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Expanded inspiration: metric improvisation and compositional tools in contemporary modal music

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Citation

Liontou Mochament, M. (2023, October 18). *Expanded inspiration: metric improvisation and compositional tools in contemporary modal music*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3645808>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

PART A: The Artists

1. Introduction

This chapter offers an insight into the metric improvisational styles and techniques of selected artists. The brief historical context and biographical information preceding the musical analyses aim to trace the interconnections and relations between artists and practices, situating them in their respective historical times.

Moreover, through musical examples taken from the transcribed and analysed materials, this chapter aims to:

1. shed light on the various rhythmical, structural and expressive tools used by the artists being researched;
2. recognise improvisational decisions made by each of the artists, thereby helping to define what is personal for each one of them and, at the same time, trying to show the influences of previous or contemporary players upon them;
3. facilitate better metric improvisation for my practice and for other players.

This chapter proceeds chronologically, showing the development of the tools used throughout the period of study.

The primary research methods that have been used are attentive and intensive listening, detailed transcription and analysis of the selected material, and, finally, recognition and categorisation of the models and tools (rhythmic, melodic and expressive) used by the selected artists. Full transcriptions and analyses are presented in Appendix I. In the main body of the text, I only include the parts of the scores that contribute to the arguments that I make.

2. Artists and material

2.1 Process of selection

The selection was made from a relatively large number of artists and recordings, always bearing in mind the goal of this artistic research project: determining how metric improvisation practice can help enhance ‘inspiration’, by providing tools for composition and metric improvisation in contemporary modal music. The goal thus frames the selection: the improvising artists and their material should have something rhythmically interesting to contribute, and at the same time propose original musical ideas and structures.

Another criterion of selection is related to chronologies. Given that the research on metric improvisation in Turkish and Greek music is scarce, the selection of the material was intended to acknowledge, or make evident, the existence of this practice through time. As a result, artists and material from the early recordings of the 20th century were bound to feature in the final list. Inevitably, there are several artists and recordings that were not included, which leaves the potential for further research. The historical dimension of this study allows the research to serve as a starting point for describing the evolution of this performance practice, from the mid-20th century up until the beginnings of the 21st century.

The third criterion for selection was influenced by the use of the material for my own artistic practice. This impacted the choice of the instruments that were played on recordings. My main instrument of practice and performance is the *oud*, so at the beginning *oud* players seemed to be a clear-cut selection criterion. However, in the process of working through and researching the archive of sound materials, I realised that other instruments used this kind of practice of improvisation, especially in the early recordings, and they significantly outnumbered recordings of metric improvisation performed on the *oud*. It was *kanuns*, violins, *lyras*, and clarinets that were usually the lead instruments when it came to ‘taking the solo’. The reasons for this are multifaceted. The sustained and louder sound of wind or bowed instruments seemed to be more useful in the conditions of a folk or urban or *kef* repertoire, where the actual conditions of the performance (dance situations, *glenti*, *café aman*, and so on) demanded a substantial climax, a peak for the audience to come to this ‘*ekstasis*’ required in a public participatory activity. The same goes for the *kanun*, as its 72 strings and 3 octaves offer a high register that can be discerned even without the help of a microphone or sound equipment. This being the case, in those early days the performance of rhythmic improvisation for the *oud* seemed to be the near-exclusive privilege of soloists such as Udi Hrant and Marko Melkon, who had the chance to record for big companies and in rather quiet conditions.

Things started to change with the spread of recording technology (see Introduction), as more and more *oud* players began to explore the rhythmic improvisational nature of the instrument, bringing it to the centre of performances. John Berberian is one of the pioneers in the field, representing the Armenian-American scene of the *oud* throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and Ara Dinkjian continued in the 1990s up to the present day. Kyriakos Tapakis is also an *oud*

player that has explored this style of improvisation on the Greek scene.

As a consequence, I chose to transcribe some of the improvisations of the above-mentioned *oud* players. But I felt that there was also a great deal of material that I did not want to leave outside my practice, so I have included performances of other instruments as well. This decision led me to transcribe performances of *kanun*, among others, and to adapt some of its elements into my own performance of improvisational practice for *oud*. There was a great deal of ‘trial and error’ in the process. For example, I tried to play some clarinet solos and I realised that certain performance choices and techniques were almost impossible to transfer from wind instruments to the *oud*. Even if they could be transferred, they were quite outside the scope of my aesthetic interests. Consequently, this part of the research remains open for further investigation (preferably by wind instrument players).

The final important criterion for selecting material hinged on whether a composition could be classified as ‘contemporary modal music’. Apart from the recordings used to illustrate earlier traces of the genre (early/mid-20th century recordings), the bulk of the material consists of recordings by artists who have mainly been active from the 1990s onwards. This gives us the chance to examine certain artists’ approaches to both improvisation and composition and, at the same time, it enables reflection on the connections of these two distinct (or not so distinct) artistic practices.

2.2 Analysis: Improvisation vocabulary for artists

The basic questions that triggered the analysis process was: Can we discern a particular use of rhythmic/melodic vocabulary, phrasing structure, and expressive tools that characterise individual artists? Do artists have a certain ‘style’ that they build their improvisations on and, if so, what is this dependent on? Do they use the *makam* in its ‘traditional’ form, following the *seyir* exactly and to its full extent? This multilevel investigation can also respond to general questions related not only to rhythm, but also to the melodic and structural development of metric improvisation. Other possible questions relate to the relationship between an existing composition and the performed improvisation. Are there differences of any kind between studio albums and live recordings? Are there any influences shared between artists of the same band? And finally, how can the answers to the above questions help develop the practice of metric modal improvisation and consequently enhance our inspiration for our own improvisations?

The following section of this chapter provides a list of the selected materials, along with short biographical summaries of the artists. Through the use of examples from the transcribed and analysed materials,⁸⁶ a list of the various characteristic traits of each artist will be provided, which can be used to recognise each artist’s improvisational style or ‘signature’.

⁸⁶ The whole corpus of the transcriptions and analyses is available in Appendix II and online at <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/Eh5YCLNMKBOMt6j>.

2.3 Listing of artists and recordings

The list below provides a chronological review of the selected material for transcription and analysis. The information provided is as follows: the name of the artist, the place of origin, the name of the composition to which the improvisation refers, the date of the original recording and of the re-release (where needed), the recording company name (where relevant), the type of performance (e.g., studio recording, or live concert recording that resulted in a video on YouTube or an actual record/CD), and the place of recording.

No	Name of improvising artist	Artist's ethnic origin/place of birth	Track Title	Date of Original Recording	Title of album	Date of release/re-release	Recording company Name/Country	Serial No	Participating artists/instruments	Comments
1	Marko Melkon Alemsharian	Armenia/Izmir (Turkey)	Çifte telli	1942–1945	Marko Melkon	1942–1945/1996	Traditional Crossroads/ NYC, US (previously published by Me-Re records)	4281	unknown	According to Kopanitsanos in a personal interview this is not a republication of KALIPHON D-703 (which is a violin solo <i>çiftetelli</i> by Nishan Sedefjian) but a republication of BALKAN (previously Me-Re) 4003 record.
2	Udi Hrant Kenkulian	Armenia/Turkey	Hicaz Sarki/ Karşılama	1950s	Udi Hrant	1994	Traditional Crossroads/ NYC, US (re-released by KALAN MUZIK in Turkey (1995))	4265	—	‘Previously unissued, these tapes wererecently discovered, in New York during his tour to the United
3	John Berberian	Armenia/US	Basha Bella (an.)	1964	Expressions East featuring the oud of John Berberian	1964	Mainstream Records/ NYC, US	56023/S6023	Souren Baronian: Clarinet & Bongos, Jack Chalikian: Kanun, John Valentine: Guitar & Dudoog (k);, James Shahrigan: Bass, John	Studio recording
4	John Berberian	Armenia/US	Siselar	1964						

⁸⁷ Information from the booklet of album found at <https://www.discogs.com/release/1641796-Udi-Hrant-Kenkulian-Udi-Hrant> (retrieved 20/06/2023)

			(comp. Ahmet Nurettin Çamlıdağ)						Yalenezian: Dumbeg, Steve Pumilia: Finger Cymbals, Def, Dumbeg & Tambourine, Bob Tashjian: Vocals	
5	John Berberian	Armenia/US	Savasda (an.)	1965	Oud Artistry of John Berberian	1965	Mainstream Records /NYC, US	S/6 047	Souren Baronian: Clarinet & Bongos, Jack Chalikian: Kanun, John Valentine: Guitar & Dudoog (k);, James Shahrigan: Bass, John Yalenezian: Dumbeg, Steve Pumilia: Finger Cymbals, Def, Dumbeg & Tambourine, Bob Tashjian: Vocals	Studio Recording
6	John Berberian	US/Armenia	Chem-oo-Chem	1969	Middle Eastern Rock	1969/2008 (UK)	Verve Forecast,US	FT S-3 073	Leader, Oud – John Berberian Percussion, Vocals – Bob Tashjian Bass [Fender Bass] – Chet Amsterdam, Clarinet, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone – Souren Baronian, Drums – Bill LaVorgna, Electric Guitar [Amplified Rock Guitar], Guitar [Fuzz] – Joe Beck	LP recording
7	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Annatoł'ya (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2006	An Armenian in America – Live in Jerusalem	2006	Labeleh Records, Krikor Music	K M5 050	Adi Rennet: Keyboards, Zohar Fresco: Percussion	Recording of a live concert performance

8	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Kef Life (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2006	An Armenian in America – Live in Jerusalem	2006	Labeleh Records, Krikor Music	K M5 050	Adi Rennet: Keyboards, Zohar Fresco: Percussion	Recording of a live concert performance
9	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Slide Dance (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2006	An Armenian in America – Live in Jerusalem	2006	Labeleh Records, Krikor Music	K M5 050	Adi Rennet: Keyboards, Zohar Fresco: Percussion	Recording of a live concert performance
10	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Crosswinds (comp. Tamer Pınarbaşı)	2012	The Secret Trio: Soundscapes	2012	Traditional Crossroads	434 6	Secret Trio Ara Dinkjian: <i>oud</i> . Tamer Pınarbaşı: <i>kanun</i> Ismail Lumanovski: Clarinet	Studio recording
11	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Crosswinds (comp. Tamer Pınarbaşı)	2015–03–28					Secret Trio Ara Dinkjian: <i>oud</i> . Tamer Pınarbaşı: <i>kanun</i> Ismail Lumanovski: Clarinet	Recording of a live concert performance in Zurich
12	Tamer Pınarbaşı	Turkey	Moments (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2015–03–28					Secret Trio Ara Dinkjian: <i>oud</i> . Tamer Pınarbaşı: <i>kanun</i> Ismail Lumanovski: Clarinet	Recording of a live concert performance in Zurich

13	Tamer Pınarbaşı	Turkey	Moments (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2015 (April)	The Secret Trio: Three of us	2015	Krikor Music/KAL AN	K M5 055	Secret Trio Ara Dinkjian: <i>oud</i> . Tamer Pınarbaşı: kanun. Ismail Lumanovski: clarinet	Studio recording
14	Kyriakos Tapakis	Greece	Volta (comp. Kyriakos Tapakis)	2015					BNR's Folk Orchestra	YouTube video of a live performance in Bulgaria
15	Ara Dinkjian	Armenia/US	Kef Life (comp. Ara Dinkjian)	2016					Ara Dinkjian: <i>Oud</i> Tamer Pınarbaşı: Kanun Zohar Fresco: Percussion (possibly keyboards but unable to track the name)	YouTube video of a live concert performance in Jerusalem for the Jerusalem oud Festival 2016
16	Tamer Pınarbaşı	Turkey								
17	Kyriakos Tapakis	Greece	Volta (comp. Kyriakos Tapakis)	2019					Kyriakos Tapakis: <i>oud</i> , Loukas Metaxas: Electric Bass, Nikos Paraoulakis: Ney & Meybahar group	YouTube video of live concert performance in Budapest

Table 1: Selected recordings

3. 1940 to 1950s – Marko Melkon and Udi Hrant

3.1 Context and biography

To describe the lives of artists such as Marko Alemsharian and Hrant Kenkulian – known to music audiences as Marko Melkon and Udi Hrant respectively – one is bound to at least mention the historical and social situation of the final years of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Armenian genocide in 1915 and the consequent formation of the Armenian diaspora.

The end of the 19th century saw the unity of the Ottoman Empire collapse, leading to the turmoil of war, population displacements, and the rise of ethnic states. The otherwise solid and peacefully cohabiting communities of the Ottoman Empire's urban centres (e.g., Istanbul, Izmir) and Anatolia were now faced with forced migration, exile and even death in conflict. One of the communities that suffered the most was the Armenian community. As the associate professor of musicology Sylvia Alajaji writes:

The arrests on April 24 [1915] served as an ominous prelude to the unprecedented massacres and deportations that were to follow in the coming months. All told, approximately one million Armenians would perish. With the trauma forever etched into their cultural memories, the survivors formed a widespread diaspora whose identities rested on the sense of Self initially forged in those chaotic years leading to 1915.⁸⁸

In these conditions, among others, a great number of musicians who lived and actively performed in Ottoman urban centres and in Anatolia were gradually forced to transfer their lives and artistic practices elsewhere, such as to Athens, Thessaloniki, Beirut, or even further abroad to New York, California, and elsewhere. There, carrying the Anatolian folk and Ottoman classical repertoire in their 'musical luggage,' they recorded and performed extensively, interacting with and influencing the local music scene. Their presence was particularly evident in New York's nightlife:

From the 1930s to the late 1950s, the northeastern United States saw the proliferation of nightclubs and restaurants that regularly featured Armenian musicians from the Ottoman Empire, and later, a generation of Armenian musicians born in the United States. In particular, Eighth Avenue in Manhattan (between 23rd and 42nd streets), home to chic, primarily Greek-owned nightclubs that regularly featured legendary Armenian musicians (mainly those who survived or escaped the massacres of the late 19th and early 20th centuries), became one of the most important scenes for the proliferation of this music and is sometimes referred to today as the "Eighth Avenue scene."⁸⁹

Marko Alemsharian and Hrant Kenkulian were two of the many musicians that were either displaced or affected by the aforementioned socio-political situation. In one way or another, their lives were connected with the Armenian genocide, immigration (abroad or inside

⁸⁸ S. A. Alajaji, *Music and the Armenian Diaspora: Searching for Home in Exile*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015, 25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16xwbgf> accessed July 1, 2023.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 58.

Turkey), and later with the Armenian-American diaspora.

Marko Alemsharian was born in Izmir on 2 May 1895 to parents of Armenian descent (Garabed and Hripsime Alemsharian). At the end of the 19th century, Izmir was considered to be one of the most culturally diverse centres of the Ottoman Empire (Kaliviotis, 2002); the concurrent presence of the Rum (Orthodox, Greek-speaking population), Armenian and Ottoman (later Turkish) Muslim communities had a huge effect on Marko Melkon's identity. Even at a young age, he was fluent in Armenian, Greek, and Turkish, so that later in his life he was able to sing and perform in all three of these languages (as is evident throughout his extensive discography). This comes as no surprise, since multilingualism was a common occurrence back then. According to Pennanen,

There was great linguistic diversity among the various religious and ethnic groups during the final decades of the Ottoman Empire. Many Greek Armenian Orthodox Christians spoke Turkish as their first language, and Turkish was written in Greek and Armenian characters. There were also Turkish-speaking Slavs, Armenian-speaking Greeks, Greek-speaking Jews, and Greek-speaking Levantine Catholic.⁹⁰

In his effort to avoid being enlisted in the Turkish army (with everything that this would mean for an ethnic Armenian in those times) and given his parents' lack of money to buy out his military service, he fled to Athens at the age of 17. There he mostly earned his living through teaching the *oud* and performing on the music scene of Athens and touring throughout Greece. From there, he moved to the U.S.A. and New York in 1921, where his sister was already residing, and in 1923 his parents also followed, fleeing Turkey (probably due to the events of 1922 in Izmir). In these two years, Melkon had already started performing at New York's live music venues, making his living by singing and playing the *oud*. After his marriage to a Greek wife (for which he returned briefly to Greece in 1928), he moved to and stayed in Watertown, Massachusetts, making his living from a musical store he opened. The financial crisis of 1929 led him back to New York, where he started performing again and actively participated in the musical activity of the city. He performed in various places throughout the United States and recorded for recording companies of the time, such as Me-Re, Kalliphon, Balkan, and Metropolitan. He died in Astoria in 1963.⁹¹

Marko Melkon was one of the most important figures of the music scene in Greece and the Northeastern United States from the 1920s until the late 1950s, with a considerable presence in discography and live performance.⁹² His ability to sing fluently in Greek, Armenian and

⁹⁰ Pennanen, R. P., "The Nationalization of Ottoman Popular Music in Greece", *Ethnomusicology*, 48, no. 1 (1994): 1–25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30046238>, accessed February 19, 2022. This diversity is one of the reasons that allowed artists such as Melkon to address large audiences in several countries.

⁹¹ For more information and details on Marko Melkon's life and career see:

i. liner notes by his daughter Rose Hagopian-Mozian-Alemsharian to MARKO MELKON (1996). CD 4281. Traditional Crossroads. US.

ii. Notes by Ian Nagoski to Hi-Fi Adventure in Asia Minor. 2020. Online digital album. (Available at: <https://canary-records.bandcamp.com/album/hi-fi-adventure-in-asia-minor>. Retrieved February 19, 2022.

⁹² "As a singer he is found on more than 56 recordings, 24 of which are in Greek. As an *oud* player, it is calculated that he participated in more than 200 recordings." Personal conversation with Kopanitsanos

Turkish, his vast knowledge of the repertoire of all the above areas (but also the Arabic and Sephardic repertoire) which he performed on the *oud*, and his supreme ability to create an energetic and lively environment for the audience through his performance marked him as a prominent figure of the early and mid-20th century's live and recorded music scene. Melkon entertained audiences for more than 40 years and the contribution he made to introducing Middle Eastern music into the American music scene was invaluable.

His recordings and his unique style have influenced a great number of *oud* players throughout the world and his musical versatility has set an example for them.

Hrant Kenkulian was born in Adapazarı (Turkey) in 1901. His parents were Armenians. He was diagnosed blind four days after his birth. Unlike Melkon, he did not flee to another country to avoid the genocide but, together with his family, he moved to Konya, then later back to Adapazarı and finally (1918–19) to Istanbul, where he continued his musical studies in *oud* with many Armenian teachers – such as Kemani Agopos Ayvazyan (1869 – 1918), Dikran Katsakhian (?–1936), and Udi Krikor Berberian (unknown date of birth and death). Due to financial shortages his life conditions were difficult, but his abilities and dedication to the *oud* eventually allowed him to earn the place and status he deserved, exemplified by his title 'Udi', which is given to 'true masters of the *oud*', and the name 'Hrant Emre', meaning the 'one of the soul'.

Udi Hrant's first recordings were made around 1919 in Turkey (for a representative of His Master's Voice) and they were successful. However, it was not until the 1950s that his career really took off. He travelled (initially for medical treatment) to the United States, where he was welcomed by the Armenian-American community and treated with respect. The unofficial '*kef*'⁹³ gatherings by host families gave way to concerts with large audiences in concert halls and tours around the Northeast United States. As his fame started to spread there, his status was also rising back home in Turkey, where he was granted several performances for the Istanbul Radio.

Aside from his innovations on the *oud* and its technique (scordatura tuning, bidirectional plectrum, left hand pizzicato, many notes legato, and others) and his skills as a singer, Udi Hrant was also a composer. He composed more than 25 songs that now belong to the large corpus of Turkish classical music. In other words, as an artist, he is an example of an improviser-performer-composer.⁹⁴ He developed his life with music performance, lessons, tours and recordings and received wide recognition for his artistry. He died in Istanbul on the 29th of August 1978.

Konstantinos.

⁹³ In Bilal, M., (2010,6): "Based on these historical accounts and personal experience, it was entirely common for Armenians to gather with musicians and friends at an individual's home to listen to music, dance and enjoy food. The word "kef" represents this cultural phenomenon".

⁹⁴ For more information on Udi Hrant's life and career see Hagopian, Harold G., liner notes to *Udi Hrant: The Early Recordings, Volume I*, CD 4270, Traditional Crossroads, 1994.

Marko Melkon and Udi Hrant were contemporaries. They both experienced the decline of the Ottoman Empire, they traveled to the United States, they recorded, performed, and became famous in their time, and they were integral agents who increased the *oud*'s visibility outside the Middle East and created a network of students and audiences across continents. Today they are still a point of reference for *oud* players around the world, constituting the foundational pillars of Armenian *oud* playing.⁹⁵ As a consequence, they have greatly influenced the younger generations of *oud* players around the world, some of whom have become *oud* masters themselves. Marko Melkon embodies the symbolic figure of the entertainer, something depicted in his discography and career. On the other hand, Udi Hrant was mostly appreciated for his *taksim* and his knowledge of the *makam* modal system. Marko Melkon seems to have acknowledged this aesthetic difference, according to his daughters' memories:

I remember when the legendary blind oud player Udi Hrant arrived in New York from Istanbul. He came to our home for dinner and played for us afterwards. My aunt told Marko, "He plays beautifully, doesn't he?" Marko replied, "I do not play that kind of music. I make people dance." Nothing could have been truer. When it came to cabaret-style playing and having a good time, Marko was the undisputed king. He not only knew every fan by name but their favorite song as well. He knew just when to play what song and how to play it custom tailored to their taste. He made each person feel as if he were playing for them alone.⁹⁶

Melkon's self-identification as a musician that 'makes people dance', is a remark that makes evident the divisions that existed (and still exist) in the minds of both audiences and artists, namely those of 'music for dancing/entertainment versus music for listening', 'pop vs serious' music, 'folk vs classical,' and so on. Making distinctions like these reveals deep-rooted perceptions as to the value of specific practices, something which is not devoid of stereotyping and prejudice. However, research shows that in the past artists who served different performance circumstances actually had much in common with one another, both in terms of repertoire and improvisational practices. For example, both Melkon and Udi Hrant recorded examples of the Ottoman classical, urban and Anatolian folk repertoire, as well as *taksims* and metric improvisations.

Interest in Melkon and Hrant's work has focused on performances of compositions and *taksims* and not on their metric improvisations, despite the fact that both of them appear in such recordings (mainly in *çiftetelli*). This absence of research on, and even interest in, the subject has been one of the sparks for the research presented here: why is metric improvisation not considered worth researching to the same degree that the modal and melodic aspects of *taksim* have been?

⁹⁵ Melissa Bilal's article 'The Oud: Armenian Music as a means of Identity, Preservation, Construction and Formation in Armenian American Diaspora Communities of the Eastern United States', Columbia University, 2010, 4. For a helpful tool for a deeper understanding on the subject see <http://www.theoudplayer.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/FINAL-EDITED-VERSION-IN-912071.pdf>. Retrieved February 19, 2022

⁹⁶ *ibid*, Rose Hagopian-Mozian-Alemsherian (1996).

There are a number of hypotheses that can shed light on the evident lack of representation of metric improvisation in recordings and in research in general. First of all, the very nature of a performance in the early 20th century that would include metric improvisations is connected with live performances in an urban environment. Nightclubs, historically called *café aman*,⁹⁷ that appeared in the late Ottoman Empire and in Athens at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries hosted performances of folk songs from Anatolia, compositions from the Ottoman classical repertoire, songs from the urban repertoire, as well as *taksims* and metric improvisations. Given the technical equipment of the time, such conditions were inadequate, to say the least, for recording sessions. When moving the live performance to a recording setting, artists seemed to choose to record songs or *taksims* and rarely metric improvisations, probably for commercial reasons.

To add to this, we should also consider the reason why metric improvisation was employed in these performances. Discographic research has shown that the majority of metric improvisations recorded in the early period refer to specific dances and almost exclusively to the *çiftetelli*. In those settings, the connection of metric improvisation with the dance in a live performance setting seems to be the actual reason for the metric improvisation's existence.⁹⁸ Metric improvisation seems to have served as a prolongation of a given performance. People were dancing and their dancing had to continue, so the best way to do that was to 'extend' a song by performing a *taksim* on the rhythm (either non-metered or metric) and then come back to the song to end the performance. In my opinion, this is why, in general, the most represented metric improvisations in the early discography of 78 rpms of this genre is the *çiftetelli*.

Çiftetelli is a dance that even today dominates the live performances of urban music in Greece.⁹⁹ And it comes as no surprise that it evolved, in the urban entertainment scene of Greece, as a solo performance in live and recorded settings for instruments such as the *buzuki*. *Çiftetelli* is also connected with the belly dance scene that prevailed in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, the environment of *café aman* and later of the nightclubs of Eighth Avenue – with alcohol consumption, entertainment, and dance forming a part of these performances – has historically been and today even still is disparaged by some for detracting from the quality of the musical performance. Armenian and Greek musicians that found their way to New York had to work for their living and they found their way to the Eighth Avenue nightclubs. Their performances were connected with nocturnal hours, drinking, dance and entertainment. Although they enjoyed the admiration of the audiences, these musicians have historically been compared with, and looked down upon by, their peers, who were performing in the Ottoman palace and later in the concert halls. They have been regarded as uneducated or lacking proficiency, and even treated as the Other by nationalistic

⁹⁷ Roderick Conway Morris's work on the origins and evolution of *café aman*, is an invaluable source on the subject. Conway Morris, R., 1981. Greek café Music, <https://www.roderickconwaymorris.com/Articles/415.html>, retrieved February 19, 2022.

⁹⁸ This is a situation that seems to change over time as this research will show.

⁹⁹ As is the *karşılama* or the *roman oyun havası* in Turkey.

governments who were forming nation states.¹⁰⁰ Apart from the performance related issues, these social connotations also seem to add to the rare representation of metric improvisations in the discography and (subsequently) in research, despite the fact that even today, in live conditions, metric improvisations are performed and considered a part of the performance.

3.2 The *Cifte telli* (Marko Melkon) and the *Karşılama* (Udi Hrant): a comparative approach

The following section concentrates on two recordings from Marko Melkon and Udi Hrant, *Cifte telli* and *Karşılama*¹⁰¹ that serve as points of reference for the presence of metric improvisations in recordings during the 1920s and 1950s.

3.2.1 The *Cifte telli* by Marko Melkon

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/KiuHtGiDYA8gOwE>

Cifte telli is one of the recordings that Marko Melkon made in the U.S. between 1942 and 1945. Melkon's extensive presence in discography and live performance has influenced many *oud* players throughout the 20th century. Even though one performance is not enough to draw conclusions about any musician's style, the lack of more sound material should not be an obstacle for one to at least develop a good grasp of the subject. Through transcription and analysis of the artist's performance, we can both trace his technical and stylistic choices and use this information in an attempt to trace the influences that the performances may have had on later players.

The sound material used for the transcription refers to the CD by Traditional Crossroads, with the title 'Marko Melkon', which is a compilation of twenty-one tracks from his extended discography. It is worth clarifying the background of the *Cifte telli* track, because it can depict the 'fluid' situation of the recording industry in the early and mid-20th century.

There are three 78 rpm discs on which Melkon's name and the word *Çiftetelli/τσιφτετέλι* appear together; two of them labelled *Cifte telli* and the third one *Chifte telli*, as shown below:

¹⁰⁰ It took decades, for example, for *rebetiko* in Greece to be considered as a legitimate genre of music and for its representatives to gain the acknowledgment they deserved. Dictatorships, alcohol prohibition and so on. in the course of the 20th century both in Greece and in Turkey, pushed artists like the famous Roza Eskenazi to the verge of poverty. For example, it was not until the 1980s, with the revival of *paradosiaka*, that Roza and her famous colleagues came to the surface and were again appreciated by the younger generation.

¹⁰¹ *Çiftetelli* and *karşılama* are actually names of dances, common in Greece and Turkey, one in 8/8 and the other in 9/8.

Image 1: KALIPHON 703A label



Image 3: BALKAN 4003-b label



Image 2: ME RE 4003B label

These three labels – BALKAN, KALIPHON and ME RE – were initially puzzling, since in the last two the names of the artists have been omitted. The question emerged as to whether the labels referred to the same recording.

Konstantinos Kopanitsanos, a Greek collector and researcher of *café aman* and *rebetiko* music, mentioned to me in a conversation that the recording of the ‘Marko Melkon’ compilation disc from Traditional Crossroads is taken from the BALKAN 4003-B and ME RE 4003B recordings, and not from the KALIPHON 703A. According to him, KALIPHON 703A is a recording of a violin solo *çiftetelli/τσιφτετέλι* played by Nishan Shedefjian, in which Melkon participated by playing the *oud*.

Ian Nagovski makes clear that BALKAN and ME RE actually refer to the same company:

In the 30s Asllan launched an independent label called Mi-Re (roughly “With New” in Albanian) Rekord primarily to release his own recordings, but it stalled after about 6 releases. In October 1941 he accompanied a Greek singer and songwriter named G.K. Xenopoulos as an oudist along with the beloved Greek clarinetist Kostas Gadinis and accordionist John Gianaros for the Orthophonic subsidiary of Victor Records run by Tetos Demetriades. The trio of Gadinis, Asllan, and Gianaros cut another four sides for Orthophonic on May 1, 1942. Shortly thereafter, Asllan relaunched his label as Me Re with the help of Doneff and then quickly renamed it, more generically, Balkan. Gianaros came in as a business partner, and Balkan released scores of records, some of them seemingly selling thousands of copies in the mid-40s, but Gianaros split angrily with Asllan after just a few years over money problems.¹⁰²

Given all the above, it is quite safe to assume that the last two labels refer to the same recording, and that this is the one published on Traditional Crossroads.

3.2.1.1 *Çiftetelli/τσιφτετέλι(tsiftetéli)* and solo *Çiftetelli/τσιφτετέλι(tsiftetéli)*

Çiftetelli (in Turkish), *τσιφτετέλι(tsiftetéli)* (in Greek), *ciftitelli*, and also *shaftatalli*¹⁰³ (in Arabic) all refer to both a rhythmic cycle and a dance, common to the music and dance practice of the area of the Middle East and Northeastern Mediterranean. The basic form of the *shaftatalli* and the relative *üsül wahda kabira* in Arabic *iqā’* are shown below:

¹⁰² All information is extracted from Nagovsky, I., 2020, *Quilted Flowers*, <https://canaryrecords.tumblr.com/>, accessed February 19, 2022.

