

The Opinions of Music Education Students about 20th and 21st Centuries Classical Music: Uludag University Exemplification

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Abstract

The debates of music historians, composers, and performers on difficulties in understanding the 20th and 21st Centuries international classical music and the reasons have been ongoing for years. The opinions of music education students on this matter and their interests in music of these periods are a matter of curiosity. With this research, students' attitudes towards music of these periods were determined and suggestions were made in the direction of the obtained results. The target population of the study contains Uludag University Faculty of Education Music Education Department students and the research sample contains 117 students from the same department. A questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions was prepared in order to determine the opinions of music students about 20th and 21st century international classical music. From the results of the survey, it was deduced that Music Education Department students do not recognize enough about 20th and 21st Centuries composers, they rarely listen to these periods, but when the opportunity is created, they like to practice and listen to these periods.

Keywords: History of music, classical music, 20th and 21st Centuries music, opinions of students.

1. Introduction

Each period was born as a reaction to the previous period. While the 20th century was coming, composers were seeking for innovation. The “complex editing of chords, the constant change of tonalities” encountered in the works of R. Wagner and F. Liszt have laid the bases for this new seeking (İlyasoğlu, 2001; Kolat, 2011). Music has changed its parlance under the influence of the twentieth-century battles and technological advances and became new music, modern music or contemporary music (Dürük, 2009: 208). In this century, and in the 21st Century following it, many art movements have emerged in different countries, and all the rules set in the music up to the Romantic Period have been destroyed.

In contrast to previous periods, in the 20th Century, the art movements began to change rapidly. For instance, while the Baroque period lasted 150 years, the Classical and Romantic periods lasted approximately 75 years (Şenol, 2013). However, when it comes to the 20th century, there were the composers who have adopted different art movements in the same years. Some of these are “Impressionism, Expressionism, Twelve-tone technique, Total Serialism, Neo-Classicism, Futurism, Minimalism, Noiseism, Bruitism, Microtonal music, Electronic music and Aleatory” (Dürük, 2009: 208; Kolat, 2011: 3).

The composers like C. Debussy and M. Ravel, influenced by the Impressionism that started in the painting in the late 19th Century, are the pioneers of the 20th century music (İlyasoğlu, 2001: 204). In the 1920s, A. Schönberg developed a 12-tone (pitch) technique, which destroyed the chaos of lackness of tonal axis or tonelessness “in a systematic way, rather than writing it freely” (Kutluk, 1997: 239).

Later on, composers have forced the boundaries of the sound phenomenon. For instance, “John Cage in his work entitled 4'33” (4 minutes 33 seconds) was inspired by Robert Rauschenberg's white on white paintings and wanted to make think about the music of silence” (Ali, 2016: 17). Whereas, the original idea of the work, is “there is no such a thing as empty space and silence” (Ali, 2016: 17) and every voice in that space is a part of the work. Turkish composer Mesruh Savaş was aiming to achieve different sounds of the piano by using extended piano techniques in his “On the Wire” work which consists of six pieces. Some of these techniques include “preparing the piano by putting paper on the strings, with the right-hand nails or the fingertips descendant and ascendant glissando, two hand descendant glissando, right and left hand pizzicato, using the middle pedal, microtones” (Demirci, 2016: 187; Demirci, Sungurtekin, Yılmaz & Engür, 2015: 459).

The world wars and technological developments had two significant consequences in music. “The first was the use of sounds beyond the capabilities of traditional instruments; the second was the use of an intermediary technology in composing” (Chadabe, 2004: 4). Emerged in this way, electronic music is “producing or changing music through electronic sources” (Kutluk, 1997: 259). An example of the method used by contemporary composers is “Deformed Reflections” of Mesruh Savaş. The work was initially started to compose for flute and piano but later on “he added electronic sounds due to aesthetic reasons, and perhaps a little bit the instinctive greed of composers' to new sounds and colours” (Şenol & Demirbatır, 2012: 184).

