

**A TOPIC IN PROFESSIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION: SEVEN NAMES, SEVEN APPROACHES IN THE JOURNEY OF POLYPHONY IN TURKISH MUSIC**

**UM TEMA NA EDUCAÇÃO MUSICAL PROFISSIONAL: SETE NOMES, SETE ABORDAGENS NA TRAJETÓRIA DA POLIFONIA NA MÚSICA TURCA**

**UN TEMA EN LA EDUCACIÓN MUSICAL PROFESIONAL: SIETE NOMBRES, SIETE ENFOQUES EN LA TRAYECTORIA DE LA POLIFONÍA EN LA MÚSICA TURCA**



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**ABSTRACT:** It is known that polyphony in Turkish music has a history of approximately 200 years. In this study, the approaches and works of Ahmet Samim Bilgen, Ergüder Yoldaş, Hüseyin Sadettin Arel, İbrahim Selman Coşgun, Kemal İlerici, Veysel Arseven, and Yalçın Tura who have shaped and contributed to the development of polyphonic Turkish music are examined. It is considered that this study can serve as an educational material and a resource in the field of professional music education in particular, and for research on polyphony in general. In this qualitative and descriptive study, the content analysis technique was employed. The polyphony approaches of seven music scholars in Turkish music were examined in detail together with examples from their works. In addition, various suggestions and discussions related to professional music education were included, and implications for the educational practices of polyphonic Turkish music were presented.

**KEYWORDS:** Music education. Polyphony in Turkish music. Approach. Composer. Educator.

**RESUMO:** *Sabe-se que a polifonia na música turca possui uma história de aproximadamente 200 anos. Neste estudo, são examinadas as abordagens e obras de Ahmet Samim Bilgen, Ergüder Yoldaş, Hüseyin Sadettin Arel, İbrahim Selman Coşgun, Kemal İlerici, Veysel Arseven e Yalçın Tura, que moldaram e contribuíram para o desenvolvimento da música turca polifônica. Considera-se que este estudo pode servir como material didático e como recurso, especialmente no campo da educação musical profissional, bem como para pesquisas sobre polifonia em geral. Neste estudo qualitativo e descritivo, foi empregada a técnica de análise de conteúdo. As abordagens de polifonia de sete estudiosos da música turca foram analisadas em detalhe, juntamente com exemplos de suas obras. Além disso, foram incluídas diversas sugestões e discussões relacionadas à educação musical profissional, e foram apresentadas implicações para as práticas educativas da música turca polifônica.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Educação musical. Polifonia na música turca. Abordagem. Compositor. Educador.*

**RESUMEN:** *Se sabe que la polifonía en la música turca tiene una historia de aproximadamente 200 años. En este estudio se examinan los enfoques y las obras de Ahmet Samim Bilgen, Ergüder Yoldaş, Hüseyin Sadettin Arel, İbrahim Selman Coşgun, Kemal İlerici, Veysel Arseven y Yalçın Tura, quienes han moldeado y contribuido al desarrollo de la música turca polifónica. Se considera que este estudio puede servir como material educativo y como recurso, especialmente en el ámbito de la educación musical profesional, así como para investigaciones sobre la polifonía en general. En este estudio cualitativo y descriptivo se empleó la técnica de análisis de contenido. Los enfoques de la polifonía de siete estudiosos de la música turca fueron analizados en detalle junto con ejemplos de sus obras. Además, se incluyeron diversas sugerencias y discusiones relacionadas con la educación musical profesional, y se presentaron implicaciones para las prácticas educativas de la música turca polifónica.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación musical. Polifonía en la música turca. Enfoque. Compositor. Educador.*

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## INTRODUCTION

With its unique melodic and rhythmic structure, Turkish music holds a distinct place and significance apart from other national musical traditions, having undergone various changes and transformations from past to present. In our music characterized by elements such as monophony, tradition, anonymity, irregular rhythms, modal systems (Makam), and microtonal intervals fundamental changes and transformations undoubtedly took place in the last two centuries. As in social life, politics, the economy, education, and health in short, in every aspect of life the new and original orientations observed in music were sometimes quickly embraced, while at other times met with strong resistance.

Music is not limited to its artistic and entertainment dimensions; it plays roles in nearly every sphere that concerns society, most notably education, but also the economy, culture, and individual lives. For this reason, both acceptance and resistance have been natural. Every stakeholder of Turkish music, its composers, educators, performers, listeners, and researchers has expressed opinions, sometimes aligning with one side, sometimes proposing their own theories and approaches.

While this process was more limited in scope before the Republican era, with the founding of the Republic it expanded beyond national borders. This was made possible by sending young people abroad for education, inviting prominent musicians to Turkey, and, most importantly, further institutionalizing both professional and general music education.

