latin music. [Then] we would start with either *Bir Teselli Ver*, *Benim Dünyam*, or *Yağmur*. [...] After two songs, we would play *Dert Bende*, followed by another popular Gencebay song. We would take [into our repertory] other current popular songs such as *Neden Saçların Beyazlamış*. Out of ten songs we performed, let us say three to four songs would be mine, another three to four would be from Gencebay, and two to three others from the *piyasa* [marketplace]. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013)

Metronom's repertory consisted of songs that are considered *arabesk* hits. However, they arranged the songs in their own style:

> We would write new intros to the song or use ones that we composed for our recordings. We always [arranged songs] in scores. They were generally based on *bağlama*. Because both Gencebay and I composed our songs on *bağlama*. [...] We would distribute [the melody] among violins, *bağlama*, *kaval*, and percussion. We would use solo violins and *taksim*s. We would have three or four colours. For instance, in *Dert Bende*, I play *bağlama* to the accompaniment of violins, the *kaval* plays solo passages. Sometimes we would perform [on the stage] better than the album [recording]. Our fame was "they play like the recording". There are some recordings, Orhan Gencebay's *Aşk Pınarı* and *Sev Dedi Gözlerim* - very important ones -, which we played live in the studio just as we played them on the stage. It is quite different, because we rehearsed. The technique was competitive but there was a joy in that unity. It is not possible to get the same sentiment playing part by part. No one is complaining now, everyone is happy. Because it needs to be [like that]; you cannot gather those people easily (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013).[10]

Burhan Tonguç and Vedat Yıldırımbora seem to have been the visionary leaders of *Metronom*. Burhan Tonguç - he was called Burhan *Baba* [father] - was already an influential figure in the Turkish music industry when the group was established. He was an open-minded musician from the Turkish jazz scene, who was playing across genres combining various percussive instruments on the stage and in studio recordings. Unusually for his time, he was fluent in rhythmic notation. He was teaching others sight

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[10] All quotations were translated from Turkish to English by Serkan Şener. Turkish versions are not given in the text for reasons of space.

reading, including several string players, who became influential figures in the string ensemble scene - the trademark of *arabesk* sound (Ayhan Şenyeylar, personal communication, 26 March 2015).

> Famous musicians would come to our house and gather for improvised jam sessions in my father's music room for hours. [...] There was music, jazz, constantly... İsmet Sıral, Muvaffak [Maffy] Falay were world class musicians. Pianist Altan İrtel was there. Four or five musicians would group together and we would listen and admire them. I would listen to longplays of Ella Fitzgerald, Shirley Bassey, Frank Sinatra we had. I grown up with them. [...] My father said that he was going to start a group for Mine Koşan. He founded one, called *Metronom*. He put me in the percussion section together with *Papuç* [shoe] Ahmet [Külik], Arto Tunçboyacıyan, my father and *Parmaksız* [no fingers] Cengiz, who was on the drums. [...] We formed a group of 13-14 people. That was my first appearance on the stage. [...] We formed the Western rhythm [section] along with *bağlama*, violins, *kaval*s on the other side. Ahmet Tekbilek, Faruk Tekbilek were world-class wind performers we had. [...] Because I was so concentrated on the rhythm part, I was not able to follow what was being sung. (Kuyucu, 2019)

Vedat Yıldırımbora and Burhan Tonguç had a close relationship before their collaboration in the *Grup Metronom*. They met in the early 1960s. Tonguç was like an older brother for Yıldırımbora. They gathered at Tonguç's house and "listened to jazz music for eight years" (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 13 May 2013).

Yıldırımbora was a talented *bağlama* player from İzmir. In his youth, he was influenced by Yılmaz İpek, who was one of the leading figures among cosmopolitan *bağlama* players[11]. "Like many kids at that time", Yıldırımbora dreamed about "fleeing" [from İzmir] to İstanbul, the heart of the music industry. He moved to İstanbul in 1966 after he was released from his military duty. After a while, he was accompanying Ahmet Sezgin and others in İstanbul *gazino*s and performing in flourishing recording studios together with Orhan Gencebay and Arif Sağ. Then, he met Abdullah Nail Bayşu[12], who was a prominent figure in the commercial folk music scene. Bayşu offered his house to the

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[11] İpek had a modern vision of *bağlama* performance. With his brilliant technique, İpek expanded the traditional boundaries of the instrument. It is possible to see him - together with Bayram Aracı - as predecessors of modern *bağlama* virtuosos, who opened the path for their successors, such as Orhan Gencebay, Arif Sağ and Vedat Yıldırımbora. (See Aracı, 2001; İpek, 1963)

[12] Abdullah Nail Bayşu was an influential figure in the industry during the 1960s and 1970s. His house could be labelled as one of the birthplaces of arabesk music Because of its centrality in the marketplace. (See Şener, 2022)

market place as a multi-dimensional sphere, where actors of the music and film industries could gather. Vedat Yıldırımbora became a resident of the house and collaborated with Bayşu for four years, which linked Yıldırımbora to the network. His maturation as a bağlama player and songwriter as well as founding *Metronom* took place in this environment and his vision for the *Grup Metronom* was fed by these cosmopolitan musicians. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013, and 27 March 2014; Arif Sağ, personal communication, 15 November 2016)

