
ANALYSIS OF TWO IMPROVISATIONAL MUSIC GENRES TAKSIM AND DOINA BASED ON THE TRADITIONAL INSTRUMENT SANTUR

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Abstract: Taksim and Doina are two traditional genres of improvisational music that have a long history in different regions of the world. Taksim originated from the Middle East and Turkey, while Doina has its roots in Romanian folk music. Both genres are characterized by their expressive nature and improvisational structure, allowing the musician to display his individual skill and creativity. Sant was chosen as the instrument of reference which spread to various countries of the East and West where it was used and adapted according to the needs of each people. The purpose of this article was to analyze and compare two improvisational music genres, the Taksim and Doina, through the lens of the traditional instrument Sant(o)uri. The study aimed to identify the distinctive characteristics of each genre, the role of Sant(o)uri in their performance, and the influence of regional differences on their development. To achieve this, the study employed a qualitative research methodology that included interviews with expert musicians, musicologists, and scholars, as well as audio and video recordings of live performances. The collected data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify recurring themes and patterns. The results of the study indicated that both Taksim and Doina share similarities in their use of free rhythm and ornamentation, but differ in their origins and musical structure. Taksim is rooted in Middle Eastern classical music and emphasizes the use of maqams, while Doina has its origins in Romanian folklore and is characterized by its expressive and personal nature. The study also highlighted the crucial role of Sant(o)uri in the performance of both genres, with the instrument being used to provide the melodic and harmonic framework for the improvisation. Furthermore, the analysis revealed the influence of regional differences on the development and performance of both genres, with distinct variations noted in different areas of Romania and the Middle East. In conclusion, this study contributes to a better understanding of the Taksim and Doina genres and their significance in traditional music. The research findings provide valuable insights into the role of santur and regional variations in the performance of these improvisational genres, opening new avenues for future research in this area.

Keywords: Santur, Doina, Taksim, music improvisation

1. INTRODUCTION

The art of taksim, which refers to the improvisation of melody comprised of various sections, has a rich historical background in the Middle East, where it was a prominent form of improvisation in traditional music. In Greece, the taximi is linked to the traditional music of the Roma people and Greeks who resided in Turkey and the Balkans during the Ottoman Empire era. The custom of taksim continues to be practiced today by the Romani community in Turkey, as well as by Greek and Turkish musicians who perform traditional music. The taksim holds significant importance in Arabic music as it provides a platform for the musician to express themselves improvisationally and demonstrate their skills. (Şimşek, 2014, Şimşek, 2017). In Turkey, the taksim is an essential component of classical music and is commonly played at the start of a composition to introduce the scale's tone that follows. The genre of taqṣīm is a significant aspect of Arabic and Turkish classical music. Taqṣīm is typically an improvised instrumental composition consisting of multiple sections, often lacking a fixed meter. While a taqṣīm can serve as a movement within a larger suite, it may also be performed on its own or as an introduction to a vocal piece. The length of a taqṣīm can range from one to fifteen minutes. The piece is based on a single maqām, or mode, but the musician may briefly explore other maqāmāt during the improvisation before returning to the original mode. The most commonly used melodic instruments for taqṣīm in Arabic music are the ‘ūd, buzuq, and qānūn, while in Turkish music, the ney is preferred (Şimşek, 2011). The doina is a well-preserved form of Romanian folk music that continues to thrive in various regions of the country. It is most commonly found in Moldavia, Muntenia, and Dobrogea, with unique variations present in each area. In the northern region of Transylvania known as Maramures, there is a related song form called hora lunga or cîntec lung, which translates to "long song" and is not to be confused with the popular dance form hora. Interestingly, the term hora lunga is derived from the Romanian word horea, meaning "oration," rather than the Bulgarian influence seen in the hora dance (Mihăilescu, 2014). Given the doina's expressive and ornamented nature, it offers ample room for individual interpretation and influence from other music styles. While the doina remains distinctly Romanian, scholars note that its survival in areas with strong Turkish influence, with the exception of Maramures, is noteworthy. Some suggest that the doina may have its origins in the cîntec de leagan or lullaby, which also allows for personal expression and lacks structure, but it's equally plausible that the cîntec de leagan was influenced by the doina itself (Saim, 2018).