In this study, composers and educators who put forward “approaches” regarding polyphony, one of the first elements to come to mind when speaking of change in Turkish music are examined. To this end, the study first discusses the relevant concepts considered to be within its scope, and then presents seven distinct approaches in detail in the findings section.

### *Music in Turkey*

Turkish folk music, Turkish art music, contemporary Turkish music, religious music, popular music, and military music stand out as the most recognized musical genres in Turkey. These genres feature in general, amateur, and professional music education and assume roles in nearly every area of daily life.

## Turkish Folk Music

Turkish folk music evokes associations with anonymity, performance style, regional characteristics, and ethnicity. Once centered in villages and later spread to cities through migration, this tradition has long been shaped by the influence and significant roles of âşık (minstrels) and poets. With the advent of radio and television, and changes in the broader culture industry, performance practices within folk music also evolved.

According to Duygulu (2014):

When moving across the country from the center to the periphery that is, from cities and towns to villages it is evident that local cultural life still continues with great vitality. This way of life, shaped by various ethnic groups within their own social systems, also carries characteristics that vary depending on the historical and cultural nature of the community. (p. 7–8)

**Figure 1.**

*Example of Turkish folk music*

TRT MÜZİK DAİRESİ YAYINLARI  
THM REPERTUAR SIRA No: 944  
İNCELEME TARİHİ : 10 - 2 - 1975

YÖRESİ  
KE SKİN

KİMDEN ALINDIĞI  
SALMAN ve HACI TAŞAN

SÜRESİ :

ALLI DURNAM BİZİM ELE VARIRSAN

DERLEYEN  
M. SARISÖZEN

DERLEME TARİHİ

NOTAYA ALAN  
M. SARISÖZEN

AL LI DUR NAM Bİ ZİM E LE VA RİR  
AL LI DUR NAM NE GE ZER SIN HA VA

SAN DA SE KER SÖY LE KAY MAK  
DA A RA BAM KI RIL DI

SÖY LE 1.BAL SÖY LE GÜ LÜM GÜ LÜM  
KAL DIM 2-BU RA — DA .. ..

Note. [www.notaarsivleri.com](http://www.notaarsivleri.com).

## Turkish Art Music

Also referred to by different names such as ince saz music, Makam music, Ottoman Turkish music, Enderun music, Divan music, fasıl music, Classical Turkish Music, Turkish art music, or simply Turkish music/musiki, this tradition is even labeled differently within professional music education institutions where schools, departments, and main fields of study may carry varying titles. Naturally, there are certain explanations for these diverse designations. Nevertheless, the fact that professional music education is provided under such a range of different names remains not fully understood.

This music, which features religious and secular forms, instrumental and modal characteristics, and period-based variations, initially drew support mainly from palaces and dervish lodges. It is marked by textual/lyrical qualities, perceived largely as an urban music centered in Istanbul, and has a lineage of composers whose identities are well-known. Throughout history, it has produced many highly significant composers.

**Figure 2.**

*Example of Turkish Art Music*

**MUHAYYER-KÜRDİ SAZ SEMÂSİ**

MÜZİK:SADI İŞILAY

AKSAK SEMÂİ

♩ = 160

TESLİM

The image displays a musical score for 'Muhayyer-Kürdi Saz Semâisi' by Sadi İşilay. The score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 160. The first section is labeled 'AKSAK SEMÂİ' and the second section is labeled 'TESLİM'. The music features complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines with many triplets and slurs.