Along with these new seeking, there have also been changes in the writing of the notes by going beyond the ordinary. Although composers often make explanations about the writing of new notes at the beginning of their partitions, it is not always clear what the composer exactly wants with this new and maybe vary from composer to composer notes. Sophie Cherrier, the flute player of the “Ensemble Intercontemporain” ensemble, gives this

example: “For instance, Froissements d'Ailes (Rustling Wings) by Michael Levinas is a good contemporary solo flute piece, but the score is hard to decipher. We are not sure if he wants wind tones or sound with a bit of air for the beginning” (Perlove & Cherrier, 1998: 45).

20th and 21st Centuries composers composed and keep on composing their works without knowing the boundaries. Difficulties of listening to the music which was written during these periods and whether these difficulties are the result of not getting used to this music is a matter of debate among the composers as well as music historians (Dürük, 2009: 212-213).

1.1 Problem Statement

In Uludağ University Music Education Department which aims to educate music teachers, 20th and 21st Centuries composers and their works take part in course contents: Major Performance, Piano, Solo Vocal Training, Music Culture, History of Music, and Orchestra/Chamber Music. However, works from every period are studied in these courses. Students need to be exposed to these periods' music in a multifaceted way to recognize, learn, enjoy and listen to works of these periods which contains many different art movements, composers, genres, and techniques. It is not enough to understand such a different period by only practicing during limited course periods or acquiring brief information about composers in music history lesson.

As a result of the observations, it is thought that the students have low interests in 20th and 21st Centuries music. With this research, it is aimed to determine students' opinions about 20th and 21st Centuries music.

1.2 Research Questions

In the direction of this aim, the problem sentence of the research is as follows: What are the opinions of music education major students in Turkey about the 20th and 21st Centuries classical music?

1.3. Purpose of the Study

It is planned to determine the thoughts, opinions and interests of the students about the music of these periods and eliminate the deficiencies with the practices to be made afterward. It is thought that these practices can increase their interests. Because, in his study, Bradley (1972), has come to the conclusion that a systematic listening training process may have a positive influence on music preferences of students.

1.4. Research Methods

Universe of this research is Uludag University Faculty of Education Music Education Department students. It was desired to reach the whole music department but since there were students who were absent and students who were not in the department during the application, a sample group of the research with 117 students/participant (P) was formed.

Table 1. Distribution of students by years of received music education.

Year	Number of Students	%
1 – 3	9	7,7
4 – 6	41	35,04
7 – 10	58	49,56
11 - ...	9	7,7
Total	117	100

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 58 students who participated in the survey received 7-10 years of music education, 41 students received 4-6 years, 9 students received 1-3 years, and 9 students received longer than eleven years of music education.

A survey consisting of open - ended and closed - ended questions was prepared in order to determine the opinions music education students about 20th and 21st Centuries classical music. A survey is “a data collection tool designed to reach the unified statements - questions, judgments, propositions, etc. - according to the data obtained from the person, group or organization which constitutes the target population / sample of the research” (Ural&Kılıç, 2013: 53).

In the survey, the students are asked how many years they have been studying music, which periods are mostly used in their music education in general, and which periods are included in major performance, piano, orchestra/chamber music and music history courses. In addition, in order to determine the place of 20th and 21st Centuries works in their music education; the period that they prefer listening and practicing most, how often they listen to 20th and 21st Centuries works, whether they know the composers of these periods, examples of 20th and 21st Centuries composers, their ideas about these periods, and whether they like listening and practicing the works of these periods are asked.

Data obtained from closed-ended questions were analysed by frequency, and in percentages, open-ended questions were analysed by descriptive analysis method.

2. Findings

Opinions of Uludag University Faculty of Education Music Education Department students on 20th and 21st Centuries classical music were obtained with the survey applied.

To the question which Music Education Department students can answer by marking multiple options “Which period composers' works do you mostly practice in your music education?” 100 students answered as Baroque Period, 93 students as Classical Period, 88 students as Romantic Period, 42 students as 20th and 21st Centuries, and 26 students answered as Renaissance Period (Table 2).