¹⁰³ On the website [makamworld.com](http://www.makamworld.com) we read: “‘Iqā’ Ciftetelli (pronounced “shaftatalli” in Arabic) is a Turkish usül that became popular in Arabic music. It is rarely used for composed melodies; instead, its primary use is to support improvisations (both vocal and instrumental).” <http://www.makamworld.com/en/iqaa/ciftetelli.php> accessed February 19, 2022.



Figure 2: Shaftatalli iqa'



Figure 3: Wahda Kabira

However, the situation is slightly different when it comes to the actual practice. In Greece and Turkey, musicians often refer to *Düyek usulü* as *çiftetelli*.

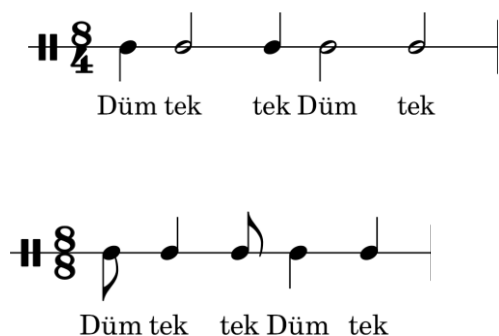


Figure 4: Düyek usulü in 8/4 and 8/8

The widely accepted view of the name's origin is that it actually refers to the etymological origins of the word *çiftetelli*; in Turkish, *çift* means 'double' and *tel* means 'the string of an instrument'. It is claimed to specifically refer to a technique used by violin players, in which two strings with an octave between them play the same melody concurrently (Γαρίνης, 1993). The term *çiftetelli* is sometimes mistakenly related to the general term 'belly dance'. However, not all so-called belly dances are danced over a simple *çiftetelli* rhythmic cycle. For example, in old traditional folk dances from Minor Asia, *τσιφτετέλι* (*tsiftetéli*) was danced by couples facing one another and in a quite more 'modest' manner than belly dance.

In the early recording history of the *café aman*, the term *τσιφτετέλι* (*tsiftetéli*) was used in at least two ways. First, it could refer to a whole improvised *taksim* or *gazel*/(a)manes

performance on top of a rhythmic cycle of *çiftetelli* (and its variations).¹⁰⁴ Second, it could be stated before or after the title of the composition. (Stating the name of the dance before or after the composition was a common practice in title-giving at that time).¹⁰⁵ In the case of improvised *taksim* over the cycle of *τσιφτετέλι*(*tsiftetéli*), rhythmic and free parts were alternated, giving a hint of what would happen in the years to come. A new distinct category of solo *τσιφτετέλι* (*tsiftetéli*) would be developed, performed by violins, clarinets and mostly the *buzuki* in the modern Greek repertoire of *laika*, offering a vast amount of performances of this type in the discography and in live conditions.¹⁰⁶ In these cases, a composed part is not even a prerequisite for the improvised part. There are, of course, cases in the discography where small, composed parts precede the improvised ones, or are included after them. In most cases, however, the solo *τσιφτετέλι*(*tsiftetéli*) (*tsiftetéli*) begins with a simple statement of the rhythmic cycle on percussion, or a melodic-rhythmic statement of the rhythmic cycle by the instrument performing the improvised part.

The argument presented here is multifaceted:

1. As a performance practice for instrumentalists, solo *τσιφτετέλι*(*tsiftetéli*) constitutes a distinct category of rhythmic improvisation practice and traces its origins back to the performances of the early 20th century.¹⁰⁷ Its survival in early recordings, as well as its presence in modern recordings and live performances, can give us a hint of its significance in live performance practice, both then and now. A full musical analysis of this category is beyond the scope of this research, leaving it open for further investigation.
2. As a performance practice, solo *τσιφτετέλι*(*tsiftetéli*) is tightly connected with the urban live music environments of each period, such as *café aman* of the early 20th century in Izmir and Athens, the live music performance scenes of the U.S. (where it spread during the mid-20th century through the presence of artists such as Marko Melkon), and the live music performance scenes of *laika* in urban centers like Athens and elsewhere.
3. The performance of a solo *çiftetelli*/ *τσιφτετέλι*(*tsiftetéli*) is intended to make people dance. This already sets some boundaries for the performance, because aspects such as duration and form, and rhythmical intensity and rhythmic flow all need to facilitate the dance. This suggests that communication takes place between musicians and dancers during and through a performance, which is an interesting

¹⁰⁴ All sound examples can be accessed at <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/saLl8aBN28Upf92>. Such an example is the ‘Διπλοχορδο’ (Diplochorodo) recording of Dimitris Semsis in 1940 (His Master’s Voice AO 2649). *Διπλόχορδο* actually means double string, thus *Çiftetelli*. In this recording, the whole performance utilises the technique of double string concurrent playing.

¹⁰⁵ The earliest example of this is ‘Τσιφτετέλι–Θα σπάσω κούπες’ recording of Estudiantina of Izmir in 1908–1909 (Odeon Records NO–58583).

¹⁰⁶ Some examples of this can be found here <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/saLl8aBN28Upf92>: 1.) Clarinet solo *çiftetelli* by Vasilis Saleas; 2.) *Buzuki* solo *çiftetelli* by Giannis Palaiologou (1963).

¹⁰⁷ It is but one of the categories of metric improvisation connected with a dance; *karşılama* or *roman oyun havası* solos are also widely performed, one such example in early recording history being *Karsilama* metric improvisation of Udi Hrant following in the next sub-chapter and others.

avenue for further research.

4. Not all parts of a structured improvised performance are necessarily improvised; many motifs and short phrases are utilised that are already known. However, the way in which things are put together to create a larger structure for the occasion is, at least in the early recordings, of an improvisational manner. This indicates the creative co-existence of composed (or pre-conceived and pre-practiced) and improvised material in the same performance.

3.2.1.2 Use of Rhythm

Çifte telli rhythmic pattern and variations

The first thing that one notices when trying to transcribe the *Çifte telli* is that the rhythmic cycle on top of which Melkon performs his improvisation is not a simple *shaftatalli*. In the figures below we can see what a simple basic *shaftatalli* rhythmic pattern looks like. It can be compared with the *mahsum iqa* (depicted in 8/8 instead of 4/4 to facilitate the comparison), and then the different rhythmic variations played by the percussion instrument in the *Çifte telli* recording of Marko Melkon. The argument here is that, in the course of the performance, rhythmic patterns are subject to aesthetic and culturally influenced choices that create a fluid artistic result, and the same observation applies to their names and their execution.



Figure 5: *Shaftatalli iqa'*

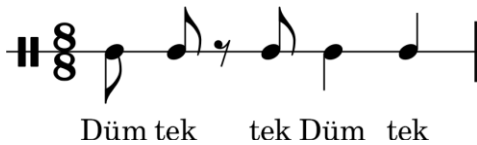


Figure 6: *Mahsum iqa* in 8/8



Figure 7: Basic Rhythmic pattern in *Çifte Tellî*

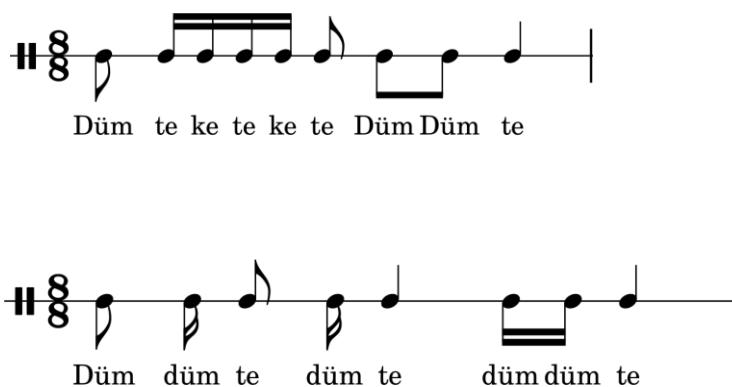


Figure 8: Variations of basic rhythmic pattern

The above variations are the ones played more often throughout the recording by the percussion instrument. They seem to be a ‘mix’ of *çiftetelli* and *mahsum*, mostly emphasising the last two eighth notes and the last quarter note. The way that the percussionist interprets the rhythmic cycle is simple and clean, a manner of playing that facilitates the soloist’s performance. I chose to transcribe the recording in an 8/8 meter and not in 8/4 or even 4/4, guided by how the percussionist interprets the rhythmic cycle. The use of sixteenth notes in the percussion interpretation implies that the basic unit of subdivision is the eighth note. Combined with the rather fast tempo and rhythmic density of the *oud* playing, an 8/8 depiction of the meter is preferable. In addition, this choice allows me to transcribe musical ornamentation in more detail.

3.1.2.3 Use of motif

In a total performance time of 2’50 (which includes the accompaniment for the violin *taksim*), Melkon uses 29 different motifs (and variations of them), some of which he repeats during the solo. The overall flow of rhythmic subdivision used for the phrasing is based on sixteenth notes. I will not provide a complete list of the motifs here, as it is already contained in the complete transcription, but I will use some of the most interesting motifs that seem to make up his unique style of *oud* playing. In explaining, I will use the numbers and names of the motifs as they appear in the final transcription.

1. Oud Motif 2 is an example of a combination of different rhythmic values inside a motif. As a movement, it seems to be used to lead to the tonic. It is used four times inside the solo (00:04-00:05, 00:20-00:21, 00:32-00:33, 01:19-01:20).

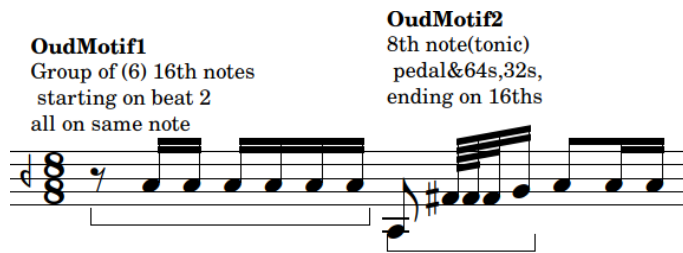


Figure 9: Oud Motif 2

2. Oud Motif 5, which is actually a group of thirty-second notes landing on an eighth note, is a quick plectrum movement on a single note, often used by many *oud* players (00:12).
3. Oud Motif 6 is a fast glissando movement connecting two notes of the same rhythmic value (00:13).

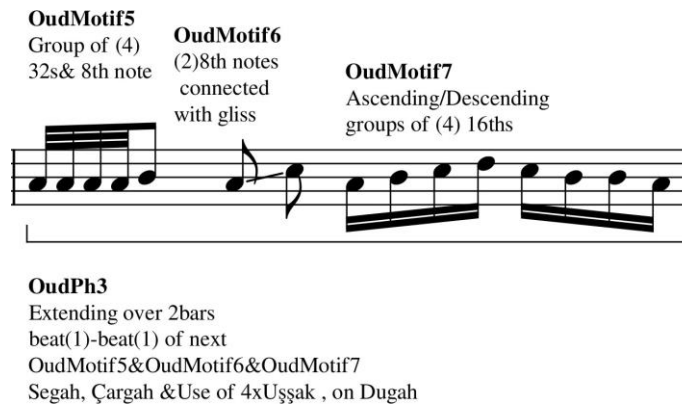


Figure 10: Oud Motif 5, Oud Motif 6, Oud Motif 7

4. Oud Motif 7 shows two groups of sixteenth notes ascending from/descending to the tonic. It also appears in bar 11 (00:31). Oud Motif 7 and its reduction are used in the ending phrase of the solo (2:51-2:53), as shown in the figures below:



Figure 11: Reappearance of Oud Motif 7

- Oud Motif 10 & Var Oud M10 (00:15-00:16) are an example of motif reduction inside the bar.

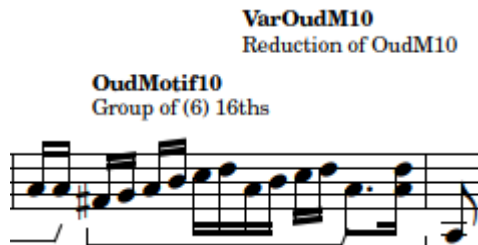


Figure 12: Oud Motif 10 & Var Oud Motif 10

- Oud Motif 11 (00:17) shows a rhythmic interpretation that varies the rhythmic cycle, through the use of open strings.

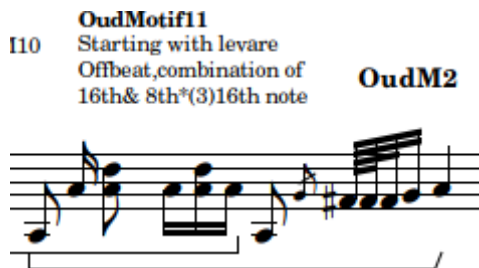


Figure 13: Oud Motif 11, open strings

- Oud Motif 13 (00:23) is a commonly used falling movement, where a tremolo on a dotted quarter note proceeds to the tonic (in this instance to the low octave of the tonic, which is an open string for the *oud*).

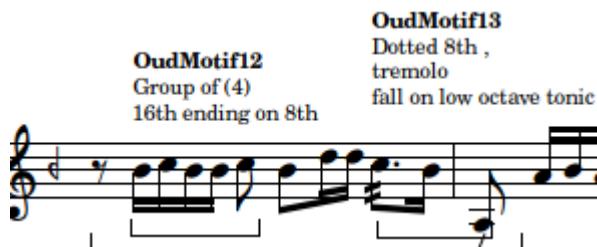


Figure 14: Oud Motif 13 fall to the tonic movement

- Oud Motif 14 (00:34-00:35) is an example of a rhythmic displacement tool: the motif starts on beat 2. Its reduced variation appears in the next bar.

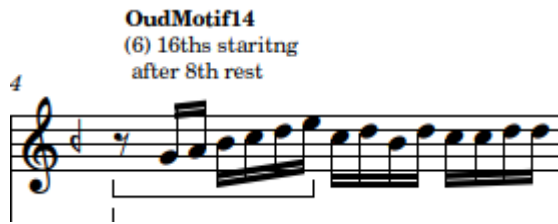


Figure 15: Rhythmic displacement of the motif

9. Oud Motif 15 (00:38) shows a frequently used rhythmic, open-string gesture for *oud* players.

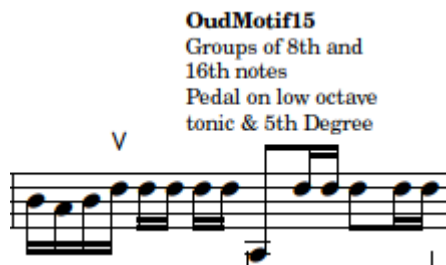


Figure 16: Rhythmic playing in open strings

10. Oud Motif 17 (00:41) is also an example of the use of different rhythmic values on the same note in a gesture.

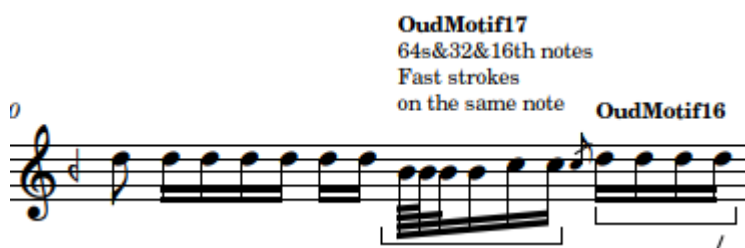


Figure 17: Same note rhythmic insistence

11. Oud Motif 20 (01:57 & 2:09) is a jump with glissando on the same string that is often used in *oud* playing.

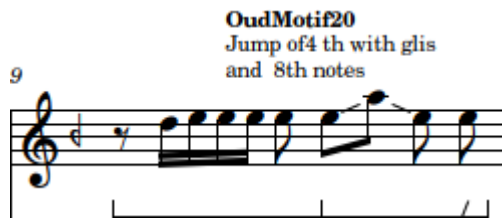


Figure 18: Glissando on closed position

12. Oud Motif 23 (2:15-2:16) and its variations offer an example of how a motif can be extended and immediately reduced and inverted in the same bar.

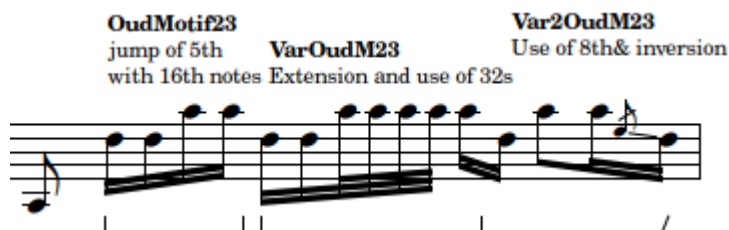


Figure 19: Oud Motif 23, extension and inversion

13. Oud Motif 26 (02:35) is a combined ornament consisting of grace note before the note and glissando towards the note.

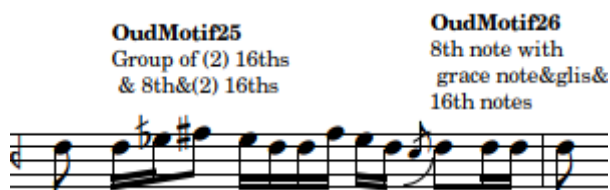


Figure 20: Grace note glissando

3.1.2.4 Use of phrasing, sentences, and overall structure

Marko Melkon's *Cifte telli* can roughly be divided into three parts, the first before the violin *taksim* (00:00-01:21), the second where he accompanies the violin *taksim* (01:21-01:49), and the third part where he again takes the leading improvisatory role until the end (01:50-02:51). It consists of a total of 30 phrases (counting the prototypes/original phrases), some of which are repeated and varied, and seven sentences (in each of which he concludes a musical meaning). As is discussed later in this chapter, structurally related choices are not irrelevant

to the *seyir* of the *makam*. On the contrary, they seem to be greatly influenced by it, giving us a hint of the importance of the *seyir* as a structure-defining tool in *makam*-related improvisation (rhythmic or otherwise).

We can discern four categories in Marko Melkon's phrasing as far as bar length is concerned:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 4), referring to phrases that start and finish inside one bar. Falling within this category are all the combinations and different lengths of a phrase inside a bar; i.e., starting off-beat, starting on another beat of the bar, and so on, but still finishing inside one bar and not covering the whole length of the bar:

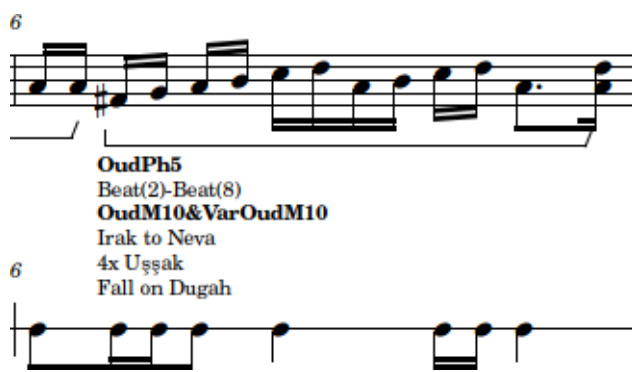


Figure 21: Oud Phrase 5, bar 6 (00:15-00:16)

2. One-bar phrase, (in total: 15), covering the whole length of the bar:

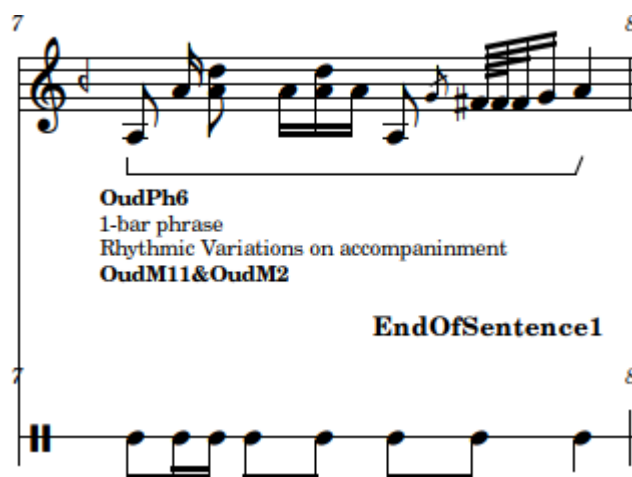


Figure 22: Oud Phrase 6, one bar phrase (00:17-00:18)

3. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 13), mostly starting off-beat near the

beginning of the meter but also on the second beat or any other beat of the bar and finishing on the first beat of the next bar.

OudPh4
Extending over 2 bars
Off beat(1) - Beat(1) of next bar
OudM8&OudM9
5xRast of Yegah
Descending 3rds from Hüseini

OudPh5
Beat(2)-Beat(8)
OudM10&VarOudM10
Irak to Neva
4x Uşşak
Fall on Dugah

Figure 23: Oud Phrase 4, bars 5 & 6 (00:13-00:15)

4. Two-bar phrase (in total: 5), covering the full length of two consecutive bars.

OudPh23
2 bar phrase
OudM10&group of 16ths on the same note
Irak to Acem , fall on Hüseini

Figure 24: Oud Phrase 23, bars 47 & 48 (01:50-1:54)

5. Three-bar phrase (in total: 1), covering the full length of three consecutive bars.

OudPh10
3 bar phrase
OudM14& groups of 16ths&OudM15&VarOudM14&VarOudM2
Rast to Hüseini (5x Rast on Rast)
Movement around Neva , fall on Segah , end on Neva
Rhythmic insistence on Neva

Figure 25: Oud Phrase 10, bars 14, 15 & 16 (00:34-00:42)

Phrase variations

Apart from the length of a phrase, another significant aspect to investigate through the analysis is the use of variations for phrases. As we saw in the section ‘Use of motif’ above, motif variations are evident in Marko Melkon’s performance and, as the analysis below shows, the variation tool is also applicable to complete phrases. It is interesting to observe both how the variation tool is used and how the varied phrase is positioned in the context of the original.

A variation of a phrase in Melkon’s performance can appear as:

1. A reduction of the original, as depicted below with Oud Phrase 13 and Var Oud Phrase13.

The figure displays musical notation for Oud Phrase 13 and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13, across three systems.

System 1 (Bars 19-20):

- Top staff (Treble clef):** Shows Oud Phrase 13 (bars 19-20) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bars 19-20). The variation is highlighted with a red box. The phrase ends with a double bar line and the text "End Of Sentence 3".
- Bottom staff (Bass clef):** Shows the original Oud Phrase 13 (bars 19-20) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bars 19-20).

System 2 (Bar 26):

- Top staff (Treble clef):** Shows the original Oud Phrase 13 (bar 26) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bar 26).
- Bottom staff (Bass clef):** Shows the original Oud Phrase 13 (bar 26) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bar 26).

System 3 (Bar 26):

- Top staff (Treble clef):** Shows the original Oud Phrase 13 (bar 26) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bar 26).
- Bottom staff (Bass clef):** Shows the original Oud Phrase 13 (bar 26) and its variation, Var Oud Phrase13 (bar 26).

Annotations:

- OudPh12** beat(2)-beat(7)
VarOudM14& groups of 16th notes
Ascending 5x Rast & 4x Hicaz On Neva, ending on Neva
- OudPh13** Extending over 2 bars
Beat(7)-beat(8) of next bar
OudM16&OudM17&OudM16
Rhythmic insistence on Neva
- End Of Sentence 3**
- VarOudPh13**
OudPh13 reduction by (3) 8th notes
placement at the beginning of the bar

Figure 25: Oud Phrase 13 (00:48-00:51) and variation, bars 19-20, Var Oud Phrase13, bar 26

2. An extension of the original; an example is Oud Phrase 29 and Var 2 Oud Phrase 29.

OudPh29
 Extending over 2 bars
 Beat(1)- beat(1) of next bar
 Starting with 8th note rest
 Movement around Hüseini
 67 Phrase serving as **question** 68

VarOudPh29
 On beat (5): pedal low octave tonic
 Movement around Neva falling on Çargah
 Phrase serving as **answer**

Figure 26: Oud Phrase 29, bar 67 (02:38-2:40)

Var2OudPh29
 Extension of OudPh29 (until beat(2) of next bar)&OudM27
 Through Neva and Hüseini movement around Çargah
 Fall on Segah
 4x Uşşak On Dugah
 Fall from Neva to Dugah

Figure 27: Var 2 Oud Phrase 29, bars 69-70 (2:41-2:44)

3. Placement of the original phrase at a different pitch (transposition).

OudPh26
 1 bar phrase
 Rhythmic insistence on Acem falling to Neva

Figure 28: Oud Phrase 26, bar 53 (02:00-02:04)

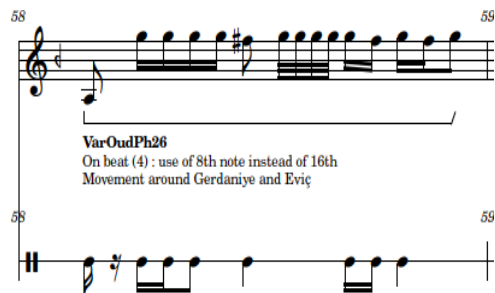


Figure 29: Transposition resulting in Var Oud Phrase 26, bar 58 (02:16-02:18)

4. A slight differentiation in the melodic material of the original. Oud Phrase 14 and Var Oud Phrase 14 are such examples.

Figure 30: Oud Phrase 14 & Var Oud Phrase 14, bars 21-22 (00:51-00:53) & (00:54-00:56)

5. A combination of two or more of the above. Oud Phrase 7 and Var Oud Phrase 7 are examples of this. Replacement of a motif and transposition are used to create a variation of the original phrase.

Figure 31: Combination of tools for Oud Phrase 7 (00:20-00:22) & Var Oud Phrase 7 (00:22-00:24), bars 8-9

Varied phrase and its displacement

Melkon uses variations of a phrase in several ways:

1. As an autonomous phrase placed separate from the original phrase, as shown below.

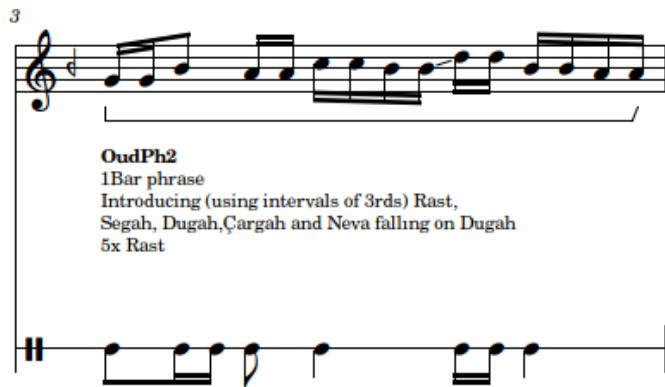


Figure 32: Oud Phrase 2, bar 3, original position (00:07-00:10)



Figure 33: Var Oud Phrase 2, bar 10, variation and displacement (00:24-00:27)

2. In a ‘question-answer’ fashion; i.e., as an answer to the original phrase, placed in the consecutive bar, as shown below with Oud Phrase 7 & Var Oud Phrase 7:

OudPh6
1-bar phrase
Rhythmic Variations on accompaniment
OudM11&OudM2

EndOfSentence1

OudPh7 (Question)
Extending over 2 bars
Beat(2)-Beat(1)
Segah leading to Çargah
Falling on Dugah)low octave

VarOudPh7(Answer)
Extending over 2 bars
Beat(2)-Beat(1)
OudPh7 one tone lower&
replacement of
tremolo on beat(6) with group of 16th notes

OudM7

VarOudPh2

OudPh8
Extending over 2 bars
beat(2)-beat(1) of next bar
Rast to Segah & **OudM7**
4x Uşşak

Figure 34: Question-answer tool (00:20-00:22) & Var Oud Phrase 7 (00:22-00:24)

3. In a series of consecutive bars, using different variations of the original phrase, either next to or further along from the prototype. In the following example, the original phrase is Oud Phrase 26 in bar 53, and the variations of this appear in bars 58-60 and 63-64 as shown below:

OudPh26
1 bar phrase
Rhythmic insistence on Acem falling to Neva

Figure 35: Oud Phrase 26, bar 53, original phrase (02:16-02:18)

VarOudPh26
On beat (4) : use of 8th note instead of 16th
Movement around Gerdaniye and Eviç

Var2OudPh26
On beat (2)
Use of 3rd minor interval instead of the same note
Movement around Acem fall on Neva

Figure 36: Var Oud Phrase 26, bar 58, Var 2 Oud Phrase 26, bar 59 (02:16-02:24)

Var3OudPh26
Extending over 2 bars
On beat(5) use of OudM24&group of 4 16th notes ending on beat(1) of next bar (Extension)
Phrase insisting on Hüseini , falling on Neva , using 4x Hicaz on Neva

OudPh27
Extending over 2 bars
Continuous groups of 16th notes ascending&chaining
5x Rast on Rast
4x Hicaz on Neva
Falling on Neva

Figure 37: Var 3 Oud Phrase 26, bar 59

Var5OudPh26
Extension of Var4OudPh26
Ending on beat(1) of next bar
From Segah to Gerdaniye (Hicaz On Neva)
Fall on Neva

OudPh26
OudPh26 On different notes
On beat(8) : 8th note rest
From Segah to Eviç (Hicaz On Neva)
Fall on Neva

Var4OudPh26
OudPh26 On different notes
On beat(8) : 8th note rest
From Segah to Eviç (Hicaz On Neva)
Fall on Neva

OudMotif25
Group of (2) 16ths & 8th&(2) 16ths

OudMotif26
8th note with grace note&glis& 16th notes

Figure 38: Var 4 Oud Phrase 26, bar 63 & Var 5 Oud Phrase 26, bar 64 (02:30-02:33)

Sentences, parts and use of *makam*

In a syntactical way of structuring his performance, Melkon makes use of small numbers of phrases, building sentences in which he appears to conclude a musical statement. These sentences (in total there are seven) vary in length and in the number of phrases included:

Part 1:

1. Sentence 1 (bars 1-7, 00:00-00:19), which contains six original phrases.
2. Sentence 2 (bars 8-13, 00:20-00:34), which contains three original phrases, three variations referring to them, and one variation referring to a phrase of a previous sentence.
3. Sentence 3 (bars 14–20, 00:35-00:42)), which contains four original phrases and one variation referring to them.
4. Sentence 4 (bars 21–32, 00:43-01:21), which contains six original phrases and six variations referring to them.

Part 2: Accompaniment for violin and *taksim* (01:22-01:49).

Part 3:

1. Sentence 5 (bars 47-55, 01:50-02:12)), which contains five original phrases and 2 variations referring to them.
2. Sentence 6 (bars 56-66, 02:12-02:37), which contains three original phrases and five variations referring to a phrase of a previous sentence.
3. Sentence 7 (bars 67-72, 02:37-02:53), which contains two original phrases and two variations referring to them.

