AHMET ADNAN SAYGUN'S VIOLA CONCERTO OP. 59 AND MOTIVIC ANALYSIS OF THE 1ST MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The viola repertoire is limited comparing to the violin repertoire in Classical Western Music. The viola gained significant importance as a virtuoso instrument after the 20th century. World renowned composers such as Bela Bartok, Paul Hindemith, and William Walton composed high level concertos for the solo viola which have a certain level of virtuosity. While foreign composers were composing works for viola, Turkish composers such as Ahmed Adnan Saygun, Necil Kazim Akses, Yalcin Tura, Ertugrul Oguz Firat also composed concertos for viola. These Turkish composers frequently used folk elements in their compositions. This article focuses on how Ahmed Adnan Saygun applied these traditional folk elements in his viola concerto.

Keywords: Ahmed Adnan Saygun, Viola Concerto First Movement, Turkish Folk Music, Viola.

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AHMED ADNAN SAYGUN'UN OP. 59 VİYOLA KONÇERTOSU VE MOTİFSEL ANALİZİ

ÖZET

Viyola virtüöz bir enstrüman olarak 20. Yüzyıl sonrasında önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Dünyaca ün kazanmış Bela Bartok, Paul Hindemith ve Willam Walton gibi besteciler viyola için virtüözlük seviyesi yüksek, üst düzeyde teknik seviyesi olan konçertolar bestelemişlerdir. Batılı besteciler viyola için önemli eserler bestelerken Ahmed Adnan Saygun, Necil Kazım Akses, Yalçın Tura, Ertuğrul Oğuz Fırat gibi Türk bestecileri de viyola için özellikle Türk halk müziği temaları kullanarak değerli eserler bestelemişlerdir. Bu makalede Ahmed Adnan Saygun'un halk müziği unsurlarını, bestelediği viyola konçertosunda nasıl kullandığı incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ahmed Adnan Saygun, Viyola Konçertosu'nun Birinci Bölümü, Türk Halk Müziği, Viyola.

INTRODUCTION

Ahmed Adnan Saygun and the Viola Concerto

The rapid dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the consequent establishment of the new Turkish Republic in 1923 led to many sets of cultural, political, social and legal reformations. One such government-based cultural reformation was in the field of music. The government provided scholarships for select, talented students to further their education in Europe. One such student was Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1907 – 1991), he travelled to Paris where he got the opportunity to study composition with Vincent d`Indy. His return to Turkey from Paris, coincided with a new era in Europe where ethnomusicology was becoming an increasingly important influence. The new musical ideas presented by ethnomusicology attracted Saygun`s attention and influenced his works. Saygun began using elements of folk in his music much like Hungarian composer Bela Bartok, with whom he later became friends during Bartok`s ethnomusicological trip to Turkey in 1936. Saygun accompanied Bartok throughout the trip where they developed and shared new ideas about the music.

Saygun as a composer was ideologically very important for the young Turkish Republic. As a newly established state, the Turkish government was supporting westernization of all areas of the arts. Along with a few other young Turkish composers such as Ulvi Cemal Erkin, and Necil

Kazim Akses, Saygun was one of the leading figures who were trained in western music. These composers and the younger generation Turkish composers gave priority on composing works which contain traditional Turkish elements. By the end of the 20th century, the repertoire that were composed by Turkish composers expanded widely. Some of these Turkish composers composed concertos for viola as well. The chart below (Figure 1), shows us the viola concertos which were composed before 1990 by Turkish composers (Ece, 2002, 97).

Besteci	Eser
Ahmet Adnan Saygun	Viyola Konçertosu. Op:59, 1977

Nuri Sami Koral	Viyola Konçertosu, 1943
Ertuğrul Oğuz Fırat	Viyola Konçertosu No:1 Kaynak Sonunu Bekliyordu Op:28, 1967 (1975) Viyola Konçertosu No:2 Kanıtsız Günlerin Oldusu, Op. 35, 1968
Necil Kazım Akses	Viyola Konçertosu, 1977
Yalçın Tura	Viyola Konçertosu, 1997
Cengiz Tanç	Viyola Konçertosu, 1987
Necati Gedikli	Viyola Konçertosu Op: 12, 1972

Figure 1. Table of Viola Concertos before 1990 by Turkish Composers

Much like his contemporaries, Saygun's significance was apparent in his incorporation of the characteristic elements of Turkish folk music into western compositional styles. In fact all of his works contain these elements. The purpose of this paper is to focus on folkloric aspects such as motives, instrumental techniques which are applied to the first movement of the concerto. Another goal is to bring out the western compositional elements that are used by Saygun.