Table 2. Students' answers to the “Which periods composers' works do you mostly practice in your music education?” question.

Periods	Number of Students
Renaissance	26
Baroque	100
Classic	93
Romantic	88
20 th and 21 st Centuries	42

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the Music Education Department students generally practice works belonging to each period in their music education.

The music education department students were asked to order the periods of works they perform in their major performance, piano, and orchestra/chamber music courses according to the frequency of practice from most to least. Also, Table 3 shows the detailed information on the questions about “most preferred periods they like listening and practicing”.

Table 3. Students' responses to the questions about the practice frequency of periods and most preferred periods they like listening and practicing.

Questions	Renaissance		Baroque		Classic		Romantic		20 th and 21 st Centuries	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
What is the period you practice most in the major performance course?	7	5,98	44	37,6	34	29,06	23	19,66	9	7,7
What is the period you practice least in the major performance course?	48	41,03	6	5,13	1	0,85	8	6,84	54	46,15
What is the period you practice most in the piano course?	4	3,42	61	52,14	33	28,2	15	12,82	4	3,42
What is the period you practice least in the piano course?	51	43,59	5	4,28	1	0,85	3	2,56	57	48,72
What is the period you practice most in the orchestra/chamber music course?	3	2,56	21	17,97	54	46,15	16	13,69	23	19,65
What is the period you practice least in the orchestra/chamber music course?	61	52,14	7	5,98	1	0,85	12	10,25	36	30,78
What is the period you practice most in the Music Culture/History course?	22	18,8	43	36,75	31	26,5	12	10,25	9	7,7
What is the period you practice least in the Music Culture/History course?	31	26,5	7	5,98	3	2,56	4	3,42	72	61,54
What is the period you most preferred listening to?	1	0,85	28	23,93	13	11,11	59	50,42	16	13,69
What is the period you most preferred practicing?	0	0	26	22,22	8	6,84	66	56,41	17	14,53

According to the Table 3, When students were asked to order the periods of works they perform in their major performance course according to frequency of practice from most to least, Baroque period with 44 students, Classical period with 34 students, Romantic period with 23 students, 20th and 21st Centuries period with 9 students, and Renaissance period with 7 students were defined as the most practiced periods; 20th and 21st Centuries works and Renaissance period works were defined as the periods they have practiced the least. The results are similar for piano, orchestra/chamber music, and music culture/history courses. Also, when students were asked about the period they prefer listening most, 59 students gave Romantic period as the answer, 28 students Baroque period, 16 students 20th and 21st Centuries works, 13 students Classical period, and one student gave Renaissance period as the answer. Similarly, 56.41% of the students said Romantic Period, 22.22% Baroque Period, 14.53% 20th and 21st Centuries, and 6.84% of the students said Classical Period as the answer when students were asked about the period

they like to practice most.

To the question “how often do you listen to the works of 20th and 21st Century composers?”, The majority (41.88%) of the students responded that they seldom listen to that period, 31.62% rarely, 16.24% often, 7.7% always, and 2,56 % of the students responded that they never listen to that period (Table 4).

Table 4. Students' responses to the question “how often do you listen to the works of 20th and 21st Centuries composers?”

Frequency	f	%
Always	9	7,7
Frequently	19	16,24
Sometimes	49	41,88
Rarely	37	31,62
Never	3	2,56
Total	117	100