There is a variety evident in the length and use of several phrases and variations throughout the development of the performance, which indicates the improvisatory manner in which the performance is built. 6-bar and 7-bar sentences (perhaps the result of an attempt at an 8-bar sentence) are used in both parts, while the overall length of sentence varies from 6 to 12 bars. The first part is larger than the second, and introduces a great amount of original material. Additionally, Melkon uses variations in the first part that refer to previous sentences, whereas the variations in the second part mostly refer to phrases inside the same sentence.

The *seyir* of the *makam* is a further structuring device that develops in the same sentence structure. In Sentence 1 and Sentence 2, the phrasing moves around the tonic (*Dügâh*), showing the *Irak* and *Rast* degrees below, and the *Segah* above up to the *Neva*, a typical first gesture of *makam Uşşak*. Sentence 3 moves the centre of focus to the *Neva*, and then with the use of a *Hicaz* tetrachord leads to a *Karçığar* modulation. The beginning of Sentence 4 employs the *Acem* as a return to *makam Uşşak*, but only temporarily, to then modulate again to *Karçığar* and then, with the use of the *Acem*, directly back to *makam Uşşak*. Sentence 5 begins with the introduction of the Hüseyinî degree, which combined with a passage from *Nim*

Hicaz, implies a modulation to *makam Hüseyini* with a *Hicaz çeşni* (an often-used modulation of *Uşşak makam*). Sentence 6 raises the focus to the upper register of the *makam*, to *Muhayyer*, and, again with a passage from *makam Karçığar*, the improvisation concludes with Sentence 7 and a return to *makam Uşşak*. All the gestures of this improvised performance show a deep knowledge of the *seyir* of the *makam* and show how the ascending-descending model is built on the *seyir* notion. On the whole, Melkon employs an ascending-descending model of development, which includes a modulation-return movement.

3.1.1.5 Concluding remarks on Marko Melkon's *Cifte telli*

The analysis of Marko Melkon's *Cifte telli* has brought up some interesting issues:

1. *Cifte telli* seems to be a fully improvised performance on a given rhythmic cycle that operates as a framework for the melodic development of the artist's ideas. Given the early date of the recording and its relevance to other recordings, as noted above, we can conclude that this type of metric improvisation was an often-used improvisation practice during the early 20th century.
2. The rhythmic flow of improvisation mostly follows the basic subdivisions of the rhythmic cycle (something that we will also notice in Udi Hrant's metric improvisations). Slightly differentiated rhythmic flows are used to emphasise the structure of the improvisation, to build tension when moving to the high register of the *makam*, or when modulating to a neighbouring *makam*.
3. *Cifte telli* follows the *seyir* of the *makam* and it also uses modulations that are common to the specific *makam*.¹⁰⁸ This allows us to conclude that *makam* and *seyir* operate as a framework of regulation in metric improvisation performance, at least in those early recordings.
4. *Cifte telli* does not relate to any composition, preceding or following. However, analysis has shown that there is a compositional approach in this performance, dictated both by the *makam* and *seyir*, as well as the rhythmic cycle.

3.2.2 The *Karşılama* by Udi Hrant

This chapter refers to the recording found in:

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/ctAAjHXaDVHYrZC> (01:26-03:58).

The *Karşılama* by Udi Hrant is a unique example of a metric improvisation on the *oud* on a 9/8 rhythmic cycle. The recording begins with a *şarkı* on 8/8. Then, we listen to Udi Hrant's voice stating the actual word '*Karşılama*'. In the liner notes of the CD, we are informed that the recordings included are from private lessons given in a hotel room during Udi Hrant's tour during the 1950s. In this track, Udi Hrant seems to be showing some *şarkıs* to his student

¹⁰⁸ Skoulios (2017,103) describes these common or frequently used modulations as "innate modulatory parenthesis that are regarded as an integral part of the modal development of a *makam*, such as *çeşni Segah* in *makam Rast*, *çeşni Karçığar* in *makam Uşşak*, *çeşni Hüzzam* in *makam Segah*. At the same time the return to the original *makam* is, usually, imperative."

(perhaps introducing them to the *fasıl* mentality). After the 8/8 *şarkı*, Udi Hrant continues with two *şarkıs* from Dede Efendi, *Indim Yarin Bahçesine* and *Baharın zamanı geldi a canım*,¹⁰⁹ both in 9/8, which he connects with a metric improvisation.

At this point, it is worth providing some information about Dede Efendi. It helps to position Udi Hrant as a remarkable example of an artist who was able to combine his knowledge of the Ottoman classical repertoire and his experience of the urban live music scene – *piyasa*.

Hamamizade İsmail Dede Efendi (also known as Dede Efendi) was born in Istanbul in 1778 and died in Mecca in 1846. From an early age, he participated in the Mevlevi gatherings in Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi. He is widely known for his compositions in almost every form of Ottoman classical music (almost two hundred are known to date). Furthermore, the creation of some composite *makams* is linked to his name. Dede Efendi is a representative of the Ottoman classical style and his compositions are still widely performed.

Both the choice of repertoire and the combination of compositions during performance are of interest in Udi Hrant's recording of *Karşılama*. He records two examples of *şarkı* from Dede Efendi (considered a pillar of Ottoman classical music) for his student, and combines them with a metric improvisation. In my opinion, this choice is hard evidence of how Udi Hrant was a bearer of both the Ottoman classical and urban music performing traditions. Moreover, the setting and the place of the recording are, in my opinion, important factors that could have influenced both the choice of repertoire and the performance of a metric improvisation. The recording of *Karşılama* is a lesson, and, when recording a lesson, a teacher often wants to demonstrate elements of their performance to their student, or aspects of a genre or style. In this sense, we can hypothesise that metric improvisation was a means of connecting two compositions with the same *makam* and *usül*. Metric improvisation seems to have been an element of the performance of the urban Ottoman repertoire, both as a connecting 'bridge' between two compositions and as a solo performance (as Marko Melkon's *Cifte telli* recording shows).

3.2.2.1 Use of rhythm

The whole performance of the two *şarkı*'s of Dede Efendi, and the metric improvisation by Udi Hrant, are in *aksak usulü*, a 9/8 rhythmic cycle that is shown below:

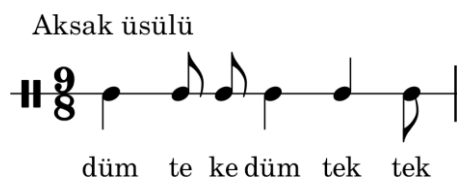


Figure 40: *Aksak usulü*

¹⁰⁹ Full scores can be found in Appendix II.

Aksak is a common rhythmic cycle in Turkish folk and *sanat müziği*.¹¹⁰ The dance related to it is usually called *Karşılama*, both in Turkey and Greece, and this is also how Udi Hrant announces the performance in the recording, once again stating the close relationship between the rhythmic cycles and the dance.

3.2.2.2 Use of motif/melodic ideas

From a total of four minutes, the improvised part lasts only 48 seconds (2:53-3:41), showing the connecting character of the metric improvisation for this performance. Udi Hrant uses five basic melodic ideas, varying and connecting them to create small phrases. In the example below, Hrant uses a simple rhythmic/melodic idea (Oud Motif 1) that he varies multiple times in the consecutive nine bars. Oud Motif 1 is actually a one-note rhythmic idea in 9/8; and all the variations follow this basic rhythmic idea, using different notes and transposing into different registers. Hrant also makes some subtle alterations in the last group of eighth notes, alternatively using three eighth notes or one eighth note, and two sixteenth notes or one eighth note. In addition, he varies a whole phrase (Oud Phrase 1) and repeats it almost unaltered after six bars, as shown on the next page. Oud Phrase 1 is a descending-ascending melodic idea that starts and ends on the octave.

¹¹⁰ More information on the *aksak* rhythm can be found in Fracile, N, “The ‘Aksak’ Rhythm, a Distinctive Feature of the Balkan Folklore”, *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 44, no. 1/2 (2003): 197-210, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/902645>, accessed May 7, 2022.

Oud Solo
8

OudMotif1
16ths and 8th notes
rhythmic motif on 9/8
on the same note

VarOudM1
OudM1&fall
to subtonic

OudPh1
One bar phrase starting beat(2)
Introducing the solo
rhythmic variations on Dugah

OudPh2
Extending over 2 bars
Beat(1)-beat(1) of next bar
5x Rast to Neva then to Muhayyer
showing Tiz Dik Kurdi

OudPh3
2Bar phrase
Rhythmic motifs on
Muhayyer and Gerdaniye

Var2OudM1
OudM1& 4th degree as pedal and top of the motif

11

End of Sentence1
Bar8-11

OudPh4
2bar phrase introducing Neva as pedal Insisting on Tiz Neva

Var3OudM1
Group of 4 16ths instead of 2
3rd and 4th degree

Var4OudM1
Var2OudM1 16th notes
on 2nd and 3rd degree

14

OudPh5
2bar phrase introducing Tiz Nim Hicaz, Tiz Dik
Falling on Muhayyer

End of Sentence2
Bars 12-15

OudPh2

VarOudPh2
OudPh2 Extension (movement
of last 2 8th notes
to the beginning of the phrase)
'soft hicaz on Muhayyer, Uşşak on Hüseini

17

OudPh6
Extending over 3bars
From Tiz Segah to Tiz Çargah 3x Uşşak on Muhayyer

VarOudM1

End Of Sentence 3
Bars 16-19

OudMotif5
8th note combined with (6) 16th notes
accents of 16th :1&4

Var4OudM1
Transposition of oudM1 a 5th up

VarOudM2
OudM2 a 4th down
Extension with (2) 8th notes

OudMotif6
(4)16th ending on (1) 8th

End of Sentence4
Bars 20-24

OudPh9(Question)
Extending over 2 bars
Beat(9)-Beat(9)
Neva as Pedal, jump to Evic&Gerdaniye, ending with turn on Muhayyer

VarOudM2

VarOudM6
Dotted 16th

VarOudM5
Inversion Of OudM5

VarOudPh10(Answer)
One bar phrase
Ending on Neva
4x Buselik on Neva

OudPh10
2bar ascending-descending phrase
Ascending from Nim Hicaz to Muhayyer and Tiz Dik Kurdi descending back to NIm Hicaz, then to Dugah, ascending on Huseini , descending to Dugah

Figure 41: Oud Motif 1 and Variations (appearing from 02:53-3:18)

On the whole, the rhythmic flow of subdivisions consists of eighth and sixteenth notes and follows the *aksak* rhythmic pattern. There is only one example that goes against the *aksak*. This is in bar 23, where Hrant employs accents and disrupts the feeling of the group of three eighth notes. He then varies the same melodic idea a few bars later, as shown above.

3.2.2.3 Use of phrasing, sentences and overall structure

In this brief metric improvisation, Udi Hrant manages to create ten phrases that explore the *makam Hicaz*:



Figure 42: *Makam Hicaz* scale

He also involves the related *makam Uzzal*:



Figure 43: *Makam Uzzal* scale

Even more, he creates a bridge from one composition to the other. As far as phrasing is concerned, he creates one-bar and two-bar phrases, as well as phrases extending over three bars. He then combines the phrases into a total of five sentences. The model employed is a descending one, as for the majority of the performance (fifteen bars) he explores the area around the octave, thereby creating tension that is released in bar 23. There, he insists on the 5th degree, a characteristic movement of *makam Uzzal*, and he ends on the tonic.

3.2.2.4 Concluding remarks on *Karşılama* by Udi Hrant

Udi Hrant's analysis of metric improvisation in *Karşılama* has brought to light a series of interesting issues. As far as Hrant's style is concerned, analysis has shown the following:

1. Udi Hrant's use of rhythm is closely related to the *aksak usulü*, using only basic subdivisions (eighth and sixteenth notes). With these basic tools, he creates motifs that make use of the lower open strings of the *oud* combined with its high register notes.
2. Udi Hrant's phrasing is also closely related to the *aksak usulü*. Most of his phrases conclude within one or two bars, giving an explicit metricality to the improvisation.
3. Udi Hrant's use of *makam* is dictated by the relationship to the preceding and subsequent compositions. In this sense, *Karşılama* operates as a short improvisational 'bridge' between the two compositions, referring at the same time to both compositions, rhythmically and melodically. Presumably its short duration and its specific function limited it to not include modulations or a full development of the *makam*. Instead, it operates as a commentary between two compositions, proposing a model of performance for respective performances.

3.3 Concluding remarks on Marko Melkon and Udi Hrant's performances

In this sub-chapter, we focused on two performances from the early discography of the 78rpm recordings of two of the most renowned *oud* players of the early and mid-20th century. Melkon and Hrant were contemporaries and, as my analysis has shown, they shared much in their style of metric improvisation. Their approach is closely connected to the respective rhythmic cycle and the development of their improvisations is dictated by the *seyir* of the chosen *makam*. Their phrasing structure is closely related to the bar (something that began to change in the performances of artists who were active later during the 20th century). In addition, the chosen recordings and accompanying analyses show that both artists were familiar with metric improvisational performance practice and included it in their recordings. Lastly, their choice of rhythm (*Çiftetelli* and *Karşılama*) contributes to the argument that metric improvisation was related to dance, even if, in Udi Hrant's performance, the compositions performed were of the *sanat* repertoire.

4. 1960s to 1980s – John Berberian

4.1 Introduction (life and career)

John Berberian (1941-) is considered one of the *oud* virtuosos of the 20th century. He was born in New York to parents who were Armenian immigrants. From a very early age he was exposed to music, because his father, Yervant Berberian, was an accomplished *oud* player and singer. His father encouraged him to take up the classical violin, which he studied for five years, but his instrument of choice became the *oud*. He studied economics at Columbia University and never pursued a professional career as a musician. In his own words:

(...) it [the *oud*] has been the love of my life. However, I didn't want to make music a full-time venture because I felt I wanted to keep it away from being a job, so to speak. There is time for a job and there is time for pleasure. I went to Columbia University and there studied whatever I needed to go into business. I worked as a purchasing director, or manager you call it, for various companies. When I finally moved out of the New York, New Jersey area to Massachusetts, I pretty much retired from daytime work and just concentrated on my music, and that's what I am doing now in my retirement years; I have some students that come for a lesson and I am more than happy to pass on whatever I have learned to them.¹¹¹

Despite his reluctance to make music performance a full-time job, Berberian recorded extensively during the 1960s and 1970s and performed around the world, gaining the respect of musicians and audiences worldwide. Born and raised in New York, Berberian lived and performed in a multicultural environment. Musicians of Greek, Arab, Armenian, Turkish and other ethnic origins could be found to perform together in one night club. As an Armenian-American, he would often perform at Armenian community events, playing after older *oud* players in night clubs.

He would not, however, stay unaffected by the melting pot that New York used to be in those days, collaborating with musicians from various ethnic origins and musical backgrounds in live performances and in recordings. His exposure to all these influences, as well as his innate curiosity for different musical cultures, allowed him to develop his own personal style in *oud* playing. Berberian's diverse musical personality allowed him to record with some of the major recording companies of the time (Mainstream Records, Verve Forecast, RCA and MGM). His records include a wide range of musical genres: from Armenian folk songs and Arabic instrumental covers to experimental arrangements of folk tunes and rock-Middle Eastern fusion. Berberian was one of the first *oud* performers ever to introduce the *oud* into non-typical Middle Eastern orchestras and, in my opinion, this is what contributed to his uniqueness as an *oud* player. In his albums, Berberian allowed plenty of space for improvisation, when it was *taksim* or metric improvisation. In order to get a closer insight into his work through this research, I engaged with his discography through attentive listening and chose to transcribe and analyse the following metric improvisations, which has enabled

¹¹¹ All information come from John Berberian's interview in the podcast Kzirian, A., "Episode 3: John Berberian; Oud Master" 13/05/2019, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://tags.im/tagsim-podcast/>.

me to comment on his versatile style:

1. *Basha Bella* (from the album *Expressions East*, Mainstream Records, 1964, US)
2. *Şişeler* (from the album *Expressions East*, Mainstream Records, 1964, US)
3. *Sevasda* (from the album *Oud Artistry of John Berberian*, Mainstream Records, 1965, US)
4. *Chem oo chem* (from the album *Middle Eastern Rock – John Berberian and the Rock East Ensemble*, Verve Forecast, 1969, US)

These examples are not only chosen to point out Berberian's artistry and versatility in metric improvisation; they also serve as examples of this idiomatic genre's development.

Furthermore, the first three examples (all of them traditional folk tunes) are evidence of how the repertoire from Anatolia was incorporated and performed by first-generation Armenian-American immigrants. Wherever lyrics existed, they were sung in Turkish. The Turkish language was a *lingua franca* for the immigrants who fled from the Ottoman Empire to America, as it was in the places of the Ottoman Empire where minorities co-existed. It comes as no surprise then that the songs performed and recorded at that time were mostly sung in Turkish, even if the musicians were of Armenian or Greek origin. For the most part, that was the situation in the live performance scene of urban centres such as New York, Massachusetts, and other places where the immigrant populations gathered. The fourth choice serves a different purpose: within five years' time, Berberian experimented with incorporating tunes from Anatolia into a jazz/rock fusion band. This landmark recording shows how performers of a 'traditional' Middle Eastern instrument started to collaborate with musicians who performed other genres of music, such as rock and (later) jazz, to create the genre that we now know as fusion.

4.2 *Basha Bella*, *Şişeler*, *Şavaş'da*: a comparative approach

In this sub-chapter, I will comment on the different ways in which Berberian approached metric improvisation during the performance of folk songs. His 1964 album for Mainstream Records, *Expressions East*, consists of seven folk songs from various areas of the Middle East and a *taksim*. From this album, I have transcribed and analysed two metric improvisations that were performed on the tracks *Basha Bella* and *Şişeler*.

4.2.1 *Basha Bella* (*Expressions East*, Mainstream records, 1964)

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/Cj2QUc0IGRPOIEB>



Image 4: Back cover of Ross Daly's LP *Pnoi*.

During the early days of my own *oud* education, my first teacher, Christos Tsiamoulis, introduced me to a tune that he called *curcuna*. I still remember the score that he gave me; an old score with the title *Basa Bella*. I always assumed that this title referred to the lower register (bass) of the *oud*. It was not until I came across the recording by Berberian when I realised that *Basa Bella* was actually *Basha Bella*, likely a transliteration of the Turkish expression *başa bela*, which means ‘pain in the neck,’ or a ‘nuisance.’ This tune became extremely popular in Greece during the 1990s when Ross Daly recorded it for his album *Pnoi* (RCA, 1990) alongside the famous Greek-Roma clarinet player, Vasilis Soukas. On the cover of *Pnoi*, the tune is called *ΜΠΑΣΑ ΜΠΕΛΑ – παραδοσιακό Ανατολής* [Mpasa Mpela – Paradosiako Anatolis], which refers to a traditional tune from the East. It is placed in the section *ΤΖΟΥΡΤΖΟΥΝΑ* [Tzourtzouna]; i.e., the Greek expression for *curcuna*. From personal

conversations with musicians in Greece, I came to realise that the majority of musicians refer to the tune in question by the name *Armenian curcuna* (αρμένικη τζούρτζουνα).

I suggest that Berberian's recording created a perception that this tune is of Armenian origin, whereas it is in fact part of the broad Anatolian repertoire. Unfortunately, I was not able to find its first score or recording. However, its history and its issues of nomenclature indicate that tunes from the Middle East and Anatolian area are a kind of common ground for musicians from various ethnicities.¹¹² In addition, the very fact that the tune's title is replaced by the term *curcuna* makes the importance of the rhythmic cycle evident. In the same way as with the *çiftetelli* discussed earlier in this chapter, *curcuna* (in Turkey and Anatolia) and *Iqa' Jurjina* (in Iraq), is a common rhythm of the Anatolian and Middle Eastern repertoire, best described as a 10/8 bar with an internal grouping of 3+2+2+3 eighth notes. It is particularly common as a rhythmic structure in the folk repertoire of the Armenian, Iraqi and Kurdish people, but it has also survived in the Turkish classical music repertoire and has provided younger generations of musicians in Greece and elsewhere with inspiration for their creativity.¹¹³

4.2.1.2 Use of rhythm and motifs/melodic ideas

Berberian's 1'02 metric improvisation (3:08-4:10) consists of 19 melodic ideas and motifs, together with their many variations. The overall rhythmic flow depends almost exclusively on quarter and eighth notes that closely follow the *curcuna usulü*.



Figure 44: *Curcuna usulü* basic structure

1. Variation of the motif and rhythmic displacement. Despite the fact that the flow of the subdivisions does not change, Berberian makes his improvisation interesting by using many variations of the same melodic idea/motif and by using rhythmic displacement. His control over these two tools is one of the remarkable aspects of this improvisation and it constitutes a distinct aesthetic characteristic. One such example is shown below:

¹¹² Ατζακας (2012) explains in his first chapter the interrelations, common spaces of performance and communication through the common understanding of the modal language of the wider area of Balkans, Greece, Turkey by the ethnic minorities and the Muslim musicians of the late and post-Ottoman era.

¹¹³ A fine example can be found here <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/XrczQ5lE6dNmJ0p>. The group's name is *Hopla loon* and *Curcuna minor* is the title of the tune.

Figure 45: Multiple variations on the same motif (Oud Motif 3) and rhythmic displacement (3:20-3:26)

Another example of rhythmic displacement is also shown below:

Figure 46: Rhythmic displacement of Oud Motif 14 (3:54-3:58)

In the example above, Berberian places the melodic idea on the sixth beat of the bar and from there he begins to build his phrase. In this way, he creates a one-bar phrase, placed not on the first beat of the bar but on the sixth.

Finally, Berberian repeats unchanged melodic ideas in several places in his improvisation, as is the case with Oud Motif 14 in the example shown above.

4.2.1.3 Use of phrasing, makam and overall structure

In this performance Berberian uses a total of eleven basic phrases – some of which he repeats unaltered and others which he varies. He experiments with several phrase length variations (the numbering referring to both the original and varied phrases):

- 4.2.1.1.1.1 One-bar phrase (in total: 3)
- 4.2.1.1.1.2 Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 6)
- 4.2.1.1.1.3 Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 1)
- 4.2.1.1.1.4 Four-bar phrase (in total: 2)
- 4.2.1.1.1.5 Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 1)

In varying his phrases, Berberian uses tools such as extension, reduction and displacement on different notes of the same phrase. One such example is Oud Phrase 7, which starts as a one-bar phrase in a certain position (octave). The first variation is a displacement that is positioned a fourth lower and the second combines a displacement that is positioned a minor sixth lower and an extension by four eighth notes. In this manner, Berberian proposes a unique way of processing the melodic material by combining several tools for varying a phrase.

The musical score is divided into two systems, measures 70-72 and 73. It features various Oud motifs and phrases with detailed annotations.

Measure 70:

- OudMotif12:** 4ernote&8note with vibrato and backward glissanto
- OudMotif13:** Group of (5) 8ths descending, 3rd note repetition with ornament
- Var3OudM1:** OudM1 reduction by a 4er
- VarOudM13:** OudM13 a 4th lower
- OudMotif14:** Group of (5) 8ths ascending, repeating 1st note serving as Question
- OudM15:** Group of (5) 8ths descending repeating 3rd note serving as Answer

Measure 71:

- OudPh7:** One bar phrase serving as question
- OudM12&OudM13:** Descending phrase from Muhayyer to Neva
- VarOudPh7:** One bar phrase serving as Answer to OudPh7
- OudPh7:** one 4th lower
- Var3OudM1&VarOudM13:** Descending from Hüseini to Dugah (showing the low position of Segah to Kürdi)
- Var2OudPh7:** extending over 2bars. beat(1)- beat(4) of next bar
- OudM14&OudM15&OudM16:** Around Segah&Çargah to Neva ending on Dugah

Measure 72:

- OudMotif16:** group of (4) 8ths descending
- OudMotif17:** Group of (5) 8ths ascending descending
- OudM16:**
- OudM17:**
- OudM16:**

Measure 73:

- OudPh8:** extending over (3) bars beat(6)-beat(5)
- 2*(OudM17&OudM16):** Ascending from Segah to neva Descending to Dugah
- EndOfSentence3:**

Figure 47: Oud Phrase 7 and variations (03:48-03:54)

Structurally, Berberian's improvisation consists of four large sentences as follows:

1. Sentence 1 (bars 48-53) – Entrance (03:08-03:19)
2. Sentence 2 (bars 54-61) – Development (03:20-03:33)
3. Sentence 3 (bars 62-75) – Climax (03:34-03:58)
4. Sentence 4 (bars 76-82) – Outro (03:59-04:10)

Berberian appears to control the length of his sentences expertly, by creating larger phrases to give us a glimpse of a compositional approach based on metric improvisation, something that becomes more evident in this research project's examination of the work of subsequent artists.

As far as the use of *makam* is concerned, Berberian's improvisation begins after the clarinet *taksim*, with a rhythmic insistence on the degree *Hüseyni* and a suspended cadence (*asma karar*) on the *Neva* in Sentence 1. In Sentence 2, through use of the *Acem*, he descends gradually to the *Dügâh*. It is worth mentioning the position of the second degree of the *makam* used in this improvisation: Berberian uses the *Segah* degree in its low position close to *dik Kürdi* whenever there is a movement to the tonic *Dügâh*. In the first part of Sentence 3 (62-69), Berberian extends his improvisation to the high register of *makam Uşşak*, using an *Uşşak* trichord. In bars 70-75 he begins the descent from the octave to the tonic. In Sentence 4 there is a return to the mid-high register of the *makam* and a final cadence to the tonic, with the use of all the possible positions of the second degree of *makam Uşşak*, even as low as *dik Kürdi*, as is shown below. On the whole, Berberian employs an ascending-descending model that he repeats three times in his improvisation.



Figure 48: Modulation (03:59-4:10)

4.2.2 Şişeler

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/jDXMkYLO9lT2uSO>

Şişeler is a Turkish folk song from Kilis, a town in the southeast of Turkey, close to the

border with Syria.¹¹⁴ Composed by Ahmet Nurettin Çamlıdağ, this song has been recorded many times. Its original title is *Ringo Ringo Şişeler*, but in Berberian's version we hear *Lingo Lingo Şişeler*.¹¹⁵ Its lyrics present a sarcastic narrative about the drinking of alcohol. The recording used here is a fine example of how musicians were attempting to recreate the environment and the feeling of a *meyhane* or nightclub for an album or studio recording. As we will see in the analysis, this aesthetic choice also emerges from the artistic choices that were made during the improvisation.

4.2.2.1 Use of rhythm and motifs/melodic ideas

Şişeler contains two different rhythmic structures. The first one (Figure 52) is played in the introduction and the lyrics section, and it is a one-bar phrase, performed differently by the two percussion instruments (*darbuka* and *zilia*).¹¹⁶ The second rhythmic structure (Figure 53)¹¹⁷ is employed during the clarinet *taksim* and the *oud*'s metric improvisation, as is shown below:



Figure 49: Basic one-bar rhythmic pattern as played by *darbuka* and *zilia* (00:40)

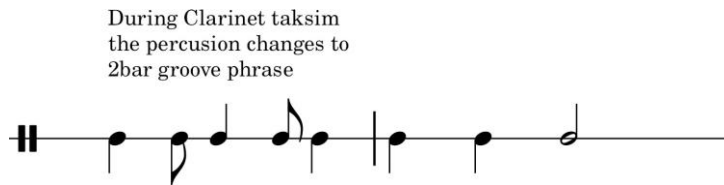


Figure 50: Groove change, two-bar rhythmic pattern for *taksim* and metric improvisation (02:46)

In their effort to transfer the lively environment of a *meyhane* or a nightclub to the studio, the artists of the *Şişeler* recording dedicated a considerably part of it to improvisation. John Berberian's improvisation (3:46-4:48) follows a clarinet *taksim* (2:38-3:46). Throughout the clarinet *taksim*, Berberian plays the following two-bar rhythmic/melodic accompaniment with almost no variations:

¹¹⁴ Kilis, historically, has been a multicultural place as it was inhabited peacefully by all the major minorities of the Ottoman Empire; Armenians, Rums (Greek-speaking Orthodox), Turkish and Jews. For more information on Kilis, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/kilis>, retrieved April 22, 2022.

¹¹⁵ This subtle change in the lyrics is probably due to copyright issues, as with many other songs and tunes published under an almost identical but different title.

¹¹⁶ *Zilia* is a set of metallic idiophones, often used in Anatolian, *café aman*, and *rebetiko* music.

¹¹⁷ The second variation could be viewed as an 8/4 *shaftatalli/çiftetelli* if we chose to write in one bar. However, as there is no significant change in tempo, I decided to keep two-bar structures of 8/8. In addition, writing with a basic subdivision of eighth notes facilitated the transcription of ornamentation and other details.



Figure 51: Oud's rhythmic/melodic accompaniment during clarinet *taksim*

In his metric improvisation, which lasts just over one minute, Berberian introduces twelve new melodic ideas and motifs together with their variations. Again, the overall subdivision is almost exclusively based on eighth notes, with the use of sixteenth notes for ornamentation. As is the case in *Basha Bella*, this fairly standard improvisational technique does not detract from the overall intrigue in the development of this performance. In *Şişeler*, Berberian introduces new rhythmic and expressive tools and, at the same time, he makes use of previously mentioned material, thereby showing his personal improvisational 'signature'. The following example presents a combination of the aforementioned features: Berberian enters his performance introducing Oud Motif 1, which is almost identical to Oud Motif 1 from *Basha Bella*. However, at the same time he builds tension by repeating it seven times, and he further continues building tension by creating ten variations of the same motif. In creating these variations, Berberian makes use of extension and transposition and he also substitutes the notes of the basic motif with pedal notes:

OudMotif1
Group of (4) 8th
Accent&Vib. on (1)

Oud Solo

OudM1

OudM1

OudM1

OudM1

OudM1

OudPhase1
(4) bar phrase
OudM1*7
Entry phrase
Rhythmic insistence on Hüseini

During Clarinet taksim
the percussion changes to
2bar groove phrase

Brp

Var2OudM1
OudM1 variation
on 3rd note(use of
low octave pedal)

VarOudM1
OudM1 variation
on first note

Var3OudM1
OudM1
variation on 2nd note

VarOudPhase1
(4) bar phrase
VarOudM1&Var2OudM1&VarOudM1&Var3OudM1&VarOudM4
OudPhase1 with variations on OudM1
Insisting on jump from Gerdaniye to Hüseini
Hüseini Aşuran as pedal to Neva
Use of Dugah-Çargah interval as passage to the next phrase

Brp

Var4OudM1
OudM1 variation
on 3rd&4th note

Var5OudM1
VarOudM1
variation
one tone lower

Var6OudM1
Var2OudM1 one tone
lower and pedal on
low octave tonic

Var2OudPhase1
Extending over(4) bars
Beat(1) - Beat(5)
VarOudPh1 transposition one tone lower
Rhythmic insistence on Acem-Neva

Brp

Var5OudM1

Var6OudM1

Var7OudM1
Var5OudM1 extension
with 1/2 **Var6OudM1**

Var7OudM1

Var8OudM1
Var7OudM1
one tone lower&
beamed 2nd 8th

Var3OudPhase1
Extending over(3) bars
Beat(5)-Beat(6)
Var8OudM1&
Var9OudM1&Var10OudM1
Descending
movement
from Hüseini -Çargah
to Neva -Segah
stop on Dugah

Brp

Figure 52: Transferring motifs from *Basha Bella* (03:48-4:04)

Berberian also introduces intricate rhythmic tools in his performance, as is shown below.

