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

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PART B: The Creative Path

1. Introduction

The second part of this thesis focuses on the creative processes undergone in this trajectory. The objective of this part is to trace the influences of the tools and practices (derived from the previous chapter) on my artistic practice, suggesting ways of incorporating the research results into both metric improvisation and composition. Furthermore, I will describe the process of transmitting knowledge gained through research, by commenting on the experimentation I have undertaken in workshops.

Contrary to the common belief that improvisation is a performance practice based solely on spontaneity and on the spur of the moment, research has acknowledged that there is a great deal of preparation before the actual moment of the improvised performance. Especially in the case of metric improvisation, the improvising artist is faced with the difficulty of having to maintain and converse with the underlying rhythmic cycle, whether it is explicitly held by a percussion instrument or implied by another rhythmic, melodic, or harmonic accompaniment. Improvising inside such a framework raises some challenges that, for me, required systematic effort and practice to be able to control the different concurrent levels of modality and rhythm and, at the same time, create improvisations that are aesthetically appealing.

The first step was to start recognising tools, techniques, structures and models of metric improvisation (this process is thoroughly described in Chapter 1). Afterwards, I began to practice the rhythmic tools. Harris Lambrakis and Apostolos Sideris's classes, seminars, personal discussions, and musical collaborations were invaluable during this process. Harris has been teaching seminars on rhythmic and free improvisation in modal music in the Labyrinth Musical Workshop for the last eight years. In addition, Harris Lambrakis has been a great influence on my work on many levels, as he is the director of the Multicultural Orchestra of the National Opera Scene in Athens, where I was a member from 2018 to 2019. Apostolos Sideris is a double bass player and composer from Athens. He studied at Berklee, Boston, and for the past ten years he has been living in Istanbul where we met. In his work on rhythm, he combines different genres of music into his personal rhythmic/harmonic vocabulary and style. This has made him one of my main sources of inspiration. We have collaborated in live performances and recording,[141] and he has been a mentor for my rhythmic and harmonic development through personal lessons and collaborations. Through all these influences, and through personal work on transcriptions, listening, analysing, personal lessons, seminars, and collaborations, I was able to discover a huge amount of material that I could incorporate into my personal metric improvisation performances. In the following parts, I will show on the one hand the ways in which we can practice and embody the above, and on the other hand how these tools, models, and structures are made visible in instances of personal performances.

[141] Some examples can be found at:
https://open.spotify.com/track/0gaztKeII3Ed17O7AKzshz?si=fd97e83299de4ca0 and
https://open.spotify.com/track/3J65zoFYIBlYzT5AVHmrdO?si=39e1f52041cd4267 , accessed June 22, 2023.

When required to improvise metrically, one is faced with a multilayered challenge: one has to pay attention to the tempo, the rhythmic cycle, the harmony (if it exists), and the *makam*/mode. In contrast to the *taksim* performance – where a feeling of a steady pulse may exist, but the development is rubato does not follow a rhythmic cycle closely – in metric improvisation things are quite different. As an improviser coming from the *taksim* performance tradition, I initially had difficulty in developing metric improvisations that could be aesthetically appealing, rhythmically interesting and metrically correct. The research presented here has however contributed significantly to building my metric and rhythmic capabilities and, at the same time, to developing my personal style. The development in my practice has grown out of influences from the artists described in Part A.

In this chapter, I will describe the process of my personal practice through:

1. examples of practice in metric improvisation,
2. examples of workshops that I conducted during the research trajectory, in which I experimented with fellow musicians and students on how to use rhythmic and metric tools and structures, in order to build more elaborate and rhythmically interesting metric improvisations and, eventually, to start creating newly composed material.

2. On Metric improvisation

2.1 Building rhythmic vocabulary and phrasing for metric improvisation

The first stage of this process was to try and imitate the metric improvisations transcribed and analysed in the previous chapter.[142] This way, I was able to practice and eventually embody not only the various rhythmic tools used by the artists, but also the structures and expressive tools utilised by each one of them. However, when trying to create new metric improvisations, I found myself unable to use all of the tools that I encountered and had already practised. The improvisations that I transcribed and analysed mostly referred to particular compositions (instrumental pieces or songs), and this defined the ways in which the artists improvised. However, I needed a way to detach myself from pre-composed material, to be able to work on metric improvisation itself and eventually create new improvised and pre-composed material. At this point, I realised that I had to follow the path of concrete practice on each one of the tools and structures.

It was then that I decided to take seminars and sessions with Harris Lambrakis and Apostolos Sideris.[143] I identified the need to understand the ways in which the tools discovered through research actually worked by themselves, and this led me to another way of thinking about the very subject of rhythm and metric improvisation. Each of the tools that I practised then became an independent part of my rhythmic vocabulary that was available to be used in performance.[144] In this process, Kyriakos Tapakis's interview and input were invaluable. He has himself collaborated with the composer and multi-instrumentalist Kostas Theodorou and with Kostas Anastasiadis, a drummer and percussionist. Tapakis describes this collaboration as crucial for his rhythmic development:

> Marina Liontou-Mochament (M.L.M.): Rhythmically [in improvisation], what is your approach?
>
> Kyriakos Tapakis (K.T.): To tell you the truth, I haven't approached it. I haven't thought about it. Great part of my approach has been influenced by the band that we had with Theodorou [Kostas], mostly with him. Everything there was rhythmical and we were together there with Anastasiadis the drummer, and I was really enthusiastic about his approach to rhythm. He was always telling me things about rhythm but I did not practice any of those on the oud, I was practicing them rhythmically,[145] [and then those things passed in my oud playing. If I had some time to practice, Anastasiadis would always tell me to do it on the instrument, but I never did. [I am playing] Whatever comes out, I did not practice it.[146]

Following his example, I decided early on in the trajectory that it was necessary to collaborate with

[142] Videos available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/rrTqGTVgE0VRv84.
[143] Videos available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/JDS2OV7QiEnZABT.
[144] Sound examples available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/M6UlQykA8AX0bHt.
[145] Tapakis did not explain what he meant with the phrase "practiced rhythmically and not on the oud," but from my experience as his student what he means here is that he practiced all the rhythmic tools suggested by Anastasiadis by clapping, tapping his feet, counting out the varying subdivisions while clapping and other. Tapakis was always suggesting this kind of practice during our lessons.
[146] All interviews available at: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/iDHHPNtOLg0gaOL.

a percussionist, so that I could learn more about rhythm. I had the chance to collaborate with Alexandros Rizopoulos, a Greek percussionist, composer of contemporary modal music, and architect. I took lessons on rhythm, focusing on Greek traditional music, but also on rhythm practice in general.[147] At the same time, I began practising and experimenting with improvising on rhythm.[148] Through analysis, I discovered that, apart from rhythmic tools (syncopation, groupings, and polyrhythms to mention some), the artists were using tools that concerned motifs, such as variation, extension, reduction, and so on. I started experimenting with those tools, combining them with the rhythmic tools. The next step was to start building phrases and small sentences. As we saw in the previous chapter, all artists created phrases of varying lengths of bars. In Harris Lambrakis's workshops, I realised that one of my weaknesses in metric improvisation was that I was unable to feel the length of phrases in bars (two-bar, three-bar phrases, and so on) without thinking about it, and I mainly focused on what happened inside the bar. In his interview, Lambrakis also pointed out the fact that this is a common issue. In his words:

> I see that the basic problem is the great focus on the meter and the lack of a wider perspective; and all the effort is to analyze everything, to reach every detail inside the bar but the fundamental thing is to then to leave it [*sic*] and perceive it from the outside [*sic*]. And then this helps me to relax and not think about what I am playing. The basic thing is for someone not to think and count (…). To be able to raise your focus and that then the meter becomes something like a breath. And then to leave from that. It is not something difficult. For the percussionists maybe, it is more difficult. (…). But for me, this is the way and that is the moment when we approach the non-tempered of the rhythm. There is the 'tempered' rhythm of the metronome (exactly the way the tempered piano exists) and then there is the 'non-tempered' where you can breathe and get away and be inside the rhythm. It is the same with the intervals. I see it as something that opens and closes.[149]

Here Lambrakis adopts the term 'tempered' and 'non-tempered', historically used for tuning systems, to refer to rhythm. Although this seemed vague to me at first, during his seminars and through his instruction, I realised that he was referring to rhythmic plasticity, with the 'tempered' being the metronomic and rigid kind of approach to rhythm and the 'non-tempered' being a more fluid approach. His instructions were extremely helpful in correcting my whole approach to my practice; the focus shifted from 'thinking' to 'feeling' the length of the bar. To achieve this, the first step was to start recognising, through the repertoire, phrases of varying lengths. When this was made clear and felt through repetition and memorisation, then it was made possible for me to start feeling the length of the phrase rather than thinking about it, and eventually to start creating my phrases with varying lengths and complete metric improvisations. At the same time, I examined the relationship of material that could precede my metric improvisations, focusing on repertoire from Anatolia and original compositions. In addition, I realised that this whole process could contribute to another understanding of the *taksim* performance on top of a rhythmic cycle (*usulü taksim*). In this sense, I created short pre-composed material that combined phrases using

[147] The collaboration resulted in the creation of a common workshop–in progress named Rhythmic Plasticity which focuses on ways that rhythm can be used to enhance creativity both in improvisation and composition. Sound material available at: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/yVmFF7CPaAO7sCH.
[148] Examples available at: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/BaQIBhTmrb1zE8e
[149] Interview available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/qltgxSOm9MvSIEZ

rhythmic tools that were found in the analysis and *taksim*-like improvisations.[150] Some examples that describe this process will be examined in the following chapter.

2.2 Influences of research on personal metric improvisation performance

In seeking out the influences that this research has had on my performance, I decided to look closely at my own metric improvisations. This way I would be able to trace the rhythmic and structural influences of the performances practiced in my own improvisations, as well as my personal practice in rhythm, and in this way, I could then describe the process of embodiment through research. In this chapter, I will refer to some examples of my practice in metric improvisation within different settings and connected with different styles and repertoires. I structure my account with reference to the pre-existing compositions that have I worked with.

2.2.1 *Gönül kalk gidelim* by Ali Ekber Çiçek

Gönül kalk gidelim is one of the songs strongly associated with[151] Ali Ekber Çiçek that is based on *Alevi* poetry. Ali Ekber Çiçek (1935-26 April 2006) was one of the most prominent figures in Turkish *halk* music, especially as far as Alevi and Anatolian repertoire for *bağlama* is concerned. Originally from Erzincan, a city in North-East Turkey, he moved to Istanbul at the age of nine and then to Ankara at the age of twelve. He worked for the state-operated radio service for 35 years. He has composed approximately 400 songs and he has performed the music of Anatolia extensively.[152]

Here I examine three different performances of metric improvisation inside the same composition. The first one refers to a rehearsal in a studio in Istanbul (2017). The next two were recorded in 2021, a few days apart, also in Istanbul. The first of these was recorded in Ada Studio with Sinafi Trio and the second during a live performance in a concert hall for the Municipality of Istanbul. These three occasions were not only chosen for the purposes of musical analysis; they also describe the continuum ranging from completely informal to extremely formal settings of performance, as well as distinctively different uses of instruments, in this way offering a chance to discuss extra-musical parameters that can affect the performance of improvisation. Another criterion for selecting these cases for analysis was that despite the fact that this song has seen many arrangements,[153] most of them are either re-recordings of the original from other artists (sticking to styles of Anatolian singing and instrument playing), or arrangements relating to Western classical orchestration and harmony. To the best of my knowledge, in neither case was improvisation ever

[150] One such example can be found at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/ZNO2i8aqsKppRau.
[151] I use the term 'strongly associated with' to convey both the meaning of *kaynak kişi* (which means the source person for the song) and to point out the fact that Ali Ekber Çiçek's version of the song is the one that most musicians refer to.
[152] More information on Ali Ekber Çiçek's life and music can be found in the documentary "Yıllar,Yollar,Yüzler – Ali Ekber Çiçek" (2003) directed by Tülay Bostancı Akça.
[153] There are hundreds of versions of this song. One of the most well-known is the one connected with Zülfü Livanelli (author, poet, musician, political activist) who recorded his arrangement of *Gönül kalk gidelim* in 1979, in the same studio that Case 2 of this research was recorded by the same sound engineer, Ihsan Apça. I had the honor of collaborating with him and learning more about *Gönül kalk gidelim*, during our last recording session in Istanbul (October 2021) with Sinafi Trio.

employed in the various releases of the song. This fact has provided me with a challenge as an improviser: I had to imagine a way to include an improvisation relating to a song that constitutes a symbol for Anatolian and Alevi repertoire. On the other hand, this same fact has provided me with an approach of great freedom, in the sense that I had no prototype to imitate and also no influence I could refer to.