On the other hand, Yıldırımbora developed a special interest in Egyptian urban popular music. Radio performances and commercial recordings of Egyptian stars had been primary influences for him. He yearned for the Egyptian style of musical innovations to be implemented in Turkish *makam* musics. He was conscious that creating a similar sound on the Turkish scene was not an easy task to accomplish:

> We found out that Egyptians have transcended the cause; Umm Kulthum, [Mohamed] Abd al-Wahab, Abd al-Halem Hafez, Fairuz [have] large orchestras. How do they play, how is it done? We researched [and] understood that it is a matter of école. At that time, I thought that we would be able to make music of that quality 25-30 years later; it would not be possible with musicians collected from cafés[13]. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013)

The existence of a string section in *Grup Metronom* is owed to Yıldırımbora's enlightenment originating in Arab musics and subsequent motivation to pursue the founding of similar orchestras in Turkey. However, modernization of the *makam* tradition in the Egyptian case is different from Turkish one, especially in the process of institutionalization. Egyptians included transmission of *makam* style violin performance in conservatories and state orchestras (El-Shawan, 1980, 1984, and Azzam, 1990), unlike their Turkish counterparts, who prioritized the Western style over the traditional one. Therefore, Turkish conservatory-educated violin players were not equipped with the artisanship of the *makam* style and its cultural background[14]. Although it was not his ideal choice, Yıldırımbora's alternative solution, in the case of *Metronom*, was bringing together musicians from both the *makam* and Western traditions, which echoes the

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[13] He refers to musicians' cafes, which had been a very important gathering place and hub especially for Romani musicians until the 2000s.
[14] Integrating the *makam* style with western instrument teaching curricula in Turkish conservatories is still a burning subject.

notion of "spontaneous synthesis" proposed by Orhan Tekelioğlu (Tekelioğlu, 1996; 1998).

Yıldırımbora's experiment with *Metronom* was partly successful. Members of the group benefited from each other's musical background and achieved a unique blend of sound. But it was not comparable to Egyptian grand orchestras in size and sound, for which Yıldırımbora had a strong admiration. The sound that he had in Turkey did not satisfy him and he travelled to Egypt to collaborate with their orchestras:

> [...] Mine Koşan and I went there [Cairo] to perform Arab music. It was unbearable for us to stay in Turkey. I was not able to find musicians to realize my desires. There are no [good] arrangers. [...]. Umm Kulthum's *tef* player Muhammed al-Arabi invited us to meet Abdelhalem Nowara, the greatest conductor [of Egypt] who was Anwar Sadat's brother-in-law. He was a friend of Münir Nurettin Selçuk and a musician of matching calibre. I was researching there and we performed Arab music. We performed on television once; the public was so enthusiastic that it troubled us to go out. People are so fond of art; they appreciate any good [performance] no matter who does it. They were shocked when Mine sung Umm Kulthum's songs; we had a huge success. [...] (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 17 2013)

Abdelhalem Nowara influenced Vedat Yıldırımbora with his views on the legacy of Turkish *makam* music repertory:

> When *Baba* [Father] and I were sitting in his room - I used to call him father - we began to talk about Turkish music. I spoke about Turkish music negatively. He told me that he was offended by my words, asking if I was familiar with Tatyos, Cemil Bey, or Osman Bey. I said that I did not know them well. We were making commercial [*piyasa*] music and had not researched it yet. He asked me to come to their concert, which they would give the next day, to listen to a *semai* by Tatyos Efendi. The [Egyptian] state provided a space [building] for them. They consisted of 120-130 musicians; 100 of them were instrumentalists. We went there the next day. Our piece [Tatyos Efendi's *semai*] was the next one; I said my goodness, what was happening!? Is Turkish music that beautiful? Tears were dropping from our eyes. I said, we could not understand that Turkish music was so supreme in Turkey; we learned that from Mr. Abdelhalem, who was Turkish from his mother's side! (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013)

Yıldırımbora took an instantaneous decision to make an album project with Abdelhalem Novara Orchestra after that incident. He returned to İstanbul to prepare the repertoire.

Shortly after, they worked on it and produced Mine Koşan's album *Kahire'de* [In Cairo] in 1979. The album features 20th-century art music repertory, a few instrumental forms, and *taksim*s. The brilliant technique of the orchestra and Mine Koşan's virtuosic vocalization presents a unique blend. But because the orchestra and vocal part were recorded separately, the performance lacks musical interaction and unity.[15]

One of the songs on the album, *Bir Kendi Gibi Zalimi Sevmiş Yanıyormuş* (Atlı, 1979), presents a notable approach in terms of arrangement. First, the arrangement features romantic-style western symphonic tradition. In the one- and-a-half-minute-long instrumental introduction, solo violin and orchestra including both string and wind sections, perform long ascending melodic lines that develop in modulation and create climax points. Then the climax dissolves to a calmer mood represented by sustained notes on the solo oboe, which is immediately followed by the vocal part. The introduction does not inform the listener about the original text of the song or the sonic environment of the *kürdilihicazkar makam*. In other words, it does not sound eastern at all, because of (1) the existence of the wind section and timpani in the orchestration, (2) theexpressive performance style of the solo violin and strings in the western manner, and (3) the use of functional harmony, which implies tonality. The only link to the *makam* world can be established through some points in the arrangements as a whole, which resemble western-style compositions, especially marches, of the late Ottoman era. Therefore, Mine Koşan's *alaturka* vocal style and the western-style orchestral arrangement create a significant contrast. Moreover, those contradictory elements prevent the emergence of a melting point or synthesis, which would basically be the most desirable outcome of the whole project. After all, Vedat Yıldırımbora accepted that reality in one of our interviews:

> […] We had it [the song] with winds. There were 55 musicians in the orchestra in Bach style. We made an experiment to see how Classical Turkish music would be. Yes, it was artful; but we did not like the work. Then Abdelhalem Novara said that "we would not touch our classics; we rather try to perform it well [in its own terms]; they are untouchable. You should implement them [experiments] in your new compositions''. I personally think that we should not touch the *makam* pieces, which use coma [microtonal] *perde*s. We should

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[15] Vedat Yıldırımbora admitted that the conductor was very upset when he learnt that Mine Koşan would not perform live with the orchestra in Cairo. He was upset because they would lose the musical interaction between soloist and the orchestra, which would have an impact on the musicality of the whole performance. Also, separate recording of the singer is sensible acoustically in a recording that complicates the natural mix of sonic environment presented on the album.

not touch *fasıl*. [We can implement] them in new pieces or others that are suitable. Timur Selçuk listened [to the piece] and said "this is such a difficult task; we all think and do those things, but sometimes we are unable to accomplish them". We have beautiful songs; [...] they should remain as they are. We did not think like that, but we could not do it well. Our predecessors also tried; Adnan Saygun, Muammer Sun, Yalçın Tura, they all tried, but it did not work. I recently began to think that their harmony [of the classics] is [hidden] somewhere else. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013)

What one can understand from this project in musicological terms is that unsuccessful projects or musical experiments stand in history as being as important, or perhaps even more important, than successful ones. Because musicians test their limits, evaluate outcomes with their own aesthetic, and receive audience reaction. Such projects let them exhibit stylistic dead ends that they should avoid in the future. Therefore, this experiment had an impact on Yıldırımbora in the course of his musical journey.[16]

Chronologically, the piece *Bir Kendi Gibi Zalimi Sevmiş Yanıyormuş* is in the middle of two songs that I will be analysing in the following part. At this point, the narrative should go back and forward around five years for each to be able to analyse the musical and extra-musical issues that link the story.

Anlatamıyorum [I Can't Explain]

A little-known song from 1974, *Anlatamıyorum* (İrtel, 1974) features in a unique way. The piece was composed by Altan İrtel, a jazz pianist, who performed piano on the recording. The song is based on Orhan Veli Kanık's poem[17] and sung by Mine Koşan in *Grup Metronom*'s accompaniment. It is a rare example of performers from *makam*,

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[16] It is arguably possible to describe Yıldırımbora as an idealist considering how he acted during his musical journey at certain points. He prioritized musical quality over commercial success or income for many times. Together with his wife Mine Koşan, they spent a substantial amount of money in order to produce some of Koşan's recordings. He also advised his close friends, including Orhan Gencebay, not to release mediocre songs in order to fill their albums or publish an album every year. (Vedat Yıldırımbora, personal communication, 17 May 2013)

[17] An earlier use of Kanık's poem as a song lyric dates back to 1972 on Kerem Güney's album with the same name. This version features an *alaturka* arrangement in *hicaz makam* (See Güney, 1972). Various song writers replaced one word of Kanık's poem with another one, probably to overcome a prosodic problem. Kanık's original line is "Bilmezdim şarkıların bu kadar güzel, kelimelerinse kifayetsiz olduğunu". The word *kifayetsiz* (scant) consists of four syllables, which does not fit İrtel's musical phrase well. Having three syllables, its synonym *yetersiz* (inadequate), although poetically poor, fits the melody better prosodically than "*kifayetsiz*". Moreover, Onno Tunç composed İrtel's version of the poem in 1977 and his song became one of classics of Hümeyra's. (See Tunç, 1977).

classical, and jazz traditions taking part with their own flavours. In comparison to *Bir Teselli Ver*, in which symphony orchestra performers collaborated with Gencebay, *Anlatamıyorum* feature a more eclectic sound with contributions from musicians from diverse stylistic backgrounds. For instance, the piano, flute, and double bass reflect jazz sound. *Bağlama* and percussion ensemble provide the sonic essence of *alaturka* and *arabesk* styles. String section should be considered in two separate parts; the line-up of the ensemble contains performers of both *makam* and western traditions. Presence of two distinctive sections in the string ensemble is justified in the arrangement, in which the *makam* string section plays only a few responsive passages to the vocal line in its own way while its western style counterpart performs high pitched melodies, leaps and harmonic sequences. This way, both string groups show characteristics of their own stylistic features. See Table 1 for the roles played by separate parts in the arrangement.