Saygun composed the op. 59 Viola Concerto, which comprises three movements, in 1977 for the Turkish violist Rusen Gunes who served as the principal of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Saygun used a common orchestral setting with the following instruments: Violin I-II, Viola, Cello and Bass, 2 Flutes, 2 Oboes and English Horn, 2 Bb clarinet, 2 Bassoon, 4 F Horn, 3 C Trumpet, 3 Trombone,

Celesta, Harp, and Percussions such as Timpani, Cymbals, and the Marimba. The only unique instrument is the Middle Eastern percussion instrument darbuka.

METHOD

The model of the research

This article was written in the qualitative research technique. Analysis of the musical materials and analysis of the content was used as the analytical method.

Collection of the Materials

The materials that was used in the analysis of the motivic and structural analysis of the composition were the manuscript of the work, the recordings of the concerto, and recordings of the Turkish folk music.

In order to analyze the score as reliable as possible, I obtained the scanned images of manuscript from the Saygun Museum in Bilkent, Ankara. I also found the recording of Rusen Gunes as the solo performer of the concerto. The recordings of Asik Veysel and Arif Sag was used as well, in order to analyse the traditional folk materials.

Interpretation and the Analysis of the Materials

The materials were analyzed with the content analysis method. The main process was the identification of the folk materials and the use of these materials in a common structural form of Western Classical Music.

These materials and findings were approved by a performer and professor viola from New York and an ethnomusicology professor from State University of New York in order to verify the reliability of the materials and findings.

FINDINGS

The Form and the Structure of the Movement

The work has a structure of A-B-$A^{1/2}$ with a Coda at the end. This structural aspect of the work projects Saygun`s multi-cultural influences. Saygun used folk materials formotivic purposes. On the other hand he applied traditional forms of the western classical music in the concerto as well. The opening section until the rehearsal number 8 serves as an Exposition. All of the essential motives are given until the end of this opening section.

The development section starts 8 measures after rehearsal number 8 as it is shown in the chart below. Although this section is developmental, some of its features appear even before the development section. The next section, the recapitulation, starts at 7 after rehersal number 20. And the final section is the coda which begins at no. 28. Figure 2 is a short graphic demonstrating the sections.

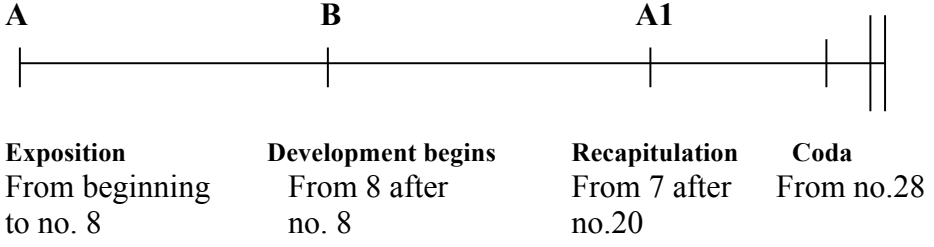


Figure 2. A graphic demonstration of the sections in the first movement.