2.2.2 Case Studies

2.2.2.1 Case 1: rehearsal in studio (Istanbul 2017)

This chapter refers to the following recording:
https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/vbQ1nukjd6onBfr (Improvisation part: 2.09–3.20).

The recording was made during a rehearsal in a local studio in Istanbul. The setup consists of Apostolos Sideris (electric bass), George Mekhesvilli (drums), and Elena Moudiri Chasiotou (vocals). The choice of instruments suggests a more contemporary approach to the song, and the performance is full of variations on the original themes and interactions between the musicians. Despite being a short performance, the improvisation has a noticeable structure, which was not planned. Whilst listening to a recording, a six-part skeletal form that underlies the performance's structure is evident. This is outlined below:

1. Entrance (quasi-free of the rhythmic cycle) (2:09-2:20)
2. Building Tension (2:20-2:28)
3. Rhythmical Development (2:29-2:38)
4. Rhythmic and Melodic Intensity (2:40-2:50)
5. Variations on motifs of the composition (2:51-3:01)
6. Return to the composition (3:02-3:20)

The model employed here uses a combination of movements and is influenced by Ara Dinkjian's performances. In Parts 1-4 there is a movement to the octave and direct drop to the fifth, and then immediately an ascent to the octave and the higher register of the *makam Hicâz*. The largest part of the improvisation is a rhythmical exploration of the area from the octave until the fifth over the octave, and it is only in Parts 5-6 that there is a descending movement to the tonic. The improvisation creates tension in a variety of ways. One is by focusing insistently on the high register of the *makam*; another is by creating density through different flows of note values; one more is by employing small motifs and repeating them with slight variations; finally, there is sometimes an extensive use of rests. The release is achieved only at the end of the improvisation, with references to the themes of the song, gestures that resemble *bağlama* techniques, use of *mezzo forte* and *piano* dynamics and a small phrase bridge that helps the singer to enter the song. In terms of phrases, there are many three or four bar phrases but also one-bar phrases. The elements in this performance that I have drawn on in my work on rhythm are as follows:

a. including a variety of rhythmic tools, one of the most evident being the displacement of the motif in many different positions in the bar,

b. over-the-bar phrasing,
c. extended length of phrases,
d. many variations on small motifs.

In this performance, the contribution of the bass and drum players were invaluable. The way they accompanied and improvised, but at the same time kept the basic structure stable, clearly facilitated the flow of my performance. It was a useful model for me in thinking about my own practice.

In the performances discussed next, the rhythm section is substituted by the *kanun*, which performs a two-bar phrase from the song, on top of which I improvised. This difference contributes significantly to the change of approach as we will see in Case 3.

2.2.2.2 Case 2: Ada Studio Recording with Sinafi Trio (Istanbul, October 2021)

https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/Xa8EyjVUpxXmxCF

This example refers to a recording session and is included here to demonstrate how different conditions can affect the performance of improvisation. A studio recording is, in my opinion, one of the most challenging conditions for a performance of improvisation, be it *taksim* or metric. The absence of an audience, the detailed sound, and the time pressure are conditions that demand high precision and concentration. More often than not, when in a recording studio artists have difficulty performing as freely and spontaneously as in live concert or rehearsal conditions. The following is, for me, such an example.

Again, in an improvisation lasting almost a minute, we can discern the following parts:

1. Entrance (2:00-2:12)
2. Climax (2:13-2:23)
3. Release (2:24-2:33)
4. Return to the composition (2:34-2:57)

The model followed is, again, a combination of movements. In the Entrance there is an ascending-directly-to-the-octave movement that continues on upwards to explore the high register. The Climax is introduced directly afterwards, moving within the higher octave. The Release and Return parts descend to the lower register of the *makam*. In the Outro, I employed some gestures typical of *bağlama* playing to lead the singer to the song. Tension is achieved by means of rhythmic density, extensive use of tremolo, and a *forte* dynamic throughout the improvisation. The phrases are mostly one or two bars long, with the exception of the entrance phrase, which is a three-bar phrase. The phrases start and end in various parts of the bars, an influence from Tapakis and Pınarbaşı. The ascending-descending model, and the way it is developed, resembles the style of Udi Hrant in its simplicity in structure and it is also heavily influenced by the previous example of my metric improvisation (Case 1).

This instance of metric improvisation is, in my opinion, an example of a stilted performance. The

climax comes unnaturally early and there is an imbalance in the duration of the parts. The release and return are given more space in comparison with the Entrance and Climax. As I was not satisfied with the result and had no other chance to record the improvisation part due to time restrictions, I asked my fellow musicians for feedback. They were content with the result, but they also had the impression that it was forced, rushed, and unnecessarily loud. I had this feedback in mind when I performed the following day.

2.2.2.3 Case 3: Live performance in Ali Emir Kültür Merkezi with Sinafi Trio (Istanbul, October 2021)

https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/r5B1iyowTQZBdlo
One day after the recording session described above, we were invited to perform on a well-known stage in Istanbul with the Sinafi Trio. *Gönül kalk gidelim* is part of our performance repertoire and it was included in this performance. Having in mind the previous day's recording, I contemplated the feedback and decided that I would try a different approach for this performance.

Structurally, the approach followed is shown below:

ad libitum

1. Entrance (2:03-2:28)

"straight"

2. Building Tension (2:29-2:39)
3. Climax 1 (2:40-2:53)
4. Release (2:55-3:11)
5. Climax 2 & Return to the composition (3:12-3:21)

This performance is structurally and stylistically influenced both by Tamer Pınarbaşı and Kyriakos Tapakis's models, structures, and aesthetics. The *ad libitum* beginning, and the metric parts with development and climax, are a direct influence from Tapakis's improvisations. The small motifs and the extended use of rests and pauses create tension. The rhythmic displacement of the motif, the dissonant chords in the finale, the second climax, the over-the-bar and three and four-bar phrasing, and the communication with the underlying harmonic rhythmic phrase are all a direct influence from Pınarbaşı's style of improvisation.

Another direct influence was likely Lambrakis's comments on thinking and counting during the performance of metric improvisation. In his seminars, Lambrakis insisted that not counting the rhythm would facilitate the metric improvisation performance. His metaphor of feeling the bar as a breath was extremely influential for this performance.[154]

[154] ibid.

After listening to this performance and for the purposes of this research, I realised that the only thing that I was trying to feel was the first beat of the two bar-phrases played by the *kanun*. The meter (10/8) was now conceived as a whole. In this sense, I was not occupied with what was happening inside each bar, so that I was able to feel the duration of more than one bar. And, despite the fact that the *kanun* was repeating the same phrase in an almost metronomic manner, I was feeling the duration in terms of at least two bars, something that led me to the creation of longer and more interesting phrases.

2.2.3 Concluding remarks on *Gönül Kalk Gidelım*

Through this process of experimentation, trying different improvisations on the same song in different settings, and accompanied by different instruments, I was able to realise how the performance setting and the fellow musicians can influence the performance of metric improvisation, and the degree to which my research on the subject is making itself evident in the artistic outcomes. The process has also made evident the fact that extra-musical elements, such as interviews and discussions with mentors and teachers, can also affect the performance itself.

2.3 Influences of research on *taksim* performance

2.3.1 *Saba usulü taksim* for *Daracık Sokakları*

Daracik Sokaklari (Sinafi Trio, Thessaloniki Concert Hall, 2022)

(The video is available on https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/yDCgtxM3RgaJ5wc)

This performance moves in between *usulü taksim* and metric improvisation, alternating between them and suggesting a way of approaching such an occasion. The starting point was the idea of creating an improvisatory environment before a *Saba türkü* from Istanbul that is called *Daracik Sokaklari*. In this sense, this performance resembles an introductory taksim before a pre-composed song, but it follows a rhythmic cycle. References to the 'Roman'[155] style of performance are made already evident from the beginning.

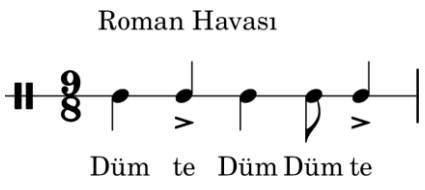


Figure 179: 9/8 *roman havası usulü*

The *kanun* bases its accompaniment on the *roman havası* by translating the strong and weak parts

[155] For information on Roman musical and social identity in Western Turkey see: Seeman, S, *Sounding Roman*, (New York: Oxford University Press,2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199949243.001.0001.

of the meter to octave interchange, imitating the style of a percussion instrument and creating variety throughout the performance.

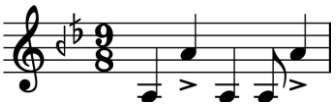



Figure 180: *Kanun* interpretation for *roman havası usulü*

When discussing how to proceed with this performance, I suggested that I would perform an improvisation on top of a *roman havası*, having in mind the recordings and live performances of Roman musicians. More often than not, Roman musicians choose to improvise on *roman havası* before pre-composed tunes (*oyun havası*) or, in some cases, they improvise their whole performance, completely avoiding the introduction of a pre-composed part.[156] These performances can be found under the titles *Karşılama*, *Roman Havası*, *Ağır Roman Havası* or *Çiftetelli*, once again relating their improvisations to dances and rhythmic cycles. The improvised performance in this style is mostly a task undertaken by instruments, such as the violin or the clarinet, that can provide long sustained notes. Based on this, I found it challenging to perform an improvisation on *makam Saba* on top of a *Roman Havası*, a challenge that would give me the chance to experiment with the potential of the *oud* for such an improvisation.

The parameters that were pre-decided for this performance were the *makam*, the rhythmic cycle, and the pre-composed song that would follow. This way, I had the opportunity to move freely with respect to the duration and the style that I would follow. This freedom resulted in a hybrid-style of improvisation: there is a constant interchange between parts that are loosely related to the rhythmic cycle and *ad libitum* parts, something that happens also in the improvisations of Roman musicians in recordings.

Apart from the Roman influences, the main reason that I include this performance is the evident influence of the research on metric improvisation, both on rhythmic tools and on the structure. For every part of the structure, I will comment on the most interesting rhythmic and phrasing tools.

Structurally, we can discern the following parts:

1. Entrance (00:00-00:52)
    a. First Sentence: first phrase (five bars) (00:00–00:13), second phrase (four bars) (00:14–00:24), third phrase (four bars) (00:24-00:32)
    b. Second Sentence: fourth phrase (9 bars 00:33-00:52)
2. Development (00:53-1:12)
    a. Third Sentence: fifth phrase and sixth phrase (four bars question, four bars

[156] Mustafa Kandıralı (1930-2020), a famous Roman clarinet player in Turkey, is one such example.

answer phrases) (00:53-1:12)

3. Climax 1
    a. Fourthh Sentence: seventh phrase (eight bars) (1:13–1:28)
4. Release (1:29-1:53)
    a. Fifth Sentence: eighth phrase (six bars) (1:29-1:40)
    b. Sixth Sentence: (ninth phrase (1:41-1:53)
5. Climax 2 (1:55-2:16)
    a. Seventh Sentence: tenth phrase (1:55–2:01) (extending over four bars) eleventh phrase (extending over four bars) (2:02-2:08)
    b. Outro (2:09-2:16)

The Entrance is almost completely a*d libitum*. Nonetheless, there is a loose relationship with the *usül*; all the phrases seem to have a connection with the first and the fifth beat of the bar. In addition, there are phrases or motifs that introduce the relationship with the *usül*. One such example is the phrase introduced on 00:14-00:24, as shown below:

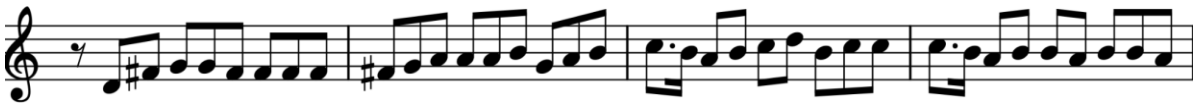



Figure 181: On-rhythm phrase introducing the *usül* in the *ad libitum* Entrance.

