

The Clarinet as a Defining Instrument of Turkish Popular Culture: Its History, an Exemplification of its Practice by Serkan Çağrı, and a Single Case Study

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Description of Study

The purpose of the study is to provide a glimpse into Turkish clarinet performance through the lens of a Western classically trained clarinetist. The three research questions I will answer to achieve this include the following: How did the clarinet become a popular phenomenon in Turkey? How does the life and career of Serkan Çağrı exemplify this phenomenon and inform the reader about what Turkish clarinet performance sounds like? What experiences and lessons did I learn from my time in Turkey and as a student of Serkan Çağrı? The paper will answer these questions in the following sections: 1.) An explanation of the past and current state of Turkish clarinet performance. It is unlikely the clarinet has been or ever will be as popular as it is currently in Turkey. The instrument is performed in villages, on the streets of Istanbul, in taverns, on concert stages, and recently in conservatories of music. I believe that the popularity of the instrument in the late 20th and 21st century is related to the Turkish nation's interest and effort to define their culture from 1923 through the present day. 2.) To help readers understand what Turkish clarinet performance is and sounds like using Serkan Çağrı's life, career, and recorded performances to describe the genre. Unlike the life and lifestyle of Western Classical performance, Turkish clarinet performance is a vital part of Turkish popular culture. My case-study experiences in Turkey provide me a unique glimpse into Serkan Çağrı's career; experienced through the lens of a Western classically trained musician, I will share these experiences with the reader. 3.) I will explain that Turkish clarinet performance is in fact a unique genre of performance for the instrument, requiring technique, equipment, and repertoire distinct from that of Western Classical music and clarinet performance. I use my private study of the instrument to detail my beginning experiences with the instrument using video footage of those experiences. My concluding remarks consider how a study of Turkish clarinet performance might benefit a Western Classically trained clarinetist and composers of Western classical music and I make suggestions for further research in areas of study related to the Turkish clarinet.

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