The frequencies of students' responses to the question “Do you know the classical music composers of 20th and 21st Centuries?” were very close. Fifty-seven students said yes, and 60 students said no. When students were asked to write examples of 20th and 21st Centuries composers, many students left this question unanswered. Most of the students who responded to the question gave the names of Turkish Five “Ahmet Adnan Saygun, Ulvi Cemal Erkin, Cemal Reşit Rey, Necil Kazım Akses, Hasan Ferit Alnar” and Turkish composers “Fazıl Say, Necdet Levent, Muammer Sun, Erdal Tuğcular, İlhan Usmanbaş, Cenan Akin, Nevit Kodallı, Saip Egüz, İlhan Baran, Ferit Tüzün, Selman Ada, Bülent Arel” as examples. In addition, “C. Debussy, B. Bartok, J. Cage, S. Barber, D. Şostakoviç, J. Sibelius, C. Orff, J. Williams, I Stravinsky, A. Copland, S. Prokofyev, B. Britten, A. Casella, G. Enescu, O. Respighi, K. Stockhausen, A. Haçaturyan, F. Amirov, V. Babri, H. Alfvén, B. Benary, A. Berg, E. Satie, K. Karayev, R. Dyens, L. Brouwer, A. York, A. Webern, G. Ligeti, B. Maderna, J. M. Damase, G. Gershwin, A. Schönberg, C. Bolling, D. Kabalevski, A. Piazzola” were the other composers that students recalled.

The answers given by the students to the question whether they like listening and practicing the works of 20th and 21st Centuries period and whether these periods and composers are given enough places in their music education are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Students' responses to the question “Do you like listening to and practicing 20th and 21st Centuries music?” and “Do you think you have sufficient training to learn 20th and 21st Centuries classic music in your music education?”.

Questions	Yes		No
	f	%	f
Do you like listening to 20 th and 21 st Centuries classical music?	77	65,81	40
Do you like practicing 20 th and 21 st Centuries classical music?	68	58,12	49
Do you think you have sufficient training to learn 20 th and 21 st Centuries classical music in your music education?	25	21,37	92

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that 65.81% of students like listening to 20th and 21st Centuries classical music, 34.19% do not like it; 8.12% of the students like practicing 20th and 21st Centuries classical music, 41.88% dislike it and 78.63% of them think that they did not have sufficient training to learn 20th and 21st Centuries classical music.

3. Discussion

In one of his articles published in *Milliyet Sanat Magazine* in 1981, Filiz Ali asks, “Is John Cage known in Turkey?” and adds “even those who are working on Western music don’t have an interest in John Cage. Although he is 70 years old, and a few generations of composers and commentators continue to walk on his path, John Cage doesn’t matter to Turkey.” (Ali, 2016: 18). Looking at the data obtained from the survey, it is seen that the situation changed very little after 25 years. Most of the students did not write any composer’s name even though some students could give John Cage name as an example when they were asked the names of 20th and 21st Centuries classic composers.

Today, there is little interest in the music of the composers of the previous era and the era we are in. Students have explained the reasons why they do not like listening to the works of this period: “I love to listen to classical works (P14, P88)”, “I do not like to listen to works of these periods, but rather prefer to listen to Baroque period (P19, P44, P72)”, “These periods harmony is mixed, and it does not feel comforting to me (P22, P105)”, “I love to listen to older works more. Because at that time, people were making music for themselves by feeling it, not for money or trading. I find the quality of music composed in the old period better (P113)”.

Likewise, students who do not like to practice the works of these periods have made statements like; “I think I am not technically capable of playing this period with my personal instrument (P12, P84)”, “I think it is difficult and complicated (P17, P22)”, “The overly complex feelings do not make me feel. I do not want to listen

when I do not understand what the piece of art tells (P26)", "I don't have much knowledge and interest (P37)", "I do not like having to force me because the level is usually high (P43)", "I do not like it very much as a sound. Previously, I only uttered the works of Turkish composers (P88)", "We do not know and do not study works of these periods as much as other period works. This situation is making us out of these periods music (P99)", "The closest date to us, but the farthest as information (P106)".

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the reactions of those who listened to the work of composers such as C. Debussy, I. Stravinsky weren't much different from today. They also suggested that the music was over, and the mess and the dissonant took the place of harmony and creativity (Kutluk, 1997: 231). Similarly, some composers complained about this situation.

M. Delannoy says; "While writing, I do not comply with any rules ... I do not have any fear of old traditions or writing technique... My all fear is that affects the battles of the world and the artistic dubiousness that has recently taken off. Today, music falters on the edge of genius and foolishness, with real thoughts and impressions and nonsense. It's really sad that some composers work away from the spirit and work as a craftsman. In my compositions, I only aim at the yield of inspiration and take into account the effects of nature" (Yener, 1990: 231).