Here, this rhythmic inference in an *ad libitum* part is a complete four-bar phrase, employing at the same time the insistence on a single note (typical of the Roman style). This on-rhythm part is followed by an *ad libitum* part that concludes the Entrance. Interestingly, the two phrases concluding the first sentence are complete four-bar phrases, depicting the regulative effect of the underlying *usül* performed by the *kanun*. Melodically, the first sentence of the Entrance is an introduction to *Saba makam*, moving around the tonic (*Dügâh*) and showing the area below until *Yegâh* and *Irak*. It continues with an ascending movement to the fifth degree (*Hüseynî*) and a semifinal stop in the third degree (*Çargâh*). The second Sentence of the Entrance moves around and concludes with an *asma karar* on the fifth degree (*Hüseynî*), the last before the final resting point at the end.

Development serves here as a transition to the ‘straight’ part, a direct influence from Tapakis’s model of improvisation, bringing metricity to the performance. It includes a substantial nine-bar phrase that establishes the close relationship of the phrasing to the *usül*. Again, the overall rhythmic flow is on simple eighth note values with accents on the first and fifth of the meter. Syncopation and use of rests add to the effort of establishing the ‘straight’ feel of this section. Melodically, through the use of small motifs with repetition and transposition to other degrees, the improvisation descends to the tonic (*Dügâh*) and below until *Yegâh*, and with a cadence it concludes again to the tonic.

The Climax is an eight-bar phrase. In this part the influences of both Ara Dinkjian and Tamer

Pınarbaşı are made evident, through the use of rhythmic insistence on a note of the high register and through extensive use of tremolo, again on notes of the high register. Melodically, the Climax presents a *Saba* trichord on *Muhayyer*, transferring the movement of the melody to the octave of the tonic (*Dügâh*). It is worth mentioning the dense accompaniment of the *kanun* player, which adds a layer to the elevated energy of the climax, suggesting at the same time the player's interactive relationship with the other members of the group.

The first section of the Release creates a contrast by again introducing an almost *ad libitum* feel to the improvisation, which contradicts the use of dense rhythmic tools in the previous Climax part. However, in the Release's second part, metricity and closeness to the *usül* are again reintroduced, preparing the second climax. Melodically, the Release is a return to a full-range *Saba makam*, falling to *Segah* with a suspended cadence.

Climax 2 is a direct influence from Tamer Pınarbaşı's model of double climax. In the first part, a fully elaborated 9/8 meter is translated into dense plectrum picking and an increase in tempo, preparing us for the pre-composed part. The use of tremolo in a descending climactic phrase is an influence both from Tamer Pınarbaşı and John Berberian. The ending phrase is an example of different rhythmic flows on the same phrase, creating anticipation and tension in subsequent bars:

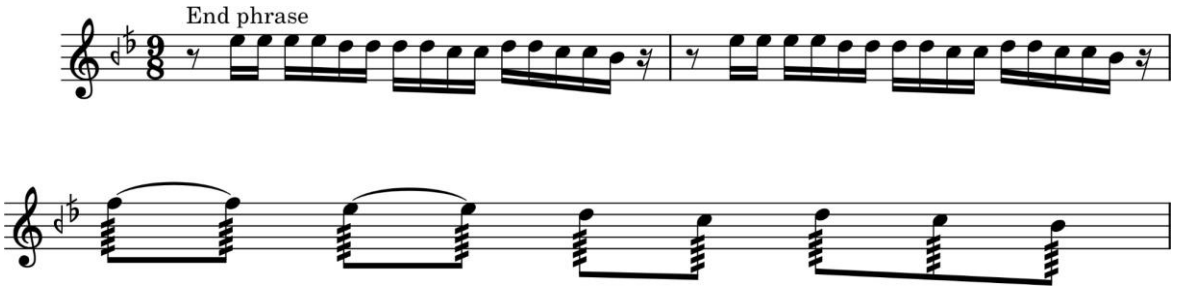


Figure 182: Repetition of a phrase varying on rhythmic values

Melodically, the Climax 2 is a preparation for the pre-composed tune that follows, re-establishing *Saba makam*. The end phrase insists on a suspended cadence on *Segah*, referring to a similar movement in the tune.

2.3.2 Concluding remarks on Daracık Sokakları

The performance analysed above presents a combination of metric and non-metric parts that can structure a metric improvisation. Further, it utilises the model of double Climax, as seen in the work of Tamer Pınarbaşı, as well as a number of structural and rhythmical tools found during research, in both Ara Dinkjian and John Berberian's works. Most importantly, this example has made evident the overall influence of the research in three major areas:

1. The relationship between the ideas that were created on-the-spot with the underlying

rhythmic cycle. In this performance, I explored the continuum between *ad libitum* and strict rhythm, using them as alternating tools, suggesting a flexible way of relating the rhythmic structure and the phrasing.

2. Compared to my previous performances, the length of phrasing (in terms of bars) was closer to the structures of four and eight bars. This happened without preparation, meaning that, with the aid of structures of four and eight bars, the practice of metric improvisation has proven beneficial for my improvisations.

3. Apart from the aforementioned influences, the style of melodic development is also influenced by the characteristic Roman style of playing. Again, during practice on metric improvisation, I listened closely to *Roman Havası* improvisations and pre-composed tunes, trying to understand and acquire elements of the style.

Finally, this performance is also influenced by the notion of *keriz*, theTurkish Romani slang term for melody. This word *keriz* appears in literature and song texts from the late 19th century up to the present time. It is a lexical term that embodies a complex concept denoting the *poiesis* of musical creativity that enables a musician to fashion melodies from pre-existing musical elements. Further, *keriz* links musical sound to the affect that it creates in the listener through mimesis of movement. Sonia Seeman has examined the concept closely:

> (...) But what did keriz sound like? Two samples from recordings pressed in 1905 and 1910 provide examples of four types of keriz: (1) improvised interpretations of a basic melody, which are varied each time in subsequent repetitions; (2) elaborations of a basic melodic line performed simultaneously by different instruments and/or singers; (3) rhythmic instrumental motives improvised between verses; and (4) phrases constructed by stringing together sets of melodic and rhythmic motifs within a given makam to accompany dance.[157]

The fourth explanation of *keriz* is relevant to *Daracık Sokakları*'s performance. Supplementary to the analysis and investigation of the tools, structures, and so on, the concept of *keriz* is suitable to describe the aforementioned on-the-spot creation in a non-analytic way. While improvising, I tried to imagine the dance and the melodies that would support the dancers and facilitate the flow of the dance. In this sense, I avoided complex rhythmic tools evident in other performances and I tried to remember the expressive style of the violins and clarinets. Finally, the notion of *keriz* was the inspiration for the 'direction' of the piece, once again showing the need for extra-musical input to enhance 'inspiration'.

2.4 Workshops (disseminating research results)

2.4.1 Introduction

In trying to decipher what it is that makes the performance of a metric improvisation 'successful',

[157] Seeman, S, *Sounding Roman*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199949243.001.0001.

interesting, and intriguing, many times I found myself focusing on the 'mathematics' of music and not so much on how music 'feels' (or on how I can create improvisations that invoke feelings to myself and the audience). In realising this, I began to understand Ara Dinkjian's words:

> Question: Let's say that you have to practice before you get a good solo or a good rhythmic improvisation, what would you think about your practice, not for your performance?
>
> Ara Dinkjian: I do not mean to be rude but I reject your premise 'you have to practice'. I never practice. (...) And here is my only [advice] – this is not good for students –: if I practice then when it comes time to play, I'm gonna play what I practiced, I am not going to allow to music to come, I am gonna practice to execute what I practiced and this is the beginning of the problem.[158]

At first, Ara Dinkjian's answer sounded aphoristic. I was not able to conceive how it was possible to not practice and create improvisations that are globally regarded as masterpieces. It was only after some years of practice that I came to grasp the meaning of his words, namely that one can practice the tools and the structures, and enrich one's techniques on the instrument, and this is a process all artists go through. But the practice of the tools is not a process that can guarantee a 'good' result (as we saw in Case 2). I was faced with this challenge in several stages of my research trajectory. I needed to find a way to get myself out of the dead end of self-repetition and imitation; specifically, a way that was not connected with the practice. The only way was through extra-musical input. Conversations with accomplished artists, colleagues and mentors, input from other fields of art, and above all the act of listening were the things that could unlock my inspiration on improvisation and composition. Active listening is an activity that is recommended by all interviewed artists. Some of them even regard it as the most important activity related to the musician. In Ara Dinkjian and Tamer Pinarbasi's words:

> Tamer Pınarbaşı: For me, you have to listen, you have to practice your instrument, not improvisation, whatever. If you listen, that's the best practice.
>
> Ara Dınkjıan: Our job as musicians is to listen not to play. Playing is the easy part. How do you know what to play? It's only if you hear what is needed. He is doing this or he is doing that. Maybe the best thing to do is not play anything, that would be great. Or he is doing this, he is doing that oh my god if I do this it is gonna be perfect. [...] So when we are playing music at any moment, Marina, you should be able to say: "stop Ara what is the kanun doing right now? And I should be able to tell you he is trilling. If I do not know what he is doing, how the hell do I know what to play. If I am not listening to my fellow players, what are they playing, who the hell am I to be playing? This is the most important thing.

The 'non-practice-of-improvisation' argument, however, is not made to devalue the whole process of practice, research, and analysis. On the contrary, it is made here to point out that there is a need for a combination of things, during practice, to create a multi-levelled approach to the creative processes.

[158] Interview available on https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/Documents/interviews&fileid=10278448855.

In addition, through transcription and analysis, I realised that there is a great deal of compositional thinking on the practice and performance of improvisation, once again leading us to the assumption that, as seen through a performing artist's eye, improvisation and composition are not processes set apart from one another. On the contrary, a great deal of compositional thinking on improvisation seems to exist, especially when discussing an idiomatic improvisation as metric modal improvisation, and vice versa. In Ara Dinkjian's words:

> So, look my dear. When it comes to improvising or even composing, which might be the same thing [...] Sometimes I close my eyes and I imagine my father singing when I am improvising because for me all instruments are trying to emulate the human voice.[159]

The aim of the above personal description of the process is to delineate the situation that an artist may be faced with when delving deep into the analysis of things. Through my experience in the research and learning process, I discovered that there is a huge amount of time spent on trying to understand, analyse, and then imitate; there is less time spent on enriching the tools that can help artists to create. Faced with this situation, I decided to create a workshop within which the two ends would meet. The following chapter describes the process and the outcomes of those workshops, suggesting a way to apply this research for the benefit of creative performing artists.

2.4.2 The Workshops

After practicing and experimenting with my improvised practice, a question arose: how would this process be of any use to other musicians? Can this process of systematised practice on metric improvisation prove helpful for other artists? Can it generate inspiration for other musicians too? And, lastly, can it lead to the creation of new works in contemporary modal music?

While interviewing my mentors and esteemed artists, most of them were defending the view that improvisation could not be practiced. However, there are some things that can help: the practice of the tools, the concrete practice on the instrument, and active listening. In this view, I focused on experimenting with this kind of practice. I argue that, if one is going to try to improvise metrically, a certain type of practice is required that allows the artist to come to a level of awareness that provides 'freedom from thought'. My experience as an improvising artist in this idiomatic improvisation has shown that 'freedom from thought' is a state of mind that resembles the state of flow as described earlier. In trying to achieve this state, I argue that the more tools one has in one's toolbox (rhythmic, structural, expressive tools), the more it becomes possible to approach a state of 'freedom of thought'.

As a teacher, I was faced with different levels of musicianship and different states of mentality amongst the various participants. Nevertheless, both improvising artists and amateur musicians who had never improvised before were faced with similar issues when required to perform a metric improvisation. Namely, how can one have control over the rhythmic cycle, and what kind of

[159] From a personal interview with Ara Dinkjian available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/3S6DSw4Zj8QGcbR

rhythmic tools can one utilise to make the performance of metric improvisation interesting? How can one develop large structures in one's performance and, finally, how can the process of metric improvisation eventually lead to the creation of fixed pre-composed material (compositions).

To give answers to these questions, I decided to create and conduct workshops within which I could experiment with the results of the research and apply the tools and ideas derived from it. In the following chapter I will refer to two of them,[160] one conducted in November 2018 in Codarts University for the Arts, Rotterdam, and the other conducted online in April 2021 for the non-profit organization olipoli which is based in Thessaloniki, Greece. In Codarts, the workshop was conducted for undergraduate and master's students of the Turkish music department. In olipoli the participants were both professional and undergraduate music students with varied musical backgrounds. Here, I will comment on the different paths followed in the workshops, and on the results of the experiment.