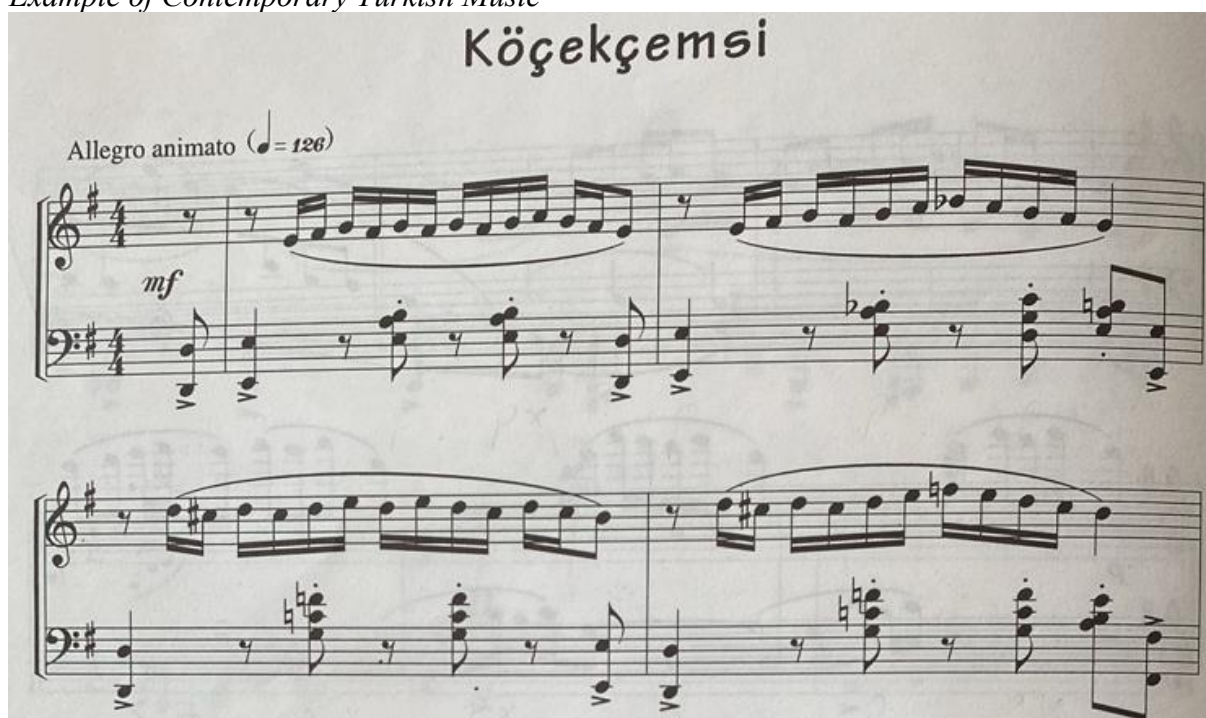
*Note.* Efe (2007, p. 133).

### **Contemporary Turkish Music**

Known by various names such as contemporary Turkish art music, polyphonic Turkish music, polyphonic Turkish art music, or simply Turkish music, this tradition took significant steps particularly with the founding of the Republic. The adoption of the Western musical pitch system, the use of Western compositional techniques, and the alignment with Western musical systems in nearly every art form and performance practice instrumental music, vocal music, choirs, chamber music, orchestras, dance, opera, and ballet can be highlighted as its defining characteristics.,

**Figure 3.**

*Example of Contemporary Turkish Music*



*Note.* Sun (1998, p. 8).

### **Religious Music**

In Anatolia, regarded as the cradle of civilizations, church music, synagogue music, and various forms of Turkish mystical (Sufi) music performed by different religious orders and communities have existed for centuries. Today, traditions such as Mevlevi, Bektashi, and Halveti music continue to hold a prominent place both in social life and in professional music education.

**Figure 4.**  
*Example of Religious Music*

**BESTENİGÂR İLÂHİ**  
Ben yürürem yâne yâne

*Düyek* 

Ben yū rū rem ya ne ya ne ya Hū ya Hū  
Ben Yu nu su bi ça re yim



Aşk bo ya dı be ni ka ne ya Hū ya Hū  
Dost e lin den a va re yim



Aşk bo ya dı be ni ka ne ya Hū ya Hū  
Dost e lin den a va re yim

Note. [www.devletkorosu.com](http://www.devletkorosu.com).

### *Popular Music*

This genre also features strikingly diverse labels, especially in the last sixty years. Terms such as Turkish light music with Turkish lyrics, Turkish light music, Turkish pop music, Anatolian pop, Anatolian rock, progressive music, green pop, rap, heavy metal, jazz, tango, and arabesque reflect the many branches of popular music. It can be said that this music is mass-oriented, occupies an important place in the culture industry, is frequently featured in mass media, is consumed rapidly, and is preferred particularly by young people.

According to Küçük Kaplan (2016):

In Turkey, from around the 1950s onward, with the creation of an environment in which developments in America and Europe could be followed more closely, it was observed that young people in particular showed great interest in popular music genres from these regions. (p. 13)

An excerpt from Sultan-ı Yegah is one of the popular music examples that left a mark on its era (Küçük Kaplan, 2016, p. 129).

**Figure 5.**  
*Example of Popular Music*

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Sultan-1 Yegâh". The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes a Flüt (Flute) part in the top staff, an E. Gitar (Electric Guitar) part in the middle staff, and a B. Gitar (Bass Guitar) part in the bottom staff. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 88$ . The second system continues the E. Gitar and B. Gitar parts, with a Flüt part that features a complex, rapid melodic line. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Note. <https://www.gitaregitim.net>.

### *Military Music*

Although it experienced interruptions at times (such as the closure of the Mehterhane), military music has survived from the 4th century to the present day. Contrary to common belief, it has not been limited to battlefields but has continued to exert influence in daily life in weddings, military send-off ceremonies, national holidays, commemorations, and almost every occasion of social importance.