1 Syncopation:

OudMotif6
8th notes placed offbeat,
beams
creating syncopation



OudPhrase7
Extending over (3) bars
Beat(7)- beat(8)

OudM6&8th notes straight
Movement around Muhayyer-T'iz Segah fall on Gerdaniye, Acem
Fall on Neva



Figure 53: Oud Motif 6 creating syncopation (04:29-04:30)

2. Accents and groupings:

OudMotif10
Group of (6)
8ths ascending
descending

OudMotif11
group of (3)
8ths
on the same note
(groupings of three)

VarOudM9
OudM9
different notes

VarOudM10
OudM10
variation on
1st note

OudPhrase11
Extending over (5) bars
OudM11 * 6 Variations on different notes
Accent and placement of the motif creating syncopation
Ascending movement from Neva to Muhayyer
Descent on Segah
Stop on Çargah
5x Hicaz on Neva (Nikriz on Çargah)
Karçığar makam modulation




Figure 54: Accented motifs and groupings (4:38-4:42)

3. Lastly, Berberian employs the question-answer tool in his use of motifs:

OudMotif5
(2) Groups of (3)
same 8ths
& 4er
Serving as **question**

VarOudM5
OudM4 variation on
2nd group of (8ths)
serving as **answer**



OudPhrase5
(2) bar phrase
OudM5&VarOudM5
Rhythmic insistence on
Muhayyer , Gerdaniye
stop on Evic



Figure 55: Question-answer tool (04:22-04:24)

4.2.2.2 Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure

Berberian's metric improvisation in *Şişeler* consists of thirteen original phrases and six variations. Lengthwise his phrases are constructed as follows:

1. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 4)
2. Two-bars phrase (in total: 1)
3. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 4)
4. Four-bar phrase (in total: 2)
5. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 6)
6. Phrase extending over five bars (in total: 2)

Compared to his previous metric improvisation Berberian utilises longer phrases to convey his musical ideas. He also introduces a phrase extending over five bars – a length of bars that none of the previous artists used. Structurally, his metric improvisation consists of four parts made up from five large sentences, each of which make a statement concerning the *seyir*:

1. Entrance (bars 43-70) (03:48-04:19). This part is divided into two smaller parts, each one corresponding to one sentence (Sentence 1 & Sentence 2). In Sentence 1 (03:48-4:07) Berberian insists on *Hüseynî* , and then he gradually descends through all the notes of the *makam Hüseynî* , to the tonic (*Dügâh*). As a last move, he ascends and descends the whole range of the *makam*, even visiting the *Yegâh*

degree one fifth lower from the tonic. The second sentence (Sentence 2) (04:07-04:19) is a re-establishment of the melodic material of the *makam*, in a descending manner from *Acem* to *Dügâh*.

2. Development (bars 71-78, beat 6) (04:20-04:32). In this part Berberian uses Sentence 3 to move from *Neva* to the high register of the *makam* and stay around the octave (*Muhayyer*).
3. Modulation (bar 78, beat 7 to bar 94, beat 3) (04:33-04:42). Falling from the octave, Berberian modulates to *makam Karçiğâr* and finishes the modulation by insisting on *Çargâh*. As we will see in other improvisations, a modulation from *Hüseynî* to *Karçiğâr* is really common.
4. End (bars 94-97, beat1) (04:43-04:49). With a small sentence (Sentence 4), Berberian returns to the basic *makam* and exits the improvisation by ending on the first beat of bar 97 and returning directly to the song. It is worth noting the immediate change of the rhythmic accompaniment.

In this metric improvisation we should point out that, although the song is in *makam Uşşak*, Berberian chooses to explore *makam Hüseynî* and even modulate to *Karçiğâr*.



Figure 5: *Makam Uşşak*



Figure : *Makam Hüseynî*



Figure : *Makam Karçiğâr*

This is also the case with the preceding clarinet *taksim*, which is also in *makam* (with a very low second degree close to *dik Kürdi*). As is demonstrated in the following example (*Şavaş'da*), for his metric improvisation Berberian also uses a different or relative *makam* to the one that is related to the preceding composition.

4.2.3 Şavaş'da

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/yCMduNtB3naMws9>

Şavaş'da is included in the album *Oud Artistry of John Berberian* (Mainstream Records 1965). Again, *Şavaş'da* is not the original title of the song performed; its original title is *Sivas'ta bir yar sevdim* or *Sivas yollarında* and it is a folk song from Sivas. This recording includes two metric improvisations – one from the *oud* (02:19– 03:14) and one from the *kanun* (03:17–04:07). I decided to include it in this research project because the two metric improvisations contained in it are inextricably connected. As my analysis of this song shows, the *oud* improvisation is a modulation to a different *makam* than that of the song, and the *kanun* improvisation is a return to the *makam* of the song. This practice is common in live performances of urban music. It is however rare to find an example in the discography of the 1960s where this live practice was recorded in a studio. In addition, during their metric improvisations, artists take turns to play the accompaniment. For research purposes both transcriptions are included in Appendix II. At this point I only focus on the *oud* metric improvisation and briefly mention the movement of the *kanun* improvisation to support the argument.

4.2.3.1 Use of rhythm and motifs/melodic ideas

The basic rhythmic pattern played by the percussion throughout the song and the most frequently-played variation are both shown below:

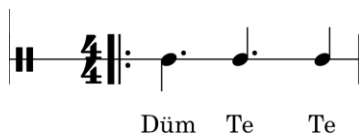


Figure 59: Basic Rhythmic pattern for *Şavaş'da*

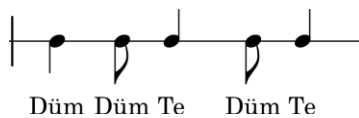


Figure 60: Variation of the basic rhythmic pattern

During the *oud* solo, the *kanun* is playing a two-bar accompanying phrase emphasizing the tonic and the leading tone:



Figure 61: Kanun accompaniment

In this 54-second improvisation, Berberian introduces twelve basic motifs/melodic ideas that he varies extensively. The overall rhythmic flow is on eighth notes. Sixteenth notes, grace notes and appoggiaturas are used for ornamentation. Again, Berberian introduces new elements to support his metric improvisation, some of which are shown below:

1. Extensive use of tremolo with glissando, beamed or with accent, following the rhythmic pattern in the high register and over-the-bar use of motif (Oud Motif 3):

OudMotif2
Group of (4) beamed
4er notes with tremolo

OudMotif3
Group of (3) dotted 4ers
Placed over (1) bar of 4/4
creating 'merge of meter' feel

VarOudMotif3
OudM3 on other notes

Var2OudMotif3
OudM3 reduction
-replacement of last dotted
4er with 8th without tremolo

OudPhrase2
Extending over
(4) bars
beat(1)-beat(1)
OudM3&VarOudM3&Var2OudM3
Modulation to Hisar Buselik Makam

EndOfSentence1

Figure 62: Combination of tremolo, glissando and over-the-bar use of motif (02:21-02:28)

2. Combination of variation tools (extension, reduction) with rhythmic displacement, and reference to another tune (in this case there is a reference to *Basha Bella*, analysed earlier in this chapter), for the development of a single melodic idea (Oud Motif 4):

OudMotif4
Group of (4)
8th notes
Ascending Descending

VarOudM4
OudM4
variation: different
last (2) notes
extension: Addition
of (1) 8th & (1) 4er

Var2OudM4
VarOudM4
same notes
different
position

OudPhrase3
Extending over (4) bars
OffBeat(3)-Beat(4)
OudMotif4&VarOudM4&Var2OudM4
Development of OudMotif4
{comment:influence from composition Nubar Nubar}
Movement around Dugah and Segah (?), showing Hüseini/Acem Aşiran

Figure 63: Extension, reduction, rhythmic displacement and reference to *Nubar Nubar* folksong (02:31-02:34)

3. Creation of a polyrhythmic effect with combinations of simple values and off-beat rhythmic displacement on a previous bar:

OudM13 **OudM13** **OudMotif14** (Starting off beat on previous bar) **VarOudM14** **Var2OudM14**

Group of 4 sets of : 8th&4er note **OudM14 variation** **OudM14 on other notes**

creating polyrhythmic feel

51 52 53 54 55 5

OudPhrase13
Extending over (4) bars
OudMotif14VarOudM14&Var2OudM14
Descending gradually from Muhayyer to Çargah
Reintroducing Neva instead of Hisar
Return to Uşşak makam

Figure 64: Polyrhythm effect (03:01-03:05)

4. Variation and off-beat displacement:

VarOudM15 **OudMotif15** **Var2OudM15**

OudM15 on different notes **OudM15** on different notes

Off-beat placed group of (3) 8ths

59 60 61

OudPhrase16
Extending over (4) bars
Offbeat(2) -beat(4) of last bar
Hisar to Acem, fall on Buselik then back to Neva, ending phrase starting from Zirgüle showing Buselik 4x ending on Dugah

to Dugah

Figure 65: Variation of the motif (03:11- 03:13)

4.2.3.2. Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure

In this performance, Berberian creates sixteen original phrases with no variations.

1. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 6)
2. Three-bar phrase (in total: 1)
3. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 3)
4. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 6)

Contrary to his other performances, Berberian chooses to create phrases that do not complete their musical statements inside the notated bars. Instead, the phrases are mostly begun on the last beat of one bar and mostly finished on the first beat of the last bar.

Structurally, Berberian's performance consists of four parts, each of which includes one sentence:

1. Opening Sentence 1 (bars 23-29) (02:20-02:28)
2. Development (bars 30-43)
 - a. First development – Sentence 2 (bars 30-38, beat 6) (02:28-02:41)
 - b. Second development – Sentence 3 (Comment on the first development,) (bars 39-43) (02:42-02:47)
3. Climax Sentence 4 (bars 44-51, beat 6) (02:48-03:00)
4. Outro Sentence 5 (bars 52-61, beat1) (03:01-03:13)

In the Opening, Berberian shows an ascending full octave of *Uşşak makam* until *Tiz Çargâh*.



Figure 66: *Uşşak makam* until *Tiz Çargâh*.

Then he directly modulates to *Hisar Buselik makam*, theoretically a distant makam.



Figure 67: *Hisâr Bûselik* modulation until *Tiz Çargâh*.

In the development and recapitulation, Berberian establishes the new *makam* and comments on it by using melodic ideas and motifs that refer to *Nubar Nubar*. In the climax part, Berberian insists on using the high register of the new *makam*. Then, in the outro, Berberian descends to using material from the newly established *makam*. It is noteworthy that he uses a fully chromatic scale from a fifth below the tonic. This choice of intervals contributes greatly to the full change of the melodic environment, establishing a full modulation to the new *makam*.

The *kanun* improvisation operates as a return to the basic *makam* through a series of modulations (from *Rast* to *Hüseyni* and then to *Uşşak makam*) and stops at certain tonal centres (*Gerdâniye*, *Hüseyni*, *Çargâh*). Finally, the melodic environment is transformed again and returns to *Uşşak makam*.



Figure 68: *Rast makam*



Figure 69: *Hüseyinî makam*



Figure 70: *Uşşak makam*

The main argument to make here is that there must have been a plan before recording, or at least a discussion before the performance, concerning the choice of *makam*. It reveals a compositional mentality on a series of metric improvisations within a performance. Even if all of the *makams* were not decided in advance by the artists, there must have been a certain ‘scenario’ that directed them collectively throughout the recording. One might try to argue that it could all have been decided spontaneously, but this would indicate that the artists had remarkable capacities to change and adapt to the performance, capacities that come from considerable experience of building and thinking compositionally. Whatever the case may be, it is an interesting example. Such sophisticated transformations and movements between *makams* rarely happened with the use of metric improvisation. *Taksim* has traditionally been the tool for such elaborate processes.

4.3 *Chem-oo-Chem*: the beginning of fusion

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/xCNTbw07lyJjv27>

Chem-oo-Chem is included in John Berberian’s album *Middle Eastern Rock – John Berberian and the Rock East Ensemble* (Verve Forecast, 1969). In his interview with Noah Schaffer in artsFuse, Berberian gives us the story behind the creation of the album:

Noah Schaffer (N.F.): In 1968 you recorded a groundbreaking album on Verve/Forecast entitled *Middle Eastern Rock* as John Berberian and the Rock East Ensemble. That LP has something of a cult following– you can hear the whole disc on YouTube. How did that come about?

John Berberian (J.B.): The concept came from my producers at Verve at the time. I was really excited – it was a great transition. The title was a bit misleading – it was more jazz than rock – but we incorporated two or three rock musicians, including Joe Beck on guitar, who just wailed [sic] away with the oud. I think for its day it was a very progressive album and is thought of as remaining very current. I used Middle Eastern melodies, some of which I arranged myself, and we went over them with three rock musicians and four Armenian musicians. We came together one day and made an album. The entire LP was rehearsed and recorded in one day! We still incorporate some jazz elements in our music; once in a while we'll put in a bit of "Take Five."

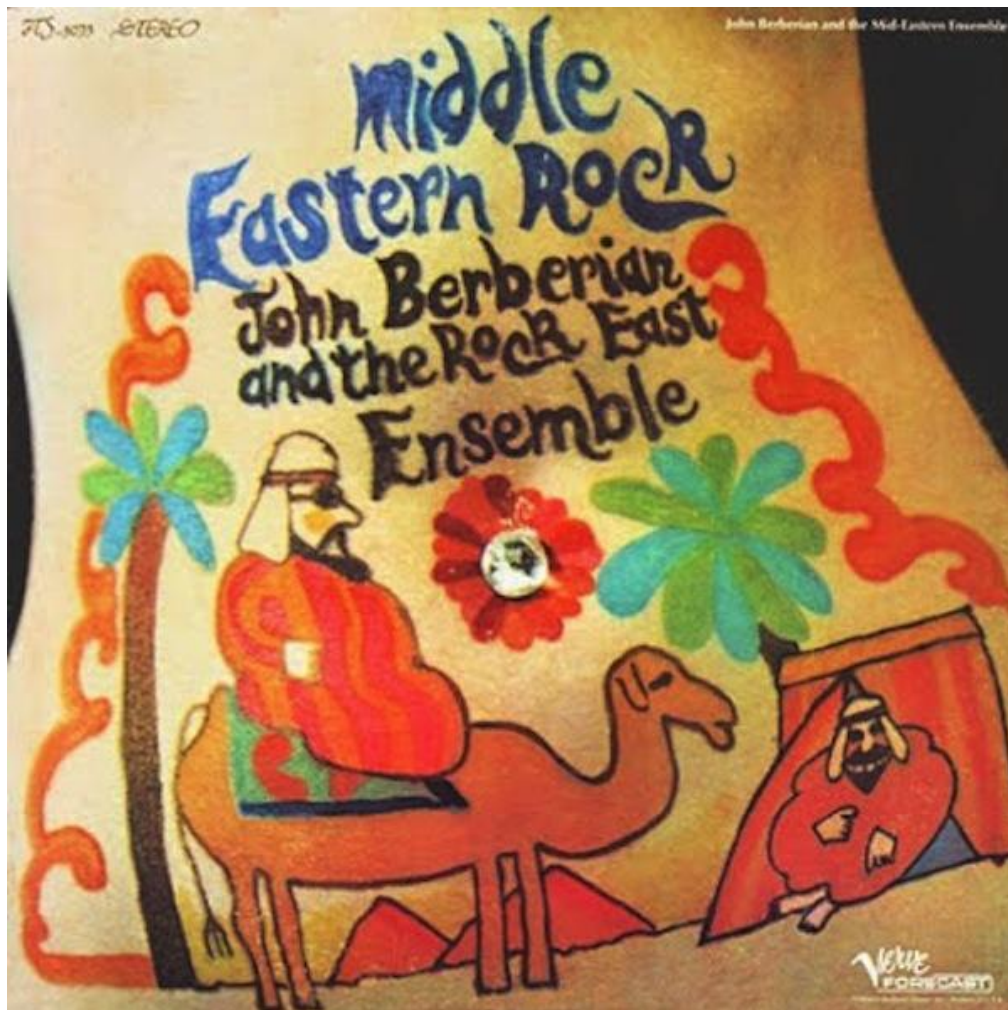


Image 5: Front cover of John Berberian's LP *Middle Eastern Rock*

N.F.: How was *Middle Eastern Rock* received?

J.B: It was very well received, but its success was short-lived because a few months after it came out the management at Verve changed hands, and they weren't interested in pushing the material that had already come out. I think it would have been much bigger had the company stayed intact. It was licensed and came out as a CD in England ... but now it's out of print.

The actual LPs sell for a pretty penny.¹¹⁸

John Berberian was active on the music scene of New York in a variety of ways; as a member of folk bands, fusion bands, and as a soloist. For this recording, Berberian collaborates with a multicultural group of musicians¹¹⁹ and experiments with new arrangements of folk songs combined with a rock and jazz sound. Back at the time, the *oud* did not participate in fusion orchestras, a fact that makes this album a pioneering step towards the inclusion of the *oud* and, in general, instruments originating in the Middle East. As Berberian explains,¹²⁰ the famous *sitar* player Ravi Shankar (1920-2012) was the only one that collaborated with fusion orchestras, and the marketing companies that approached John Berberian aimed to give the *oud* a place next to the *sitar* as far as commercial and marketing needs were concerned. This context is not unusual: marketing and management have historically influenced artistic production with various results. Berberian himself connected the Middle Eastern rock album with his need for artistic expression, and not with the commercial world. He reluctantly stated that this album would have had a lot more recognition from audiences were it not for difficulties related to the recording companies.

Semantically, the track list in *Middle Eastern Rock* is accompanied by a signification of the meter in which they are played:

1. The Oud & The Fuzz (4/4)
2. Tranquility (6/8)
3. Chem-OO-Chem (6/8)
4. Iron Maiden (2/4)
5. Flying Hye (9/8)
6. $3/8 + 5/8 = 8/8$
7. The Magic Ground (2/4)

Uncommonly, rhythm and meter may acquire a significant role in the listener's ear with these references. The following comment is made on the back label of the vinyl:

¹¹⁸ The whole interview is accessible online at <https://artsfuse.org/131401/fuse-music-interview-john-berberian-brings-his-oud-artistry-to-the-lowell-folk-festival>, accessed May 25, 2023.

¹¹⁹ To mention some: Chet Amsterdam (American) on Fender bass, Souren Baronian (Armenian) on clarinet, tenor saxophone, and baritone saxophone, and Bill LaVorgna (American) on drums and others.

¹²⁰ See interview in Appendix I.

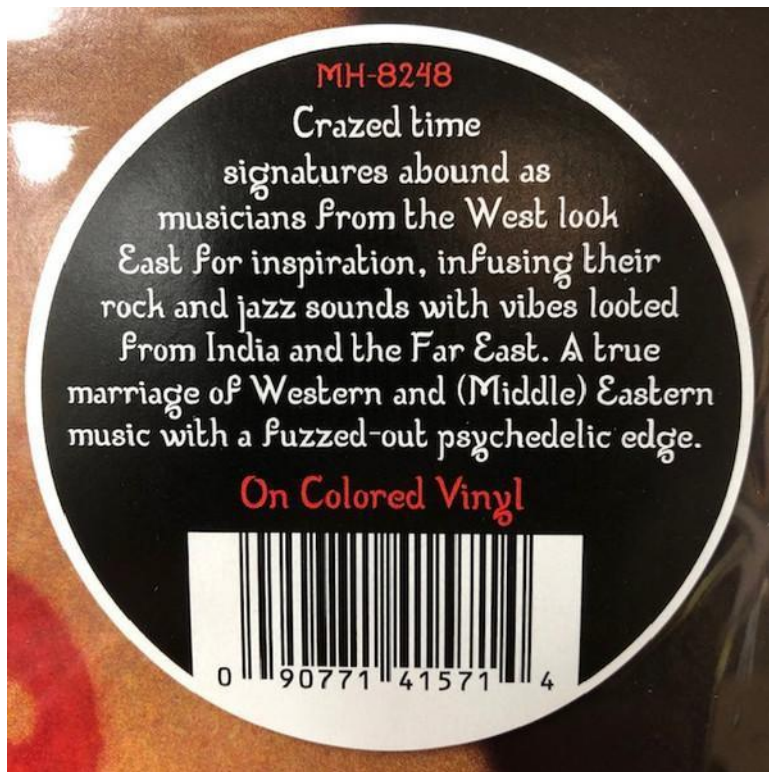


Image 6: Back cover of John Berberian's LP *Middle Eastern Rock*

The reference to the meters in the titles of the tracks and the text on the back label of the album have intrigued me throughout this research, to such an extent that they motivated me to include one of Berberian's fusion recordings, *Chem-oo-Chem*.¹²¹ With this album, Berberian sets the beginning of a new path for the *oud* and, at the same time, sets the focus on rhythm and not on *makam* – a completely different approach compared to his previous recordings and to the discography of the era on the whole.

Chem-oo-Chem is registered as an Armenian folk song and the arrangement is made by John Berberian. In *Chem-oo-Chem*, the lineup differs significantly from Berberian's previous records, showing his progressive view on Middle Eastern music: electric guitar, electric bass, clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone and drums are combined with the *oud* and the *dumbeg*,¹²² creating a fertile environment for fusion and improvisation. In fact, the track's duration is 5'59 and the improvised parts take up the most space. Taking turns, the guitar (1:49-2:53), saxophone (2:55-3:51) and *oud* (3:53-5:01) improvise and, at times, (for example 2:38-2:48) all the musicians create improvised phrases collectively. It is worth mentioning that the whole album's recording was accomplished in one day, a feat that surely contributed to its live performance feeling. Taking the recording conditions of that era (1969) into consideration, *Chem-oo-Chem* is a fine example of fusion, spontaneity, communication, and overall artistic freedom, and even today it is still considered as being current.

¹²¹ There is no hard evidence, but the hypothesis here is that there is a statement referring to the prevalence of belly dancing, as explained in the introduction.

¹²² Percussion instrument, very similar to *darbuka*.

4.3.1 Use of rhythm and motifs/melodic ideas

Complying with the ‘rhythmic pursuits’ that are stated explicitly in the titles of the tracks, we can discern three different grooves in the plot of *Chem-oo-Chem*’s performance. During the singing part (00:00-01:49), the rhythmic approach used is that of a 6/8 meter:



Figure 71: Basic rhythmic pattern (singing part)

This approach changes slightly during the guitar’s improvisation (1:49-2:53) to a simpler 3/4 with variations:



Figure 72: Basic rhythmic pattern (guitar solo)

In the saxophone solo part (2:55-3:51) the groove again changes to 6/8 and then gradually builds up to a 12/8 feel, which is kept throughout the solo and the singing part with the following rhythmic patterns:



Figure 73: Basic rhythmic pattern (saxophone solo)

The above changes in the groove and rhythm demonstrate the performers’ competency in managing rhythmic plasticity and highlight the fluid nature of the live performance. In addition, the significant changes in the tempo throughout the recording (♩ ~ 331 at the beginning ranging to ♩ ~ 413 at the end) is a marker of a lively and energetic improvised performance. This metronomic change is characteristic of a group live performance where musicians avoid the use of a metronome. It also often appears in recordings when the group decides to simulate the liveliness of a live performance setting in a studio recording.

Berberian's solo (3:53-5:01) starts after a cue from the saxophone, which dissolves gradually and gives space to the *oud*:



Figure 74: Saxophone cue

On the whole, the harmonic accompaniment of the *oud* solo is improvisational but discreet, most probably because the *oud*'s sound would be covered if all the electrically amplified instruments were playing concurrently. The *dumbeg* and the drum accompany the *oud*, giving the metric improvisation a rhythmic intensity and space in which to develop. It is worth mentioning that the presence of a bass guitar phrase (4:18-4:37) which, combined with the straight 12/8 feel of Berberian's solo, elevates the improvised part:



Figure 75: Electric bass phrase

As far as the use of motif is concerned, Berberian suggests twenty-two motifs, with an overall subdivision flow of eighth notes, similar to his previously transcribed metric improvisations. Berberian uses all the tools that he proposed in previously transcribed recordings, but here his approach is more combinatorial. Some examples are shown below:

1. Syncopation combined with the question-answer tool:

Oud Solo

Oud Motif1
Same note
repetition
Serving as
question
Creating
syncopation

OudMotif2
Serving as **answer**

OudMotif3
Second **Answer**

Figure 76: Combination of syncopation with question-answer (03:52-03:54)

2. Off-beat and over-the-bar displacement combined with variation (inversion, reduction, and duplication) of the motif:

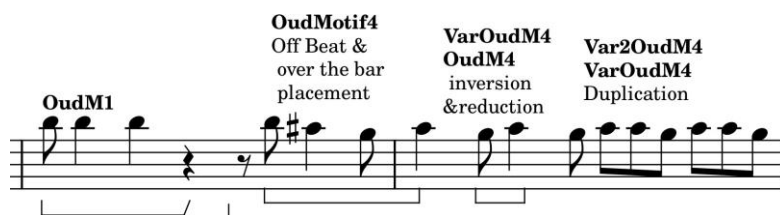


Figure 74: Oud Motif 4 and variations (3:57-03:59)

3. Extended variation combined with grouping placed over the bar:

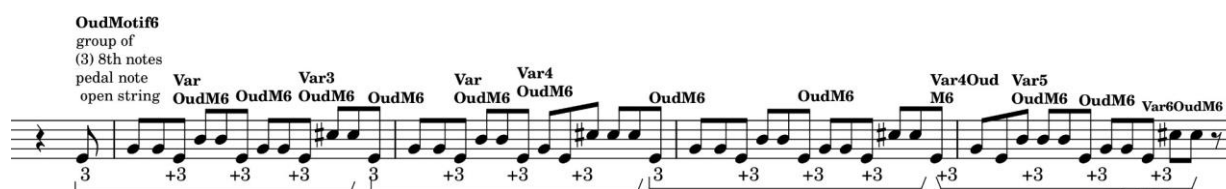


Figure 75: Oud Motif 6 and variations (04:07-04:14)

4. Transposition of the motif in different octaves, as question-answer and groupings of eighth notes:

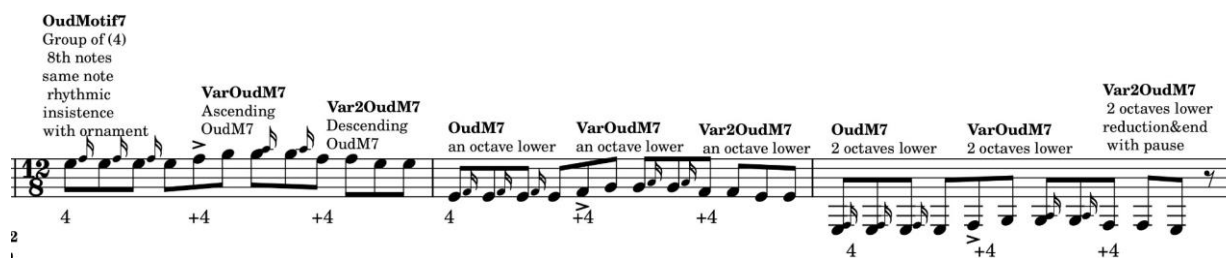


Figure 76: Oud Motif 7 transposition (04:22-04:23)

5. Resetting the basic grouping combined with ornaments of sixteenth notes:

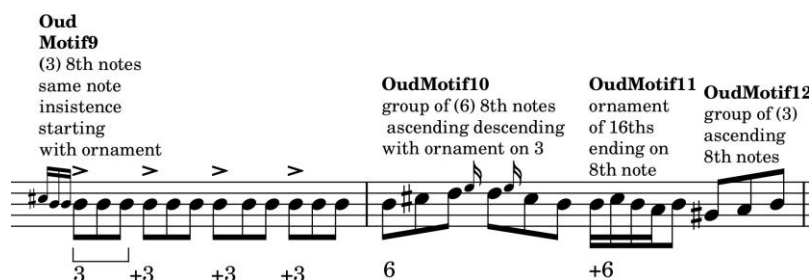


Figure 77: Accents on 3 and then accents on 6 (04:23- 04:26)

6. Groupings combined with variations of the motif:



Figure 78: Oud Motif 13 varied combined with different groupings (04:31-04:33)

4.3.2 Use of phrasing and overall structure

Differentiating from his previous performances, in *Chem-oo-Chem* Berberian creates fifteen original phrases and varies them extensively. As far as the length of the bars is concerned, he creates the following phrasing ideas:

1. Part-of-bar phrases (in total: 2)
2. One-bar phrases (in total: 9) and one-bar phrases with rhythmic displacement (1 original and 3 variations)
3. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 2)
4. Two-bar phrases (in total: 2)
5. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 2)
6. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 1)

Notable is the increase in the length of bars during the performance. There is a clearcut structure in this performance described below:

1. Entrance – Sentence 1 (bars 35-42) (03:52-04:06)
2. Development
 - a. First Development – Sentence 2 (bars 42-46) (04:07-04:15)

- b. Second Development – Sentence 3 (bars 47-49) (04:16-04:22)
- 3. Climax
 - a. Modulation – Sentence 4 (bars 50-56) (04:22-04:30)
 - b. Second Modulation – Sentence 5 (bars 57-60) (04:31-04:39)
 - c. Tension building – Sentence 6 (bars 61-63, beat 1) (04:40-04:44)
- 4. Modulation & Outro – Sentence 7 (bar 63, beat 3, to bar 68, beat 1), (04:45-04:52) & Sentence 8 (bars 68, beat 2, to bar 72) (04:53-5:01)

Concerning the management of the modal material, Berberian creates a complicated modal environment. His solo comes after the saxophone solo, which is mainly developed in E-minor, focusing on a rhythmic interplay of the mode with a 12/8 underlying rhythmic structure. Remarkably, he starts on the fifth (Si) over the octave (*Mi-Muhayyer*) and directly changes the environment using *Nikriz* on *Muhayyer*.