2.4.2.1 Codarts

In this workshop I experimented with several areas:

One was explaining the genre of metric improvisation, by introducing the participants to a certain rhythmic structure on top of which they could improvise. First, we focused on the *curcuna usulü*. After explaining the rhythmic cycle, I demonstrated how one can improvise on top of it without connecting the improvisation to composition and I prompted them to do the same. In this first stage, I realised that many of the participants were reluctant to improvise metrically. For them it was a new experience, as most of them were quite familiar with *taksim* but not with metric improvisation. It took a substantial amount of time to persuade them to try to create even one-bar or two-bar phrases, and even the ones that took the risk of doing so faced difficulties in maintaining the rhythmic cycle. It was then that I decided to introduce one of my compositions, *Harman Sokak*. By introducing a composition, the goals were first to provide the participants with *makam*-based melodic material they could use for their improvisations. In this case it was *makam Beyati*, with a modulation to *makam Karçiğar*. This way I introduced them to the tool of modulation in metric improvisation. Second, I wanted to familiarise them with the feeling of already composed phrases of concrete lengths in bars. Through this awareness, we could experiment with trying to feel the length of a phrase in bars to create new phrases in improvisations.

The introduction of precomposed material facilitated the process: every one of the participants could at least try to vary a phrase of the composition or even create new phrases. However, for the majority of students, the creation of larger structures of phrasing was an almost impossible task.

Another area of experimentation was introducing the participants to the notion of active listening and performing as a group. For this I introduced them to my composition *Unsaid*. As will be

[160] Videos of the workshops are available at https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/fe9StJNCllGEDSH and https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/ZIK1uR4X9b1yz3p .

explained in the next chapter, this composition explores, among other things, the relationships between the performers, and this was something I wanted to work on with the participants. However, extensive use of expressive tools, changing tempo and tension, and exploring the particular groove of compositions are all tools that are difficult to manage in a collective performance. Anticipating the difficulty, I decided to explain the goals of the piece to the participants up front (something I rarely choose to do in such settings, as I prefer that the performers take their own decisions on the composition). This experiment worked and the participants were able to perform the piece as a group, collectively moving to different speeds during the performance.

The feedback from the participants was that, even if they were reluctant to participate in the first stage, they gained a lot after trying to improvise. They were also eager to try these things at home and they were motivated to work on the subject of metric improvisation. However, they would have enjoyed some more material on rhythmic tools and structures.

After this workshop, I contemplated extensively on how I could use the participants' input for the next step of experimentation. I realised that I should put more focus on the preparation of rhythmic tools and on what happens inside the bar, and then go further on prompting the participants to improvise. In addition, what this first seminar had been lacking was the exposure of the participants to concrete examples of improvisation. It was more focused on my compositions and the tools that they provide for contemplation on performance, improvisation, and composition. I had all of this in mind when I prepared the next online workshop in olipoli.

2.4.2.2 olipoli

In this workshop I wanted to experiment on four areas. I present them as a list here.

1. *How concrete examples of rhythmic tools encountered in my research could be approached for practice, detached from any improvisation or composition.*
   For this strand of activity, I created a set of exercises for the rhythmic tools I had encountered through my research. I selected those that could be played on every instrument and were accessible to varying levels of competency. This first step concerned what could happen inside a single bar. It could guide the participants to gradually master various tools and prepare them for the next steps of the workshop.[161]

2. *How examples of other performers' improvisations could provide participants with ideas for motifs, melodic ideas, and eventually phrases.*
   For this, I used parts of transcribed improvisations which we initially practiced together while reading. Then, I asked the participants to try and vary every motif/melodic idea included in the example. Then, I asked them to create their own motifs/melodic ideas, whether or not based on what they had been given. What interested me most, apart from

[161] Some examples can be found at: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/apps/files/?dir=/Documents/workshops/Oli_Poli/OLI_POLI/Rhythmic%20tools_Pdf&fileid=11293800438.

the melodic variation of motifs/melodic ideas, was to see the motif as an entity that could be displaced inside the bar, and how could someone utilise the material of motifs that had already been played to create their own.

3. *How to improvise on small structures of phrases that included harmonic accompaniment.*
   For this, I introduced them to a small part of my composition *Karma* and created four-bar harmonic phrases on 11/4 and 11/8 meter that they could use as a loop to experiment. The use of the rhythmic/harmonic material was positively received by the participants, and they commented that it was really helpful as a point of reference for them to start improvising.

4. *How the introduction of notions such as flow, awareness, and active listening could influence the practice of metric improvisation.*
   In the introduction of the workshop, I tried to familiarise the participants with notions related to the act of improvisation and performance in general. I explained the terms and their effect, and tried to draw parallels for the actual acts of performance, improvisation, and composition. This suggestion, also well-received by the participants, actually facilitated the process of the workshop. For example, whenever one of the participants tried a phrase or a short improvisation and I realised that his/her focus was disrupted, I would come back to the terms explained in the introduction and suggest that they use them at that moment.

Despite the fact that this workshop was online and lasted only six hours, almost all the goals were achieved. The only thing that was not possible – because of the time restrictions and online conditions – was creating new composed material. However, some participants sent me their own composed materials inspired by the workshop, an unexpected outcome of the experiment. The participants' feedback was positive overall, and I was asked to repeat the workshop in live conditions.

3. On composition

3.1 Introduction

In his article 'Contemporary modal composition: breaking the stereotypical polarity of modernity / tradition', Andrikos (2020) suggests the following schema in his effort to describe the positioning of composing in the continuum of musical processes:[162]

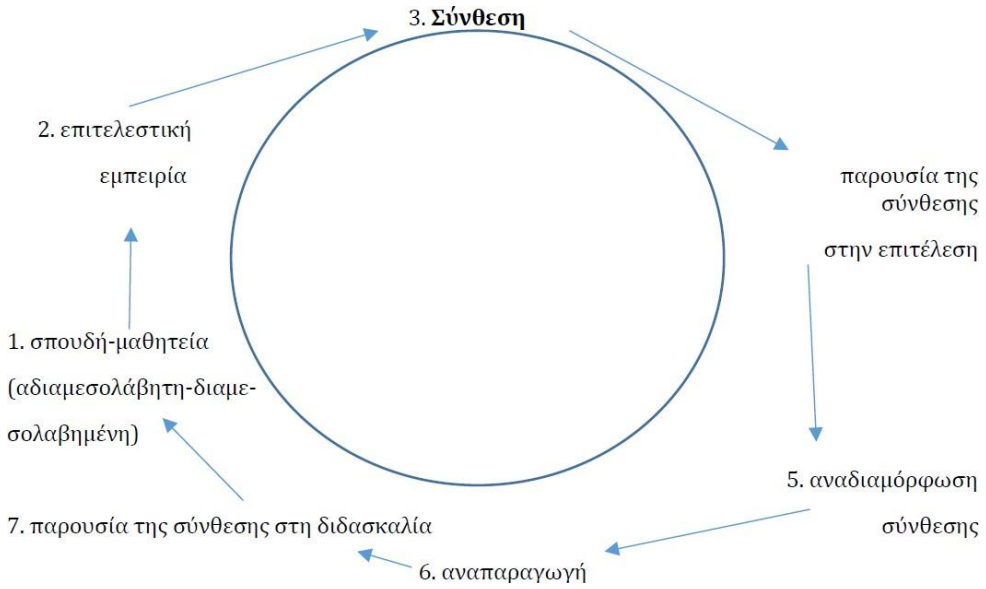


Figure 183: The continuum of musical processes by Andrikos (2020)

Andrikos discusses the awkward position of a performer/composer of a historical genre (with reference to post-Ottoman music and its presence in Greece and Turkey). Based on Attali's thought, he suggests that:

> synthesis (composition) can act as a motive for the activation of a series of processes that can give a feeling of vitality to a historical music genre, which would otherwise be threatened by ontological consolidation and undevelopment. (...)[163]

More often than not, in my performance practice, I have been faced with questions concerning the role of a performer of a historical genre, and even a historical genre not seeming to belong to my

[162] Translations of the terms is as follows:
1. Apprenticeship (unmediated-mediated)
2. performance experience
3. synthesis (composition)
4. presentation of composed work in performance
5. remodelling of the composed work
6. reproduction of the work
7. presentation of the work in teaching

[163] ibid. Andrikos (2020), 7.

cultural background. Although it is an enormous and painstaking taks, and an endless one, the path of reproduction of a historical genre has become a constant field of arising questions in my practice. Why do I choose to perform, for example, Ottoman classical music, and in the centre of Athens, a place where historically this genre did not have any presence until recently? What is the meaning of such a path and, in performance terms, where could it lead me? Ara Dinkjian in one of his interviews shares his view on the process of apprenticeship and a similarly awkward feeling:

> Yes, we start by imitating, this is how we all start, but I could never be Yorgo Bacanos, I could never be Farid el Atrash, I could never be Udi Hrant. The goal has to be to discover who I am, what do I have to add to this history.[164]

In accordance with Ara Dinkjian's perspective, I discovered that all the questions concerning my artistic state began fading away when I started to create pre-composed works through metric improvisation practice. The collection of ideas and then the negotiation with the material, the live performance of the precomposed works, and the diffusion of the works through seminars and lessons, have helped me enormously to redefine my sense of my personal artistry. This process, described thoroughly in Part B of this research, has provided clarity in my personal artistic and existential questions, and it proposes a model for further research and a tool for aspiring musicians. However, this argument should not in any way be considered as a negation and rejection of historical genres in general. Andrikos's schema places the apprenticeship of the genre as the first step in the process. Delving into the material, embodying it, and understanding it deeply is, of course, the first step. But this process is not a linear one; expecting fluency in a historical genre and then allowing oneself to create new material, is, in my opinion, a linear view of the world of music making. All things considered, there is some simultaneity in the process, as I elaborate below. One can learn and create at the same time, especially when involved with music cultures where one does not originally connect with the creative environment in which the process is undertaken.

3.2 Influences of research on the creation of pre-composed material of contemporary modal music

Here I will focus on tracing how my research into metric improvisation has influenced my own work on pre-composed musical works[165]. It is in line with Andrikos's view of the process of music making within the framework of a historical genre. The practice of metric improvisation encompasses all the different stages described in the previous chapters: thorough listening, transcription, analysis, systematisation of tools and models, and work on metric improvisation in practice and performance. All these stages, and the subsequent work on each of them, have allowed me to create pre-composed works directly influenced by my work on rhythm and improvisation. The process was not linear. Rather, during the time I was working on the tools and

[164] AlTurki, Fadil, "Ep68: 'An Armenian in America', meet Ara Dinkjian and enjoy a great music history," produced by Almadi Podcasts, April 2021, https://soundcloud.com/fadilalturki/ep68?utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing, retrieved April 24, 2022.
[165] Full scores available at Appendix III and at: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/7OQko6dp2Y6oFxH.

vocabulary of other artists, and while I was trying to build my own vocabulary on rhythm and rhythmic tools, I created the works included in this research, through improvisation. After the creation of the works (and for the purposes of this research), I decided to look closely at the material and to trace the influences of the research on each of the works, in this way providing a meta-level of contemplation. As the analysis will show, there are direct influences from the artists whose work and performances were analysed, and from the rhythmic tools and models of metric improvisation brought to light through analysis. The continuum of improvisation and composition is therefore made evident through both artistic processes.

Some of the works composed through this process are shown in the table below.

Title	**Rhythmic cycle / meter / time signature**	**Makam**	**Link**
Harman Sokak	10/8 (*curcuna*)	*Uşşak*	https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/0KfSZkavGNG6aeX (5:55–8:26)
Vertigo	9/4 (*aptaliko*) & 12/8	*Hicaz*	https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/14kL6wU041QiVbf
J	8/8 & 4/4	*Hüseynî*	https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/OjsdgCDhnLF0m8U & (1:00–5:50) in https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/14kL6wU041QiVbf
Karma	4/4	*Kürdi*	https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/28i7N5FXqMe219R
Unsaid	4/4 & 2/4	*Kürdi /Nihavend*	(26:00-30:36) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNbCioaew1M & https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/2he2ytpgDZkCfDr

Table 4: Original work on composition

A link with a video live recording or sound recording is provided for each of the compositions. As far as the notation is concerned, all notations in this chapter have a descriptive character, as is often the case with composed music referring to the *makam* system. In other words, the notated composition is only a skeleton. During the performance, every artist has the freedom to vary, to add embellishments and ornamentation, rendering thenotated composition a framework for his performance. In this respect, transcriptions are very much in line with the thinking of the

musicians with whom I have studied, and with the tradition more broadly. While discussing the role of a pre-composed work in his performances (with his modal improvisation quartet but also performances of Ottoman classical repertoire), Harris Lambrakis made the following comment in an interview with me:

> In the quartet, we are trying to not crystalize the compositions, as is the case with the *şarkı*. They [the *şarkı's*] were written down with notation but the piece is not this, so what is the piece and where is the piece? Those pieces are also improvisations that were just written down, but everyone improvises [in performance].