**Figure 6.**  
*Example of Military Music*

**Yeniçeri Marşı** Beste : ?

RE\_FÍ\_TÍ\_ MÚ\_BÜR\_DİM DÂ\_ĞI\_ TÚ\_MÜR\_DİM  
 VÂ\_Dİ BE\_VA'Dİ SAH\_RA BE\_SPH\_RA  
 DİL\_BER DİL\_BER CÂ\_NÂ MÁ\_RÂ Á\_RÂ CAN EY\_YU\_SÚ\_FÜ\_SÁ\_Nİ  
 EY\_MA\_Hİ\_KEN\_Â\_

Note. Üngör (1965, p. 168).

### *Polyphony Within Tradition*

Even if not consciously intended, polyphony can be encountered in the performance practices of traditional Turkish music. It may arise through personal taste and preference, inspiration, improvisation, or performance carried out without deliberate reflection on or questioning of tradition.

Polyphony (in other words: heterophony, parallel melody, musical texture, or harmonic blend) is the simultaneous intertwining of more than one sound, proceeding together in harmony according to certain criteria. In other words, polyphonization is the ability to establish a certain consonance and unity among sounds within a musical flow. To achieve this consonance and unity, certain rules must be established, identifying the intervals between sounds that are deemed appropriate for use. Although these combinations may often vary, mixtures that are essentially perceived as harmonious are frequently preferred by the human ear. (Yarman, 2001, p. 57).

In Turkish folk music, instruments such as the bağlama, çift kaval (double flute), tulum (bagpipe), dutar, and üç telli (three-stringed lute), and in Turkish art music, instruments such as the oud, qanun, classical kemençe, and tanbur, often reveal the performers' tendencies and preferences toward polyphonic expression when played.

**Figure 7.**

*Example of Polyphony in Traditional Turkish Folk Music*

### Eremedim Vefasına Dünyanın

Hisarlı Ahmet

Note. Türkmen and Adar (2010, p. 148).

**Figure 8.**

*Example of Polyphony in Traditional Turkish Art Music*

### Nihavent Peşrevi

M. Reşat AYSU

Note. Efe (2007, p. 42).

### *Fundamental Transformations*

As noted in many works on music history, when Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II decided that “some things had to change,” music was inevitably affected as well. The closure of the Mehterhane and the establishment of the Muzika-ı Hümayun, the increasing influence of Western-style music in the palace, and the presence of foreign-born composers, conductors, and educators such as Angelo Mariani, Luigi Arditi, Giuseppe Donizetti, Callisto Guatelli, Corado Bonzani, and Gaetano Roubale were undeniably influential in this transformation.

One of the most striking aspects of this period was, alongside marches, the polyphonic arrangement of Turkish music works by prominent composers of the time, such as Şevki Bey. Later, polyphonic arrangements and adaptations for piano, string instruments, and bands attracted the attention of the palace, the public, and performers alike, ensuring that this process continued without interruption.

### *Republican Cultural Policies and the First Generation of Composers*

It is well known among the Turkish people that Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, had a deep love for music. Atatürk cherished traditional Turkish folk music, Turkish art music, universal (Western classical) music, and mystical (Sufi) music, and made room for them in his life. Memoirs of influential intellectuals, musicians, and politicians of the period including Hafız Yaşar Okur, Ali Rıza Sağman, Burhanettin Ökte, Sadettin Kaynak, Mazhar Müfit Kansu, Münir Hayri Egeli, Necdet Remzi Atak, and Cemal Reşit Rey offer insights into his musical passion. Although it is often assumed that Atatürk particularly loved songs (şarkı) and folk songs (türkü), he also took significant steps to ensure the development of our music and its performance and recognition abroad.

Oransay (1985, p. 8) provides examples of these transformations: the transfer of the Muzika-ı Hümayun to Ankara, the establishment of the Presidential Symphony Orchestra (1924), the founding of the Music Teacher Training School (Musiki Muallim Mektebi, 1924), the transformation of Darülelhan into the Istanbul Conservatory (1926), the beginning of folk song collection (1926), and the establishment of a committee to classify Turkish Art Music works (1926). Other key developments included sending artists such as Cemal Reşit Rey, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Hasan Ferit Alnar, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, and Necil Kazım Akses abroad for study (starting in 1927), inviting world-renowned musicians such as Paul Hindemith, Carl Ebert, and Béla Bartók (from 1932 onward), and the composition of the first Turkish opera,

Özsoy Opera, by Ahmet Adnan Saygun—whose subject matter was personally determined by Atatürk.

### ***Research Problem Statement***

The problem statement of this study is formulated as follows: “What are the approaches of the musicians who contributed to the development of polyphonic music toward polyphony in Turkish music?”.