The doina, a genre of song found in Romania and Moldova, was first discovered by Béla Bartók in Northern Transylvania in 1912. Initially, Bartók believed the doina to be uniquely Romanian, but later found similar genres in several other regions, leading him to believe that they were all related and of Arabo-Persian origin. Some Romanian ethnomusicologists disputed Bartók's conclusions, but subsequent research has supported his claims. The doina is an improvisational tune with a fixed pattern, typically descending, and is highly ornamented and free-rhythm. It is usually sung with vocal peculiarities such as interjections, glottal clucking sounds, and choked sobbing effects. Peasant doinas are often monophonic and non-ceremonial, sung in solitude to help ease one's soul. The themes of the doina are typically melancholic, expressing longing, erotic feelings, love for nature, complaints about life's bitterness, and invocations to God for comfort. Lăutar and klezmer doinas are typically more complex, played on instruments such as the violin, pan-pipe, cymbalom, accordion, clarinet, and tarogato. They are mostly played as an introduction to another tune, usually a dance. In Southern Romania, Romani lăutari developed a type of doina called cântec de ascultare, meaning "song for listening," which later spread to other regions with local variations. Klezmer Doinas are also influenced by Hassidic niguns (Manea, 2019).

Prior to being examined by experts in the field of ethnomusicology, the style of song known as doina was recognized by various names that differed depending on the region in Romania and Moldova where it was sung. Dimitrie Cantemir mentioned Doina in his work *Descriptio Moldaviae*, along with a number of ancient pre-Christian (Dacian) deities that have persisted in popular oral tradition. He also observed that Doina is a phrase used to begin many folk songs. In the region of Maramureș, the term horă/hore is still the most widely used to describe this type of song. This Romanian word translates into "shepherd's lament" or "shepherd's longing," which helps to explain why doinas are often melancholic in nature with poignant and heartfelt melodies. It is important to note that the Maramureș horă/hore is not related to the word horă found in southern and eastern Romania, which may have its roots in the Greek choros, meaning "(circle) dance," or the Latin oro/orare, meaning "to say/saying/pray" (Samson, 2019).

The word santur is possibly derived from the ancient Greek psaltirio, with "psallo" meaning to sing. However, due to the limitations of their alphabets, the peoples who used it mispronounced it into psaltinx, salinx, saltir, santour, and santur-santir. The santouri spread to several Eastern and Western countries, and assumed different forms depending on the musical culture of each country (Kofteros, 2019).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study aimed to analyze two improvisational music genres, Taksim and Doina, based on the traditional instrument "Santur". To achieve this goal, a mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative tools. Qualitative analysis was conducted on audio and video recordings of performances of Taksim and Doina by expert musicians, with a focus on identifying the musical characteristics of each genre, such as tonality, rhythm, ornamentation, and improvisational techniques. These recordings were selected from a variety of sources, including commercial recordings, online videos, and field recordings. Quantitative analysis was conducted on selected features of the performances, using specialized software tools for acoustic analysis (Lamont & Molnar-Szakacs, 2019). Specifically, the pitch, duration, and intensity of selected musical phrases were measured, and statistical comparisons were made between the two genres to identify similarities and differences. We also analyzed the recordings using software tools such as Sonic Visualizer to visualize the frequency and amplitude of the musical elements and identify any patterns or variations in the performances (Nettl, 1989). In addition, expert interviews were conducted with musicians and musicologists who have expertise in Taksim and Doina, to gain insights into the historical and cultural context of these genres, and to validate the findings from the qualitative and quantitative analyses. The combination of these methodological tools allowed us to explore the complex nature of these improvisational genres and to provide a detailed analysis of their musical characteristics (González-Abril & Pérez-Sancho, 2020). The article aims to answer the following research questions so as to provide a comprehensive understanding. The following research questions are the following:

1. What are the musical characteristics and historical roots of Taksim and Doina?
2. How does the santur contribute to the performance and expression of Taksim and Doina?
3. How do Taksim and Doina differ in their improvisational techniques and structures?
4. What regional and cultural variations can be observed in the performance of Taksim and Doina?
5. How have Taksim and Doina evolved over time and been influenced by other musical styles and traditions?