Indeed, it is common knowledge to the performers of *makam* music in areas like Turkey and Greece that the notation (if existent) is merely descriptive. The absence of detailed notation gives the performer the space and freedom to choose the ornaments and the expressive tools that they regard suitable, according to their aesthetic preferences.

3.2.1 *Harman Sokak*

Harman Sokak is a composition developed on a *curcuna usulü*. The composition consists of three parts, of which the first operates as a *teslim*, also functioning as a refrain following each of the others. *Harman Sokak* is largely influenced by the work of the early recording artists such as Melkon and Udi Hrant; above all, the *Çifteteli* of Marko Melkon was the inspiration for this piece. When creating it I was experimenting with creating a metric improvisation with form and structure that resembled those of a solo *çiftetelli*, but that would follow a different *usül*, namely that of a *curcuna*.

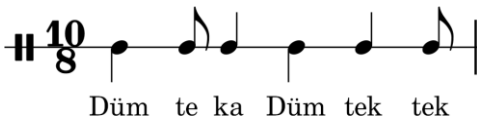


Figure 184: *Curcuna usulü*

In addition, the works of Ara Dinkjian, Udi Hrant, John Berberian, and in general the music of the Armenian *oud* players and Armenian folk repertoire have brought me closer to *curcuna* tunes and songs composed on this *usül*. Consequently, through metric improvisation practice on a *curcuna*, distinct precomposed parts were eventually created, some of which are crystallised in *Harman Sokak.*

3.2.1.1 Use of rhythm

The overall flow of subdivisions is in quarter and eighth notes. Sixteenth notes are used only on one motif which is varied and transposed, and is mostly placed on the last three eighth notes of the meter as shown below:

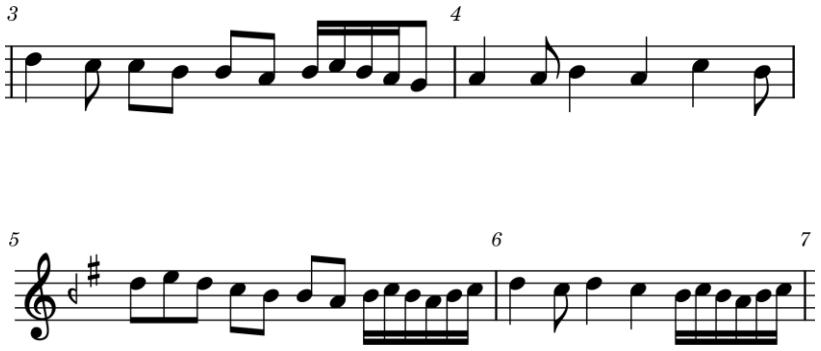



Figure 185: Flow of subdivisions for *Harman Sokak*

This simple rhythmic flow is influenced by the style of the early recording improvisations.

3.2.1.2 Use of motif/melodic idea, phrasing and overall structure

In this piece I used simple motifs and melodic ideas that follow the underlying metric entity. In developing the ideas, I used mainly the question-answer device (for motifs and complete phrases), variation and transposition of the motifs. The upbeat beginning of the phrases is a tool often used in metric improvisations on *curcuna*. The phrases mostly extend over two bars, with the ornament of the sixteenth note landing on the first beat of the next bar. All parts have an eight-bar structure, a common length of bars in these forms.

The piece closely follows the *seyir* of *makam Uşşak*/*Beyati*. In Part A, the melody moves around the first degree (*Dügâh*) establishing the *makam*. The innovation here is that in the second part there is an early climax facilitated by modulation to *makam Karçığar*, whereas, in general, modulations in this kind normally come in the third part. In the third part, the melody moves to the fifth degree (*Hüseynî*) and falls to the third degree (*Çargâh*) – a common fall for *makam Hüseynî* – and then it resolves with a fall on the tonic (*Dügâh*).

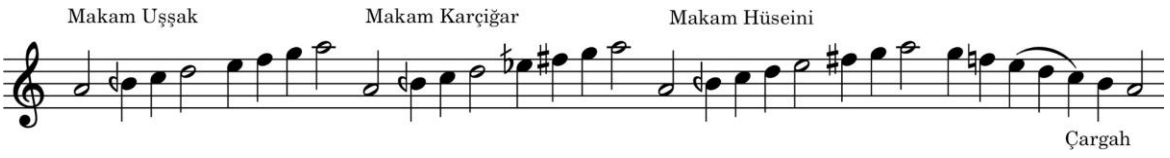



Figure 186: Movements in *Harman Sokak*

The feeling of the piece resembles the feeling of the early recordings or even some folk Anatolian songs, which suggests the influences of the early stages of this research.

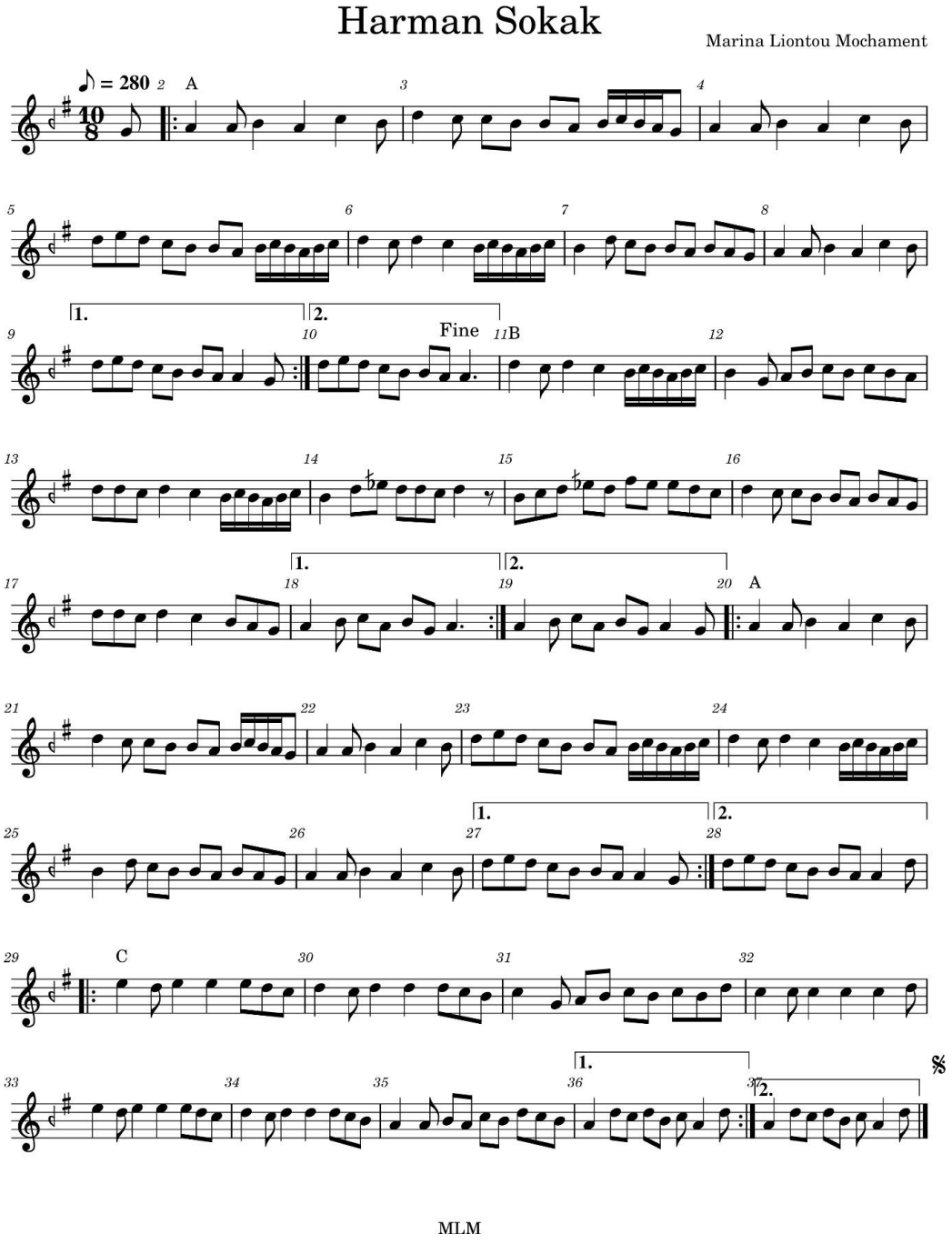



Figure 187: *Harman Sokak*

3.2.2 *Vertigo*

Vertigo is a composition influenced by folk tunes and dances found on the coasts of West Turkey and in Greece. Its rhythmic structure is based on a folk dance named *aptaliko*, with its origins both in Greece and Turkey. The composition moves from a 9/4 to a 12/8 time signature. This change in time signature is a tool influenced by my work with the percussionists I collaborated with throughout the course of this trajectory. In addition, it is a suggestion about how we can revisit and process 'traditional' forms and structures.

3.2.2.1 Use of rhythm

The basic rhythmic structure of the first part of Vertigo is based on *aptaliko* rhythm, as shown below:

Figure 188: *Aptaliko* rhythmic cycle

In Part1 the overall rhythmic flow is on quarter and eighth notes, with a scarce use of sixteenth notes. Rhythmically, Part1 is a straightforward *aptaliko*; as I chose it to resemble the dance, a more complicated use of rhythmic tools was not considered to be a choice that would bring out the character of the piece. The only place that the melody does not follow the *aptaliko* rhythmic structure exactly is when the modulation begins and is used to create tension, as is shown below:

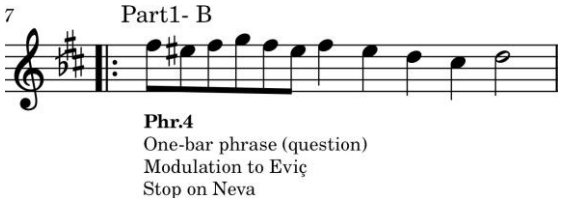


Figure 189: Change of accents

3.2.2.2 Use of motif/melodic idea, phrasing and overall structure

In terms of motif and phrasing, Part1 is approached as a traditional *aptaliko*; motifs are created that closely follow the underlying rhythmic structure, and phrases conclude inside the bar, thereby creating one-bar and rarely two-bar phrases. The question-answer tool is employed for phrases; i.e., a phrase serves as a question and the following one as an answer. Finally, the reduction tool is used (bar. 11):

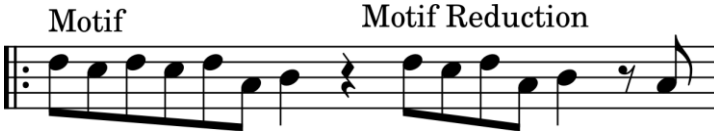



Figure 190: Variating the motif

Part2 is based on a 12/8 time signature. The 12/8 time signature could also be perceived as a 4/4

creating a rhythmic illusion, a tool that is often used by percussionists and is a direct influence of my work with percussionists. I chose to notate the piece in 12/8 to give emphasis to how the phrases are accented and conclude their gestures. The underlying rhythmic structure is shown below:

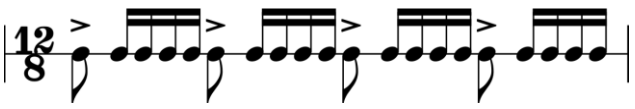



Figure 191: 12/8 time signature of Part B

The overall rhythmic flow is in eighth and sixteenth notes, with thirty-second notes for ornamentation. As Part2 is based on the idea of rhythmic modulation (from a 9/4 time signature to a 12/8 time signature) it is used as a climax in the overall structure of Vertigo. Consequently, more intricate rhythmic tools are employed to support this purpose, such as the off-beat displacement of the motif and the overall rhythmic illusion explained previously.