### ***Purpose, Significance, and Limitations of the Study***

The aim of this study is to examine the works and approaches of the musicians who contributed to the development of polyphonic music in Turkey. The study is considered significant particularly because it can serve as both a tool and a resource in professional music education. This research is limited to the approaches of Ahmet Samim Bilgen, Ergüder Yoldaş, Hüseyin Sadettin Arel, İbrahim Selman Coşgun, Kemal İlerici, Veysel Arseven, and Yalçın Tura.

## **METHOD**

This study, which is qualitative and descriptive in nature, employed the content analysis technique. “Content analysis provides social scientists with a systematic methodology for examining raw information obtained from archives, documents, and mass communication media, and for giving it meaning” (Demirci & Köseli, 2010, p. 344).

In this research, the approaches of seven composers Ahmet Samim Bilgen, Ergüder Yoldaş, Hüseyin Sadettin Arel, İbrahim Selman Coşgun, Kemal İlerici, Veysel Arseven, and Yalçın Tura who put forward perspectives on polyphony were examined, with illustrative examples from their works.

## FINDINGS

### *Figures who approached polyphony in Turkish music*

Our first-generation composers Cemal Reşit Rey (1904-1985), Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1907-1991), Necil Kazım Akses (1908-1999), Hasan Ferit Alnar (1906-1978), and Ulvi Cemal Erkin (1906–1972) took important steps that continue to influence Turkish musical culture today, producing works of which the nation remains proud. However, these composers did not explicitly propose theories, approaches, or techniques directly concerning the polyphonization of Turkish music. The technical methods they employed can, at best, be inferred from the content of their works.

Other composers are thought to have held similar views. Nonetheless, our composers generally did not prepare lecture notes, books, or explanatory texts about their works that could serve as educational tools or contribute directly to theoretical debates.

In this section, the approaches and works of the composers and educators identified within the study's scope are presented.

### *Ahmet Samim Bilgen*

Ahmet Samim Bilgen, born in 1910 and originally trained as a lawyer, is best known for his work *Ilgaz*. However, he also published many writings in which he expressed his views on polyphony, making his ideas accessible to interested readers.

In summary, Samim Bilgen argued that folk melodies and makams (modal structures) show similarities to major and minor tonalities. According to him, when folk songs are arranged polyphonically, vertical harmony should be employed. Works should be harmonized according to the rules of the 18th and 19th centuries. He recommended the Phrygian (mi/kürdî) scale and preferred the use of the plagal cadence in the Dorian (re/hüseynî) scale (Bilgen, 1986, p. 1-3).

The Phrygian mode is a scale built on the third degree of the natural major scale. It has a very distinct sound and consists of the following sequence: 1 semitone, 3 whole tones, 1 semitone, and 2 whole tones (Boone & Schonbrun, 2018, p. 105).

The Dorian mode consists of 1 whole tone, 1 semitone, 3 whole tones, 1 semitone, and 1 whole tone. It is built on the second degree of the major scale or Ionian mode (Çiçek, 2022, p. 103).

**Figure 9.**  
*Works of Ahmet Samim Bilgen*



Note. Bilgen (1986).

An examination of Bilgen's works reveals that he employed triadic vertical harmony.

**Figure 10.**

Two Examples from the Scores of Ahmet Samim Bilgen's Works

NEVRUZ GELİN

DÜRIYE

Source: Bilgen, 1986, p. 6.

### *Ergüder Yoldaş*

Ergüder Yoldaş (1939-2016) was a composer and one of the well-known figures of Turkish popular music, most famously recognized for his work *Sultan-ı Yegâh*. He carried out important studies and even experimental attempts regarding the polyphonization of Turkish music. His year-long experiments with an 18-member orchestra composed of T.R.T. Istanbul Radio artists earned him recognition as one of the pioneers of his era.

He expressed his ideas with the following words:

When harmonized, Turkish music possesses the qualities to acquire a universal character. Aside from minor errors, my conviction that the music of the future will be realized entirely through Turkish musical systems may currently be considered a fantasy; yet, once the subject is studied with seriousness, I have no doubt that scholars will reach the same conclusion as I have. (Darbaz, 2005, p. 41)

**Figure 11.**

*A Study on Polyphony from Ergüder Yoldaş's Personal Notes*

2nd eksemi (Rast) | C g D 8 E 5 F 9 G 6 g A 8 B 5 C |

Hümâyun Cadance Perfect Cadance Romput?

A vu va vu va vu va vu va

su me k . 1

Note. E. Yoldaş, personal notes.

**Figure 12.**

*Examples of Works Polyphonized by Ergüder Yoldaş*

**Geçti Dost Kervanı**

Ergüder Yoldaş

1. Keman

2. Keman

3. Keman

4. Keman

Çello



Note. E. Yoldaş, kişisel notları.