Finkelstein (2000) also mentioned that being "incomprehensible and unpleasant" is the most prominent specialty of 20th Century music. When you think about this period, it is easier to reach the information about the composers and their music compared to the other periods, since we have more possibilities to listen to the records made, the new theories are placed in the educational institutions, and the number of the books written about these theories are increased, and the musical history is also important from the scientific point of view. This, in turn, allows the composers to acquire the interests they deserve (Finkelstein, 2000: 95).

In this research, although there are also students who don't like to listen and practicing the music of these periods, there are students who do. Students have commented on this subject as: "The harmony of the works of this period sounds better (P1, P92)", "I like listening to them since the works contain emotions more clearly (P2)", "I think the works of these periods are freer (P3)", "It has a lot of stuff in it with the bundle from the past. This makes me feel nice while listening to them (P5)", "I like to hear to the works of these periods because of the experimental quests of the new harmonic structure and the pursuit of sound (P7)", "In particular, playing the works of Turkish composers composed during these periods develops me regarding our music (P10)", "I think they express the period we live in better (P21)", "Especially by examining from the perspective of Turkish works, I prefer listening to the music and rhythms of our culture in a sensual sense (P23)", "There are different types of harmonies in these periods, especially in chamber music (P31)", "I like the music out of the rules (P52, P61)", "I like to listen because I like extreme and irregularities. Also, we cannot tell today's chaotic life in another language. So, I also need it (P80)", "I think it is more up-to-date, more innovative and more forward-looking (P87)", "Contemporary period works were composed perfectly. It is a period I prefer listening to (P97)".

There are also students who think that technical difficulties will improve the playing skills as well as students who do not like to play 20th and 21st Centuries works due to technical difficulties. "I can feel my emotions and my feelings more clearly. These periods music gives me peace (P4)", "I am pleased to reflect the changes in style to the individual instrument and to learn new techniques (P9, P52, P61)", "I prefer playing because of the beautiful melodies that will be formed even though I have difficulties while practicing (P24)", "I like to practice because I think we are freer regarding commenting while practicing (P30)", "I like to practice because it is far from ordinary (P34, P67)", "I like to practice because it develops and trains (P69, P75, P93, P105)", "Because I'm a musician. I like to practice since it is my favourite period (P81)", "I would like to be familiar with the music of these periods (P94)", "Playing the works I have lived shows that I represent the period I live (P95)", "I like the works of Turkish composers. I feel closer to my culture and music because it is Turkish pieces (P96)" are answers given by students why they like to play their works in these periods.

In the research, students were asked about their opinions about this subject and these opinions were evaluated regarding composing, listening and practicing, education, and given importance.

Students who evaluated the 20th and 21st Centuries music regarding composers mentioned that composers could express themselves better with the freedom given in the writing technique in these periods. "I think composers express themselves more freely (P46)", "I like Turkish composers give a lot of space to local tunes (P92)", "In these periods, more individual feelings were processed. They have the traces of all periods (P116)". Also, while students evaluate 20th and 21st Century classical music from a technical and harmonic point of view, they pointed out the differences of these harmonies and their technical difficulties. "Contemporary music has different approaches and techniques. This makes it difficult to obtain precise information about contemporary music (P88)", "I think that the harmony of contemporary music is much different from other periods (P92)", "They are very rich works in the sense of harmony and require intensive work (P23)".

Assessing the 20th and 21st Centuries classical music, some of the students have expressed the view that these periods are a difficult period regarding listening and practicing. "It's a period when your music has reached its peak and is complicated at the same time. Listening and playing are more challenging than the works of other

periods (P17)", "20th and 21st Centuries music requires more attention while listening, more difficult music to listen to and understand. Perhaps it is not listened too much because of this (P93)".