In terms of motif and phrasing, motifs closely follow the underlying metric entity, with the exception of some off-beat displacements of the motifs. The Variation tool is the one more often employed for motifs and phrases, as in bar 17:

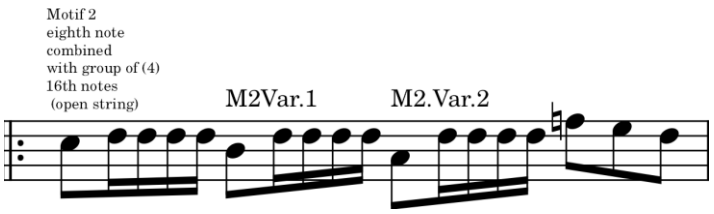


Figure 192: Variation tool for motifs

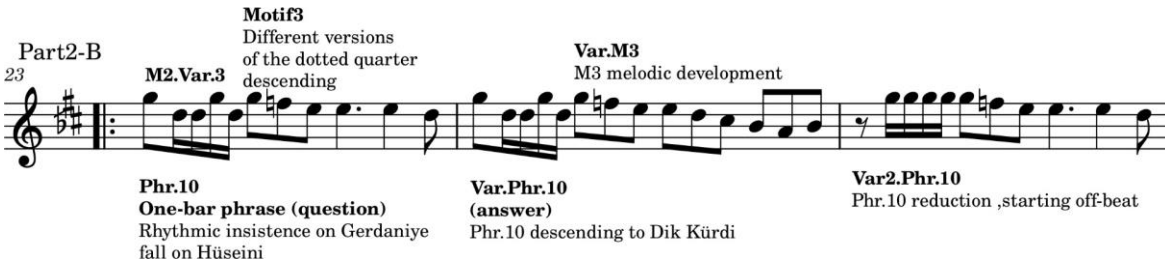


Figure 193: Variation tool for phrases

In the figure above, we can see the use of the melodic development tool for Motif 3 as well as the

use of a question-answer tool, in terms of phrasing for consequent phrases (bars 23-24).

Vertigo is a two-part composition. Each part has its own distinctive structure that follows the seyir of *makam Hicaz*. In particular, the first part explores the version of *Hicaz* that enters on the fifth degree (*Uzzal*).

In Part1 we can discern the following parts:

1. Entrance (bars 1-6)
2. Modulation (bars 7-10)
3. Return to the *makam* (bars 11-15)
4. Connecting bridge (bar 16)

In the Entrance, the melodic development is an establishment of *makam Uzzal*. In the following part, there is a modulation to *makam* Eviç, a typical modulation for the *Hicaz* family. In the third part there is a return to the *makam* with a focus on the second degree and then a re-establishment of the *makam* with the repetition of the Entrance part.

In Part2 we can discern the following parts:

1. Entrance (bars 17-22)
2. Development (bars 23-26)
3. Climax-Modulation (bars 27-30)
4. Return to the basic makam & Repetition of reduced entrance part for improvisation (bars 31-32)
5. Variation of Entrance part for Outro (bars 33-34)

In the Entrance, the melodic movement shows *makam Hicaz*. The development part moves the tonic centre to the fifth degree (*Hüseynî*), referring to Part 1. Further, by the introduction of *nim Sehnaz*, there is a preparation for the modulation part. In Modulation, the melodic movement shows a *Hicaz* tetrachord on *Hüseynî* implying a modulation to *Zirguleli Hicaz*, as shown below:

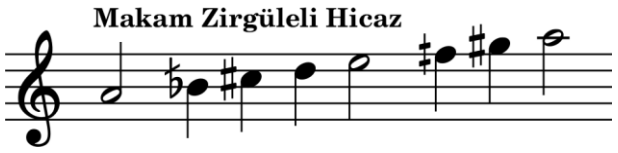



Figure 194: Modulation

Finally, with a repetition of the Entrance part, the melodic movement re-establishes *makam Hicaz*. In both parts, the influences from the models discussed in Chapter 1 are clearly evident. Part 1 employs the Entrance-Modulation-Return model, providing an early climax with the introduction

of an early modulation. Part 2, on the other hand, develops the model of Entrance-Development-Climax-Modulation-Return/Outro.

Another tool that affected the structure and the feeling is the multiple repetitions of complete parts, especially in Part 2. This provides the piece with a feeling of cyclicity, built gradually throughout its course, and creates the space for an improvised solo after Modulation in Part 2.

3.2.3 J

3.2.3.1 Use of rhythm

J is a tripartite composition.

The first part of *J* is based on the following rhythmic pattern:

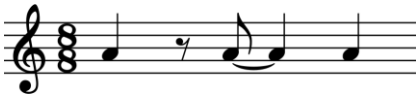



Figure 195: Basic rhythmic pattern

The overall flow of subdivisions in the A and B parts is in eighth notes, with sixteenth notes used as ornaments.

Part C could be interpreted either in a 4/4 time signature, with the flow of subdivisions set in triplets of eighth notes, or in a 6/8 time signature, with the flow of subdivisions set in eighth notes.[166] In all of the discussions I had with the percussionists that performed this piece, both 'feels' were considered adequate, again highlighting the subjectivity of perception considering such rhythmic patterns. For research purposes, I will include both versions of the second part in the notation of the piece.

3.2.3.2 Use of motif/melodic idea, phrasing and overall structure

In *J* emphasis is given to the simplicity of the motifs and to the types of variation inspired by the old recordings analysed in Part A. The same applies to the creation of phrasing. The most important tools used in the development of the melodic ideas and phrasing are shown below:

[166] When perceived as a 6/8 time signature the underlying rhythmic pattern resembles the style of the 6/8 rhythms of Azerbaijan. A sound example can be found here: https://surfdrive.surf.nl/files/index.php/s/tlMjo9h6y0L0OT9. For more information on the styles of rhythm in Azerbaijan see Cemi loğlu Imamverdi yev I. &Ali Imamverdi, 2020 *azerbaycan raks havalari atlasi*, https://iksadyayinevi.com/wp–content/uploads/2020/12/azerbaycan–raks–havalari–atlasi–1.–cilt–1.pdf, accessed June 26, 2022.

1. Variation tool for the motif:

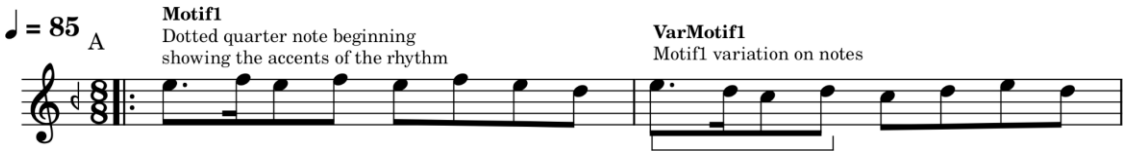



Figure 196: Motif 1 and variation (bars 1-2)

2. Use of the same rhythmic pattern for the presentation of second minor and second major intervals:

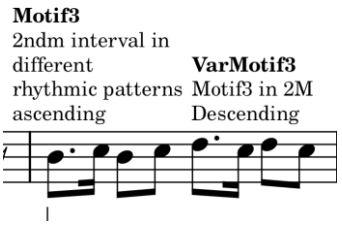


Figure 197: Motif 3 and variation (bar 4)

3. Variation tool for the phrase

    a. Triple variation of a phrase:

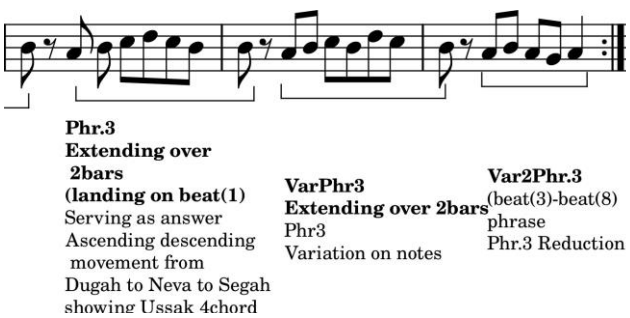


Figure 198: Phrase 3 and variations (bars 6-8)

    b. Combined with question answer tool:

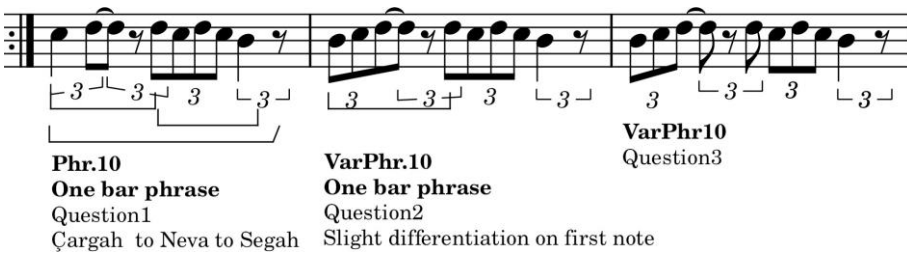


Figure 199: Triple variation and question-answer tool (bars 17-19)

4. Syncopation:

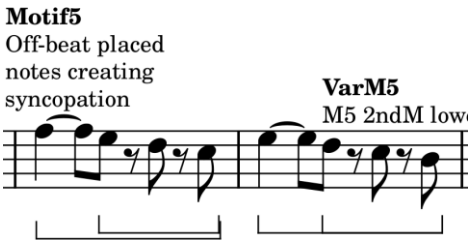


Figure 200: Syncopated motif (bars 13-14)

J consists of eleven phrases with their variations. One-bar phrases and phrases extending over two bars are employed here primarily, highlighting the idea of simplicity of the phrase and the extensive use of variation.

Structurally, *J* consists of three parts:

1. Entrance (Part A) bars 1-8, Sentence 1 (bars 1-4) & Sentence 2 (bars 5-8)
2. Development (Part B) bars 9-16, Sentence 3 (bar 9, beat 1 to bar 11) & Sentence 4 (bars 12-16)
3. Climax (Part C) bars 17-26, Sentence 5 (bars 17-21) & Sentence 6 (bars 22-26)

Parts A & B are repeated twice before moving on to Part C. The innovation here is that the Climax of the composition is achieved in the third part where the meter changes to 4/4 (or 6/8 as explained before), while the extensive repetition of the one bar phrases creates a feeling of cyclicity and provides space for improvisation, again an inspiration from the metric improvisations of Berberian and Dinkjian. The third part acts as an 8-bar form which the improviser can use as a framework for the development of their ideas. Melodically, *J* follows the *seyir* of *makam Uşşak*/*Beyati* and presents a flavour (*çesni*) of *Hüseynî* in the third part.

3.2.4 *Karma*

Karma is a piece hugely influenced by my research on the rhythmic tools addressed in Part 1. During my work on building and extending my rhythmic vocabulary, I focused on tools such as syncopation, over-the-bar phrasing, rhythmic displacement, and so on. All these tools helped me compose *Karma.*

3.2.4.1 Use of rhythm

Karma develops over a basic meter of 4/4. As the goal was to experiment with the tools that define what happens in the bar, it was crucial to keep the overall time signature simple. The overall flow of subdivisions is in eighth notes, facilitating the focus on rhythmical processing of the melodic material.