### *Hüseyin Sadettin Arel*

Hüseyin Sadettin Arel (1880-1955) is regarded as one of the most prolific figures in the history of Turkish music. A musicologist, composer, theorist, and educator, Arel brought a new discipline to the teaching of traditional art music and its notation system.

In his early years as a composer, Arel produced works using Western music and forms. In later years, however, he turned his focus more toward Turkish Makam Music (TMM), to which he devoted a number of compositions (Çolakoğlu Sarı et al., 2023, p. 78).

In his publication *Ahenk Dersleri* for Turkish Music, the system Arel presented was based on Western harmony. Arel (1959, p. 32) argued that triads and sixths should be employed. Seconds, fourths, and fifths could also be used, and one should not be limited only to triads and sixths. Such work, he stressed, requires substantial knowledge and experience. Arel also used horizontal polyphony techniques such as canon and imitation in his works.

We can say that Arel was the composer who paid the utmost attention to notation in Turkish Makam Music. His use of dynamics, articulation, clefs, key signatures, tempo markings, metronome indications, etc., gave performers significant guidance and insight for interpreting works, thereby bringing a new perspective to the performance practice of Turkish Makam Music. By using Makam scales as transpositions (şed), he reshaped accidentals in ways rarely encountered, encouraging performers to explore positions and discover the limits of their instruments. (Çolakoğlu Sarı et al., 2023, p. 78)

Arel authored Harmony Lessons, Counterpoint Lessons, and Fugue Lessons. He is recognized as one of the greatest composers and music scholars of Turkish music. In the realm of Polyphonic Turkish Music, he is undoubtedly a towering and unmatched figure. Very few composers have been able to follow in his footsteps. Yet the future of national music, without question, lies in this direction. It is known that Arel composed 71 polyphonic works for chamber music and chorales (Öztuna, 1969, pp. 45–61, cited in Türkmen, 2018, p. 381).

**Figure 13.**

*Example of a Work Polyphonized by Hüseyin Sadettin Arel*

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Prélude (Ön-ezgi)" by H.S. Arel. The tempo is marked "Allegro ma non troppo". The score is arranged for four staves: 1. Keman (Violin I), 2. Keman (Violin II), Viyola (Viola), and Viyolonsel (Cello). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like "pizz." (pizzicato) and "arco" (arco). The piece is attributed to H.S. Arel.

Note. Özkoç (2012, p. 153).

**İbrahim Selman Coşgun**

Music teacher İbrahim Selman Coşgun (1953-2010) conducted polyphonic experiments with Turkish folk music choirs and endeavored to instill a love of this music in younger generations.

The fact that he was “only” a music teacher, known within a limited circle, should not be considered as diminishing the value of his works. It is particularly significant that in his polyphonic experiments he deliberately chose to use traditional Turkish folk instruments.

According to him, in the arrangements of Turkish folk songs (THM), traditional Turkish instruments should be used, and instruments such as the organ, piano, or guitar should not be employed. Attention must be paid to microtonal (komalı) sounds. When adding second or third voices in polyphonization, great care must be taken. The second voice must be composed to be at least as beautiful as the folk song itself.

İbrahim Selman Coşgun's approach to polyphony can be summarized as follows: in arranging Turkish folk songs, traditional Turkish instruments should be employed, avoiding the organ, piano, guitar, and similar instruments. Microtonal intervals must be carefully respected. In polyphonizing folk songs, when second and third voices are added, care should be taken to ensure that the second voice is composed with equal beauty to the main melody.

If the arrangement is intended for high school students, then when applying harmony rules, the second and third parts to be written should avoid long leaps and wide intervals; instead, they should follow the melody more closely so that they can be perceived easily by the ear. Folk songs, which express profound and beautiful meanings, should be arranged in a way that does not distort their expression, suppress their main melody, cause it to be forgotten, or push it into the background. The second, third, or even fourth voices, when isolated and sung alone, should be at least as beautiful as the main melody itself and should carry clear musical meaning (Türkmen & Adar, 2010, pp. 35-42).

### Figure 14.

Examples of Works Polyphonized by İbrahim Selman Coşgun

*Ahmet Bey*

Yöresi:Kütahya

The musical score for 'Ahmet Bey' is presented in two systems. The first system includes three staves: Bağlama (top), Cura (middle), and Kemane (bottom). The Bağlama staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/8 time signature. The tempo is marked as 108. The Cura and Kemane staves use the same key signature and time signature. The second system includes three staves: B. (top), C. (middle), and K.K. (bottom). The B. staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/8 time signature. The C. and K.K. staves use the same key signature and time signature. The score is polyphonic, with each instrument playing a different part of the melody.

Note. Türkmen and Adar (2010, p. 50).