According to the data obtained from the research, it was determined that students think music from the 20th and 21st Centuries is not studied enough in the lessons. Students also emphasized the need for individual studies to understand and practice better the works of these periods. The opinions and suggestions of the students about this subject are as follows: "I think that we should pay more attention to 20th and 21st Centuries music in our department (P1, P54, P72)", "Today, charming works are also composed, and our course contents should be improved to understand this period better (P2)", "As a music teacher, we need to know and learn the music of every period very well (P4)", "More works of these periods are required to be searched, listened and played more often to create permanent learning (P9)", "A lesson should be given to performing Turkish music and other contemporary works (P23)", "There should be more place for these periods in the course content (P26, P104)", "In instruments courses, the music of these periods does not have much place. It is necessary to open a separate course for these periods (P93)", "If contemporary period works are studied more frequently in the curriculum, it may be a period we understand and love (P94, P106)", "20th and 21st Centuries music are not given enough place in our education. Although I do not like it very much, in my opinion, the music of these periods is a time in which freedom and imagination have emerged (P107)".

Despite the technology and knowledge we have, 20th and 21st Centuries classical music is not well known and understood. A students participating in the research "20th and 21st Centuries music will gain importance in later times (P96)", and the other student uses the expression "I do not know these periods music enough (P51)".

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As a result of this research, it is seen that Baroque, Classical, and Romantic works are mostly included in music education of Uludag University Music Education Department. Students stated that most of the major performance course includes Baroque period works, at least 20th and 21st Centuries works. The technical difficulties in the works of 20th and 21st Centuries make it difficult for every student to perform the works of these periods. The data of the question has been asked for piano course; the situation is the same as the major performance course. However, there is an obligation to play Turkish artefacts in piano course contents of Uludag University Department of Music Education every semester. The Turkish composer are composed their works in the 20th and 21st Centuries. It is thought that students responded to this question because they ignored this situation or the number of works is subtle compared to other period works. About the Orchestra/Chamber music course, 46.15% of the students stated that the most studied period was Classical period.

In the research conducted, the period in which the students most preferred listening and practicing was determined as the Romantic period. The number of students who responded to these questions in the 20th and 21st Centuries was only 16 - 17 students. This figure is less than 20% of the surveyed students. In parallel with this data, the frequency of students listening to 20th and 21st Centuries classical music was determined as 41.88% "sometimes", 31.62% "rarely" and 2.56% "never". These results showed that students of music education department listen to the 20th and 21st-century classical music at a low level. A similar result is also seen when students are asked to write examples of composers of these periods. Most of the students left this question unanswered and mostly gave examples only from Turkish Five and Turkish composers. Few international composers are recognized by the students. The data show that a significant number of students with a background in music education do not even recognize composers by name in these periods.

Besides this, 65.81% of the students answered "I like to listen", and 58.12% answered "I like to the practice" in the question "Do you like to listen to and practice 20th and 21st Centuries classical music?". Among those who answered yes to this question, there are also students who did not practice the music of these periods. However, they have expressed that they can prefer practicing when there is a possibility.

In the research conducted, to the question "Do you think you are taught enough to learn 20th and 21st Centuries classical music?" 78.63% of the students answered as no and stated that the more importance should be given in course contents for recognition, understanding, and learning of these periods.

In addition to being determined that students do not have enough interest in the 20th and 21st Centuries classical music, by the help of the answers given to the open-ended questions, it was resulted that the interest to the pieces of these periods can be increased via multi-directional education.

In the direction of the results obtained, suggestions on the subjects are as follows:

- 20th and 21st Centuries classical pieces are more involved in course content,
- Organizing seminars promoting 20th and 21st Centuries composers and their works,
- Arrangement of concert performances including 20th and 21st Centuries classical works,
- Organizing discussion environments for 20th and 21st Centuries classical music for student,
- Books and magazines written about 20th and 21st Centuries music in libraries, ensuring that they are read by students,
- It is recommended that students be taught the notion that new periods music can be learned only in a

versatile way, by practicing, reading, listening and discussing.

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