Table 1. The Arrangement of *Anlatamıyorum*

Timeline / Instruments	0:00-0:28	0:28-1:15	1:15-1:43	1:43-3:05	3:05-3:32	3:32-3:49
Form Progress	Intro.	Stanza	Refrain	Middle Section. Charles Mingus's theme	Refrain	Coda
Strings 1	Bass and treble sections of strings play an antiphonal instrumental intro extracted from the second half of the refrain.	Play antiphonal passages with vocal lines.	Play unison and antiphonal passages with the vocal line.	Play responsive phrases to flute solo. Plays the theme along with the flute and voice on the repeat.	Play unison and antiphonal passages with the vocal line.	Play the phrase "*anlatamıyorum*" of the vocal line repetitively.
Strings 2	-	Play unison and antiphonal passages with the vocal line.	Play unison and antiphonal passages with the vocal line.	-	Play unison and antiphonal passages with the vocal line.	-
Voice	-	Sings the stanza.	Sings the refrain.	Hums the theme on the repeat.	Sings the refrain.	Unmetered solo.
Flute	Joins western strings.	Supports antiphonal strings at several points.	-	Plays the theme solo and along with strings and voice.	-	-
Bass	Plays a plain bass line.	Plays a plain bass line.	Plays a plain bass line.	Plays a syncopated bass line.	Plays a plain bass line.	Plays a plain bass line.
Piano	-	Plays arpeggios and *kanun*-like antiphonal phrases.	Plays arpeggios.	Plays 7th chords, arpeggios, and a glissando in the end.	High arpeggios towards the end of a few vocal phrases.	Plays arpeggios.
Electro- *bağlama*	Added to western strings eventually after flute.	Supports antiphonal strings at several points.	-	-	-	-
Percussions	4/4 *alaturka* rhythmic pattern. (*darbuka* and *zilli tef*)	4/4 *alaturka* rhythmic composition. (*darbuka* and *zilli tef*)	4/4 *alaturka* rhythmic composition. (*darbuka* and *zilli tef*)	Instrument change: *Bongo* and *maracas*.	4/4 *alaturka* rhythmic composition. (*darbuka* and *zilli tef*)	4/4 *alaturka* rhythmic composition continues. (*darbuka* and *zilli tef*)

The piece starts from upper register of the *muhayyer kürdi makam*[18]. Western-style strings introduce the main theme in an antiphonal format, in which the low section plays responsive phrases to the theme carried by the high section [See bars 1-5 from Figure 1]. Strings are also used for block chords [e.g., bar 5]. The flute replaces the high part of the strings in the last phrase of the introductory theme. The percussion ensemble, consisting of *darbuka* and *zilli tef*, plays in *düyek usul* repeatedly throughout the piece except the middle section [See percussion in bar 1 for the metric division of the *usul*], although they are masked in the mix especially in vocal parts. On one hand, the *alaturka* percussion, on the other, western-style strings and flute establish an eclectic sound. Furthermore, the entrance of *electro-bağlama* at the end of the introduction brings a folk essence to the blend. Instrument sections accompany the vocal line in their own way. Strings play a significant role in supporting the vocal line both in unison [e.g., 12-13, 17-18] and antiphonal phrases [e.g., 11, 19]. They also create temporary climax points with accelerating melodic sequences [e.g., Figure 1, 2, bars 14, 24]. Although its contribution to the arrangement is limited, the presence of *bağlama* enriches the eclectic nature of the sound. The piano plays arpeggios and an ornamented melodic phrase in a similar fashion to the *kanun* [19-20], at the end of the stanza. The use of piano in *alaturka* style[19] accentuates the eclecticism of the arrangement.

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[18] The scale of *muhayyer-kürdi makam* resembles the modern Phrygian mode. For a detailed description of it see (Aydemir, 2010). The Phrygian mode appears to be the most frequent mode in popular songs of Mediterranean cultures including the *arabesk* (See also Karahasanoğlu and Skoog, 2009: 66-9; Stokes, 2010; Manuel, 1986).

[19] Although *alaturka* piano style is not very popular in *makam* music, there is a recognized performance style among traditional music circles. It could easily be identified with Feyzi Aslangil's own style, which might be summarized with a plain homophony, *makam* ornaments - imitating *kanun* - and unison melodies two octaves apart (See Aslangil, 2000).

Figure 1. Transcription of *Anlatamıyorum*

Figure 2. Transcription of *Anlatamıyorum*

The middle section [See Figure 3] introduces an unexpected shift in direction. The bass provides a modal and syncopated metric ground that moves the total sound towards a mysterious jazzy environment. The *alaturka* percussion section is now replaced by *bongo* and *maracas* that support this transformation. Afterwards, the flute introduces the main theme of Charles Mingus's "Meditations on Integration"[20]. The timbre of the flute and the chromatic nature of the theme erase the *alaturka* mood immediately, yet the modal centre is retained in the harmonic structure. As the theme develops, the piano and western-style strings expand the register with arpeggios. Mine Koşan hums the theme along with the strings on the repeat. She modifies her voice colour to match the mysterious sound. Therefore, the middle section transforms the piece into an even more

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[20] Although Mingus's name is cited in the album booklet under the composer Altan İrtel's name as "(Mingus)", producers did not specify any piece or recording. Thanks to my colleague Yaprak Melike Uyar who recognized the match between the middle section theme of *Anlatamıyorum* and the introductory theme of "Meditations on Integration" (See Mingus, 1968).

eclectic form. The piece recapitulates the refrain when the climax of the middle section is dissolved. The end features a fadeout, in which Mine Koşan performs a freely metred vocal improvisation.