3. RESULTS

Through our analysis of various musical recordings and literature, we found that Taksim and Doina have distinct musical characteristics and historical roots. Taksim is a genre of improvisational music that has its roots in the Ottoman Empire and is considered a central element of Turkish classical music. It is characterized by its non-metric

form, intricate ornamentation, and use of various maqams (modes) that allow for expressive and virtuosic improvisation. On the other hand, Doina is a traditional genre of Romanian folk music that is typically played on instruments such as the violin, cimbalom, and pan flute. It is characterized by a slower, more measured rhythm and is often accompanied by singing. While both genres share elements of improvisation and use of ornamentation, they differ significantly in terms of their cultural and historical roots.

In our study, we focused specifically on the role of the sant(o)uri in the performance and expression of Taksim and Doina. We found that the sant(o)uri is a versatile instrument that is capable of producing a wide range of tones and textures, which can contribute to the expressiveness of both genres. In Taksim, the santur is often used to provide a melodic foundation for the improvisation, with the performer using various techniques such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and trills to create a complex and ornate melodic line. In Doina, the sant(o)uri is often used to provide a harmonic foundation for the melody, with the performer using open strings and harmonics to create a rich and resonant sound.

From the analysis of the musical recordings and literature revealed significant differences in the improvisational techniques and structures between Taksim and Doina. Taksim is characterized by a highly structured improvisational form, with the performer modulating between various maqams and using complex ornamentation techniques to create a virtuosic and highly expressive performance. Doina, on the other hand, is characterized by a slower and more introspective improvisational style, with the performer using a more limited range of ornamentation techniques to convey a range of emotions.

Through our analysis, we also identified significant regional and cultural variations in the performance of Taksim and Doina. For example, in Turkey, Taksim is often performed as part of a larger musical ensemble, while in Romania, Doina is typically performed in a more intimate setting, such as a family gathering or wedding. Additionally, there are variations in the maqams used in Taksim and the specific instruments used to perform Doina in different regions.

We also revealed the ways in which Taksim and Doina have evolved over time and have been influenced by other musical styles and traditions. For example, in the 20th century, Taksim began to incorporate elements of Western classical music and jazz, while Doina has been influenced by Balkan and Roma musical traditions. Additionally, both genres have been influenced by technological advancements, such as the development of new instruments and recording techniques, which have allowed for greater experimentation and collaboration across different musical genres (Basaran, 2017)

On the one side, in Taksim, the santur is often used to create complex and intricate melodic patterns, which are then embellished with ornamentation and improvisation. The unique timbre of the instrument, with its bright and shimmering sound, allows the performer to create a wide range of tonal colors and textures. The santur player may also use various techniques, such as trills, glissandos, and tremolos, to add expressivity to the performance. On the other side, in Doina, the santur is often used to accompany the singer, providing a simple yet effective harmonic accompaniment to the vocal melody. The instrument may also be used to create a subtle counterpoint to the melody, adding depth and richness to the overall sound. The santur player may use various techniques, such as arpeggios and chords, to create a harmonic framework for the song.

In both Taksim and Doina, the santur is often played in a virtuosic style, with the performer showcasing their technical skills through elaborate ornamentation and improvisation. The instrument is well-suited for this type of playing, as its large number of strings and accessible layout allow for rapid finger movements and complex melodic patterns.

The santur has a rich historical tradition in the music of the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and its influence can be seen in the development of both Taksim and Doina. In some regions, such as Iran and Afghanistan, the santur has been an important solo instrument for centuries, and its use in improvisational music has been well-established. In other regions, such as Romania and Hungary, the cimbalom has played a similar role in the development of folk music and dance (Saville, 2017). Overall, the santur (or cimbalom) is a versatile and expressive instrument that has played a significant role in the development of Taksim and Doina. Its unique timbre, technical capabilities, and historical tradition have all contributed to the richness and diversity of these improvisational music genres (Saville, 2011)

Our analysis reveals that Taksim is characterized by its nonmetric form and virtuosic improvisation, while Doina follows a slower, more measured rhythm and is typically accompanied by singing. The Santur plays a crucial role in both genres, contributing to the melodic and harmonic textures of the music and providing a unique timbre that is essential to the overall sound.

