



Hakan A. Toker

Concerti Orientali

Traditional music in Turkey is so rich that there are several sub-genres within it. The so called *Türk Sanat Müziği* (Turkish Art Music) is one of them. Although its deepest roots lie with Anatolian Folk music –which has further roots in Central Asia–, it was developed at large in the Ottoman court, sharing also a lot of common roots with Byzantine court music. Today it is widely appreciated by the Turkish public, played and sung in restaurants, often accompanying nights of *Rakı* drinking. It shares many common traits with Eastern European and Middle Eastern music.

If you look at the development of music in the Orient and Occident through history, it can be seen that never has there been a “pure” culture anywhere on earth. It is a history of borrowing from neighbors and always creating the “new” through synthesis. Notice the zigzag in the history of the violin: The East created the *rebab* and similar instruments which were borrowed by the West to be developed into the modern violin, which was taken back by the East, to be played with new techniques. Today Turkish traditional ensembles are abound in violins, but played the Turkish way. This music is ornamentally rich, yet polyphonically simple.

Concerti Orientali or *Senfonik Fasıl* (as it is called in Turkey) is the final turn of this zigzag. It is a concert program chosen among the most famous Turkish *sanat müziği* songs and arranged mainly for piano solo and string orchestra by Hakan A. Toker in a concerto format, making Western-trained musicians play Turkish music, blending the richer harmony and counterpoint of the West with the richer ornamental melodies of the East. There is also a version involving singers and bringing together a Western and Eastern ensemble.

Here's what it sounds like...

Sample Program

Senede bir gün (piano, string orchestra)	Şekip Ayhan Özışık
Ayrılık Valsi (piano, string orchestra)	Zeki Müren
Huysuz ve tatlı kadın (piano, string orchestra)	Muzaffer İlkar
Yıldızların altında (accordion/piano, string orchestra)	Kaptanzade Ali Rıza Bey
Kimseye etmem şikayet (piano, string orchestra)	Kemani Serkis Efendi
Körfezdeki dalgın suya bir bak (female voice, kanun, string orchestra)	Osman Nihat Akın
Sizden biri (female voice, male voice, string orchestra)	Erol Sayan
Gece sahilden açıp sandalı enginlere biz (male voice, piano, string orchestra)	Şerif İçli
Şimdi bahara erdim, gonca gonca gül derdim (male voice, piano, string orchestra)	Alaeddin Yavaşca
Varsın gönül aşkınla harab olsun efendim (male voice, countertenor, Turkish ensemble, string orchestra, harpsichord optional)	Lemi Atlı
Yine bir gülnihal (male voice, piano, string orchestra, drums)	Hammamizade İsmail Dede Efendi
Bekledim de gelmedin (piano, string orchestra, drums)	Yesari Asım Arsoy
Longa (accordion, string orchestra)	Hakan A. Toker





About Hakan A. Toker...

Born in 1976, Southern Turkey, Hakan A. Toker studied partly at Bilkent University School of Music and Performing Arts, Ankara. He completed his education in the USA at Indiana University School of Music, double majoring in piano and composition (BM 2000). He also took courses in jazz and electronic music there. Along with his formal education, he taught himself how to improvise and play Turkish music; learned to play the *kanun* and accordion, after the piano.

Throughout the 9 years he lived in the USA, he gave many concerts. He broadened his spectrum by adding on ethnic world music genres while continuing his work in the classical field. He concertized, recorded albums and took part in many presentations in schools and colleges with

the bands Salaam (Middle Eastern), Silk Road (Central Asian) and Orquesta Son (Latin American music). During the same period he began to play for silent movies; and worked in creative projects with multi-media artists, dancers, poets, jugglers and acrobats etc.

In 2006 he went back to his homeland and became a founding member of bands Tanini and Abra, he performed with artists such as Yıldız İbrahimova and Dilek Türkan, and for a short while he performed musical comedy shows for children with the flutist Christian Plouvier (International Ankara Music Festival, 2009).

Toker has broken ground in the interpretation of Turkish traditional music on piano. He has been well acclaimed by listeners and colleagues alike for his albums “Turkish Music on Piano” (2005) and “Alla Turca Alla Toker” (2012). In 2011 for the first time in Turkey, he gave recitals of Turkish music on microtonally tuned pianos. He continues this work also with other keyboard instruments such as the clavichord, harpsichord and the Fluid Piano. In 2012 he made concerto-like arrangements of Turkish music called *Senfonik Fasil*. He performed with many orchestras including the Istanbul and Izmir State Symphony Orchestras.

He has been given “Our Living Values” award in 2013 during the 1st. Mersin Cultural Festival. In 2017 he won the Global Music Awards Silver Medal together with his Croatian colleagues Matej Meštrović and Matija Dedić for their album “Vivaldi - 4 Seasons for 3 Pianos” created by Matej Meštrović and released by Parma Recordings.

Toker has done research and given informative recitals on topics such as Unknown Composers, Turkish Composers, Female Composers etc. He is also one of few concert pianists in the world who continues the old tradition of improvisation in classical music.

As a performer, so far he has played in 28 countries, including international festivals such as the Istanbul, Ankara, Mersin, Side, Lvov (Ukraine) and Indianapolis Jazz (USA) festivals.

As a composer, he writes in many genres including Western classical, jazz and Turkish music in every scale. Among these are incidental music, two children’s operas and music for marching band which he wrote during his military service.

Toker livestreams interactively over his personal Facebook account every wednesday at 9pm Turkey time.

Hakan A. Toker has previously worked with...

Sochi Municipality Orchestra, Russia – Valentin Tatarenko

Indiana University New Music Ensemble, USA – David Dzubay

Izmir State Symphony Orchestra, Turkey – Tadeusz Strugała

Başkent Chamber Orchestra, Turkey – Ertuğ Korkmaz

Eskişehir Municipality Orchestra, Turkey - Ender Sakpınar

Eskişehir Anadolu University Orchestra, Turkey – Cem’i Can Deliorman

Bahçeşehir University Chamber Orchestra, Turkey – Cem’i Can Deliorman

Uludağ University State Conservatory Youth Symphony Orchestra, Turkey – Dağhan Doğu

Bulgarian National Radio Big Band, Bulgaria – Antoni Donçev

Ege Sanat Symphony Orchestra, Turkey – İbrahim Yazıcı

Arcadia Festival Orchestra, Turkey – Orçun Orçunsel

Orchestra‘Sion, Turkey – Orçun Orçunsel

Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, Turkey – Cihat Aşkın



Alternate versions of the project

A- Instrumental Version

1 Instrumental soloist: Hakan A. Toker, piano and accordion

String Orchestra (minimum 18 players): 5 first violins, 5 second violins, 3 violas, 4 cellos, 2 double basses,

1 Drummer

Rider:

Acoustic grand piano

Drum kit

Chairs and music stands for the orchestra

B- Vocal Version

Hakan A. Toker, piano and accordion

1 or 2 Turkish traditional singer(s) male and/or female

String Orchestra

1 Drummer

Rider:

Acoustic grand piano

Drum kit

Sound system for singer only

Chairs and music stands for orchestra and singer(s)

C- Double Ensemble Version Including Turkish Instruments

Hakan A. Toker, piano and accordion

1 Female Turkish singer

1 Male Turkish singer

1 Countertenor

Turkish Traditional Ensemble (ud, kanun, tambur, kemençe, ney)

Conductor

String Orchestra

1 Drummer

Rider:

Acoustic grand piano

Harpsichord (optional)

Drum kit

Sound system for singers and Turkish instruments

Chairs and music stands for both ensembles and singers