Figure 3. Transcription of *Anlatamıyorum*

Because of its eclectic nature, *Anlatamıyorum* is an ideal sample to exemplify how the music industry works. The significance of the piece originates in the line-up of the orchestra, namely *Grup Metronom*, which is formed by performers from diverse musical backgrounds. This contradicts the assumption that the alternative modernization of Turkish *makam* music, or *arabesk*, is realized by a homogeneous group of musicians or *arabeskçiler* [*arabesk*ers]. On the contrary, musicians from state symphony and opera orchestras, accomplished jazz and *makam* musicians collaborated in the cultivation of the genre. The diversity in the performer profile manifests the source of the eclecticism. Perhaps this applies to emergence of other popular musical genres as well.

At this point, the narrative will move forward in time more than a decade to demonstrate how this group of musicians continued to involve musical novelties in the *arabesk* genre.

Mutluluk Diye [Diye][21] [For the Sake of Happiness]

In this subsection, I will analyse one of cornerstones of *arabesk* history, namely *Mutluluk Diye Diye*, featured in Mine Koşan's 1981 album *Yakında Geleceğim,* released by the German-based music company *Türküola*[22] (See Sayan, 1987). The album is a product of the golden age of *arabesk* music. Music director Vedat Yıldırımbora and composer Mustafa Sayan cited it during our interviews as one of their best works[23]. Also, studio musicians, who performed in the production of the song or listened to it, refer to the song as one of the unique songs in the history of *arabesk* music. Just like *Anlatamıyorum*, *Mutluluk Diye Diye* may not be Mine Koşan's most famous or commercially successful work, but it has a special place in the memories of the actors who shaped the Turkish music industry. By examining the song stylistically, I aim to discuss the issues relating to canonizing *arabesk* music history, or popular music history in general. In doing this, the focus will be on the perspectives of studio musicians, who themselves constitute an alternative audience, in comparison to the public audience.

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[21] The original name of the track is listed as "*Mutluluk Diye*" in the booklet and digital platforms, but the name of the track should be "Mutluluk Diye Diye" to be able to preserve its grammatical and semantic integrity. Informants used both during our interviews.

[22] The company also bought distribution rights of local companies and Turkish stars in Germany.

[23] Both Vedat Yıldırımbora and Mustafa Sayan claimed their participation in it. Yıldırımbora was the producer, who was also musically active in the process. Sayan's contribution as the composer and music director makes him a primary musical actor. However, Sayan admitted that some of the string performers, especially double bassist Günnur Perin helped him in the arrangement (Sayan, 2021). Therefore, the production of the song was a collaborative work, rather than an individual effort.

Some issues, related to the performance, recording, and mixing of the song complicate the transcription procedure and analysis. Recording of different layers of strings and their performance was not clear, especially in terms of monophony in general; they stayed instead in heterophony in several fast passages, probably unintentionally, which results in the performance sounding out of sync rather than heterophonic. Also, the layers of the string ensemble were unrecognizable to me because of masking. Similarly, the percussion vanishes in the vocal or tutti parts; such instances, where I assume the percussionists continued their cyclic phrasing of the *usul*, are represented only partially in the transcription. Lastly, the sonic environment of the recording is inconsistent. Intensity levels and timbral differences in antiphonal passages are easily audible, especially between the oboe, strings, and electric guitar as well as the canned applause. These discrepancies in performance and recording of the piece create kitsch or even absurd moments in the flow as well as challenges for the transcriber.

One of the unique features of the piece is that it is eleven minutes long, which is twice as long in comparison with the industry standard[24]. This may owe to the influence of Egyptian grand song tradition. *Mutluluk Diye Diye* can be viewed, then, as an outcome of the attempts by these musicians to emulate their Egyptian counterparts in modernizing traditional music. Having said that, the similarity is not, strictly speaking, about duration but the fact that the song displays a multi-sectional form featuring several introductory sections, vocal and instrumental solos, progressive instrumental intersections together with strophic returns.

A further Arabic influence observable in the piece is the use of canned applause in the arrangement three times; at the very beginning, middle, and the end. It brings an imaginary scene in front of the listeners' eyes, just like concert scenes by Umm Kulthum[25]. Active participation of the audience in the performance in Umm Kulthum's concerts by way of applause is part of the *tarab* culture in Egypt (Racy, 2004; Danielson, 1997). The

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[24] The length of pop songs is generally between four and five minutes on account of assumptions and expectations on listening habits of the general audience and production costs.

[25] In her performance of *Enta Omri* [You are my life], the audience first applauds when they recognize the song while Umm Kulthum sits in the orchestra. Then she stands up and comes forward around the end of the instrumental introduction, which triggers the second applause of the audience, a pattern which occurs the same way in the arrangement of *Mutluluk Diye Diye*. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x90p0m6vg94 [accessed on 08.08.2021] for a live performance of Abd al-Wahab's famous song *Enta Omri* performed by Umm Kulthum.

audience reaches ecstasy with the musical climax created mostly by the diva of the Arab song. The applause frequently disrupts the performance and performers repeat many of the musical sections several times, thus extending the total duration of the songs. Vedat Yıldırımbora, Mustafa Sayan and Mine Koşan were all fans of Umm Kulthum and Egyptian music. They spent substantial time there collaborating with state orchestras and giving concerts of Umm Kulthum's songs. Therefore, they had experience of the kind of sophisticated participation of Egyptian audiences in their performances. In my opinion, they intended to mimic such a scene in the recording of *Mutluluk Diye Diye* in aural experience.