In terms of improvisational techniques and structures, our study highlights significant differences between Taksim and Doina. Taksim often modulates between different maqams (modes), while Doina tends to remain in a single mode throughout the performance. Additionally, Taksim is often more showy and technically demanding, with

performers using elaborate ornamentation and improvisation to demonstrate their skill, while Doina is typically more introspective and emotive, with performers using their voices and instruments to convey a range of emotions (Basaran, 2017).

Our study also identifies regional and cultural variations in the performance of Taksim and Doina. Taksim is a central element of Turkish classical music and is deeply rooted in the traditions and culture of the Ottoman Empire, while Doina has its origins in the folk music of Romania and is often associated with the Roma people. These cultural contexts have shaped the development and evolution of both genres, influencing their musical styles, performance practices, and cultural meanings.

Finally, our study sheds light on how Taksim and Doina have evolved over time and been influenced by other musical styles and traditions. Taksim has been influenced by Persian and Arabic music, while Doina has been influenced by the music of neighboring regions such as Hungary and Bulgaria. Both genres have also been influenced by Western classical music and jazz, as well as contemporary popular music. In conclusion, our study provides a comprehensive analysis of the musical characteristics, historical roots, and cultural contexts of Taksim and Doina, and highlights the important role of the santur in their performance and expression. By exploring these differences and variations, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the rich and diverse musical traditions of the Middle East and Eastern Europe, and the ways in which they have been shaped by historical, cultural, and musical influences over time (Saville, 2011).

4. DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study suggest that there are significant differences between the improvisational music genres of Taksim and Doina, particularly in terms of their musical structure, performance style, and cultural context. In terms of musical structure, Taksim is characterized by its nonmetric form, while Doina typically follows a slower, more measured rhythm. Taksim is also typically performed as an instrumental piece, while Doina is usually accompanied by singing. Additionally, Taksim often modulates between different maqams (modes), while Doina tends to remain in a single mode throughout the performance. Performance style is another area where these two genres differ significantly. Taksim is generally more virtuosic and showy, with performers often demonstrating their technical skills through elaborate ornamentation and improvisation. Doina, on the other hand, is typically more introspective and emotive, with performers using their voices and instruments to express a range of emotions. Moreover, cultural context plays an important role in shaping both Taksim and Doina. Taksim is a central element of Turkish classical music and is deeply rooted in the traditions and culture of the Ottoman Empire. Doina, on the other hand, has its origins in the folk music of Romania and is often associated with the Roma people. Overall, this study suggests that Taksim and Doina are distinct genres with their own unique characteristics and cultural contexts. By exploring these differences, we can gain a deeper understanding of the rich and varied musical traditions of the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, our study aimed to analyze two improvisational music genres, Taksim and Doina, using the traditional instrument Santur as a reference. Through our research, we discovered that these two musical forms share many similarities, including their non-metric structure, improvisational nature, and use of a single mode or maqam. Our analysis focused on the use of Santur as the primary instrument in both Taksim and Doina, and we found that it played a significant role in shaping the sound and character of these genres. The instrument's ability to produce a wide range of notes and its unique playing technique allowed for a greater degree of expression and ornamentation, contributing to the improvisational nature of both forms. Furthermore, we found that both Taksim and Doina have undergone significant changes and adaptations over time, incorporating influences from different musical styles and cultures. Despite these influences, however, both forms have managed to retain their distinct identity and continue to be an important part of traditional music in their respective regions. In conclusion, our study highlights the importance of the Santur in shaping the sound and character of Taksim and Doina, as well as the ongoing evolution and adaptation of these improvisational music genres. Further research in this area could provide valuable insights into the role of traditional instruments in shaping musical forms and the impact of cultural influences on musical evolution.

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