Figure 79: *Nikriz* pentachord on *Muhayyer*

He then ends his first sentence by restoring the scale of the basic *makam* (*Bûselik*) to the tonic.



Figure 80: Full range *makam Buselik* (transposed on E)

In Sentence 2, Berberian introduces the note *Eviç* (C#), implying the change to *Rast-Uşşak* on *Hüseyinî* that follows in Sentence 4. Then, again he returns to the tonic in Sentence 3, again restoring the basic *makam* (*Buselik*).

Directly in Sentence 4 he modulates by using *Uşşak* on *Hüseyinî* (could be considered and *Rast* on *Neva*).



Figure 81: *Uşşak* on *Hüseynî i* (implying *Rast* on *Neva*)

In Sentence 5 he insists on making a *Rast* pentachord on *Neva* audible, then moves to *Tiz Çargâh* (sol) and *tiz Hüseynî*, and descends with a full change of the mode to *Hisar* on *Muhayyer* and *Hicaz* on *Çargâh*.



Figure 82: *Hisar* on *Muhayyer* and *Hicaz* on *Çargâh*

Berberian then uses a small motif that he repeats three times (as a *tihai*) to create a melodic tension and land on *Muhayyer* (Sentence 6). Directly from there, with the use of a *Rast* tetrachord on *Hüseynî i*, he descends from *Tiz Çargâh* (Sol') to *Çargâh* (Sol) through a full modulation to the chromatic genre, with *Hicaz* on *Çargâh* and *Nikriz* on *Acem* (Sentence 7).

Thereafter he modulates again, using a *Hicaz* pentachord ascending and a *Nikriz* pentachord on the octave to end his solo on the octave (Mi). As a result, he never comes back to the basic *makam* (*Bûselik*) and ends his solo with a climax and a modulation, something extremely rare in recordings.¹²³

On the whole, Berberian uses a multiple ascending-descending-ascending model of metric improvisation, with a series of modulations and multiple climaxes.

4.4 Concluding remarks

John Berberian constitutes an important figure in *oud* performance history during the 20th century. This chapter has shed light on his competency, virtuosity, and pioneering attitude. Berberian is a versatile *oud* player; his discography proves an amazing command of different idioms, ranging from the Anatolian repertoire to the Arabic 'Aziza', all the way through to the arrangements and fusions of Middle Eastern music with rock and jazz. Apart from this, his recordings of *taksim*s and metric improvisations make him a great master of both the 'traditional' style of improvisation and a pioneer in placing the *oud* and its improvisational side at the centre of performance. His album *Middle Eastern Rock – John Berberian and the Rock East Ensemble* (Verve Forecast, 1969) is the first step taken to introduce the *oud* in rock

¹²³ Although rare in *taksim* improvisations, the described modulations (not in the same order but in a similar manner) exist in semi-improvised rural songs of Greece, such as *Thrinós megalos*, and others.

and jazz bands. In my opinion, one of the most important reasons for the acceptance of the *oud*, and for its gradual introduction to fusion and world music, and (from the 1990s onwards) even to the world of jazz, was Berberian's work as a recording artist during the 1960s and his continued presence in the American discography of that time. His virtuosity and his exploratory approach to music, combined with the conditions of the era that permitted and even reinforced the fusion of genres, opened a way for the *oud* to be presented to large audiences. To my mind this affects the route of the instrument and its performers to this very day.

Commenting on his metric improvisations that have been analysed in this chapter, we can discern the following:

1. Use of basic subdivision: In all his performances, Berberian almost exclusively uses eighth notes. He uses sixteenth notes only for ornaments and denser subdivisions in the form of tremolo. Despite his inner pulse being set almost exclusively on eighth notes, it does not detract from his performances at all. On the contrary, he manages to create and maintain the interest of the listener by using different rhythmic tools, as we will see.
2. Syncopation and rhythmic displacement are the basic rhythmic tools that Berberian employs in all his transcribed performances.
3. Extensive use of variations in motifs and phrases: Berberian appears to have a specific compositional approach in this area. He presents small rhythmic motifs that he varies, by extending, reducing and transposing them, thereby creating a rich variety from simple and basic ideas. He uses the same technique with his phrases: small phrases are displaced to different octaves in different tonic centres and, reduced and extended, they support his creation of phrasing and sentencing.
4. Varying lengths of phrase: In all his performances Berberian is consistent in creating phrases of varying length, creating unexpected outcomes through an improvisatory way of thinking.
5. Different structuring models: Berberian's improvisations vary in the ways that they are built. He introduces models with triple ascent-descent; he presents a larger or even double development; and he places climaxes in different places throughout his overall structure (after the development and at the end of his solo), thus reducing the Outro part. Overall, there is no predictability in his structures, which of course reinforces the improvisational aspect of his performances.
6. Modulations: One could argue that modulation to neighbouring and (more often) to distant *makams* is Berberian's melodic signature with his metric improvisations. He seems to favour chromatic changes, even when the basic *makam* diatonic (for example in *Şavaş'da*, where he modulates from *Uşşak makam* to *Hisar Bûselik*

makam). These kinds of changes are extremely rare in a ‘classic’ *taksim*, except where *taksim* serves as a modulation from one *makam* to another. However, even in those cases, the transition from one *makam* to another distant one occurs gradually. Berberian’s direct transitions and his consistency in those kinds of modulations show his preference and personal taste, as well as his ‘out-of-the-box’ mentality and approach to the melodic material.

5. 1990s to date

A. In the U.S.A.: Ara Dinkjian and Tamer Pınarbaşı's practice

5.1 Ara Dinkjian

Ara Dinkjian is one of the most influential *oud* players and composers of the 20th and 21st centuries. He was born in 1958 in New Jersey, to Armenian-American parents.¹²⁴ His father, Onnik Dinkjian (1929-), is a French-born Armenian whose parents came from Diyarbakır and Harput, areas in East Turkey. Onnik Dinkjian, also known as the 'Voice of Armenians', is a renowned Armenian folk and liturgical singer who was Ara Dinkjian's main influence during his formative years. Ara Dinkjian grew up living and interacting with the Armenian-American community and had his first musical stimuli from his father, other family members and friends, and the broader Armenian-American community:

The part about being Armenian is really all-encompassing and I say that because, before I was conscious it seemed that all of our friends, of course relatives, everybody that we associated with, was part of that Armenian-American community. A lot of it centered around the church, my father is a deacon which means he served at the altar singing the religious music, and when I was 13, I became the church organist and continued that post for over 45 years, so the religious music, actually to be honest any sound any music, was fascinating to me and I wanted to be part of it.¹²⁵

Ara Dinkjian was interested in music from his early childhood. He experimented with a variety of instruments (*darbuka*, clarinet, guitar) but at the age of five or six he discovered the *oud* and from then on it became his primary instrument. He studied classical piano, among several other instruments. According to his personal website:

Ara learned several Western and Eastern instruments (piano, guitar, *dumbeg*, clarinet) and in 1980 graduated from the Hartt College of Music, earning the country's first and only special degree in the instrument for which he has become most well-known, the *oud*.¹²⁶

It suggests that he was the first student ever to graduate as an *oud* player in an academic environment. At this time, faculty in academic institutions in the United States were likely barely aware of the existence of this instrument. Even before his formal training and throughout his career, Dinkjian performed alongside his father, at unofficial events (picnics, weddings and so on), as well as at concerts and official events. At these events, he would mostly perform folk songs from Anatolia for the Armenian-American community. As he explains, the Armenian-American community in the United States is a diverse one:

¹²⁴ All information about Ara Dinkjian's life and career can be found in Ara Dinkjian's interview in Almadi podcasts. AlTurki, Fadil, "Ep68: 'An Armenian in America', meet Ara Dinkjian and enjoy a great music history", produced by Almadi Podcasts, 04/2021, https://soundcloud.com/fadilalturki/ep68?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing, retrieved April 24, 2022.

¹²⁵ *ibid*.

¹²⁶ From Ara Dinkjian's biography on his personal website, <https://www.aradinkjian.com/biography>, retrieved April 24, 2022.

Some from Harput, some from Diyarbakir, some from Erzurum, some from Malatya, some from Urfa and so on. And each one of them had their own melody and their own dance. But in America, when the Armenians would gather, they wound up learning each others' dances and melodies. That never happened in Turkey because you were a little bit isolated, you were in your own village but in America all would gather... So, when my father and I would perform, and we performed thousands of picnics and weddings and dances, there would be hundreds of Armenians all dancing all of the folk dances of the ancestors and we didn't realize how precious that was. It was almost like keeping a dinosaur alive.¹²⁷

This early and continuous exposure to a varied and wide repertoire, as well as his formal training on piano and his experience with the organ in the Armenian church, contributed to the forming of Ara Dinkjian's unique musical identity. It has developed through creative work in both composition and improvisation, much of which has been pioneering.

Together with the Turkish-Armenian percussionist and multi-instrumentalist Arto Tunçboyacıyan, American jazz pianist Armen Donelian, and American bassist Marc Johnson, Dinkjian formed Night Ark in 1985, an instrumental group that performed his original compositions. Night Ark recorded for RCA/BMG and Universal/PolyGram and toured extensively around the world. Night Ark's creativity and progressive approach made the group highly influential, both for musicians and audiences.

While Night Ark was the band with which Ara Dinkjian became famous worldwide, his collaboration with Eleftheria Arvanitaki made him especially well-known in Greece. Through that collaboration, he has been a great influence on *oud* players there.

In 2010, in New York, he formed Secret Trio with the North Macedonian clarinetist Ismail Lumanovski and the Turkish *kanun* player Tamer Pınabaşı. Secret Trio's work focuses on original compositions of the members of the group and suggests a more contemporary aesthetic in performance.

This chapter focuses on eight examples of Dinkjian's metric improvisations.¹²⁸ Some of them are different instances of improvisations for the same composition, for studio and live performances. This allows me to trace the differences in performance and approach in these various settings. In all cases (except for *Crosswinds*), the composed material belongs to Ara Dinkjian and it serves as a vehicle for his improvised performance.

5.1.1 Anna Tol' Ya

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/ksXNGTF5hUgn9QR>

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Previous work on Ara Dinkjian's metric improvisations can be found in the writer's master's thesis: Liontou-Mochament, M., 2013. "Rhythmic improvisation in the works of Ara Dinkjian, Kyriakos Tapakis and Sokratis Sinopoulos", Master thesis, Codarts, University for the Arts.

Anna Tol' Ya is an original composition by Dinkjian that is greatly influenced by the folk repertoire of Anatolia. The specific recording in question is a recording of a live performance included on his album *An Armenian in America* (Krikor Music KM5050, 2006).

5.1.1.1 Use of rhythm and motifs /melodic ideas

The basic rhythmic patterns, executed with many variations and improvisation from Zohar Fresco, are shown below:



Figure 90: Basic rhythmic patterns of *Anna Tol' Ya*

In a total of 1'07, (02:39–03:46), Dinkjian presents twenty-nine motifs/melodic ideas, dense rhythmical playing, and repetitions and variations of the melodic ideas/motifs. He uses intricate rhythmic tools, some of which are examined below. The overall flow of subdivision is on eighth notes and in parts on sixteenth notes.

1. Syncopation:

Dinkjian uses syncopation on several occasions in his improvisations. Below, an example of syncopation combined with open string playing:

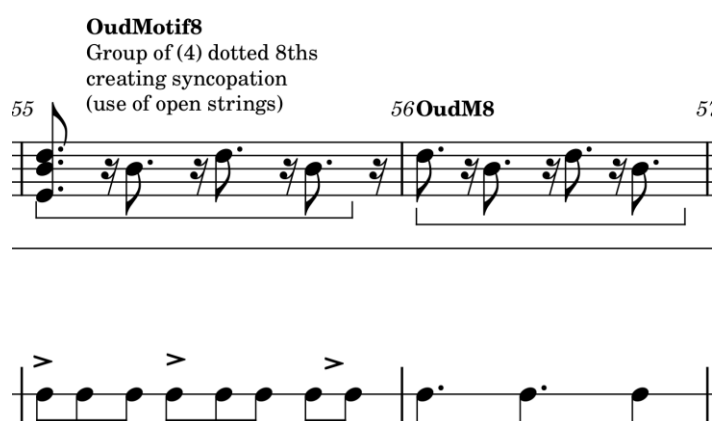


Figure 84: Syncopation and chord with open strings (02:58-02:59)

2. Extensive repetition of a single melodic idea/motif:

In many cases, Dinkjian repeats a motif for more than a bar creating tension and one-motif phrases.

OudMotif14
Group of (3) 8th &
(2) 16ths & (1) 8th

OudM14

71. **OudM14** 72. **OudM14** 73. **OudM14** 74.

OudPhrase9
Extending over (3) bars
Beat(1)-Beat(3)

OudM14*5
3x Uşşak on Muhayyer
{Repetition of OudM14 and positioning after
rests creating hypermeter/syncopation effect}

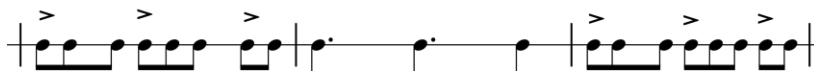


Figure 85: Extensive repetition of one motif (03:16-03:18)

A similar use of repetition is shown below, this time combined with the tool of rhythmic displacement:

OudM16

OudMotif16
Group of (2) 16th
ornament on 8th
(with grace note) & (2) 8ths

OudM16 **OudM16** **OudM16** **VarOudM16**
OudM16 **OudM16** **OudM16** **OudM16** **OudM16** **Reduction**

76. 77. 78. 79.

OudPhrase12
Extending over (3) bars
Beat(2)-beat(8)

OudM16*(5)&VarOudM16
Movement around Muhayyer & Tiz Kürdi
Fall on Gerdaniye
Stop on Tiz Kürdi
{Rhythmic displacement of OudM16}



Figure 86: Extensive repetition and rhythmic displacement (03:20-03:26)

3. Accents and rhythmic insistence on one note:

On this occasion, Dinkjian uses accents on weak beats of the bar (this case on five).

The image displays a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for the Oud, and the bottom staff is for the BRP (Bass Rhythmic Pattern). The Oud staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents on the fifth beat of each bar. The BRP staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents on the fifth beat of each bar. The score is divided into four measures, each containing a different motif:

- OudMotif12**: group of (8) 8ths, accent on 1 & 5, pedal on tonic.
- VarOudM12**: OudM12 without pedal, accents on 1 & 5.
- OudMotif13**: Group of (3) 8ths after 8th rest & group of 8th & (2) 16ths & (2) 8ths, all on same note, accent on 5.
- OudM13**: (This label is placed above the fourth measure of the Oud staff).

The BRP staff shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents on the fifth beat of each bar, corresponding to the Oud staff.

Figure 87: Accents and groupings on the same note (03:14-03:17)

5.1.1.2 Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure

In total, Dinkjian creates seventeen original phrases and only one varied phrase, thereby showing extreme originality in his musical phrasing.

1. Two-bar phrase (in total: 4)
2. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 2),
3. Three-bar phrase (in total: 1)
4. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 4)
5. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 2)
6. Phrase extending over five bars phrase (in total: 2)
7. Phrase extending over six bars phrase (in total: 1)
8. Phrase extending over seven bars (in total: 2)

In terms of length of bars, Dinkjian is the first of the artists examined in this research to extend his phrasing for more than four bars, in order to create larger phrases. As shown below, extensive repetition of the same motif and its variations are some of the tools that help him achieve this:

VarOudM8
OudM8 variation
& reduction
(use of open strings)

OudMotif9
Group of (4) 8ths
accent on 1
(creating syncopation)

VarOudM9
OudM9
variation
on last note

OudMotif10
combination of (3) 16ths ornament
(2) 8ths & (1) 4er & (1) 8th
around high tonic and pedal
on 4th degree and tonic

VarOudM10
OudM10 variation on pedal:
only low tonic

OudPhrase7
Extending over (7) bars
Beat(3)-Beat(8)
VarOudM8&OudM9*(2)
& VarOudM9*(2)&
OudM10*(4)
Accented ascent from Neva to Gerdaniye
with 4x rast on Neva
Movement around Eviç&Gerdaniye
Stop and Insistence
on Muhayyer

Figure 88: Phrase extending over seven bars (03:01-03:09)

Structurally, we can discern the following parts in Dinkjian's improvisation:

1. Entrance (bars 39-46, beat 1) – Sentence 1
2. Development (bar 46, beat 2 to bar 58, beat 1) – Sentence 2
3. Climax (bar 58, beat 2 to bar 78) – Sentence 3 & 4
4. Release (bars 79-84) – Sentence 5 & 6
5. Outro (bars 85-96) – Sentence 7

Compared to the performances of the artists analysed above, this is the first example where we encounter a five-part improvisation and also the first instance of an artist creating the climax-release effect in such a clear manner. In the Entrance part, Dinkjian introduces *makam Hüseyinî*, despite the fact that his composition, for the most part, focuses on *makams Beyati* and *Uşşak*. The Development part comes quickly after the Entrance and it is a direct modulation to *makam Karçığâr* with a return to the *Dügâh* (tonic) with *Uşşak* intervals. As we saw earlier in this research, Berberian followed the same path for his improvisation technique, giving us a hint of the possible influences on Dinkjian. In the Climax section, Dinkjian moves to and focuses on the high register of *makam Uşşak*, then modulating again to *Karçığâr*. In the Release section he creates a *Hicaz* environment on *Muhayyer* (*çesni*) and then he returns to *Neva* again, presenting *makam Karçığâr* on the descent, through *Uşşak* to land on *Dügâh*. These modulations can be seen below:

Makam Hüseyini

Makam Karçığâr (descending)

Makam Uşşak (descending)

Uşşak on
Muhayyer

Descending
Hicaz on Muhayyer

Figure 89: Modulation scheme for Anna Tol' Ya metric improvisation

Despite the short duration of the metric improvisation, Dinkjian manages to create a dense solo

part, rhythmically, melodically, and in terms of modulation and movement of the *makam*. As we will see further on in this chapter, this is one of his stylistic traits in metric improvisation.

5.1.2 Slide Dance

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/kklJgYxgG3MYfVa>

Slide Dance is a composition included on the live recorded album *An Armenian in America* (Krikor Music KM5050, 2006). *Slide Dance* has been recorded eleven times,¹²⁹ with and without lyrics. It is one of Ara Dinkjian's most recorded compositions.

5.1.2.1 Use of rhythm and motif/melodic ideas

Slide dance begins with four bars of percussion, playing a *curcuna* thickened out with sixteenth notes:

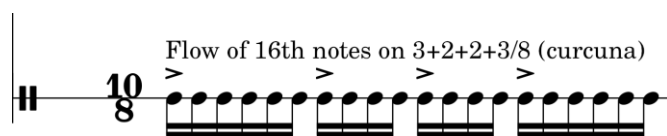


Figure 90: *Slide Dance* *curcuna* pattern

During the performance of the metric improvisation there are two underlying rhythmic layers. One is played by the percussion, as shown above, and one is created by the piano and the bass.



Figure 92: Bass accompaniment during metric improvisation

These two different rhythmic flows enable the artist, as we will see through analysis, to interchange between different subdivision flows creating a rhythmically interesting improvisation.

In this version of *Slide Dance*, Dinkjian performs a metric improvisation (3:46-5:18). In contrast to all the previous material that we have examined, we will see that this example contains much variety in the flow of subdivisions, starting with bigger time values (quarter notes and eights) and continuing with smaller time values (sixteenth notes), combined with groupings and accents and other rhythmic tools.

¹²⁹ See Ara Dinkjian's website <https://www.aradinkjian.com/compositions>, accessed February 19, 2022.

Dinkjian creates twenty-seven original motifs/melodic ideas, which he repeats, varies, and combines with different rhythmic tools to create his phrases. Below, I will comment on the most innovative ones.

1. Development of a single motif through variations:

Oud solo
36

OudMotif1
(1) 4er note with grace note played with gliss& vibrato

VarOudMotif1
duplication of the note value

Var2OudMotif1
OudM1 extension: addition of (2) 8ths & (1) 4er

OudMotif2
Group of (2) 8ths, (1) 4er, (3) 8ths (straight)

Figure 92: Development of a motif (03:48-03:52)

In this example, Ara Dinkjian begins with a single note motif, duplicates it, and extends it in three consecutive bars.

2. Combination of different values in a melodic idea:

OudMotif6
Combination of (1) 4er& ornament of (2) 16ths with grace note on dotted 8th

OudMotif7
Combination of 16th& ornament of dotted 16th& 32nd (2) 16ths falling on 4er 4er with 16th played legato

46

id

Figure 93: Different values (04:08-04:10)

3. Use of question-answer tool:

OudMotif8
Group of (3) 8ths
with apoggiatura
placed upbeat
Question

OudMotif9
Combination of (2)
8ths &
ornament of dotted
16th & 32nd (2) 16ths
falling on 8th
Answer

Figure 94: Question-answer tool (04:11)

4. Extensive repetition and rhythmic displacement (shift) of the motif:

In this example Dinkjian uses one motif, which he repeats for eight bars with almost no variation, simply placing it in different positions inside the bar.

OudMotif16
Group of (12) 16ths
Ascending & chained
(shift of the motif)

VarOudM16
OudM16 reduction
by (3/4ths)
(last part of the motif)

Var2OudM16
OudM16
reduction
by (1/4th)

Figure 95: Extensive repetition of the same motif (Oud Motif 16 and variations) (04:33-04:46)

5. Use of rests:

Characteristic in this performance is the four-bar rest in the middle of the improvisation (bars 67-70), which creates tension and anticipation before the Climax part (04:48-04:56)

5.1.2.2 Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure

In total, Dinkjian creates eleven original phrases with no variations as follows:

1. Two-bar phrase (in total: 3)
2. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 2)

3. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 1)
4. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 1)
5. Phrase extending over five bars (in total: 1)
6. Six-bar phrase (in total: 1)
7. Phrase extending over seven bars (in total: 1)
8. Phrase extending over eight bars (in total: 1)

Dinkjian uses repetitions of a motif (with or without variations) and rhythmic displacement to facilitate the creation of longer phrases. Thus, he manages to create even almost eight-bar-long phrases based on one melodic idea. The shorter phrases (two bars) are created by a one-bar long motif that is repeated with a variation in a question-answer mode.

Unlike in his other solo, here Dinkjian creates a three-part structure combining the climax with the Outro and leaving the improvisation in a place of high tension.

1. Entrance (46-51) – Sentence 1
2. Development – Tension building (52-66) – Sentence 2 – pause part
3. Climax-Outro (67-78) – Sentence 3

In the Entrance part, Dinkjian creates space for the development of his ideas. His use of a one-note motif that is developed gradually is an expressive tool that creates contradiction with the previously performed dense composition. In Sentence 1, Dinkjian gradually starts to build up his ideas by creating motifs and phrases, showing *makam Hüseynî* and *Beyati* and returning to the tonic (*Dügâh*). He continues to the Development part by concurrently changing the flow of subdivisions and moving his focus, first onto the fifth degree of the *makam Hüseynî* and then onto the relationship of *Neva* (Re) and *Gerdâniye* (Sol). It is worth drawing attention to how he uses a single dense motif in different positions in each bar for almost eight bars, followed by a four-bar pause, constituting a gesture that creates tension and anticipation. In the Climax part, Dinkjian jumps to the higher register of the *makam* (to the note *Tiz Çargâh*, Do') and, with insistent rhythm and repetitions of the high notes, he exits the improvisation, remaining to the end on the upper octave of the *makam* (to the note *Muhayyer*, La').

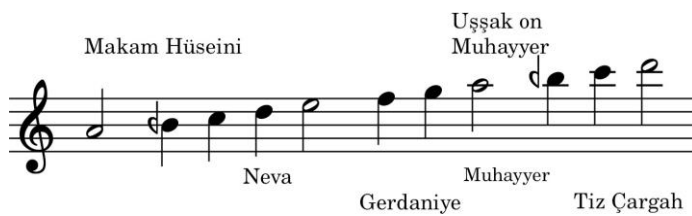


Figure 96: *Seyir*-like movements

On the whole, Dinkjian presents an original ascending-descending-ascending model for metric improvisation. He manages to create tension even from the first note of the performance, by using

contradictions in density within the flow, extensive repetitions of motifs, rhythmic displacement, syncopation and pauses. He chooses not to completely release the tension that has been created (something that we also encountered in John Berberian's metric improvisation in *Chem-oo-Chem*). This is an unusual approach in modal improvisations – especially in *taksims*, given that *seyir* often dictates the route of the improvisation, and it is highly unusual for a *makam* (and for a *taksim*) to end its progression on the upper octave. Dinkjian's approach to the progression of the *makam* is therefore very fresh, well-adapted to the aesthetics and the conditions of live concert performance, and surpassing the traditional norms of *seyir*.

5.1.3 *Kef life: a comparative approach*

In this sub-chapter, I will focus on two versions of Dinkjian's metric improvisations performed in his original composition *Kef Life*, in order to trace differences and similarities in how he improvised for the same composition. Both of the recordings that I analyse are of live performances. One is included on the *An Armenian in America* album (Krikor, 2006) (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/hCkIDW2OCsXbIkK>), and the other is a YouTube video, recorded live in Jerusalem, in 2016 (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/1Ca3OvXJZPcGs74>). I will refer to them respectively as Kef Life 1 and Kef Life 2. In addition, I will also comment on Pınarbaşı's metric improvisation in Kef Life 2 and try to juxtapose the two artists' differing approaches, as they develop metric improvisation in the same composition.

5.1.31. Use of rhythm and motifs/melodic ideas

The durations of the improvisations in these two recordings of *Kef Life* are shown below:

Kef Life 1: *oud* improvisation (01:24-2:41) – one minute and seventeen seconds.

Kef Life 2:

1. *oud* improvisation (00:48-1:48) – one minute.
2. Kanun improvisation (01:49-3:05) – one minute and sixteen seconds.

The basic rhythmic pattern in both performances is a *Mahsum iqa* as shown below:



Figure 97: *Mahsum iqa* in 8/8

In both Kef Life 1 and Kef Life 2, the solo parts begin after a four-bar phrase from the percussion.

In Kef Life 1 (2006), Ara Dinkjian uses twenty-three original motifs with their variations and extensive repetitions. In Kef Life 2 (2016), he presents fourteen original motifs which he also varies extensively. As far as the flow of subdivisions is concerned, Kef Life 1 (2016) includes eighth and sixteenth notes alternatively, throughout the solo, whereas Kef Life 2 (2016) is exclusively based on a sixteenth note flow. The rhythmic tools Dinkjian applies in both cases appear similar. In the interest of clarity, I demonstrate some of the tools and the motifs and melodic ideas in a comparative approach.

1. Extensive repetition of a motif/melodic idea, creating tension and anticipation:

In both recordings Dinkjian uses a melodic idea based on a pedal note and a note in the high register, which he repeats for a several bars, thus creating widely spaced phrases and a feeling of tension:

OudMotif7
Combination of 3plet on 4er note & 16ths creating shuffle feel

OudMotif8
(2)groups of 16ths and 32s
pedal on tonic and 5th
1st group (tonic- 5th)
2nd group (5th 6th)

OudM8

OudPh8
Bars 39-48
OudM7&OudM8*(6)&VarOudM8&Var2OudM8*(3)&VarOudM8 on different notes&Var2OudM8*(3) on different notes&VarOudM8 on different note&Var2OudM8*(3) on different notes&OudM9
Rhythmic insistence on Hüseini & Acem, then gradually passing through Eviç&Gerdaniye, to Tiz Segah and Muhayyer.

EndOf Sentence2

VarOudM8
Variation on 2nd group (5th-7th-6th major)

Var2OudM8
Variation on both groups (pedal on tonic -> 6th major 6th major-7th)

VarOudM8 on different notes
(pedal on tonic)

Figure 98: Extensive repetition of a single motif – Kef Life 2 (01:09-01:26) and Kef Life 1 (01:59-2:12)

2. Rhythmic insistence on one note in the high register combined with syncopation:

In both recordings, Dinkjian plays a high note rhythmically and insistently, and uses syncopation.

Figure 99: Rhythmic insistence on high note & syncopation – Kef Life 1 (2:00 -2:05)

VarOudPh9
OudPh9 with variations:
First bar:
 off beat (5) : pause instead of note
 offbeat(6): fall on tiz segah
 beat(7): Use of 16th and 32s instead of 8th note
Second bar:
 Beat(2): placement of 32s at the end of the group of 16ths
 Beat(3): 16th instead of dotted 8th bringing the last group of 16ths one 16th earlier on the phrase.
 Ending on Muhayyer

Figure 100: Rhythmic insistence on high note & syncopation – Kef Life 2 (01:26-01:33)

3. ‘Shuffle feel’:

Here Dinkjian introduces a new rhythmic tool, the ‘shuffle feel’, by using triplets and sixteenth notes in a row:

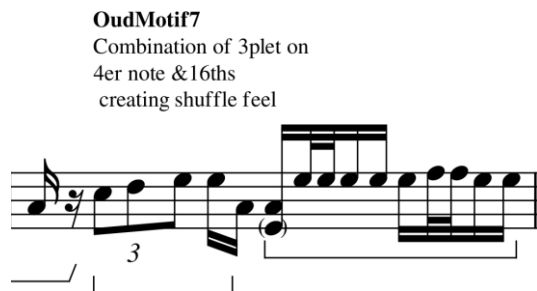


Figure 101: ‘Shuffle feel’ – Kef Life 2 (01:09-01:10)

5.1.3.2 Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure

In Kef Life 1 (2006), Dinkjian’s phrasing develops as shown below:

1. One bar (in total: 1)
2. Two-bar phrase (in total: 4)
3. Three-bar phrase (in total: 3)
4. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 1)
5. Five-bar phrase (in total: 1)
6. Phrase extending over five bars (in total: 1)
7. Nine-bar phrase (in total: 1)

In Kef Life 2 (2016), Dinkjian’s use of phrasing is shown below:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 1)
2. One bar (in total: 2)
3. Two-bar phrase (in total: 3)
4. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 5)
5. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 5)
6. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 1)
7. Ten-bar phrase (in total: 1)

Dinkjian seems to choose varying lengths of phrases for his two improvisations. However, there is a structural similarity, because in both of them we see the existence of a nine or ten-bar phrase structure and many two-bar phrases.