### *Kemal İlerici*

Kemal İlerici (1910-1986) was a composer and theorist who stood out with the harmonic system he developed by drawing on his extensive knowledge of traditional Turkish music. His book *Composition, Turkish Music and Harmony* influenced subsequent generations of composers. The system, also referred to as quartal harmony or the İlerici system, served as the technical foundation for his works (Say, 2005, pp. 125-126).

When it comes to polyphony in Turkish music, İlerici is one of the first figures to come to mind; his book and theory are widely used in courses. He advocated for a quartal harmony system. According to him, the principal scale is la hüseyinî. Turkish Makam scales can be employed. In this system, the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 8th scale degrees are considered “resting” tones, while the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th are “moving” tones. Fourths and fifths, as well as parallelisms, can be used; the I–VI–III connection can be explained as a tonic/subdominant/dominant relationship. He also recommended the use of seventh chords (İlerici, 1970).

The idea of Kemal İlerici creating a harmonic system for Turkish music can be examined in three stages:

Before formulating his own harmonic system, between 1934-1942, İlerici believed that Turkish music works could be composed according to the rules of Western harmony.

As a result of his studies and observations, İlerici discovered that Western harmony and Turkish music differ entirely in terms of structural organization. His first string quartet, composed in 1943, is regarded as the first experiment reflecting this realization.

Finally, building also on his work in Western harmony, İlerici focused on the idea that a harmonic system should be developed based on the structures and functions of Turkish Makam scales and their degrees. Within this new harmonic order, he composed the orchestral suite Köyümde (1945). This idea also led him to produce his work Composition and Harmony in Turkish Music. However, he also explained that the harmony book did not immediately take its current form but went through various stages of development” (Bayraktarkatal & Yalınkılıç, 2020, p. 349).

**Figure 15.**  
*Examples of Works Polyphonized by Kemal İlerici*

Note. Tura (2019, pp. 61-62).

### *Veysel Arseven*

Veysel Arseven, originally from the Gagauz (Gök Oğuz) Turks, was born in 1919 in the Bessarabia region of Romania. He came to Turkey in 1938, where he adopted the name Veysel Arseven. In 1957, motivated by his view that polyphonic works of Turkish music were insufficient in number and that existing works were difficult to access, he published the book *Polyphonic Folk Songs*. This collection, consisting of 20 folk songs, included not only his own polyphonic arrangements but also works by other composers (Bulgar, 2004, pp. 1–16, as cited in Yılmaz, 2024, p. 37).

As a music educator, Arseven summarized his approach as follows: polyphonic studies should not be conducted only on paper but also at the piano; the conventional concept of chordal harmony should be abandoned; the melodic structures of folk songs are better suited to horizontal rather than vertical polyphony; fourths, fifths, and octaves are crucial, while thirds and sixths should generally be avoided; augmented seconds, augmented sevenths, and—though more rarely—minor sixths, which are thought to be favored in Turkish music, should be used with the aid of horizontal techniques; and the application of canon and imitation techniques should be emphasized (Arseven, 1959, pp. 2007–2009).

Arseven grouped his polyphonized works under the headings Western Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, Aegean, Southern Anatolia, Central Anatolia, Black Sea, and other regions. In the book, the arrangements are ordered as two-voice, three-voice, and four-voice folk songs. In addition to his own works, the collection also includes polyphonic arrangements of Turkish music by Hasan Ferit Alnar, Necil Kazım Akses, Ferit Hilmi Artek, Faik Canselen, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Fuat Koray, Ahmet Adnan Saygun, and Eduard Zuckmayer (Yılmaz & Adar, 2023, p. 162).

**Figure 16.**

*Example 1 of Works Polyphonized by Veysel Arseven*

**ANKARA TÜRKÜSÜ**  
(Beşli aralığında kanon)

Ağırca (♩ = 80) Türkü  
Veysel ARSEVEN

*mf* An ka ra' nın ta şı na bak Göz le ri  
An ka ra' nun ta ş tır yo lu Her ta ra

min fi ya şı na bak Biz düş ma nı  
fi as ker do lu Ar tık ye tiş

*Note.* Arseven (1957, p. 5).

Figure 17.

Example 2 of Works Polyphonized by Veysel Arseven

Moderato (♩=80)

Ay de-ğar Gi-re-sün-dan a-man bu-lut-lar a- ra-sın-dan, dan, dan, 1. 2. a- ra-sın-dan, dan, Al-çak-la-ra kar-lar yağ-mış ü-şü-me-din-mi sen bu l-si Al-çak-la-ra kar-lar yağ-mış ü-şü-me-din-mi lar yağ-mış ü-şü-me-din-mi sen bu l-sin so-nu nu dü-şün-me-din-mi? lar yağ-mış ü-şü-me-din-mi dü-şün-me-din-mi Al-çak-la-ra kar-lar yağ-mış

Note. Arseven (1957, p. 6).