Figure 3 shows the first five measures of the opening. (Figure 3). This opening section is important because the main motivic materials are given in these opening five bars. We observe P4ths in the strings and P5ths both on flute and trumpet parts. P5ths and P4ths are known as consonant intervals but when they used together they create dissonance. Opening measures in Figure 1 shows us this dissonance created by the combination of these two perfect intervals.
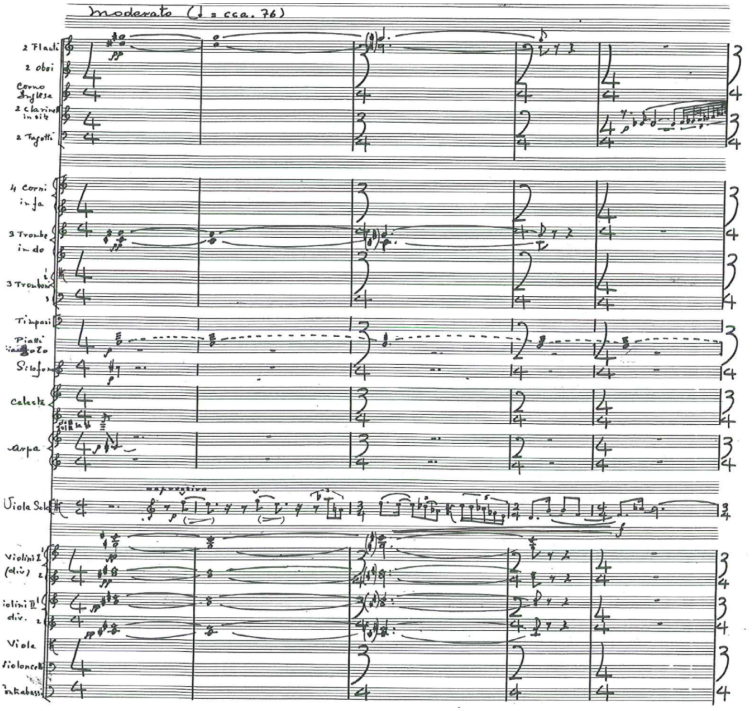


Figure 3. Opening section of the first movement. P5ths on Flute and Trumpet parts, P4ths on Strings.

The development is significant because of the use of the soloist's music and the instrumentation. First of all, Saygun gives a motive to the viola similar to the opening orchestral motive but in a developed form. As shown in the example below, the viola soloist's phrase contains the same rhythmic values as the opening motive but different intervals and direction. Another different aspect is the accompaniment. The P4th and P5th intervals are given in lower wind instruments such as the 2nd clarinet, 2 bassoons, and 4 horns which is different from the opening where this accompaniment is played by the strings. This kind of change in the instrumentation is typical in traditional sonata form. (Figure 4)

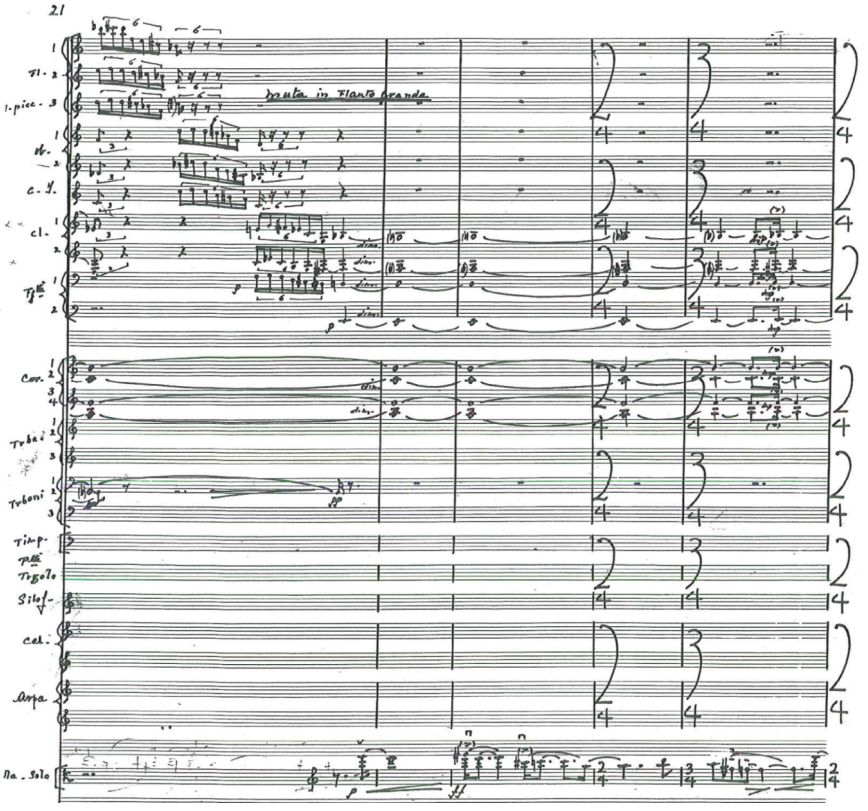


Figure 4. 8th bar after rehearsal number 8.