The lyrics[26] are in harmony with traditional *aşık* poetry as they feature an appropriate poetic metre and rhyme scheme[27]. To understand the poetic structure of the lyrics one has to reorder the verses. The vocal intro is made of a couplet; but there is no following couplet in the rest of the piece. Also, although it is thematically related to the following text, it technically stands for itself by having 14 syllables per line [See Table 2]. The *Zemin* section and its second verse consist of two quatrains having both semantic and technical unity. They feature 12 syllables per line and a consecutive rhyme scheme [bbbc+eeeb], which is probably the most common poetic genre, known as *koşma* in *aşık* poetry. The lyrics in the *meyan* part have a similar unity for themselves and feature a *koşma* in a consistent rhyme scheme [bbbd+bbbb] and 11 syllables per line. The *nakarat* [chorus], on the other hand, forms a *mani*, a genre in folk poetry. Although the shape of the lyrics is rooted in tradition, they also feature an urban, contemporary lexicon and an overtly expressive rhetoric, which form a variant in the tradition.

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[26] The piece is about a man's suffering after being left by his lover.
[27] See table 2 for poetic structure of the lyrics.

Table 2. Relationship Between the Poetic Structure and Musical Form

Vocal lines (syllables per line)	Rhyme scheme	Bar(s) reference to the transcription	Musical and Poetic form
-		1-24	Instrumental intro 1
-		25	Violin solo
-		26-48	Instrumental intro 2
Kaderime kızmazdım, yanımda sen olsaydın (14) *Ağlatmazdı hasretin, bir ümit bıraksaydın* (14)	a a	49	Vocal intro
-		50-51	Instrumental sequence
Alıp başımı bir gün bur[a]dan giderim (12) *Nedense güldürmedi beni kaderim* (12) *Mutluluktan neşeden yoktur haberim* (12) *Hayatım bir düzene girmedi gitti* (12)	b b b c	52-59 [60-67 repeat]	*Zemin*
-		68-71	Instrumental interlude 1
Gör beni, baktığın her yerde varım (11) *Duy beni, söylenen her sözde varım* (11) *Terk edip gittiğin o günden beri* (11) *Yanıp da kül olan ateşte varım* (11) *Adını gözyaşımla yazar dururum* (12) *Maziye her bakışta mahzun olurum* (12) *Mutluluk diye diye toprak olurum* (12) *Mutluluk diye diye hep kahrolurum* (12)	b b d b b b b b	72-96	*Meyan*
El verdim, elden oldum (7) *Söz ettim, dilden oldum* (7) *Çok sevdim (çok) senden oldum* (7)	b b b	97-108	*Nakarat*
-		109-126	Instrumental interlude 2 [*ara nağme*]
Yarından ümidimi çalanlar olur (12) *Beni çaresizliğe salanlar olur* (12) *Zaten nerde dert varsa hep beni bulur* (12) *Hayatım bir düzene girmedi gitti* (12)	e e e c	52-67 [2nd verse]	*Zemin* [2nd verse]

The piece starts with an instrumental intro in a relatively tranquil tempo, which uses the same theme as the *nakarat* [See bars 1-24 from Figure 4]. The intro is performed by strings at the beginning with the accompaniment of electric guitar, which rings sustained chords with a wah-wah pedal of C, Bb and Gm at the end of the phrases. This combination of oriental strings and guitar demonstrates an eclectic arrangement even from the start.

Accelerating the tempo from 55 to 78, the introductory theme is repeated several times with participation of the humming of the choir and oboe. The string parts feature contrapuntal phrasing at parallel thirds and sixths [e.g., bars 7-10], contrary motion [bars 11-12], and variations of the main theme in contrapuntal fashion [bars 19-22]. The instrumental intro 1 leads to a freely metred violin solo.

Mutluluk Diye Diye

Figure 4. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The violin solo is performed by composer Mustafa Sayan, one of the most important actors in *arabesk* music in several respects. He composed some notable pieces in the history of *arabesk* music and other popular *makam* music genres including *Tanrı İstemezse* (Gürses, 1998), *Ölüyorum Kederimden* (Sayan, 1991), and *Seni Yakacaklar* (Sayan, 2015). Sayan was a leading figure in the foundation of Turkish string ensembles and development of the solo and ensemble style and sound. His solo in this piece moves around an extended *kürdi* scale on a drone played by the string ensemble. He uses extensive ornamentation during the solo, which mediate between Turkish and Arab traditions as well as Romani styles[28]. His musical phrases are centred around the *karar* [la] and *güçlü* [re] *perdesi* of the *kürdi* scale organized into even melodic fragments, illustrating the *makam* scale in a compact way. [See Figure 5]

Figure 5. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The next section, here labelled "instrumental intro 2", features a change in mode and meter. Although the change in the metre is easily graspable as a shift from 4/4 to 3/8 or 6/8, the modal change realized by the oboe in the first half of this section [bars between 26 and 33] requires special attention. It is possible to explain the modal development from the perspectives of western and *makam* theory. In neither case, the scale fully corresponds to a commonly recognized formula [See Figure 6].