In Kef Life 1 we discern the following parts and sentences:

1. Entrance (bars 25-27) – Sentence 1 (01:23-01:32)
2. Development & Modulation (bar 28, o f f b e a t 2 to bar 45, beat 1) – Sentence 2 & 3 (01:32-01:38) (01:39-01:58)
3. Climax (bars 46, beat 3 to bar 57) – Sentence 4 (01:59-02:18)
4. Modulation 2 (bar 58, beat 2 to bar 62 – Sentence 5 (02:19-02:27)
5. Outro (bars 63-71) – Sentence 6 (02:28-02:41)

In Kef Life 2 we discern the following parts and sentences:

1. Entrance (bar 28, beat 2 to bar 39, beat 1) – Sentence 1 & 2 (00:49-00:59) (00:59-01:09)
2. Development (bar 39, beat 2 to) bar 48) – Sentence 3 (01:10-01:26)
3. Climax (bar 49, beat 2 to bar 52) – Sentence 4 (01:26-01:33)
4. Release (bars 53-57, beat 1) – Sentence 5 (01:33-01:41)
5. Outro (bar 57, beat 2 to bar 61) – Sentence 6 (01:41-01:48)

In both Kef Life 1 and Kef Life 2 Dinkjian, creates a five-part metric improvisation in which the Climax is based on the same idea of a large multi-bar phrase, consisting of the same motif in the high register, played in numerous repetitions and slight variations. However, the rest of the improvisation differs, in the sense that in Kef Life 1 there are two modulation episodes from *makam Uşşak* to *makam Karçığar*, whereas in Kef Life 2 there is no modulation to another *makam*. The modulations are shown below:

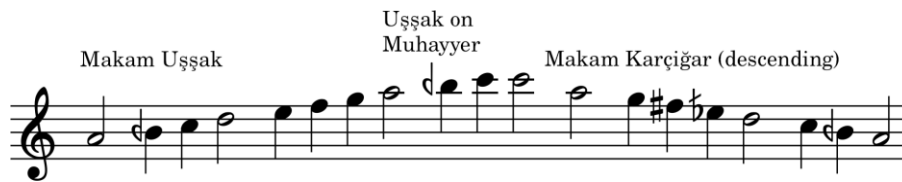


Figure 102: *Makam Uşşak* (full range) and descending *makam Karçığar*

5.1.3.3 Tamer Pınarbaşı's metric improvisation in *Kef Life 2*

Directly after Ara Dinkjian's metric improvisation, Tamer Pınarbaşı begins his improvisation. As my analysis shows, apart from his own personal style, Pınarbaşı is also influenced by Dinkjian's performance, processing motifs and phrases from the previous improvisation in real-time, and showing us how artists communicate and affect each other during a performance.

5.1.3.3.1 Use of rhythm and motif/melodic ideas

Pınarbaşı creates eighteen original motifs by utilising intricate rhythmic tools. In addition, he

varies and repeats them extensively to build his phrases and sentences. Below are some of the more interesting tools that he uses:

1. Repetition and reduction of motif, rhythmic displacement and over-the-bar phrasing:

KanunMotif1
Combination of
(4) 32s & (2) 16ths & (2) 8th notes & 4er rest

KanM1

VarKanM1
1st Reduction of KanM1
(without 4er rest)

KanunPhrase1
Extending over 2 bars creating a "merge" of bars effect
(6+6+4)/8 over 2 bars of 8/8
KanM1*2&VarKanM1
Movement around Eviç, Gerdaniye, Muhayyer, fall on Hüseini



Figure 103: Example of combination of rhythmic displacement and over-the-bar phrasing (01:49-01:50)

2. Syncopation:

KanunMotif3
Group of (1) 16th & (1) dotted 16th & 32rest
(pedal on high octave tonic fall to subtonic)
Syncopation

VarKanM3

KanM3

VarKanM3
Pedal on high octave tonic fall to 7th M

KanunPhrase4
Beat(1)-Beat((7)
KanM3 & VarKanM3 (2)
Pedal on high octave tonic and fall on Eviç & Gerdaniye

Figure 104: Kanun Motif 3, variations and displacement creating syncopation (02:03-02:04)

3. Groupings and accents:

The example below seems a direct influence of Ara Dinkjian's improvisation in Kef Life 2 (bars 36-38).

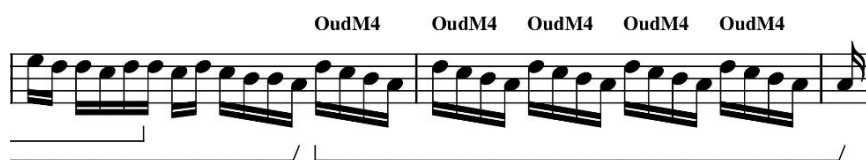
KanunMotif6
 descending group of (4) 16th notes
 (OudM4)



KanunPhrase9
 (2) bar phrase
 Borrowed from Oud-> ExtendedOudPh6

KanM5*8
 Groupings with accent on the first note of the group
 creating Syncopation effect

Figure 105: Repetition of groups of sixteenth notes (02:13-02:16), direct influence from Dinkjian's solo (01:03-01:07)



OudM4 **OudM4** **OudM4** **OudM4** **OudM4**

OudPh6
 Extending
 over 3 bars
 Beat(7)-Beat(1)
 of last bar

OudM4*5
 4x Uşşak
 On Dugah

Figure 106: Original phrase from Dinkjian's improvisation in Kef Life 2

4. Dissonant intervals combined with syncopation, question-answer and over-the-bar phrasing:

KanunMotif10
 Combination of Syncopation &
 Dissonant intervals
 Serving as **Question**

KanunMotif11
 Combination of Syncopation
 and straight group of 8ths
 Serving as **Answer**

VarKanM10
KanM10
 Beat(2) inversion of $\sharp b$
 Beat(4) addition of $\sharp b$

VarKanM11
 KanM11 without syncopation
 with ornament on beat(6)



KanPhrase12
 (2) Bar phrase
 From Segah Jump to Eviç,
 Tiz Segah then one octave higher from Tiz Eviç, fall on Tiz Segah
 Then with use of big semitone (from F# to G (1) komma) fall on Hüseini

VarKanPh12
 VarKanM10 & VarKanM11

Figure 107: Change of modality with dissonant intervals (02:34-02:41)

5. Change of subdivision in the flow:

This is one of the tools that Pınarbaşı uses often in his metric improvisations. In the example below, directly from a flow of sixteenth notes he changes to sextuplets in sixteenth notes:



Figure 108: Change of subdivision in the flow (02:41- 02:48)

6. *Tihai*-inspired use of motif.

In a form resembling the *tihai* technique, Pınarbaşı repeats a motif three times and lands on the first beat of the next bar.

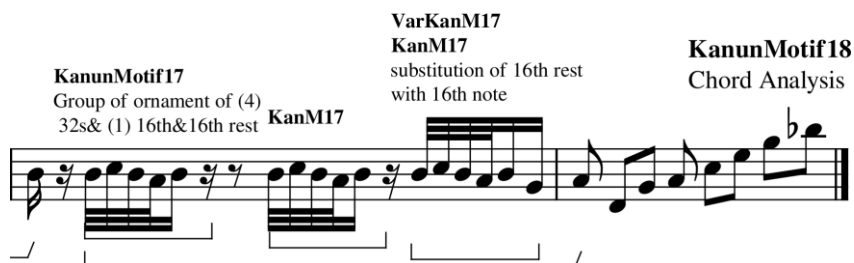


Figure 109: Technique resembling *tihai* (3:02-3:05)

5.1.3.3.2 Use of phrase, *makam* and overall structure

Pınarbaşı creates eighteen original phrases, which he varies extensively. The length of the phrases varies as is shown below:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 4)
2. Two-bar phrase (in total: 3)
3. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 10)
4. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 3)
5. Four-bar phrase (in total: 2)

6. Phrase extending over four bars (in total: 2)
7. Five bar phrase (in total: 1)
8. Phrase extending over five bars (in total: 1)
9. Nine-bar phrase (in total: 1)

Pınarbaşı's variety of phrase length reveals the fully improvised character of his performance. In addition, many of the above phrases are variations of an original phrase, giving us a hint of how he processes the material that he constructs in real-time.

Structurally, Pınarbaşı creates a five-part metric improvisation, as shown below:

1. Entrance & Development (bars 61-77) – Sentence 1 (01:50-02:19)
2. Modulation (bar 77, beat 8) to bar 85, beat 1)– Sentence 2 (02:20-02:34)
3. Preparation for Climax (bars 86–89) – Sentence 3 (02:34-02:41)
4. Climax (bars 90-97, beat 6) – Sentence 4 (02:41-02:55)
5. Release & Outro (bar 97, beat 7 to bar 102) – Sentence 5 (02:55-03:04)

In this performance, Pınarbaşı proposes an original way of structuring a metric improvisation. Firstly, he combines the Entrance part with the Development of his ideas. In addition, he chooses an uncommon modulation as he changes the tonic centre from *Dügâh* to *Segah*, implying a modulation to *makam Eviç*. Then, in another innovation, he creates tension and anticipation in the Preparation for Climax part, by employing dissonant intervals and insistent syncopation. In the Climax he follows Ara Dinkjian's example of high register, and an insistence on one motif, which he then enriches with extreme speeds of subdivisions, before returning to the main *makam* and simultaneously coming back to a simpler flow of subdivisions.

5.1.4 Crosswinds

In this sub-chapter, I focus on two of Ara Dinkjian's metric improvisations for *Crosswinds*, one of Tamer Pınarbaşı's original compositions. Again, the recordings come from different settings. Crosswinds 1 refers to an album recording (Traditional Crossroads, 2012) (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/27AGmJ8kDnyWuv6>) and Crosswinds 2 refers to a live concert performance (2015) (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/Ta3JvfHP0GfjDLt>). This offers us a chance to compare the two distinct instances of improvisation for the same composition.

5.1.4.1 Use of rhythm and motif/melodic idea

Crosswinds is composed on a 7/8 rhythmic pattern, which is played throughout the composed and improvised part by the *kanun*, as a rhythmic and harmonic structure:



Figure 110: *Crosswinds* rhythmic and harmonic structure

The inner subdivision of the bar is based on a group of four eighths and three eighths, a grouping that creates a large and a small section in the bar. During the metric improvisation, the aforementioned structure is constantly played by the *kanun*, providing a dense melodic/harmonic/rhythmic environment. In this sense, it comes as no surprise that, on the whole, the improvised part is built in an abstract and minimal way. In both instances, Ara Dinkjian's approach is one of providing commentary, as opposed to the dense rhythmic improvisations examined previously, thus suggesting a model for similar occasions. In addition, the four-bar rhythmic harmonic structure played by the *kanun* strongly affects the melodic material to be used, giving little space for modulations and *makam* changes.

In *Crosswinds* 1, Ara Dinkjian creates fourteen motifs/melodic ideas, and in *Crosswinds* 2 only twelve. My research has shown that there are overlapping phrases and motifs between the two performances. The metric improvisations in both performances are developed in the space of less than a minute (*Crosswinds* 1 (3:21–4:15), *Crosswinds* 2 (3:08–4:00)), and shaped by the repetitions of the underlying melodic/harmonic structure. The overall flow of subdivisions in *Crosswinds* 1 is on eighth notes, and also quarter and half notes, whereas in *Crosswinds* 2 there is an interchange between eighth and sixteenth notes (as ornaments and as basic notes). Some of the most significant rhythmic tools used in both performances can be seen in the following analyses.

1. Displacement and reduction of motif:

In *Crosswinds* 1 (bars 66–68) Dinkjian uses the same motif in different places and reduces it at the same time.

OudMotif7
Group of (2) 8th notes & (2) 4er
Ascending and jump of 3rd interval
over 5th degree
{ comment: commonly
used by Ara Dinkjian
and other
Armenian players)

VarOudM7
OudM7 placed
on beat(3)
reduction by (1) 8th

Var2OudM7
OudM7 variation on ending notes

Figure 111: Displacement of motif, reduction and variation on notes (03:28-03:32)

2. Question-answer tool combined with over-the-bar displacement of the motif and variation:

In bars 85-88, Dinkjian combines a series of tools:

OudMotif13
Combination of half and dotted 4er, indicating the rhythmic structure of the meter (4+3) & group of (3) 8ths serving as **question**

VarOudM13
OudM13 variation different notes & legato group of (3) 8ths serving as **answer**

Figure 112: Question-answer combined with variation (03:52-03:56)

3. Combination of different rhythmic values in a motif and use of expressive tools:

Use of glissando, legato, and pull effect combined with various rhythmic values.

OudMotif8
Group of 8th&4er&(2) 8ths
Jump from 7thm to 3rd fall on octave
(pull effect interpretation)

OudMotif9
Group of 4er&8th&4er
Placed over bars

Figure 120: Crosswinds 1 (03:33-03:34)

In Crosswinds 2, Dinkjian extends his use of rhythmic tools. Notable examples are shown below:

1. Syncopation:

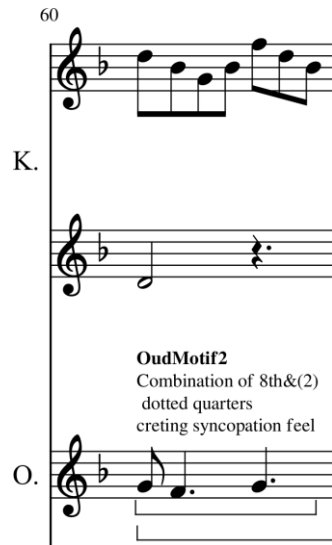


Figure 114: Dotted quarters on 7/8 (03:34-3:35)

2. Placement of a motif of 7/8 on various beats in the bar, creating the effect of a displacement of the meter.

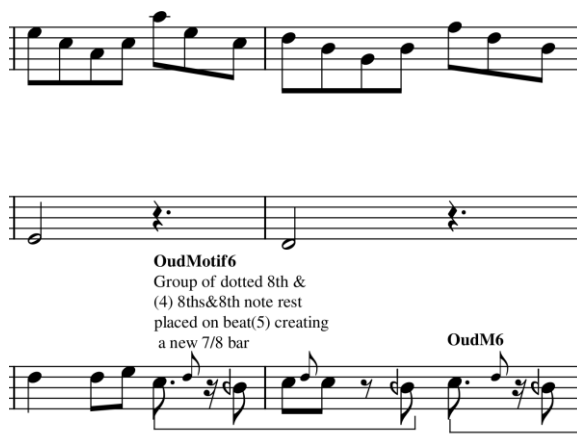


Figure 115: Rhythmic displacement (03:44-03:45)

3. Off-beat displacement of notes combined with question-Answer-Answer 2 tool:

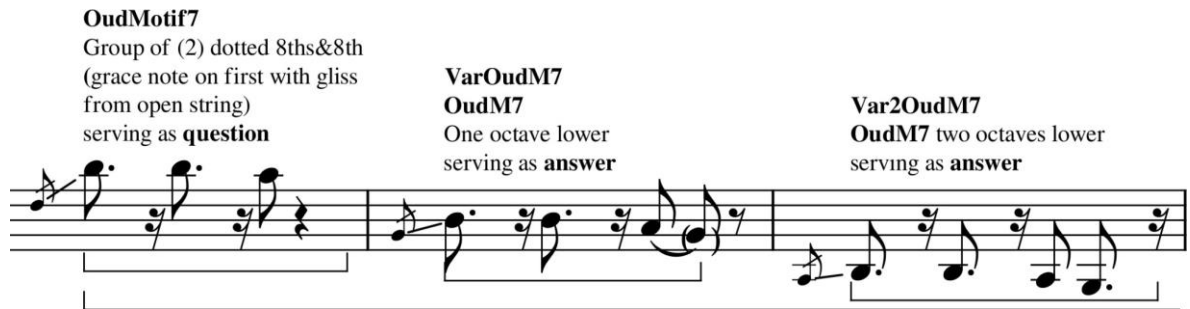


Figure 116: Placement in different octaves (03:51-03:56)

Here, Dinkjian repeats a motif in three octaves, reminding us of John Berberian's metric improvisation in *Chem-oo-Chem*.

5.1.4.2 Use of phrasing *makam* and overall structure

In these two metric improvisations, Dinkjian builds his phrases following the underlying harmonic structure.

In Crosswinds 1, we can discern the following:

1. Two-bar phrase (1)
2. Phrase extending over two bars (1)
3. Three-bar phrase (1)
4. Phrase extending over three bars (2)
5. Phrase extending over four bars (3)
6. Phrase extending over five bars (1)
7. Phrase extending over six bars (1)

In Crosswinds 2 we can discern the following:

1. Two-bar phrase (5)
2. Three-bar phrase (1)
3. Phrase extending over three bars (2)
4. Four-bar phrase (1)
5. Phrase extending over four bars (3)

Despite the fact that there is a significant difference in the variety of bar lengths between the two performances, there are also certain phrases in the two improvisations that are very alike, giving us a hint of the material's pre-preparation. Two significant examples are shown below.

1. From Crosswinds 2 bars 79-81:

79 80 81

VarOudM8
OudM8
 Movement around
 5th degree falling on 4th
 serving as answer

OudMotif9
 group of (6) 8ths
 accent on 4
 (same groups of
 ascending notes)

VarOudM9
 Variation & addition of notes

OudPhrase10
 (2) bar phrase

OudM9&VarOudM9
 3x Ussak on Dugah
 Ascent on Neva
 descent through Rast on Dugah

OudMotif12
 from Crosswinds solo in
 Soundscapes

OudPhrase3 from Crosswinds Soundscapes

Figure 117: Transferring motifs from Crosswinds 1 to Crosswinds 2 (03:57-04:01)

In this case, both Var Oud M8 and Oud Phrase 10 can be found in Crosswinds 1 at bars 81 (03:47-03:54) and 59–62 respectively (03:19-03:23).

2. From Crosswinds 2 ending phrase bars 89-92.

In this case, Oud Motif 12 (04:11-04:12) is a variation of Oud Motif 14 of Crosswinds 1 (03:57).

89 90 91 92

OudMotif12
 Ascending group of (4) 8ths
 falling on 4er

EndOfSentence3

OudMotif14 from solo on Crosswinds in Soundscapes

Figure 118: Transferring ending motif and phrase from Crosswinds 1 to Crosswinds 2

Structurally, there are extraordinary similarities between the two performances, given that both are built on top of a four-bar harmonic/melodic structure.

In Crosswinds 1 we have the following parts:

1. Entrance (bars 51-64) – Sentence 1 (03:09-03:26)

2. Climax (bars 65-73) – Sentence 2 (03:27-03:38)
3. Release & Outro (bars 74-90) – Sentence 3 (03:39-04:00)

In Crosswinds 2 parts are structured in the following manner:

1. Entrance (bars 50-59) – Sentence 1 (03:21-03:40)
2. Climax (bars 60-77) – Sentence 2 (03:41-03:56)
3. Release & Outro (bars 78-90) – Sentence 3 (03:57-04:16)

Both improvisations are tripartite and suggest an ascending-descending model with no modulations. Melodically, the material used for the metric improvisation is moving around *makam Buselik* (relative to a Dm). In both Entrance parts, the phrasing moves around the fifth degree (*Hüseynî* or A) and, with various descending stops, in both instances it concludes on the tonic *Dügâh* (D). The Climax part in Crosswinds 1 ascends to the octave, whereas in Crosswinds 2 it reaches a minor third interval above the octave, having given a hint of *Uşşak* on *Hüseynî*. In both cases, the Release & Outro part is a descending movement towards the tonic.



Figure 119: Melodic material in Crosswinds 1 & Crosswinds 2

5.1.5. Concluding remarks on Ara Dinkjian's performance

Through the analysis of Ara Dinkjian's performance we were able to examine various examples of his work on metric improvisation. As we saw, Dinkjian proposes a series of models for metric improvisation, fitting to different occasions and different stylistic purposes. He is extremely fluent in his rhythmic language. In all of his performances (this includes performances that were not thoroughly transcribed, but which I have listened to attentively, having included them in my practice for many years), syncopation, groupings and accents, and rhythmic displacement are always present. Dinkjian's metric improvisation style suggests a story-telling way of phrasing. In the performance analyses presented above, we were able to trace the ways in which he builds his phrases – through variations of his motifs, extensive repetitions that create tension, and abstract use of single notes and consecutive bars of rests. In addition, he seems to act in a compositional manner during his improvised performances; transferring motifs from one performance to the other, or even revealing his influences from other masters of the genre (mainly Berberian and the American-Armenian *oud* player Richard Hagopian).¹³⁰

In addition, and apart from all the rhythmic and phrasing tools and the processing of the melodic

¹³⁰ As he states in his interview in Appendix I.

material, Dinkjian's work suggests aesthetic ways of approaching this performance practice. He performs differently and according to the style of the genre he wants to give prominence, be it folk or contemporary and live or studio performances. As seen through my transcriptions, analyses, and written contemplations, this combination of different aesthetic approaches and rhythmic knowledge can act as a toolbox for our own performances of metric improvisation, in the many different occasions and contexts in which we are invited to perform and create music.

5.2. Tamer Pınarbaşı

Tamer Pınarbaşı was born in 1970, in Karaman in south-central Turkey. He started playing the *kanun* at the age of ten and shortly afterwards began recording and performing in Turkey and (gradually) abroad. He studied at the Istanbul Technical University's Türk Müziği Devlet Konservatuvarı. He later moved to New York, where he began exploring several other musical idioms, such as jazz, flamenco, classical and contemporary music. He is considered a master of the *kanun* and a virtuoso, and he has offered many new insights into the art of *kanun* playing. Instead of playing using the *mizrab* (plectrum), he has adopted a 'full-hand' technique (plucking with all fingers and both thumbs, using his nails instead of a plectrum), which has allowed him to incorporate harmony and velocity in his playing. This innovation has changed how *kanun* players all around the world approach the *kanun* today. He is a member of New York Gypsy All-Stars (NYGAS) and of Secret Trio, bands for which he also composes.

Tamer Pınarbaşı has been a great influence on my own practice; his improvisational skills are outstanding, and his imagination and originality in improvisation (metric and *taksim*) and composition have had a huge impact on my thinking and understanding of the genre. Although Pınarbaşı plays a different instrument than the *oud*, it was inconceivable not to include his performances in this research. Trying to understand his style and adapt it for another instrument, has however been an extremely difficult task. The *kanun* has 72 strings and Tamer Pınarbaşı plays with all digits on his hands. This fact has made it almost impossible for me to play at his speed. However, I have found it extremely beneficial to transcribe, practice, and analyse his work – exercises that have allowed me to develop a new perspective on my instrument and on my improvisational performance, with more structural freedom and imagination, and with more elaborate rhythmic tools at my disposal.

My research on Pınarbaşı has been comparative, so that I engaged in intensive listening of all the material on him that I could find, bringing it together with the material I had on Dinkjian. Throughout this process, I chose to transcribe, analyse, and practice the metric improvisations of each of the artists individually, but also the performances where they collaborated, so as to investigate their musical relationship and the ways in which they communicate and influence one another. In the chapter that follows, I comment on both their individual characteristic improvisational choices and traits, as well as on the aspect of communication and musical relationship issues.

5.2.1 *Moments*: a comparative approach

This sub-chapter focuses on two performances of Tamer Pınarbaşı's metric improvisations for Ara Dinkjian's original composition *Moments*. Two different settings were selected; the first (*Moments* 1) refers to a studio album recording (2015, Kalan Muzik) (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/4Ko1aDxLTR8d179>), whereas the second (*Moments* 2) refers to a live concert performance with Secret Trio in Zurich, 2015, that is archived on YouTube (<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/XcwHuPMNet4UxVe>). On both occasions, Ara Dinkjian performs a *Hicaz* introductory *taksim*, accompanied harmonically by Tamer Pınarbaşı. Apart from showing their obvious musical interest, I use both examples here to demonstrate the distinct ways in which the setting/environment of a performance may affect the performance of metric improvisation.

5.2.1.1 Use of rhythm in combination with a motif/melodic idea

Moments is developed on top of a rhythmic/harmonic two-bar sequence. It is composed on a 4/4 bar (with a small passage to 7/4 and then back to 4/4).¹³¹ This two-bar sequence is played by the *kanun* and sets the subdivision flow on sextuplets of sixteenth notes over a quarter note (or triplets of sixteenth notes over an eighth note), for the composition and for the improvisation that follows:

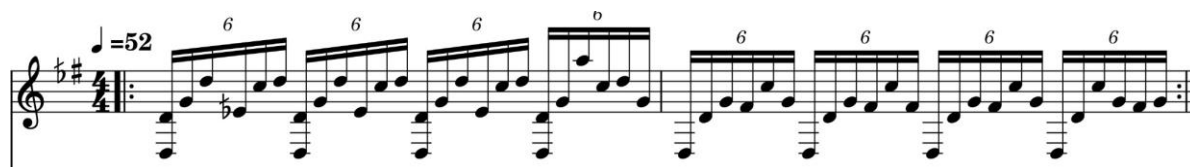


Figure 120: Kanun's harmonic/rhythmic sequence of *Moments*

In both instances of metric improvisation in *Moments*, the choice of the basic subdivision flow is the triplet of sixteenth notes over an eighth note (or the sextuplet of sixteenth notes over a quarter note), creating a certain 'feel' throughout the performance. However, in both performances, Pınarbaşı extends this basic subdivision flow to various other varying subdivisions that range from groups of five to groups of ten.

In each recording addressed here, Ara Dinkjian accompanies his performance with the following two-bar rhythmic/harmonic structure (on which he also improvises in *Moments* 2, as we will see later on in the analysis).

¹³¹ This 4/4 bar could also be considered as a 12/8 bar with subdivisions of sixteenth notes at a faster tempo. Then, the 7/4 part becomes a 9/8 and a 12/8 bar as can be seen here: <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/v5opsmL57rGcZcq>. However, I chose to transcribe the whole improvised part in 4/4 with a subdivision of sextuplets and triplets to be able to delve into more detail concerning the ornamentation and the rhythmic phenomena.



Figure 121: Moments 1 *oud* basic accompaniment scheme



Figure 122: Moments 2 *oud* basic accompaniment scheme

There is a significant difference in the duration of the two performances, which is related to the different settings (album and live concert performance). Consequently, the number of motifs/melodic ideas, phrases, and sentences appears different, as shown in the following table:

	Track duration	Metric Improvisation duration	Number of motifs/melodic ideas– variations	Number of phrases– variations	Number of sentences
Moments 1	07:42	05:23-06:38	15 motifs / 9 variations	12 phrases / 0 variations	3
Moments 2	09:45	05:37-08:35	38 motifs / 30 variations	32 phrases / 2 variations	6

Table 2: Statistics for Moments 1 & Moments 2

As my analysis will show, the rhythmic tools used in these two performances are not significantly different. What seems to be different is the use of modulation and the way of structuring the metric improvisation.