The recapitulation begins in a way typical of a recapitulation section. The first phrase is similar to that of the opening section but is given an octave higher. The viola plays this cadenza-like phrase in the beginning of the recapitulation alone for a brief period of time. The recapitulation does not appear completely traditional in terms of the form with the appearance of cadenza-like solo viola line. On the other hand, recapitulation of the opening phrase is formally typical in traditional sonata form. As Figure 5 shows, the orchestra does not accompany the viola, and the viola plays the main motive an octave higher in terms of register. This small solo section projects the nature of a free style of improvisatory baglama playing. Often in baglama performances, players reach higher registers of baglama to display

mourning. The viola cadenza has a similar elegy-like character with the higher register and forte dynamic. After the viola's solo, the wind section replies and this dialogue between solo viola and the winds continues for a short period.
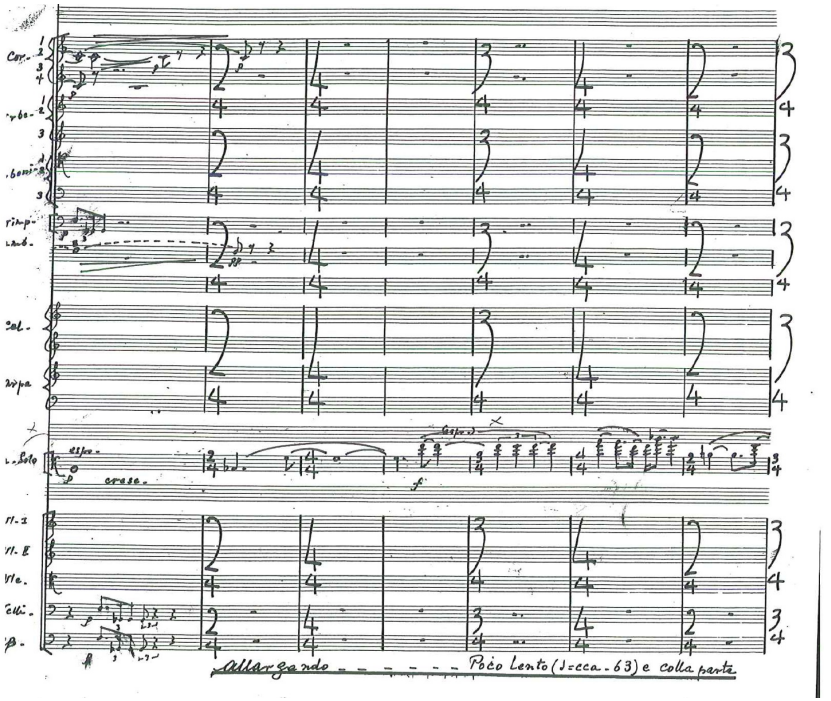


Figure 5. 8th and 14th measures after rehearsal number 20.

The last section is the coda which begins at rehearsal number 28. The beginning of coda is very different from the other sections, which begins with a figure completely different than the main motive. See Figure 6 for the beginning of the coda.
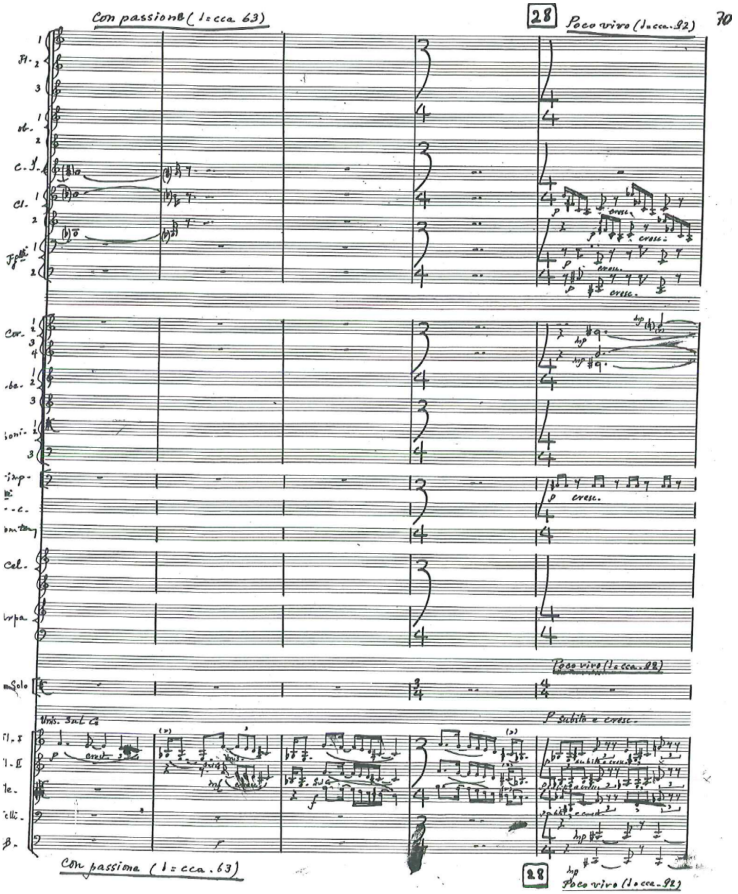