### Yalçın Tura

Yalçın Tura was born in Istanbul in 1934. He developed an early interest in music, studying violin with Seyfeddin Asal, harmony with Demirhan Altuğ, and counterpoint and composition with Cemal Reşit Rey. Between 1955 and 1976, he worked as an independent composer, writing music for many films and theatrical productions. In 1976, he joined the newly established Turkish Music State Conservatory in Istanbul as a faculty member. When the institution was incorporated into Istanbul Technical University in 1982, he continued his work there as an associate professor and later as a full professor. He founded the Department of Musicology, served as department chair, board member, and director, and retired in 2001. Over his career, he received numerous awards for his works and contributions.

His major compositions include: six symphonies for orchestra; six concertos for orchestra and various solo instruments; Dance Tunes (Oyun Havaları) for solo violin and nine string instruments; orchestral suites; Toccata for orchestra; Adagio for strings; suites for strings; various chamber works and sonatas; a Ballad for violin and piano; two ballets (Creation and A Love Tale in Topkapı); a melodrama (What Does It Mean to Love?); operas (Karacaoğlan, Fatih, Leyla and Mecnun); cantatas (In Honor of Şeyh Galib, The Meaning of the Four Books,

My Homeland); various choral works, songs, and music for television series, films, and theater. He has also authored books, articles, and conference papers (Tura, 2019, p. 4).

Tura made a significant contribution to polyphony in Turkish music. In his book, he argues that he developed his own unique approach:

When attempting to polyphonize a Makam, one must first investigate and reveal the structure of that Makam, its skeleton, the direction of its melodic movement, and its important notes, and then proceed accordingly. Of course, a Makam is not limited to these alone. Ornamenting tones, auxiliary flavors, modulations, and expansions must also be taken into account ... Western notation and the signs used in Western music should be adopted as they are; however, for intervals not found in the West, special signs should be employed. (Tura, 2019, p. 73)

**Figure 18.**

*Hüseyinî Saz Semâisi by Yalçın Tura*

The image displays a musical score for 'Hüseyinî Saz Semâisi' by Yalçın Tura. The score is presented in two columns. The left column is titled '1. HÂNE' and 'HÜSEYİNÎ SAZ SEMÂİSİ' by 'YALÇIN TURA'. It includes the tempo marking 'Biraz tutuk (poco sostenuto)' and 'Akısı (andante)'. The right column is titled 'MÜLÂZEME' and 'daha hızlı'. The score is written for three instruments: NEY, KEMENCE, and TANBUR. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'f'.

Note. Tura (2019, pp. 74-75).

## CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be stated that Ahmet Samim Bilgen preferred vertical and triadic harmony; Ergüder Yoldaş demonstrated vertical and triadic harmony; Hüseyin Sadettin Arel employed vertical and triadic harmony while also emphasizing the importance of counterpoint; music educator İ. Selman Coşgun applied vertical and triadic harmony specifically with Turkish folk instruments; Kemal İlerici proposed vertical and quartal harmony; Veysel Arseven emphasized horizontal polyphony, particularly canon and imitation; and Yalçın Tura, while adopting vertical and triadic harmony, also employed horizontal techniques in his works.

Turkish music, with its millennia-long, deeply rooted history, has had an influence not only within Anatolia but also across many parts of the world, where it has been performed and used as an educational tool.

Alongside its traditional structure, the polyphonic dimension of Turkish music especially through institutional initiatives of the past two centuries—has also made its presence felt. Today, polyphonic Turkish music works are appreciated and performed not only in professional music education but also in general and amateur music education.

It may be confidently stated that polyphony is not merely a marker of modernity but is among the necessities for establishing a universal musical language. The transformations in music observed both before and after the foundation of the Republic have now been largely embraced. Many debates in this field have gradually given way to collaboration, collective music-making, and project development. The innovations brought about by technology also indicate that new orientations are increasingly needed.

Nevertheless, it is believed that research on the polyphonic journey of Turkish music is still insufficient. New and original studies can be conducted under subheadings such as cognition, perception, taste, and skill, particularly focusing on the composer, listener, performer relationship.

Further work can be carried out with composers and performers across general, amateur, and professional music education, focusing on issues such as the technical challenges of works, their usability, and their suitability for students.

In addition to amateurs and professionals engaged in composition, institutions providing professional music education can develop new and original works, inspirations, and models, especially by building on the proposals of those with distinctive approaches to polyphony.

With the help of technology, the processing of knowledge and especially of data has now become easier. Composers' works can, for instance, be subjected to histometric analyses.

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