Some of the most interesting rhythmic tools in motif/idea-building are:

1. Extended use of syncopation.
 - a. With the use of a single note, in Moments 1:

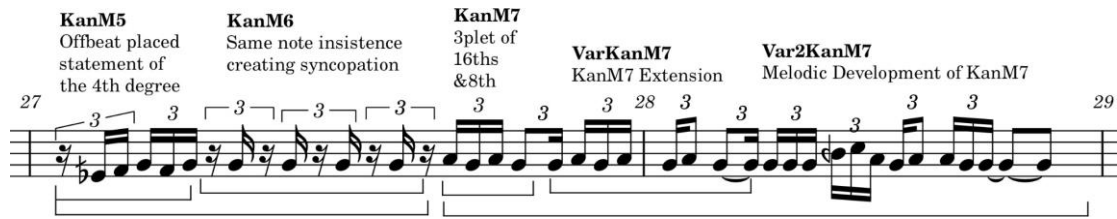


Figure 123: Single note for syncopation (05:44)

- b. With the use of various notes, in Moments 2:

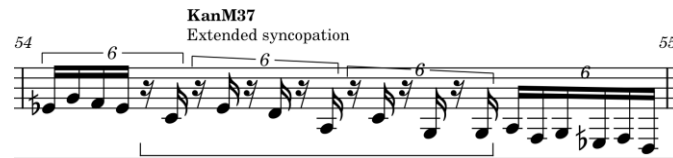


Figure 124: Extended syncopation (08:25-08:26)

- c. By using beamed notes inside the triplet or sextuplet, in Moments 2:



Figure 125: Syncopation through beamed triplets (05:59-05:60)

2. Interchange of subdivisions inside a bar.

- a. In Moments 2, Pınarbaşı builds a melodic idea based on a different flow of a triplet of sixteenth notes, a quintuplet, and a quadruplet of thirty-second notes:

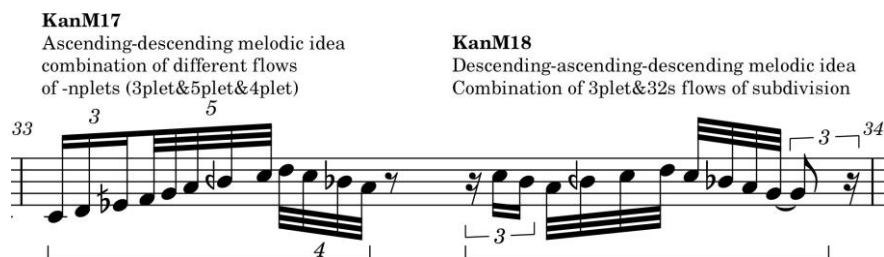


Figure 126: Changing subdivision flows (06:48-06:50)

b. In Moments 2, changing from triplets to extended use of quintuplets:

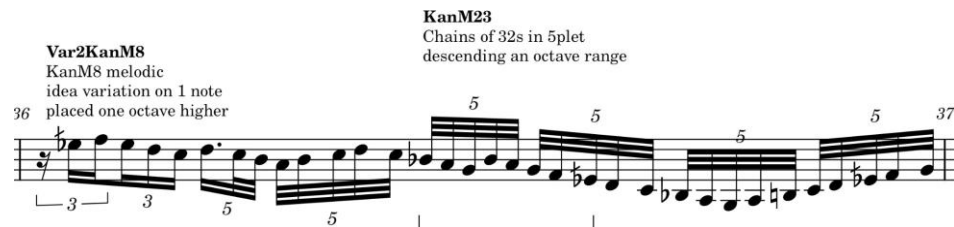


Figure 127: Interchange of varying subdivisions (6:52)

3. Rhythmic displacement of the same motif.

In Moments 2, Pınarbaşı uses Kanun Motif 8 in different bars and at the same time in different places inside the bar:

a. First statement of the motif (bar 27):

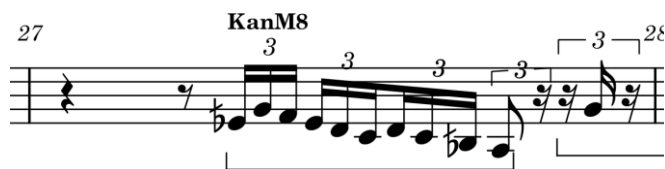


Figure 128: First displacement (06:17-06:19)

b. Kanun Motif 8, given a slight variation and rhythmic displacement:

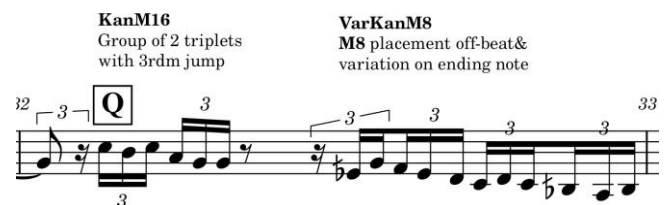


Figure 129: Slight variation (06:42)

c. Kanun Motif 8, placed an octave higher, placed offbeat, and varied slightly:

Var2KanM8
KanM8 melodic
idea variation on 1 note
placed one octave higher

KanM23
Chains of 32s in 5plet
descending an octave range

Figure 130: Placement in the upper octave (07:07)

Apart from the rhythmic tools, Pınarbası employs the question-answer tool, both for motifs/melodic ideas and for phrase building.

a. In Moments 1:

- i. For motifs/melodic ideas
- ii. For phrases

KanM1

KanM2
dotted 16th

KanM4
Ornament of
32s in 3plet of 16ths

KanunPh2
Extending over 2 bars
Question phrase
Statement of Dugah and fall on Acem Asiran
(Implying a Kürdi 3x on Hüseini Asiran)

KanunPhrase3
Extending over 2 bars (beat 4-beat2)
Answer phrase
Descent on Hüseini Asiran with Kürdi intervals

EndOfSentence1

Figure 131: Question-answer for motifs and phrases (05:31-05:40)

b. In Moments 2, the question-answer tool is utilised by the accompaniment (*oud*) in a real-time improvised reaction:

KanM16
Group of 2 triplets
with 3rdm jump

VarKanM8
M8 placement off-beat &
variation on ending note

KanunPhrase11
Extending over 2 bars (landing on beat1-overlapping phrases)
Movement from Gerdaniye to Neva then from Dik Kürdi to Rast
Hicaz environment
(Kanunphr11 is a combination with OudPhrase1 which is an on-the-sp
improvised reaction from the accompaniment)

VarKanM16
M16 reduction

OudPhrase1
Descending phrase (Acem
to Dugah)
- on the spot reaction to KanM8

Figure 132: Real time improvised reaction (06:42-06:43)

5.2.1.2 Use of phrasing, *makam* and overall structure in Moments 1:

In Moments 1:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 2)
2. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 9)
3. Phrase extending over three bars (in total: 1)

In Moments 2:

1. Part of the bar phrase (in total: 15)
2. One-bar phrase (in total: 2)
3. Two-bar phrase (in total: 4)
4. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 9)

There are significant differences in how Pınarbaşı builds his phrasing in these two performances. In Moments 1, he mainly chooses to create phrases that extend over two bars, whereas in Moments 2 his phrases vary in length, a fact probably related to the long duration of the solo. Other factors that affect the small length of the phrases are the overall slow tempo and the primary choice of subdivision in the flow. In this sense, in both performances a single bar of 4/4 appears to provide enough time and space for a complete phrase to be constructed.

Structurally, in Moments 1 we can discern the following parts:

1. Entrance (bars 23-26) – Sentence 1 (05:16-05:42)
2. Development & Climax (bars 27-30, beat 2) – Sentence 2 (05:43-05:51)
3. Release (bar 30, offbeat 4 to bar 32) – Sentence 3 (05:52-06:07)
4. Second Development & Exit (bars 33-38) – Sentence 4 (06:13-06:38)

In Moments 2, the different parts are structured in the following manner:

1. Entrance & Modulation (bars 19-26) – Sentence 1 (05:39-06:14)
2. Development (return from modulation) (bars 27-31) – Sentence 2 (06:15-06:34)
3. First Climax & Release (bars 32-38) – Sentence 3 (06:35-07:09)
4. Preparation for Second Development (bars 39-40) – Sentence 4 (07:10-07:21)
5. Second Development & Modulation & Return (bars 41-44) – Sentence 5 (07:21-07:40)
6. Second Climax & Modulation (bars 45-48) – Sentence 6 (07:41-07:57)
7. Return from modulation & Third Climax & Release (bars 49-52) – Sentence 7 (07:59-08:16)
8. Exit (bars 53-56) – Sentence 8 (08:17-08:34)

Through his performances in Moments 1 and Moments 2, Pınarbaşı suggests two completely different models. In Moments 1, he chooses to create a small and concrete four-part performance, which would be better suited to an album recording. However, even in this formal setting,

Pınarbaşı introduces some innovations (such as the combination of Development and Climax and Development and Outro parts). His performance in Moments 2 differs significantly from all the other performances examined in this research, pointing towards the artist's extreme innovation, imagination, and improvisatory approach. In Moments 2, he constructs an eight-part structure, with several modulations and climaxes, and subsequent releases. He creates sentences that defy the underlying four-bar structure, moving freely and juxtaposing them, suggesting new ways of approaching musical structure. In terms of *makam*, on both occasions Pınarbaşı begins his improvisation by exploring the area below the tonic (*Dügâh*). In Moments 1, he mostly moves within *Hicaz makam*, but in Moments 2 he explores several small modulations (even from the beginning of the performance), thus suggesting two completely different ways of developing an improvised performance. The modulations of Moments 2's metric improvisation can be seen below:

1. Sentence 1:

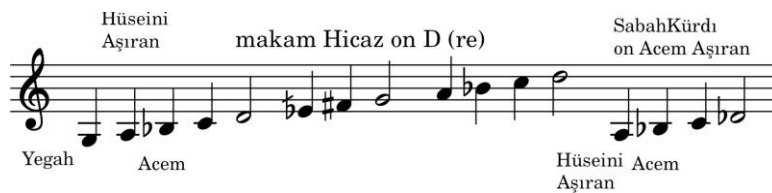


Figure 133: First modulation (05:39-06:14)

2. Sentence 6:



Figure 134: Second modulation (07:41-07:57)

5.2.3 Concluding remarks on Tamer Pınarbaşı's performance

In this sub-chapter, we focused on Tamer Pınarbaşı's metric improvisational approach. We noted the following important aspects of his performance style through the transcriptions and analyses that were presented:

1. Variety in the use of rhythmic tools. Pınarbaşı uses a variety of rhythmic tools for his performances (syncopation, rhythmic displacement, the shift of the motif, groupings, *tihai*-influenced phrasing, and so on). One of the 'trademarks' used in all of his performances is that of different flows of subdivisions in his phrasing, which allows

him to create density and move at extreme speeds.

2. Differences in duration that are influenced by the setting of the performance.
3. Variety in structural models. In each performance he suggests a different structural model for his improvisations, providing us with a variety of ideas for our own performances.
4. Modulations. Lastly, as far as the use of *makam* is concerned, when modulating Pınarbaşı chooses to explore distant or unusual modulations that again show us a different way to approach an improvised performance melodically.

B. In Greece: Kyriakos Tapakis's practice

5.3 Kyriakos Tapakis: life and career

Kyriakos Tapakis (1977-) is one of the members of the young generation involved in *paradosiaka*. He was born in Athens in 1977, and comes from a family with roots in Cyprus. He studied at the Music School of Pallini, which was founded in 1988 and is the first of the 49 music schools that are operational in Greece today. The Music School of Pallini has hosted most of today's *paradosiaka* and contemporary modal music performers in Greece as its students – musicians such as Sokratis Sinopoulos, Harris Lambrakis, and Martha Mavroidi, among others. In the context of Pallini's Music School, Tapakis studied *oud*, *bağlama*, *buzuki*, western classical music and harmony, and Byzantine music and the modal system of *makam*. He has performed extensively in Greece and abroad, has collaborated with a broad spectrum of musicians in various genres of Greek music, and, in recent years also with jazz musicians. He is highly acclaimed for his virtuosity in *oud* performance and especially for his improvisational style, both in *taksim* and contemporary genres. He is considered innovative in his approach to the instrument and has experimented with changes in the technicalities of the instrument, such as different tunings, extra strings, experimenting with sound and effects, and so on. Apart from his performance career, he is also hugely involved in teaching. His students form a rather large body of the younger generation of *oud* players in Greece and abroad. Personally, I had the good fortune of being one of his students during my undergraduate studies and he has been an inspiration for my practice in rhythm and rhythmic improvisation. Tapakis is also active in composing music, although his compositions can mostly be heard in live performances rather than in recordings.

Just as with Dinkjian, Tapakis's improvisational style was the focus of my master's thesis, meaning that this is the second time that I approach his work in a postgraduate study.¹³² For this doctoral research, I have chosen to transcribe and analyse two of the rhythmic improvisations that he performed inside his original composition *Volta*. Both of these recordings refer to live performances of the same composition, the first one in Bulgaria with the Bulgarian National Radio Orchestra, in 2015, and the second one in Budapest with a group called 'Meybahar', together with some of Tapakis's close collaborators (Loukas Metaxas on electric bass and Nikos Paraoulakis on *ney*).¹³³ Performances of improvisation by the composer himself, inside one of his original compositions, offered an opportunity to explore the artist and his style in a new way.

5.3.1 *Volta* with BNR Orchestra (2015)

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/AGwqtoLUvKH45Na>

5.3.1.1 Rhythmic-Harmonic pattern and variations

¹³² Liontou-Mochament, M., 2013. "Rhythmic improvisation in the works of Ara Dinkjian, Kyriakos Tapakis and Sokratis Sinopoulos", Master thesis, Codarts University for the Arts.

¹³³ For the purposes of this chapter, 'Volta, BNR' refers to the performance recorded in Bulgaria and 'Volta, BDP' refers to the one recorded in Budapest.

The basic rhythmic patterns that the percussionist uses in this version of *Volta* are shown below:

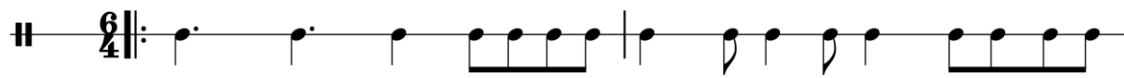


Figure 135: Basic rhythmic pattern

The rhythmic cycle is played simply and with almost no variations, in this way leaving plenty of space for the improvising artist. In the same way, the bass player plays a simple one-bar structure without variation (with an inner subdivision of 3+3+2+4) – first alone (bars 29–32), for the performer to prepare for the solo, and then he follows the same basic accompaniment line (as shown below) during the first part of the solo (bars 32–44):



Figure 136: Basic harmonic accompaniment

For the second part of the solo there is a harmonic change, as shown below, in bars 45-51. There is then a drop back to the basic aforementioned harmonic structure for the end of the solo, and the return to the composition:

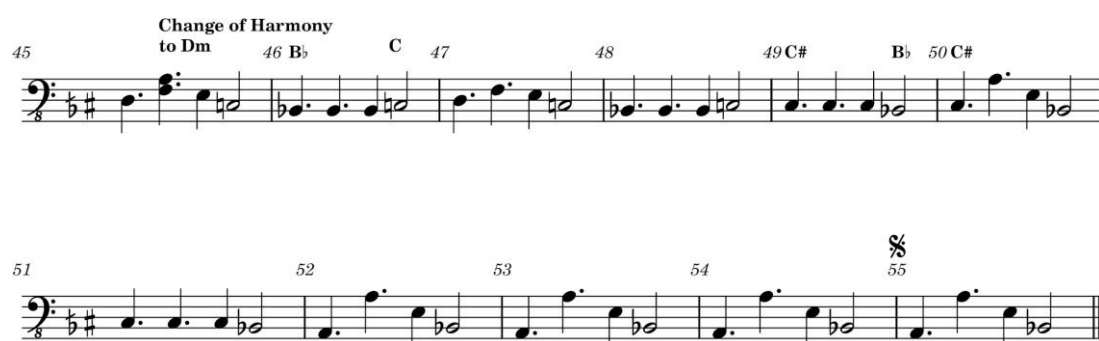


Figure 137: Harmonic change in *Volta*

It is worth mentioning that the whole bass line structure can, by itself, indicate the formal way in which the solo was originally intended to be performed: the change in harmony seems to already be predefined in a way that it resembles the harmonic change in the pre-composed part of the performance. The 8-bar change in harmony also follows this scheme. Another important point is

that the bass player seems to interpret the second degree of *makam Hicaz* in an almost equally tempered way. The concurrent existence of a different temperament within the same performance is something that one often finds in live and ‘fusion’ performances, especially in those where Western or jazz harmony is employed. This has especially been a subject of research in ethnomusicology with regards to *rebetiko*.¹³⁴

5.3.1.2 Use of motif /melodic ideas

In a total of 1’12 of improvisation, Tapakis makes use of 25 motifs and their variations. Here, I only mention the most rhythmically interesting motifs. A more extensive analysis can be found in Appendix I.

1. Oud Motif 1, Oud Motif 2, and Oud Motif 3:

In the *ad libitum* part, Tapakis uses a feel of almost a triplet— of eight notes for every quarter note. After applying this subdivision tool, he creates small motifs of triplets with ornamentations (Oud Motif 2), repetitions as such (Oud Motif 1), and different rhythmic displacements inside the bar (Oud Motif 3).

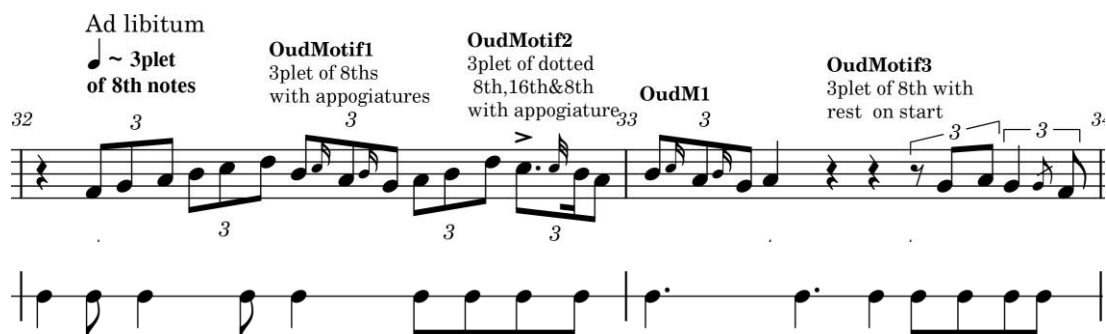


Figure 138: Almost triplet feel in *ad libitum* (02:11-02:13)

2. Oud Motif 4 and its variation show an interesting use of inversion of the rhythmic values of a motif, whereas Oud Motif 5 and its variations are an example of the use of syncopation inside a motif:

¹³⁴ Dr. Risto Pekka Pennanen is an ethnomusicologist whose work specialises in Balkan music. In his article, Pennanen, Risto Pekka, “The development of chordal harmony in Greek rebetika and laika music, 1930s to 1960s”, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 6, no. 1 (1997): 65-116, Pennanen examines the ways in which the development of chordal harmony affected the use of *makam* and its well-tempered version, *dromos*, in Greek popular music from the 1930s to the 1960s.

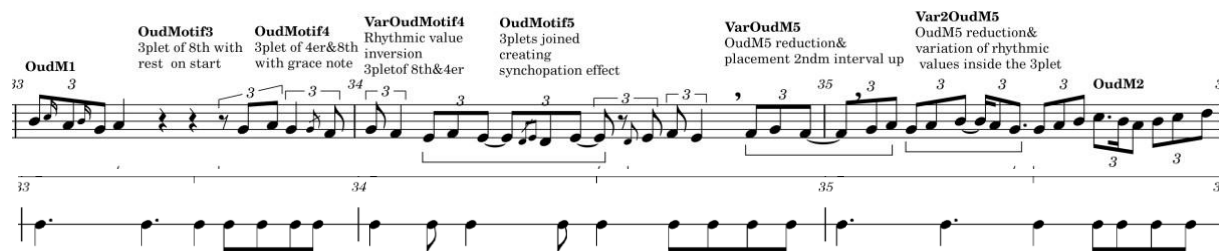


Figure 139: Combinations of variation, inversion, syncopation (02:17-02:19)

3. Oud Motif 6 and Oud Motif 7 show the use of varied subdivisions. Combined with the *ad libitum* use, the use of this variation seems to create a ‘shuffle feel,’ which is one of the characteristic traits of Tapakis’s improvised performances:

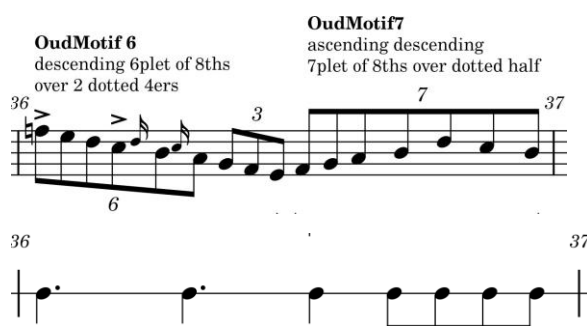


Figure 140: Different varying subdivisions (02:22-02:23)

4. Oud Motif 8 and its variations offer a fine example of the subdivision, extension, and transposition of a motif:

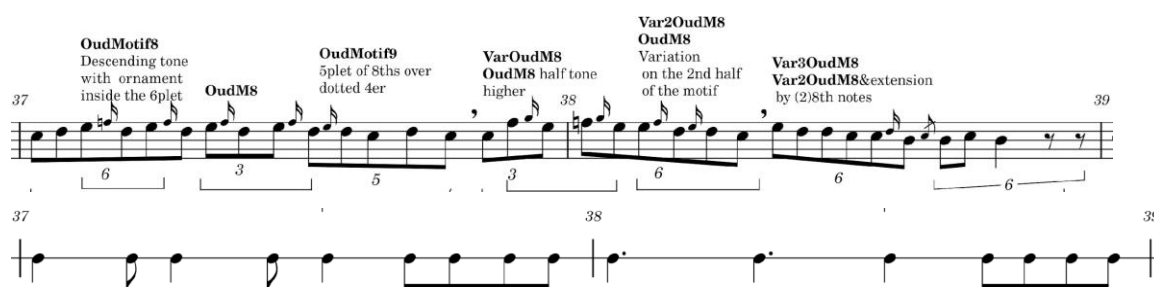


Figure 141: Combination of tools (02:26)

5. Oud Motif 12 and variations (at the beginning of the straight section) are an example of the use of a combination of pedal note (open string) and other notes, a tool frequently

used by *oud* players:

Straight
 41 = 42

OudMotif11
 Dotted 16th with 32s

OudMotif12
 group of (4) 8ths
 group of (3) same notes

VarOudM12
 16ths on the 2nd 8th

Var2OudM12
 one 8th less

Var3OudM12
 Creating synchopation effect & inverted analysis of chord

Var4OudM12
 8th notes less

41 42 43 44

Figure 142: Pedal note and rhythmic development (02:39-02:41)

- Oud Motif 16 and its variation, and Oud Motif 17 are examples of the use of groups of sixteenth notes:

OudMotif15
 Dotted 8th & 16th & 3plet of 8ths ending on 4er

OudMotif16
 Group of (4) 16th notes around a note

VarOudM16
 OudM16 on other notes

OudMotif17
 Group of (4) 16ths landing on 8th

46 47 48

Figure 143: Change of subdivision flow to sixteenths (02:52-02:54)

- Oud Motif 18 and its variation show an example of tremolo being combined with varied subdivisions:

VarOudM16
OudM16
on other notes

OudMotif17
Group of (4) 16ths
landing on 8th

OudMotif18
3plet of 8ths
with slow tremolo
'over the bar'

VarOudMotif18
5plet of 8ths
with slow tremolo

Figure 144: Tremolo and varying subdivisions (02:58-02:59)

8. Oud Motif 20, with its variation, and Oud Motif 21 are examples of the use of varying subdivisions and rhythmic displacements:

OudMotif19
Group of (4) 8ths
placed off beat

OudMotif20
Triplet after
4er rest

VarOudM20
OudM20
half tone lower

OudMotif21
3plet of 8ths with nested
3plet of 16th
starting off beat

Figure 145: Rhythmic displacement (03:04-03:05)

9. Oud Motif 22, Oud Motif 23, and Oud Motif 24 are examples of the use of sextuplets of eighth notes:

OudMotif22
6plet on 4er note
starting offbeat

OudMotif23
Ascending
descending 6plet

OudMotif24
Descending
6plet starting
with 3m
interval jump



Figure 146: sextuplets of eighth notes (03:07-03:08)

10. Oud Motif 25 is a fine example of the use of the syncopation tool:

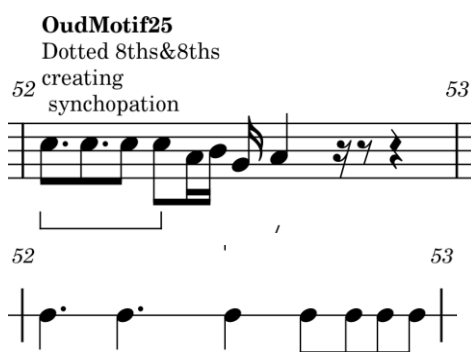


Figure 147: Dotted eighths and syncopation (03:09-03:10)

5.3.1.3 Use of phrasing, sentences, and overall structure

This version of Tapakis's improvisation can roughly be divided into four parts:

1. *ad libitum* part (bars 32-40).
2. Development or 'Straight' part 1 (bars 41-45). In this part, there is no harmonic change.
3. Modulation or 'Straight' part 2 (bars 45-48), where there is a modulation following the harmonic change.
4. Return and Outro or 'Straight' part 3 (bars 49-52), where the harmony changes back to the one played in the beginning.

The improvisation consists of fifteen original phrases (with no varied phrases or repetitions) and six sentences. Together, the overall structure and the length of the bars of each part indicate that the musicians and the orchestra and the soloist agreed ahead of time about the solo and accompaniment parts, something which seems to affect the build-up of the solo.. Combined with the change in harmony during the performance, this creates a rather 'tight' framework for the performer.

With respect to bar length, we can discern three categories in Kyriakos Tapakis's phrasing:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 3). The extract below is also a fine example of the change of subdivision flow inside one phrase, as it combines a sextuplet with a triplet and a

quintuplet to create a shuffle effect:



Figure 148: Part-of-bar phrase example (02:24-02:26)

2. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 11). This type of phrase is the one most frequently used by the artist. Tapakis seems to combine this type of phrase with different displacements inside the bar (starting at various beats of the bar, either onbeat or offbeat), some of which are shown below:

2.1 Starting with a rest on beat (6):

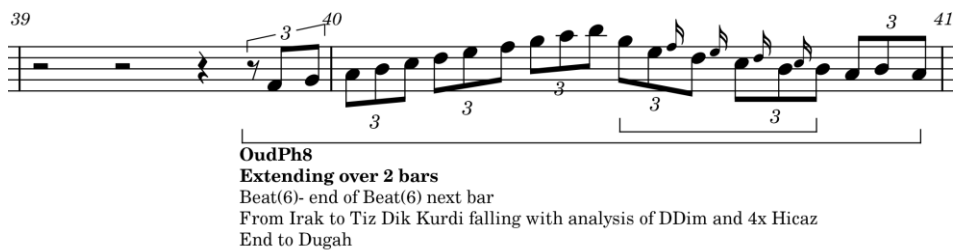


Figure 149: Phrase extending over two bars example 1 (02:33-02:34)

2.2 Starting on beat (1):



OudPh11

Extending over 2bars

Beat(1)-Beat(3) of next bar

Phrase of groups of 4 8th notes creating a feeling of 3/4

Starting on Acem, stopping on Neva, ending on Acem Aşiran

(Taking into account the change in harmony,
an F scale (relative Dm) is implied over a harmonic change of Dm,C,B♭+

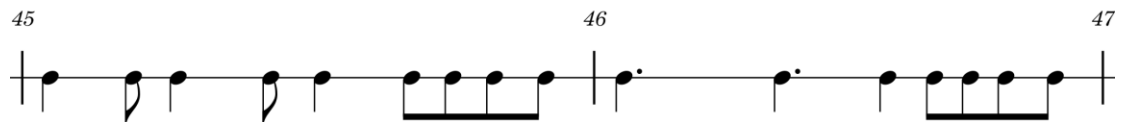


Figure 150: Phrase extending over two bars, example 2 (02:39-02:45)

3. Three-bar phrases (in total: 1); shows the use of a motif and its variations and developments to create a three-bar phrase:



OudPh10

3bar phrase

ni Reducing and varying OudM12

EndOfSentence4



Figure 151: Three-bar phrasing (02:49-02:51)

As far as structure is concerned, we can discern the following:

1. The *ad libitum* part (bars 32-40) consists of 3 sentences:
 - 1.1 Sentence 1 (02:10-02:17) includes 2 phrases.
 - 1.2 Sentence 2 (02:17-02:30) includes 5 phrases.
 - 1.3 Sentence 3 (02:34-02:35) includes 1 phrase. Sentence 3 is a rare example of a phrase that could be regarded as a sentence at the same time.
2. Development or ‘Straight part 1’ (bars 41-45) consists of 1 sentence:
 - 2.1 Sentence 4 (02:37-02:46) includes 2 phrases.
3. Modulation or ‘Straight part 2’ (bars 45-48) consists of 1 sentence:
 - 3.1.1. Sentence 5 (02:47-02:58) includes 3 phrases.
4. Return to the *makam* & Outro or ‘Straight part 3’ (bars 49-52) consists of 1 sentence:
 - 4.1.1. Sentence 6 (02:59-3:11) includes 2 phrases.

In this performance, Tapakis seems to use the four-bar structure of each part as a framework for building his sentences. Regardless of the variety of several phrases inside a sentence, Tapakis uses the four-bar length as the minimum of number bars to conclude his sentences, especially in the straight parts and in the duplication of the four-bar unit for the *ad libitum* part.

This version, and the one that will be discussed later in this chapter, are examples of how the use of harmony and harmonic changes can affect the structure of the improvised performance, and thus the performance of the improvisation itself. In this case, the harmonic change refers directly to the pre-composed part that precedes the composition. So, apart from the *makam*, the *seyir*, the rhythmic cycle, and melodic or rhythmic references to the composed material, harmony can be regarded as another parameter that acts as a regulatory framework in performances of contemporary modal music.¹³⁵ In addition to this, another significant parameter that seems to affect the improviser is the setting in which the performance takes place. In this case, the soloist is a part of a rather large orchestra directed by a conductor in a type of Western classical orchestra. It is safe to assume that, in order to have clear communication with the orchestra, the length of the improvisation was agreed upon beforehand – something that can also be indicated by (and at the same time explain) the length of the parts in the overall structure of the performance and, on the whole, the formal structure of the performance. As we will see in the analysis of the next chapter, this is not the case for the more informal setting of a small group concert.

It is interesting to see how, and if, all of the above affect how a performer decides to treat the melodic material. To investigate this, it is important to have a grasp of how *makam* is treated.¹³⁶ The *ad libitum* part starts with a phrase common for *Hicaz* showing the area from *Irak* to *Neva*,

¹³⁵ An interesting article on the use of chordal harmony in early *rebetika* and *laika* in Greece can be found here: Pennanen, Risto Pekka, “The development of chordal harmony in Greek rebetika and laika music, 1930s to 1960s”, *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 6, no. 1 (1997): 65-116, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09681229708567262>, accessed February 19, 2022.

¹³⁶ To avoid conflict with the common use of notation, the text refers to the transcription in Appendix II, where *Dügâh* is placed on A whereas the concert pitch is G. In this sense, all chord sequences should be considered according to this note, meaning that F is actually a G chord. For this transcription I chose to maintain the Arel system.

with a four chord *Hicaz* on *Dügâh* and with a consequent fall on *Rast* to *Hüseyinî Aşiran*, using tetrachord *Uşşak* and insistent stops on *Hüseyinî Aşiran*. This first set of phrases employs the area below the tonic of *Hicaz*. It is only at the end of the *ad libitum* part that the phrasing starts to move to the upper area of *Hicaz*, presenting a *Nim Hicaz* jump to *Acem*, then focusing on *Acem* and *Hüseyinî* before falling onto *Dik Kürdi*.

This ascending movement and the insistence on *Nim Hicaz*, *Acem*, and *Dik Kürdi* are combined with an extended use of changing subdivisions, creating a sense of preparation for the last phrase. Oud Phrase 8/Sentence 3 is the only sentence in this solo that presents the whole range of *makam Hicaz*. The *ad libitum* part resembles a small *taksim*, in the sense that it gives us a complete view of the *seyir* of the *makam*. Its rhythmic values do not follow the meter precisely, but instead have a rather free relation to the underlying rhythmic and harmonic structure. In this sense, Tapakis seems to confine and, at the same time, present in a complete fashion his musical ideas on *Hicaz*.

In the next part, which is the Development, he uses the four-bar unit to return to the ‘straight’ flow of the quarter notes. In addition, he develops the movement of his phrases to establish *Neva* through various interval jumps from *Hicaz*, and he employs the last bar as a preparation for the harmonic modulation.

In the Modulation part, he changes the melodic material while traveling from *Acem* to *Neva*, and descending on *Acem Aşiran*. In other words, if one takes the change in harmony into account, an F scale (relative of D minor) is implied over a harmonic change of D minor, C, B♭major.¹³⁷ The last bar of the structure is again used as a transition to *Hicaz* with extended use of *Acem* and *Eviç* and a stop on *Muhayyer*. Again, the transition is emphasised with a change in the flow of subdivisions (triplets combined with a quintuplet) and the use of tremolo in the entire phrase. The last part, the Return to the *makam* & Outro, serves as a re-establishment of *makam Hicaz* intervals. Again, there is an extended use of sextuplets towards the end of the part, employing dense ascending-descending phrasing in *Hicaz*, thus emphasising the return to the basic melodic material. Below we can see the basic modulation:



Figure 152: Hicaz on A



Figure 153: F scale

¹³⁷ In concert pitch, Cm, B♭, G♯+.