Figure 6. Beginning of Coda

The Motivic Language of the Movement

The folk materials are fundamental to the concerto. The smallest motive which is used at the beginning of the concerto appears often not only in the first movement but also in the other two movements. The main motivic material is a

figure that is very common in Turkish folk music. (Figure 7[2]) Performers of the traditional Turkish instrument Baglama apply similar motives to their performances, they use these figures as improvisatory ornaments rather than as part of the main motive (Figure 7b[3])

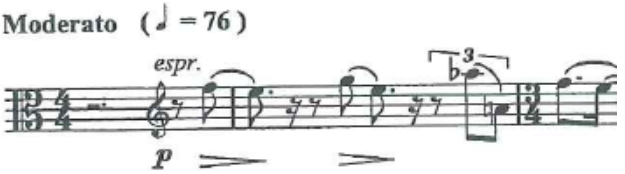


Figure 7. Main Motive in opening measures in solo viola line
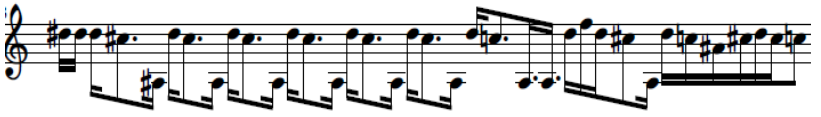


Figure 7b. The transcription of improvisatory baglama performance by Arif Sag

Within the main motive of the concerto, the first note serves like an appoggiatura which resolves to an E. The next note G serves a function similar to the F and again resolves to the E. This appoggiatura figure[4] is the one that is used and developed throughout the movement. Saygun develops the main motive by reversing the direction and augmenting its duration. In this way he gives some distance between the first and the second note of the motive. The main motive is realised also through the rhythm. As shown in Figure 8, the rhythmic figure of two

[2] The most reliable recording of the concerto was recorded by Turkish violist Rusen Gunes with London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Turkish conductor Gurer Aykal.
[3] Arif Sag is a famous Turkish folk music singer and consider as one of the most virtuoso baglama player. The Figure 8 is the transcription of his improvisatory introduction to a Turkish folk song called Deli Gonul.
[4] Check figure 7. The main motive is F-E and G-E figures in the first two measures.

eights separated by a rest established a rhythmic motive that recurs and acts independently of the pitch contour features of the main motive (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Viola line at rehearsal number 2

Rhythmic and intervallic aspects of the motive are developed in different ways, such as rhythmic augmentation, intervallic alterations. As seen in Figure 9, triplet figures are used in the viola line. This triplet figure is actually a very characteristic ornamented motive in Turkish folk music; traditional baglama players utilize similar rhythms during their improvisation. Through the triplet Saygun adds one of the most important and characteristic performance options of traditional baglama playing into the viola line.