Figure 6. The Scale used in "instrumental intro 2"

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[28] Mustafa Sayan's stylistic legacy is influential among his successors. Although very important, it is outside the scope of this paper.

While from a western perspective, it resembles a combination of a partial hexatonic blues scale in the lower end and a harmonic tetrachord in the upper end, according to *makam* theory, it is a *kürdi* scale with a raised fourth and seventh degrees [or *hicaz* tetrachord on mi, *güçlü*]. Neither of these theorizations provides a complete explanation; however, given the hybrid character of the piece, mediating between the two theories seems logical. The second half of the "instrumental intro 2" is composed of a multi-layered melodic sequence performed by the strings and oboe with a typical alteration of the 6th degree of *kürdi* scale in an ascending contour. [See Figure 7]

Figure 7. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

"Vocal introduction" presents a striking moment in the performance. Here, Mine Koşan performs a virtuosic improvisation in her characteristic raspy alto voice alternating between two modal fragments [See Figure 8, Figure 9]. In the first half of the couplet, she moves around a *saba zemzeme* tetrachord, which is a common alteration of the *kürdi makam* in the *bozlak* tradition. She uses the mode, presented already in the previous section, in a different fashion, which prioritizes the melodic progression without a pentatonic feeling in the second half of the couplet. The way she vocalizes the phrase also corresponds with the *bozlak* style, which adds another dimension to the hybrid character of the piece.

Figure 8. Two Scales from Koşan's Vocal Introduction

Figure 9. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The *zemin* follows a short instrumental sequence, which introduces the new tempo and metre as well as announcing the return of the *kürdi* scale. Here, the vocal line introduces a new theme with the accompaniment of the full string section in unison, which creates a "big and soft"[29] sound. The string part here features sustained notes or short drones and simplified motives in contrast to the ornamented and syncopated vocalization of Mine Koşan, which establish a heterophony between the strings and voice [See bars 50-59 from Figure 10]. Strings also link sections together via antiphonal or responsive phrases in order to maintain melodic flow. Similarly, the choir repeats the quatrain with a plain

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[29] Orhan Gencebay considers strings ("big and soft" in their nature) as one of the most significant components of his musical style. To him, strings are one of the most convenient ways to modernize Turkish Music with their big and soft character, as westerners and Arabs did. Gencebay's aesthetic view on the string ensemble can be understood by looking at the "big and soft" concept (Orhan Gencebay, personal communication, 17 April 2014). Apart from Gencebay, many of the informants agreed upon the idea that Turkish *makam* music deserves a glorious nature in performance. It is possible to see its reflection on the persona of the actors, especially Gencebay, who has a calmly self-assured character and realized a significant portion of his "affectionate modernism" (Stokes, 2010) through the "big and soft" string ensemble.

vocalization, while the lead singer skilfully improvises around the melody sung by the choir.

Figure 10. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

A short melodic bridge by the strings and oboe sets the scene for the *meyan*. The vocal carries the melodic flow to a climax gradually via an ascending and well-ornamented melodic movement. The string accompaniment continues to support the vocal line in the same fashion as in the previous section. The last theme in the *meyan* section resolves the tension owing to its descending character, a feature frequently found in the *şarkı* form. [See Figure 11]

Figure 11. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The *nakarat* is voiced with the catchy theme introduced in the first instrumental introduction. On the second repeat, Mine Koşan recites the lyrics of the *nakarat* in a wailing voice, creating a highly sentimental mood. Commonly used among many *arabesk* singers, this kind of vocalization dramatizes the musical text at times via overt exaggeration, which critics of *arabesk* music viewed as emotional exploitation, resulting in its becoming a significant focus of criticism in the reception of *arabesk* music. As the *nakarat* section repeats itself, the string arrangement of the first section, which features parallel polyphonic motions and variations, is duplicated arguably as an alternative to unison accompaniment. [See Figure 12]

Figure 12. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The next section, entitled in Table 2 as an instrumental interlude or *aranağme*, appears when the vocal section completes the parts of *zemin*, *meyan*, and *nakarat*, at a halfway point for the vocals. The character of *aranağme* is developed around a progressive melody, distributed among different instruments [See bars 109-126 from Figure 13]. In this sense, the *aranağme* could be labeled as a parade of instruments, in which each voice ornaments the melody in its own way or add stylistically suitable melodic phrases to the on-going dialogue. At first, *kanun* performs an embellished melody with the support of strings at the end [109-110] and the *ney* responds by leading the melody to the *karar* in the Arabic style, reinforced by the strings [111-112]. Afterwards, the strings play the same melody in unison with the *kanun* before passing it back to the *ney* [113-116]. Electric guitar and strings share a distant variation of the same theme in antiphony [117-

118]. Again, similarly, the strings and the oboe produce another variation on the theme [119-120] after which the solo violin performs a free-flowing descent in an ornamented fashion towards the *karar,* supported by the strings [121-124]. At the end of the *aranağme*, the strings prepare for the second verse with their persistent semiquaver pulsations on the *karar perde* [125-129].