5.3.2 *Volta* MBH with Meybahar in Budapest (2019)

<https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/c7IRlDvrQpTlT3X>

5.3.1.1 Rhythmic-harmonic patterns and variations

In this performance of *Volta*, the percussionist follows (with slight variations) the rhythmic structure that is shown below:



Figure 154: Basic rhythmic pattern

The bass line through bars 37-67 follows the following two-bar structure:



Figure 155: Basic harmonic accompaniment

Again, in this performance there is a change in harmony that implies a connection with the preceding composition, as shown in bars 68-72 below:



Figure 156: Harmonic change

This time, the change in harmony is more straightforward and shorter, compared to *Volta* BNR, in this way affecting the length of the modulation inside the improviser's solo.

5.3.2.2 Use of motif/melodic ideas

In this version of *Volta*, Tapakis uses a total of 27 basic motifs and their variations in his solo, with almost no repetitions of the same motif, granting the solo immense originality and setting a paradigm on the use of the different tools (variation, extension, reduction, subdivision, and others)

that can be applied to a motif. Again, the focus of this part of the chapter will be on the most rhythmically interesting motifs and their use inside the performance. A thorough analysis of the performance is available in Appendix.

1. Oud Motif 2 and Oud Motif 3 and variations

In the *ad libitum* part, Tapakis uses dotted eighth notes creating a syncopation effect combined with triplets of sixteenth notes in various positions:



Figure 157: Dotted eighth notes (03:35)

2. Oud Motif 4 and variations

At the beginning of the ‘straight’ section, Tapakis uses a motif placed off the beat. In the next two bars, he extends it and places it on the beat, then reduces it, and finally places it varied and extended over the bar:

Straight 40

OudMotif4
Off beat(3)-On beat(6)
Combination of 8ths and 16th
connected to 4er 41

VarOudM4
OudM4 extension by (1)8th 42

Var2OudM4
OudM4
reduction &
variation on notes 43

OudM5 44

OudMotif6
8th notes with
grace notes falling to 4er 44

Var3OudM4
OudM4 extension and variation on notes
placed over the bar 45

46

Figure 158: Off-beat displacement and variations of motif (03:41-03:45)

3. Oud Motif 5 is a motif placed off-beat and it is the only motif repeated as such in the next bar:

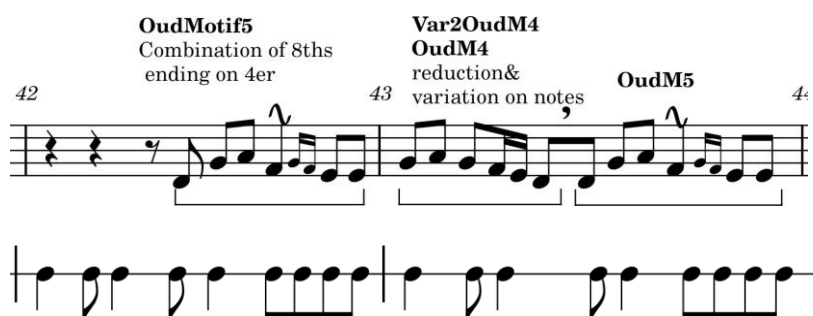


Figure 159: Oud Motif 5 repeated two times in different places (03:46-03:47)

4. Oud Motif 7 and variations use joined triplets of eight notes, combined with quarter notes, to create a syncopation effect. With a variation on only one note, Oud Motif 7 and Var Oud Motif 7 serve as questions that create tension, answered with Var 2 Oud Motif 7, an extension and variation of Oud Motif 7:

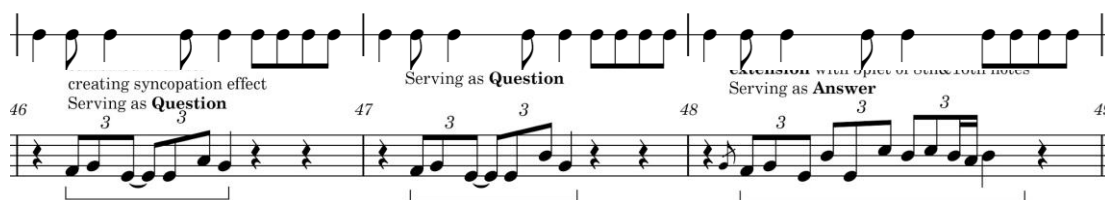


Figure 160: Beamed triplets (03:56-03:57)

5. Oud Motif 8 and variations

Oud Motif 8 and its variations are interesting in their rhythmic displacements, and in their exemplification of a motivic extension and reduction in the same phrase:

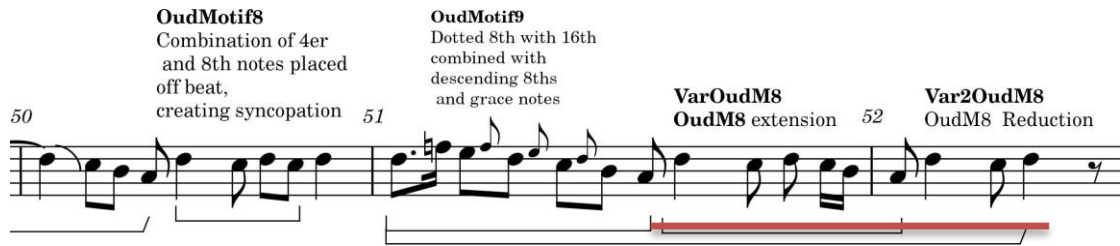


Figure 161: Oud Motif 8 extension (04:09)

6. Oud Motif 9 is an example of Tapakis's use of subdivision, this time a sextuplet over a quarter note:

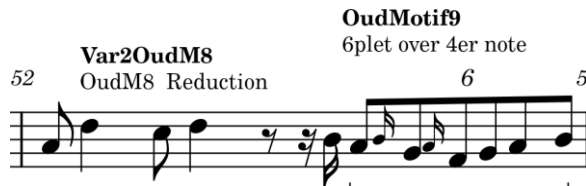


Figure 162: Subdivisions (04:13)

The use of the subdivision tool occurs frequently in Tapakis's improvisations. Below follows a list of some motifs constructed using the tool of subdivision:

Bar 53 shows a combination of sextuplet, quintuplet, and octuplet over half notes in the same bar:



Figure 163: Different flow of subdivisions in a bar (04:14-04:15)

These regular changes in the subdivision of quarter notes are a tool that creates a change in the flow within the bar, while at the same time creating displacement and sensations of movement for the listener.

Another use of the subdivision tool can be found in bar 63:

OudMotif19 9plet over dotted 4ers Accent on 1&5 of the 9plet 3rdm jump& descending	VarOudM19 OudM19 variation& placement 3rdm lower	OudMotif20 Part of the 9plet Ascending& landing on 8th	VarOudM20 OudM20 extension and placement half tone above	Var2OudM20 OudM20 extension, placement one tone above, over the bar motif
--	---	--	--	---

Figure 164: Subdivision (nonuplets) (04:39-04:41)

This time, the basic idea can be found in Oud Motif 19, which is a group of nine over a dotted quarter note, with sequences and an inner division of the nine eighth notes in a four-plus-five pattern. Oud Motif 20 and its variations are a variation of this basic idea, with Var2OudM20 extending over the bar.

In bar 68, we encounter yet another use of the subdivision tool, this time in the form of triplets of quarter notes over half notes (Oud Motif 22 and variation):

OudMotif22 Ascending 3plet of 4er over half note	VarOudM22 OudM22 in other notes
--	---

Figure 165: Triplet of quarter notes (04:54)

The use of triplets is also encountered in bar 75 – this time in the form of triplet of eighth notes over quarter notes (Oud Motif 27 and variations):



Figure 166: Triplets of eighth notes (05:12-05:13)

Apart from using varying subdivisions, Tapakis makes extended use of sixteenth notes in chains, ascending-descending, intertwined, and even combined with a septuplet, as shown below:

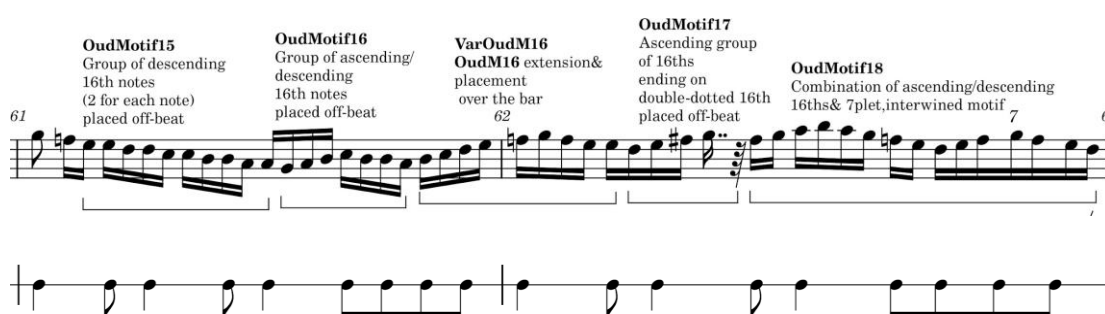


Figure 167: Groupings of sixteenths (04:35-04:38)

This change of flow from quarter or eighth notes to sixteenth notes, combined with the rhythmic displacement of the motifs (mostly off-beat), seems to be used to create rhythmic and expressive tension in the solo.

1. Oud Motif 14 and variations show an example of the use of a pedal note (usually an open string tuned to the tonic of the *makam*) in a motif:

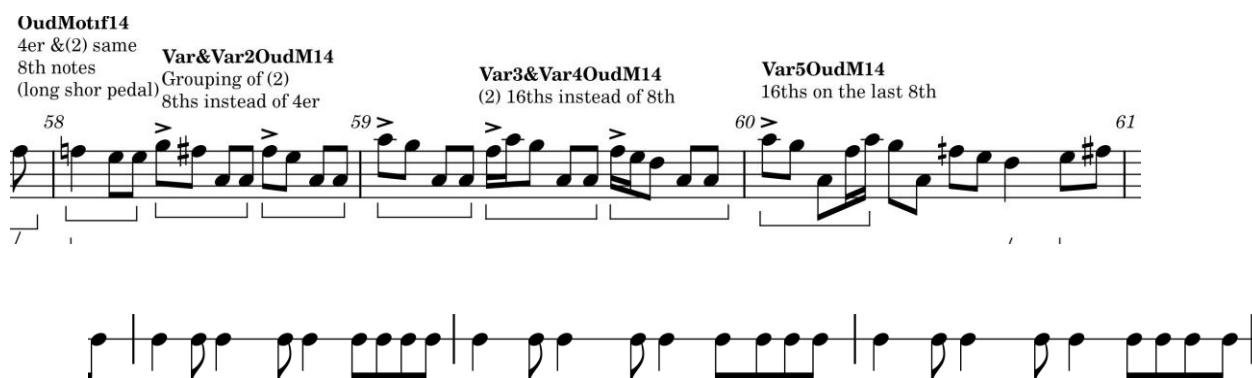


Figure 168: Extensive variation of Oud Motif 14 (04:27-04:33)

2. Oud Motif 21 and variations are an example of the transposition of a motic in various degrees of the makam:



Figure 169: Transposition of Oud Motif 21(04:47-04:52)

The last variation of the motif is intertwined with the first motif of the next bar, in this way uniting the two distinct phrases.

5.3.2.3 Use of phrasing, sentences, and overall structure

This version of Tapakis's improvisation can be divided roughly into four parts:

1. *ad libitum* part (bars 37-39).
2. Development or 'Straight part 1' (bars 40-68). In this part, there is no harmonic change.
3. Modulation or 'Straight part 2' (bars 69-72), where there is a modulation following the harmonic change.
4. Return to the makam & Outro, or 'Straight part 3' (bars 72-77), where the harmony changes back to the one played at the beginning.

The improvisation consists of 23 original phrases (with no varied phrases or repetitions) and nine sentences, in each of which he seems to conclude musical meaning. As will be discussed later in this chapter, choices related to the structure are not irrelevant to the *seyir* of the *makam*, but they also seem to be affected by and follow the harmonic change happening in the middle of the performance, itself being an influence from the composition that precedes and follows the improvisation.

Phrasing categories

Through selected examples, in this part a comment will be made on Tapakis's use of phrases. Again, a full-length analysis can be found in Appendix A.

We can discern four categories in Kyriakos Tapakis's phrasing as concerns bar length:

1. Part-of-bar phrase (in total: 1). In the example below, the half-bar phrase is connected with the next phrase on its last beat:

OudPh19
Half bar phrase used as help for fall to Neva with Acem (Buselik on Neva)

OudPh20
Extending over 2bars beat(1)-beat(4) of next bar
Use of interval jumps :
Neva to Gerdaniye and Muhayyer,
Acem to Gerdaniye
Hüseini to Tiz Kurdi , Tiz Kurdi to Muhayyer ,
fall with Acem to Hüseini

Figure 170: Part-of-bar phrase (05:01)

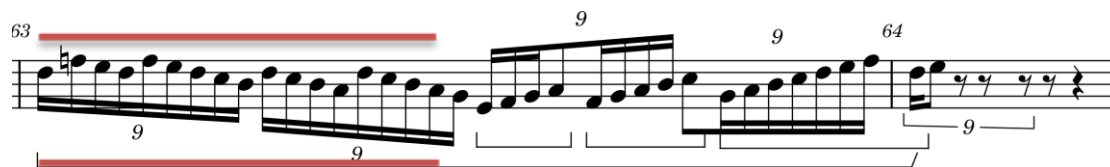
2. One-bar phrase (in total: 2). In this case, the two one-bar phrases are used in a question-answer fashion, as is demonstrated below:

OudPh9
Onebar phrase
Huseini-Acem and fall on Neva
Question phrase

OudPh10
Onebar Phrase
Hüseini to Neva,
fall on Nim Hicaz
End on Dugah
Answer phrase

Figure 171: One-bar phrases (04:17-04:20)

3. Phrase extending over two bars (in total: 13). This type of phrase is the one most frequently used by the artist, with different displacements inside the bar, some of which are shown below:
 - i. Placement on the first beat:



OudPh14

Extending over 2 bars

Beat(1)-Beat(1) of next bar

OudM19&VarOudM19&OudM20&variations

9plets over dotted 4ers

Creating a 4 'beat' meter over 6/4&groupings inside the 9plets creating complex polyrhythmic effect

From Acem to Huseini Aşiran and with chains ending on Hüseini

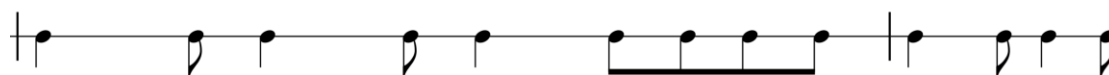
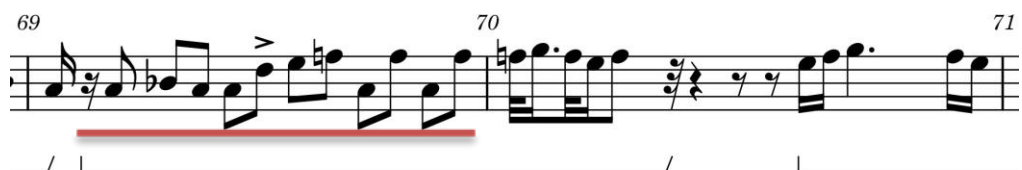


Figure 172: Phrase extending over two bars (04:39-04:42)

ii. Off-beat displacement relating to various beats:



OudPh18

Extending over 2 bars

Offbeat(1) -Beat(2)

Insisting on Acem avoiding Nim Hicaz,
following the change in harmony
(alternative: Using Bb and F ,
supports the harmony change to Dm and C

OudPh19

Half bar phrase used as
help for fall to Neva with
Acem (Buselik on Neva)

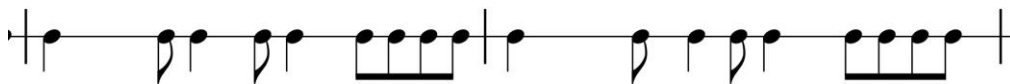


Figure 173: Off-beat displacement, example 1 (04:57-04:58)



OudPh22

Extending over 2bars

Beat(6)-Beat(5)

Series of 3plets from Acem to Nim Hicaz then to Gerdaniye

Fall and end on Dugah

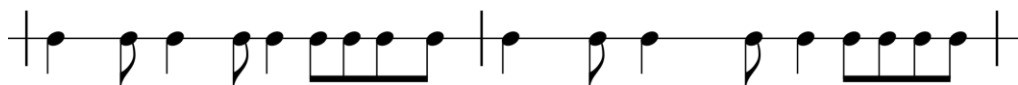


Figure 174: Off-beat displacement, example 2 (05:12-05:14)

4. Two-bar phrases (in total: 1). In this two-bar phrase, we encounter the question-answer tool:



OudPh11

2bar phrase

Offbeat(1)-Onbeat(7) of next bar

Acem, Huseini fall to Neva with 4xRast

end on Çargah

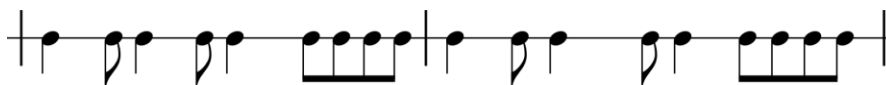


Figure 175: Two-bar phrase (04:22-04:24)

5. Three-bar phrases (in total: 1). In this phrase specifically, there is a repetition of almost the same motif in two bars that serve as two consequent questions, whereas the third bar serves as an answer, thus demonstrating an elegant tool for building three-bar phrases:

65 66 67 68 69

Ph15
ending over 2bars
4) -beat (5)
Huscini to Neva with Acem
from Neva to Gerdaniye and stop on Acem

OudPh16
Extending over 4 bars
Beat(6) of previous bar-beat(1) of last bar (ending on one)
OudM21: all its variations
Creating syncopation feeling
Falling gradually from Acem to Çargah showing all the basic notes of Hicaz

OudPh17
(Queue phrase to harmony change)
Extending over 2 bars
Beat(1)-beat(1) of next bar
From Yegah to neva and
falling back to Dugah with Hicaz 5x

Figure 178: Phrase extending over four bars phrase (04:47-04:52)

Sentences and structure

Following the paradigm of all the artists mentioned previously in this chapter, Tapakis syntactically uses small sums of phrases, in this way building sentences in every part, and concluding his musical meaning in this manner. It is worth drawing attention to the originality of the phrases and sentences, as we do not encounter any phrase/sentence variations or any repeated phrase/sentence. Rather, in each of the parts we observe the following:

1. The *ad libitum* part (bars 37-39) consists of one sentence (Sentence 1) made up of three phrases (03:32-03:38).
2. Development or ‘Straight part 1’ (bars 40-68) consists of the following sentences:
 - 2.1. Sentence 2 (bars 40-45) containing 2 phrases (03:41-03:55).
 - 2.2. Sentence 3 (bars 46-48) containing 1 phrase (03:56-04:03).
 - 2.3. Sentence 4 (bars 49-52 (only a part of the bar)) containing 2 phrases (04:04-04:12).
 - 2.4. Sentence 5 (bar 52 (only part of the bar) to bar 57) containing 4 phrases (04:13-04:26).
 - 2.5. Sentence 6 (bar 58 to the start of bar 64) containing 3 phrases (04:27-04:43).
 - 2.6. Sentence 7 (bar 64 (rest of the bar) to bar 69 (start of the bar)) containing 3 phrases (04:43-04:56). The last phrase is used as a queue for the harmonic change.
3. Modulation or ‘Straight part 2’ (bars 69-72 (part of the bar)) consists of one sentence (Sentence 8) containing 3 phrases (04:56-05:05). Sentence 8 follows the harmonic modulation.
4. Return to the *makam* and Outro or ‘Straight part 3’ (bar 72 (rest of the bar) to bar 77 (start of the bar)) consists of one sentence (Sentence 9) containing 3 phrases (05:06-05:19). The first one lead the way back to *makam Hicaz* and the last one is the ending phrase of the improvisation.

To sum up, in a total of nine sentences, four consist of three phrases, two of two phrases, one of one phrase, and one of four phrases. In terms of the length of the parts, the *ad libitum* part seems to be rather small in length and its character is mostly an introductory one. The Development part is

the largest one (28 bars). The Modulation part follows exactly the length of the harmonic change, and the Return to the *makam* part is also rather small, serving as an Outro for the improvisation.

In this sense, melodically the *ad libitum* part is an introduction to *Hicaz makam*, exploring the area around *Dügâh*, reaching down to *Irak* and up to *Nim Hicaz*, employing a commonly used movement from the *Hicaz taksim* repertoire. In this part, the flow of the subdivisions is rather slow, granting the phrase a *taksim*-like feeling. In the first part of the Development, which has a regular pulse, the flow of subdivisions is measured and eighth-note oriented. Melodically, at the beginning there is a further exploration of the area below *Dügâh* with many drops down to *Yegâh* (with a five chord *Rast*). This *ad libitum* part closes on *Dügâh*, but shortly before that has a brief resting point on *Irak*, performed in its lowest position (Sentence 2). (This type of reference point shortly before the final note (*karar*) is known technically as the *asmar karar*.) The strategy recalls Tapakis's Arabic *oud* playing.

Progressing in the Development, following the *seyir* of *Hicaz* closely, Tapakis gradually goes up to *Rast* and then *Nim Hicaz* (Sentence 3), to *Neva* (Sentence 4) and even to *Hüseynî*, *Acem*, and *Gerdâniye* (Sentence 5). In Sentence 6, he takes a more energetic approach to the development of the *makam*, such as using ascending-descending fast phrases that show the whole extent of *Hicaz*, combined with a variety in the flow of subdivisions, and ending with complicated subdivisions and fast ornamentations, thereby creating anticipation and tension. Combined with changes in the flow of subdivision and the variety of rhythmic tools, these ascending movements show how the development of the *makam* can be emphasised through rhythmic development. This two-level concurrent development approach is one of the characteristic traits of Tapakis's rhythmic improvisations.

The cue phrase that connects the two distinct parts is also worth noting. Here, Tapakis uses a series of quarter note triplets, to create a strong contrast with the previously dense (subdivision-wise) material, thus emphasising the transition and communicating it in a clear-cut way to his fellow players. In continuance, the harmonic change affects the melodic material used by the performer. In the modulation part, *makam Hicaz* gives its place to a more open use of intervallic jumps that focus on presenting *Dügâh*, *Acem*, and even a more well-tempered B-flat, which places an emphasis on the modal/harmonic environment instead of on the *makam*.

5.3.2.4 Concluding remarks about Kyriakos Tapakis

By closely examining these two performances, the following interesting issues came to light:

1. *Ad libitum* entrance vs. 'straight' development. Tapakis uses an *ad libitum* entrance in both performances, which gives the sense of *taksim* in both of his introductions. Despite the difference in length of the two *ad libitum* parts (3 bars in Volta MBH and 8 bars in Volta BNR), the idea is shared; the exposition of the *makam* in a -like fashion serves as an entrance. However, in both development parts, and for the rest of the performance, he chooses a rhythmically 'straight' approach.

2. Variety in the use of rhythmic tools. In both performances, Tapakis uses a variety of rhythmic tools, such as syncopation, shifting subdivisions, groupings, and intriguing rhythmic displacements of motifs and phrases. Adding to these, he employs different flows of subdivisions inside the bar, but also inside the phrases – specifically when trying to create tension. This tension can be observed in various cases, be it towards a modulation, or the end of the performance. In any case, he seems to use an increased density of subdivision flow as a tool to create tension, something which combines his melodic tools with his rhythmic tools in a double-layered tension that builds up.
3. Variety in the use of motifs and phrasing. Tapakis appears to be creative with an extended use of variations of the same motif on the one hand, and with an originality of motifs on the other. In contrast to other artists (especially those who were recording during the early 20th century), he only ever repeats a motif in rare cases. The same goes for phrasing: in both his performances studied here, all the phrases were played once and without variations.
4. Following the *seyir* of the *makam*, but also modulating according to the harmonic environment. In both of Tapakis's performances there is a harmonic change that leads to a modulation for four bars and then a return to the original harmonic environment. As my research has shown, this seems to affect the improvised performance in a compositional way. In both performances the artist does preparation work that leads towards the spot where the harmony changes. This way of performing implies a structured way of thinking that follows the harmonic changes (referring to jazz influences) and it provides an example of the interrelations of compositional and improvisational thinking.
5. Explicit references to the structure of the precomposed part. As the research has shown, both performances were structured in such a way that they included a modulation and a return to the previously employed melodic and harmonic material. This structure is exactly that of the precomposed part performed just before the improvisation, giving us another example of the interconnections between improvisation and composition.
6. Differences in duration and structure influenced by the setting of the performance. Even though both performances share a great deal, their basic difference seems to be in the duration and length of the structures, something that seems to be directly connected with the setting of the performance. As explained earlier, both performances were live in concert. However, one (Volta MBH) took place in a small concert hall, with a small number of participating musicians, most of whom were friends or acquaintances of the performer, whereas the other (Volta BNR) took place in a big concert hall, with a large number of participating musicians. This fact seems to affect the performance, at least structurally, and in my opinion also creatively and aesthetically. On the first performance occasion, the research showed a larger development part, which includes more originality in motifs and phrases and, on the whole, a more intense performance, whereas the restrictions in the setting of the second performance occasion resulted in a

more structured and formal improvised performance.

Ultimately, comparing these two distinct performances by practicing and analysing them has helped me come closer to Tapakis's technical and structural manner of creating a metric improvisation. The comparative approach has also brought about some thoughts concerning the setting and the conditions of the performance, which finally seem to define each performance differently.

6. Concluding remarks on Artists and Material

During this part of the research, I have been able to trace and systematise rhythmic tools and processing tools for the melodic material. Further, through the systematic analysis of their performances, different models of improvisation came to light. The lists below demonstrate the findings.

Rhythmic Tools

1. Syncopation
2. Rhythmic displacement and shift of motif/melodic idea
3. Polyrhythms
4. Subdivision
5. *Tihai*
6. 'Feel' (shuffle, swing)
7. Groupings-accents
8. Extensive use of rests

Processing Tools (applied to the motif/melodic idea and to the phrase)

1. Reduction
2. Extension
3. Variation on notes and values inside the motif/melodic idea
4. Question-answer
5. Transposition

Models of development

1. According to movement (ascending, descending and all combinations)
2. According to part management (Entrance-Development-Climax-Release-Outro and all combinations)
3. *ad libitum* parts combined with measured ('straight') parts

Another interesting topic that emerged from the research relates to the issue of accompaniment during the solo. The accompaniment during metric improvisation can be provided not only by a percussion instrument, but also by the melodic instruments. In those cases, the *oud* and *kanun*

mostly undertake this role. Through research and interviews, it has become apparent that the role of the accompaniment is a crucial one in this idiomatic improvisation. Artists define accompaniment as a relationship that contributes significantly to the process of improvisation. In Harris Lambrakis's words:

The thing I was telling you that Nikos¹³⁸ is taking the phrase out of you; if Nikos was not there the same thing would not happen. In jazz this is a usual mistake and everywhere in music. You think that if you play swing and the other is soloing that it will be nice. No, if you do not listen to the other one then it is not going to be nice. It is an interaction, we are together to play together, if the other one is metronomic then things are difficult.¹³⁹

I was able to trace this relationship during performance through several transcriptions, making evident the significance of accompaniment in the performance of metric modal improvisation. Ara Dinkjian and Tamer Pınarbaşı take this relationship a bit further by adding the element of harmony into the accompaniment. Ara Dinkjian's comment on this is enlightening:

And then some of us, like Tamer and I, maybe I am wrong to say this, but one of our greatest pleasures is either creating or re-defining harmony where harmony did not exist. You know, more than playing faster, to find the harmonic color which is supposed to be a Western European concept – it does not exist in Middle Eastern music traditionally – that harmonic color, to bring it and lay it on top a modal system which in itself is so rich without clashing this is our great challenge and our great pleasure when we find it.¹⁴⁰

Indeed, *Moments* (2015, Live concert in Zurich) is such an example. As my research has shown, along with the rhythmic/harmonic environment that is created by the *oud* during the *kanun*'s improvisation, there is an evident relationship between the two performers that is based on active listening and that can result in on-the-spot responses from the accompanying artist. Such examples of interaction and active listening relationships are tools that can be employed by the accompanying artist during metric improvisations, and they are a source of inspiration for my practice and workshops.

Finally, as far as the structure of improvisation is concerned, through my research it was made evident that there are a variety of approaches that depend on each artist's aesthetic choices concerning the setting of the performance (studio recording, live concert, etc) and relating to the preceding/or following composition. In this context, a significant point that came up through interviews is useful to note – namely the idea of narration. “We’re trying to say something, to sing, to tell a story”, was Ara Dinkjian's statement on how someone can develop a structure in his/her improvisation. Harris Lambrakis also mentioned narration and added the personal element of self-seeking in the process of improvisation and composition: “You are always searching for something, you are searching for yourself.” Narration (the process of telling a story) can become an extremely helpful tool in the hands of an improvising artist. In this sense, it can act in a

¹³⁸ Referring to Nikos Sidirokastritis, the Greek drummer.

¹³⁹ All interviews and transcriptions available on <https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/Documents/interviews&fileid=10278448855>.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

supplementary manner to all the aforementioned tools and techniques, and it can take one's understanding of how to structure improvisation a step further.

All the above can be used to help artists organise, systematise, and better articulate their rhythmic improvisations. The thorough rhythmic, melodic, and phrasing analysis provided through the transcriptions can contribute to an understanding of the ways of each artist, at the same time providing exact and specific rhythmic, melodic and structure-building tools for the artists interested in the subject. Combined with the elements of accompaniment and with extramusical notions such as narration, this research provides a large palette of musical and non-musical tools available for practice and experimentation. In addition, the chronological span of the research allowed me to trace how metric improvisation has developed and to spotlight the influences and developments related to the genre. Positioning this distinct performance practice in its historical context provides the reader with information on the artists, the different styles, and the musical networks in which they operated (or continue to operate), allowing the reading artist to relate and to contemplate his/her practice.