The whole piece is a response to the first two-bar phrase, which is also used as a loop for a metric improvisation:

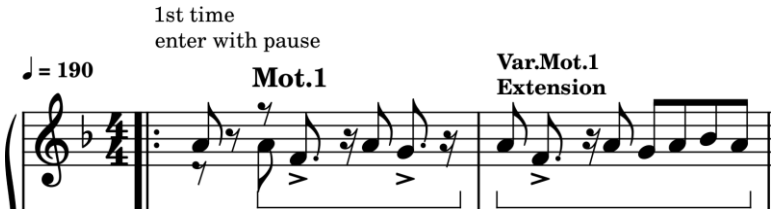


Figure 201: Two-bar intro and loop for improvisation phrase

Already from the second bar, there is an extension of the Motif 1 which is a syncopated idea. Some of the other tools that are used in the processing of the motifs are shown below:

1 Displacement of the motif combined with diverse groupings and variations:

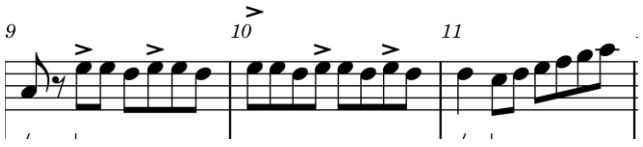


Figure 202: Combination of rhythmic tools

2 3:2 Polyrhythm effect

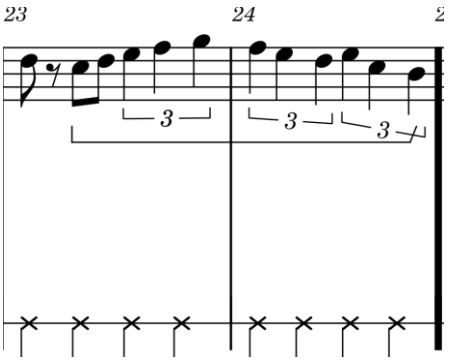


Figure 203: 3:2

3. Extended syncopation:

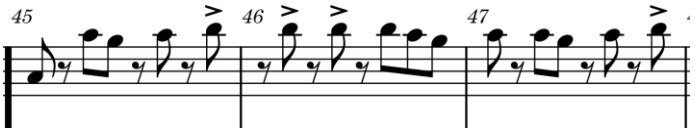



Figure 204: accents and syncopation

4. *Tihai*-like repetitions combined with syncopation:

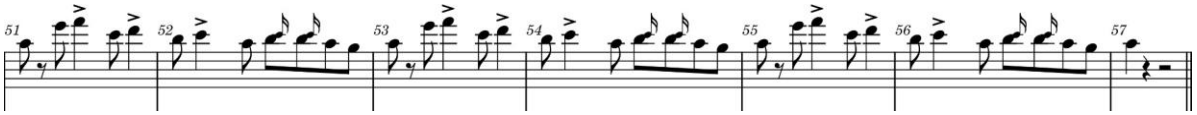



Figure 205: Repetition of the same motif three times

3.2.4.2 Use of motif/melodic idea, phrasing and overall structure

As far as phrasing is concerned, the effect of research is made evident from the length of phrases and from the over-the-bar phrasing. The majority of the phrases are two bars long. The tool of question-answer is used here in the following manner: a two-bar phrase serves as a question, and the answer is also a two-bar phrase (with over-the-bar phrasing) extended by an eighth note landing on the first beat of the third bar as shown below:

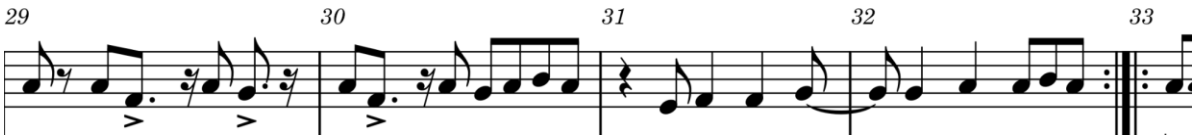



Figure 206: Question-answer tool through two-bar phrasing

In addition, this kind of four-bar phrases are repeated many times, serving as a source for variation and creating eight-bar sentences; for instance, where a four-bar phrase is varied in a repetition, as shown below:

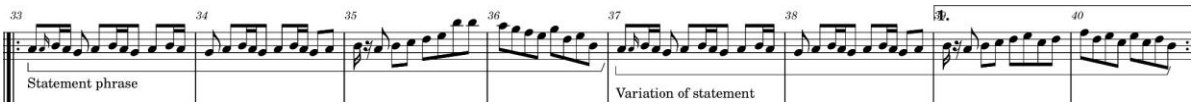



Figure 207: Additive way of structuring sentences

Structurally, *Karma* consists of four distinct parts with repetitions of Part A & B:

1. Part A: Entrance (bars 1-8)
2. Part B : Development (bars 9-24)
3. (Part A & B are repeated twice)
4. Repetition of Part A
5. Part C: Climax (bars 33-38)
6. Repetition of half A for solo
7. Part D: Second Climax and Outro (bars 45-57)

This structure is influenced by the double climax model of Tamer Pınarbaşı's performances. In addition, Part A is employed as a *teslim* (refrain) and is repeated as such after Parts B and C, and reduced in half for solo. This structure is novel and could potentially inspire other composers of contemporary modal music.

The use of *makam Kürdi* is straightforward, in the sense that there is no modulation to another *makam* and the development presents the whole range of the *makam* and the interrelations of its degrees. Also, the structure follows the *seyir* of the *makam* closely in Parts A, B and C, showing all its registers. However, Part D is unconventional, as the structure concludes in the upper octave, whereas the *seyir* of *Kürdi* would descend to end its movement.

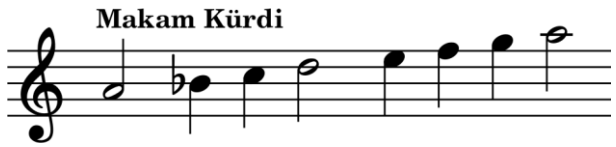
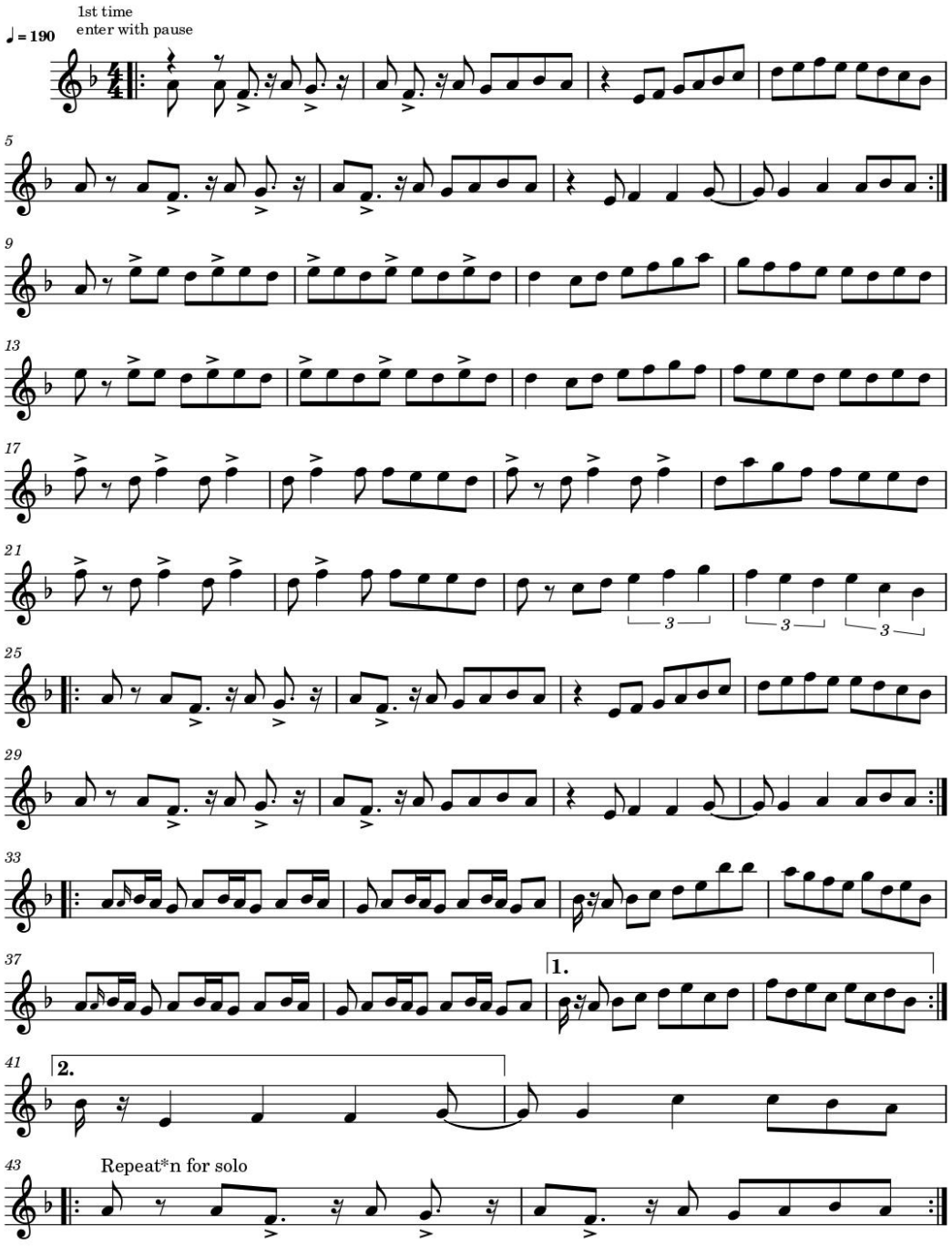



Figure 208: *Makam Kürdi*

Part A moves around the tonic (*Dügâh*) and presents the area below as far as *Hüseynî Hüseynî Aşıran*. The repetition of Part A as a refrain reinstates the tonic, even after the exploration of the high register of the *makam*. Part B follows a gradually ascending path, by presenting and focusing on *Hüseynî* and *Acem*. Part C is a restatement of the tonic combined with a jump to the high register as far as *Dik Kürdi*. The feeling of Climax is achieved not by the insistence on the high register of the *makam* (as in Part D), but with the density and extended repetition of a motif. Part D moves entirely in the upper octave of the *makam* (*Muhayyer*) and achieves a second climax with the repetition of the motif resembling *tihai*. The piece finishes on the upper octave of the *makam*, creating and sustaining the feeling of tension, a direct influence both from Berberian and Dinkjian's metric improvisations.

Karma

MLM

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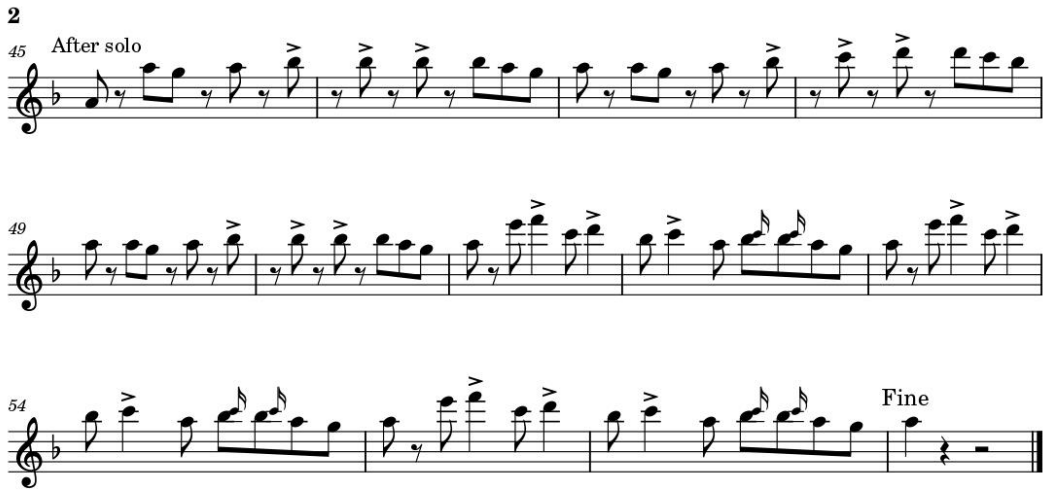

mlm

Figure 209: *Karma*

3.2.5 *Unsaid*

In *Unsaid*, the overriding aim was to conduct an exploration of the models and tools discovered in analysis, in a different, less obvious way. Here, I experimented with using ideas drawn from my work on rhythm and improvisation in a variety of ways. Instead of the obvious structures, forms, and tools, I tried to implement the effect of the tools without using the tools as such. For instance, to imitate the effect of the different rhythmic flows of subdivision in improvisation, I used the same subdivisions but changed the tempo almost to double with *accelerando*, and then reduced it with a large *ritenuto*. In those movements, the directions on tempo are indicative; it is at the performer's discretion how much they increase the speed of the *accelerando* and reduce it in the *ritenuto*. The tempo indications operate as open indications, giving the performers the freedom to choose the way they perform and move between them their own interactions and communication. Finally, the feeling of movement that results from the changed flow in a bar is implemented here by constant ascending-descending *arpeggio*-like melodic movements. In this area, the direct influence from the ascending-descending models of improvisation is evident.

3.2.5.1 Use of rhythm

Unsaid falls into three parts. The first is in a 4/4 time signature, the second in 2/4, and the third in 4/4. These simple time signatures were chosen to facilitate the fluctuating tempo. In parts one and two the overall rhythmic flow of subdivisions is on sixteenth notes, whereas in the third part the subdivision flow changes to sextuplets of sixteenth notes, a direct influence of Tamer Pınarbaşı's choices for subdivisions in 4/4 time signatures (as shown in chapter1).