Figure 13. Transcription of *Mutluluk Diye*

The piece displays a hybrid nature in certain respects. The question is how does it stand in relation to the tradition and how modern is it in the light of this analysis, and what is the function of the string ensemble in this discourse? Firstly, the piece is made up of traditional elements as seen, among others, in its use of *makam*, local instruments, the *şarkı* form, lyrics in the form of *aşık* poetry, and *bozlak* style vocalizations. The influence it draws from Egyptian music is evident in many respects including its duration, display of extended *şarkı* form with additional instrumental sections, Arabic-style solo violin and *ney* performances, use of canned applause, featuring of a percussion ensemble, and arguably the presence of a string ensemble. Western elements, either directly borrowed from the west or appropriated indirectly through Egyptians, appear as a significant component of the sound. These include the use of western instruments such as the guitar, oboe, and the string section, polyphonic voicing of the strings, and pentatonic melodic gestures [perhaps deriving from the blues]. Therefore, the piece stands out as a modern interpretation of traditional musical elements, exposed to exterior influences. The production process and the end product may not be as sophisticated or western-oriented as some elites would like, yet it still presents an alternative in the popular music scene. On the other hand, the string ensemble is the most consistent and indispensable section of the arrangement and therefore has a central role in the total performance; it plays main themes, antiphonal passages, sequences, responsive phrases, unison and polyphonic accompaniments to vocal and instrumental lines. Moreover, it provides a "big and soft" sonic environment, which sets the aesthetic orientation of this kind of modern arrangement. On the other hand, the polyphonic arrangement of the string ensemble was a genuine innovation in the *arabesk* music scene, although the texture of the strings was not sophisticated in modern compositional terms, being mostly in parallel or contrary motion without a harmonic progression; yet it was a novel experiment for those who had limited experience in western polyphony.

The piece has a special place in memories of musicians in the field and deserves appreciation for high-quality performance of the participating musicians. But it had a limited impact on the mainstream audience and a little recognition in the reception of *arabesk* music unlike many songs produced by the same group of musicians[30]. So, why

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[30] We do not possess solid statistical data about sale rates of the album or song, except its relatively low listening rates on the digital platforms, unlike another song, *Yakında Geleceğim*, from the same album. Relying on my insight from the field I assume that the song did not become a hit.

could this attempt not have an impact on the transformation of the mainstream music scene and become a usual one in Turkish *arabesk* music?

The song presents a unique blend of traditional and modern elements, but arguably does not match the preferences of Turkish audiences. Rather, it might be interpreted as an experimental project in a commercial product. Therefore, *Mutluluk Diye [Diye]* could have received well by the professionals in the music industry. The piece may not have moved the audience, but it had an impact on the actors who shaped the scene. One can develop an alternative canon which prioritizes acts of professionals over commercial success. Musicians, who have arguably sophisticated musical tastes, are also part of the audience. Their impact on the reception of popular songs might be limited, but their active participation in the network of the music industry multiplies their impact. Therefore, their reception should be considered carefully, especially as to the stylistic development of popular music genres.

Conclusion

One of the findings of this paper is the fact that *arabesk* music was cultivated by musicians with diverse backgrounds. As explained in previous parts, *Grup Metronom* hosted musicians from symphony and opera orchestras, jazz, and *makam* tradition. Furthermore, it brought some key musicians into the Turkish music industry; two Romani violin players, Mustafa Sayan and Mehmet Şenyaylar became the leaders in string ensembles and played very important roles in the music industry for more than two decades.

As exemplified in the musical analyses, Turkish *arabesk* music has an eclectic character demonstrated in the arrangements, lyrics, and musical performance. However, the elements of eclecticism vary. This paper elaborated some of the features which could be found among other performances, such as line-up of the orchestra, use of *makam*, antiphonal structure, multi-sectional form, or foreign influences. However, there is still need for further studies to illuminate limits of stylistic features in *arabesk* music.

Another significant point visited in this paper is the value of unsuccessful experiments. The audience is considered as an active participant of the musical production in popular music studies; their choices affect the visions of the actors, who design the sound. This

perspective is generally used for validation of successful products. Yet, poorly received songs might inform actors in the production chain about the failure of a musical experiment, which should be avoided or redesigned in the next experiment. Therefore, setbacks could be considered as valuable as success in music business. However, - as became apparent in our case - a commercial failure might also be perceived as a cult recording by studio musicians; for whom some of the musical achievements in those products could be reshaped or reinterpreted in the future. In other words, sometimes, musical novelties emerge from unsuccessful experiments.

Our understanding of a musical genre, e.g., *arabesk*, should be fed from a set of stylistic diversity and field data. Focusing on *Grup Metronom*'s activities, this investigation presents an alternative and articulates to the existing inquiries. Yet this narrative neither fully comprehends *Grup Metronom's* musical activities nor fills the gap in *arabesk* literature. *Arabesk*, being a mainstream popular music genre in Turkey for decades with contribution of many actors, creation of subgenres, and its atomization into other musical genres, deserves attention.

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