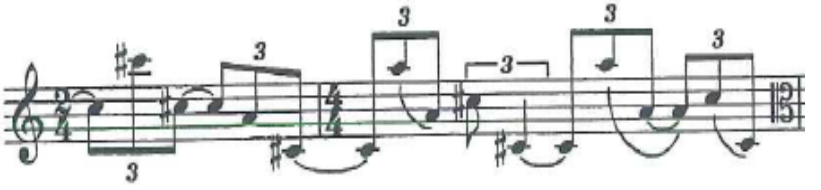


Figure 9. Second bar of rehearsal number 3

In the opening of the piece Saygun used double stops within the main motive which is played by the viola solo to create a dissonant/consonant effect with the intervals. This dissonant and consonant effect can be seen in Figure 10. The eighth-note figure is taken from the opening motive and changed as shown in the Poco Largo measure.
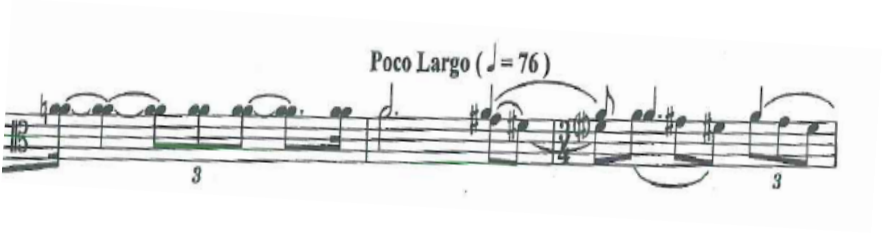


Figure 10. 6 bars after rehearsal number 10

Another element that is used in the movement are the tetracords, which are used not only in Turkish folk music but also in Eastern European folk music. Tetracords often serve as the essential modal aspect in Turkish folk songs. Baglama players often use these tetrachords as motivic fragments to improvise their performances. Saygun`s decision to use tetrachords was not coincidental, but the influence of Bartok who applied these folkloric elements to his works.

Saygun knew that use of tetrachords were essential to the development of his Turkish-influenced style. In this concerto Saygun uses tetracords as a way to develop the main motivic material shown above in Figure 7a. Figure 11 shows an instance of Saygun's use of tetrachords.



Figure 11. 4th bar after rehearsal number 3

The other element is the use of P4th and P5th intervals which are very common in folk music. As an example, baglama players play P4th or P5th double stops to create a harmonic foundation under the melody. The use of consonant intervals, helps establishing the tonal centers in the Turkish folk music, which adresses mostly the tonic and dominant of the key. We can observe this as a common technique in traditional baglama performance. Saygun uses consonant

intervals along with the dissonant intervals, a feature he borrows from Turkish folk music. This compositional style can be found in his solo or orchestral works. Figure 12, shows an example from the opening measures of the Viola Concerto where consonant intervals are played by strings as an accompaniment.

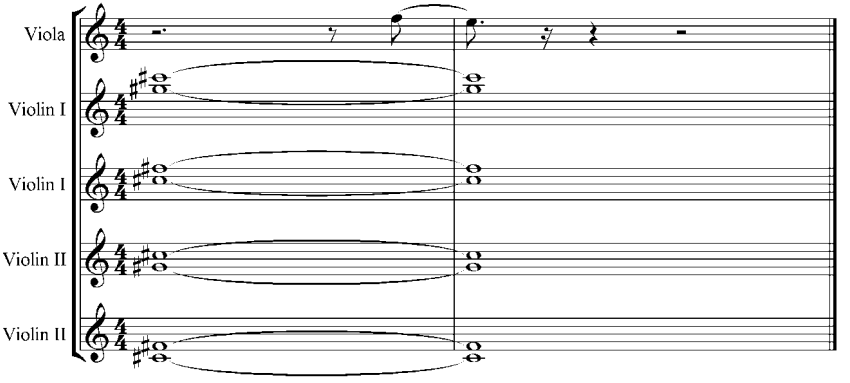


Figure 12. Consonant intervals in opening measure

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The analysis shows us that Saygun's compositional practice included the incorporation of characteristic elements of Turkish folk music into western compositional techniques and this concerto is an obvious example of his compositional style. As it is observed in the first movement, most of the ideas that Saygun uses have a relation with the baglama technique. On the other hand, there is a big difference between viola and baglama. Baglama is a plucked string instrument and viola is a bowed string instrument which brings different technical conditions such as the use of double stops, perfect intervals or dissonances, and fast moving passages. Saygun was certainly aware of the difference between these two instruments. Saygun also adopted the tonal quality of the baglama rather than a direct use of the baglama techniques. It is essential for a performer to do research on Turkish folk music and baglama performance techniques in order to understand the characteristics of the composition. Otherwise the performer will miss the most critical aspects about the work and might even perform in a completely different style due to the lack of information.

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