3.2.5.2 Use of motif/melodic idea, phrasing and overall structure

Here, the motif is playing a substantial role in the building of phrases. For example, Motif 1 appears in all parts (as such, or altered in rhythmic value), as I demonstrate below:

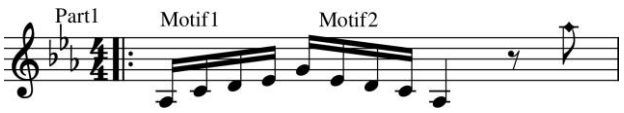



Figure 210: First appearance of Motif 1 in Part 1

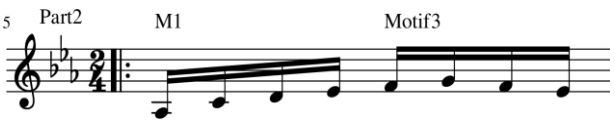



Figure 211: Appearance of Motif 1 in Part 2

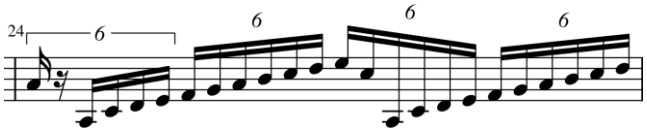



Figure 212: Appearance of Motif 1 as part of a sextuplet in Part 3

In addition, Motif 1 serves as a question in the creation of one-bar phrases in Part 2, as shown below:

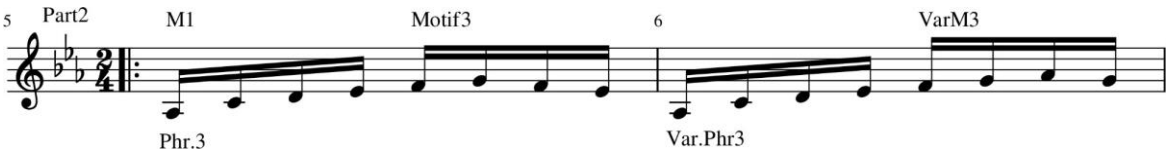



Figure 213: Question-answer tool

In the figure above we can also discern the use of the Variation Tool, both for motifs (Motif 3 & Var Motif 3) and in complete phrases (Phrase 3 & Var Phrase 3).

Finally, the change of subdivision flow in Part 3 created motifs which, when combined, resulted in syncopation and rhythmic complexity. One such example is shown below:

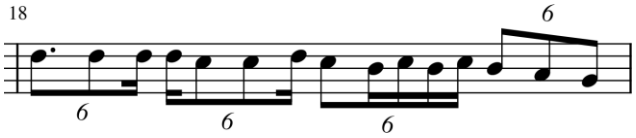



Figure 214: Different approaches on the sextuplet

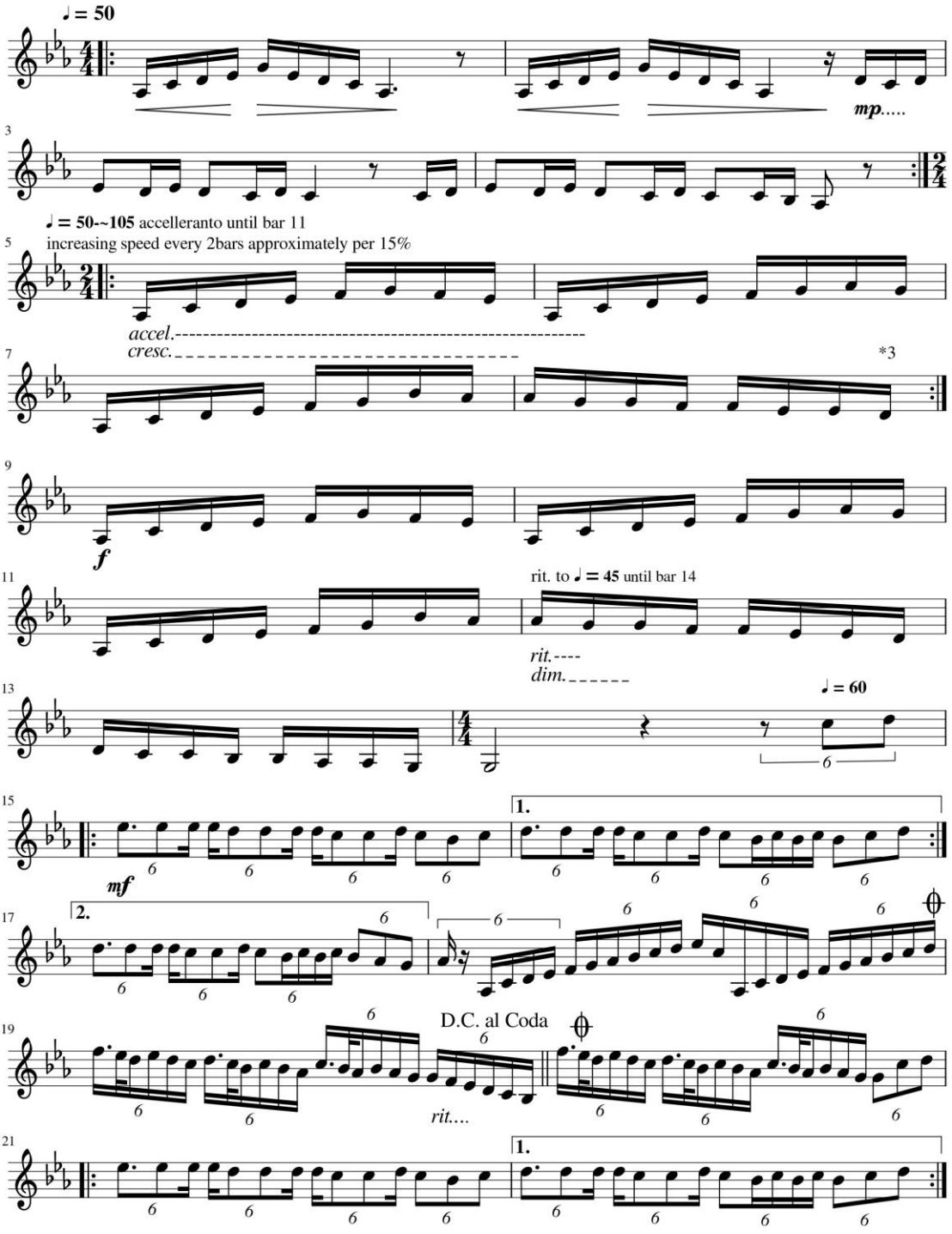
Unsaid is a tripartite composition with repetitions. The first two parts consist of four-bar sentences and the last one of six-bar phrases (landing on the first beat of the next part). The structure is as follows:

1. Entrance (Part 1):
2. Development1 & Climax
3. Development2 & Return to Entrance

This structure is repeated twice. In this way, the second Entrance becomes the Outro for the final stage of the composition, providing it with circularity and a feeling that it could go on for longer.

The use of *makam* also contributes to this feeling. Part 1 is based on the idea of a suspended cadence (*asma karar*), by extensive use of the very-low *Kaba Nim Hisar* (A-flat). This insistence on the lower register of the *makam Nihavend* creates an illusion of *makam Kürdi* on *Yegâh*, further

supported by a cadence and final resting point on *Yegâh* at the end of Part 2. However, in Part 3 the environment indicates, through the use of insistence on various degrees, the existence of *makam Nihavend*. The reinstatement of Part 1 for the end of the composition, with its final cadence to *Rast* degree (C), establishes the *makam Nihavend* environment. It is worth mentioning, however, that neither *makam Nihavend* nor *makam Kürdi* are used here in their complete classical forms. Rather, their melodic material is used in a more abstract way, with the aim for the composition to be accessible to other (even well-tempered) instruments. For this, detailed development of all the movements of the *seyir* was avoided.

Unsaid

♩ = 50
mp.....
♩ = 50-~105 accelleranto until bar 11
increasing speed every 2bars approximately per 15%
accel.
cresc.
*3
f
rit. to ♩ = 45 until bar 14
rit.
dim.
♩ = 60
mf
1.
2.
D.C. al Coda
rit....

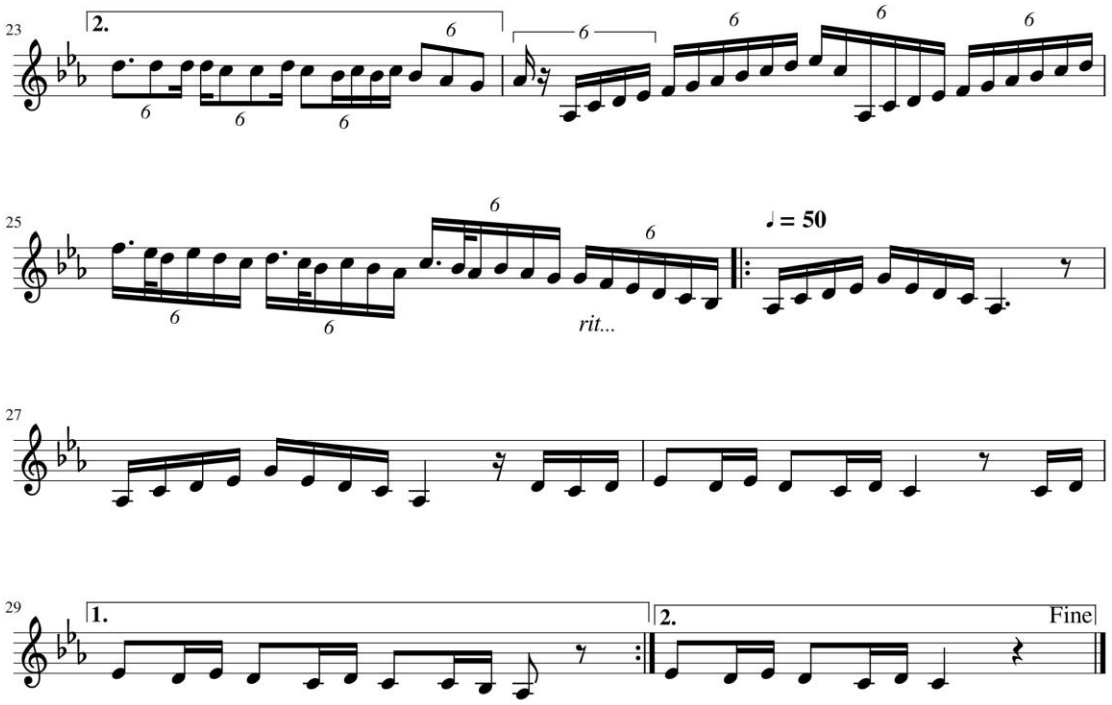
MLM

2 MLM

Figure 215: *Unsaid*

4. Concluding remarks on the Creative path

In this chapter, I focused on how research on metric improvisation could influence artistic work in all its aspects, from performance of metric improvisation, composition, and dissemination of the results of the research.

Firstly, through the practice of improvisations I had transcribed and analysed, I tried to embody the rhythmic tools, melodic movements, structures, and models of all the artists in Chapter 1 in my own playing. Then, after discerning the various rhythmic tools, I practiced and experimented with them by creating metric improvisations in my performances. The example of *Gönül Kalk Gidelim*, and the three different occasions of performance, gave me the opportunity to experiment and contemplate, through performance, the personal use of the different tools and models of metric improvisation suggested by the artists in Chapter1. The example of *Daracık sokakları* suggests ways of approaching *usulü taksim* and metric improvisation. This process suggests ways that research can affect and develop the understanding of metric improvisation, as shown through performance.

Continuing, I focused on the way the results of the research could be made useful to other performing artists. I presented the process of thought as well as the actual workshops organised during the trajectory. I claim, as shown through the results of the workshops, that an emphasis on rhythmic development and practice of rhythmic tools, as well as the introduction of certain ideas (awareness, flow, active listening) are invaluable activities in the process of learning how to improvise – metrically and in general – as well as in the act of performance. And even if we cannot practice improvisation as such, there is a wealth of rhythmic, melodic, structural, and compositional tools that can provide the improvising artist with a database of material, ready to be accessed at the actual moment of performance.

Lastly, I focused on my work as a composer. Here, I presented some of my compositions to show the influences of research on metric improvisation, as discerned in certain compositions. The aim of this part was to demonstrate how tools, structures, and models of metric improvisation can be valuable in the process of creating composed material. This way, the open-ended relationship between improvisation and composition is made evident, supporting the argument that improvisation and composition are not polarised in this tradition. They share common characteristics: processes related to improvisation occur in the act of composition and vice versa. This makes the continuum of improvisation and composition very clear.