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LISTENING FOR SECULAR BODIES: WESTERN ART MUSIC, OCCIDENTALISM, AND BELONGING IN NEO-LIBERAL ISTANBUL

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents ... ii
List of Tables ... iii
List of Figures ... iv
Acknowledgements ... vi
Abstract ... ix
Introduction ... 1
Chapter 1: Listening for Secular Bodies ... 37
Chapter 2: Secular Acoustic Atmospheres: Bodies and Contra-Public in Suspension ... 100
Chapter 3: Secular Acoustic Geographies: Listening to Istanbul, Hearing the West ... 147
Chapter 4: Settling the Flesh: Applause and the Boundaries of Secularity ... 192
Chapter 5: House Concerts, Ritualization, and Secular Sainthood ... 234
Conclusion ... 281
Bibliography ... 290

List of Tables

Table 1: Terminology Chart.. 47

List of Figures

Figure 1: Sarıca Mansion, Moda. Photo by author. 24

Figure 2: Istanbul State Opera production in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum's main court 101

Figure 3: Süreyya Opera's main façade on Moda's Bahariye Avenue. Photo by author. 108

Figure 4: Süreyya Opera lobby. Photo by author. 109

Figure 5: Süreyya Opera interior. Photo by author. 109

Figure 6: Süreyya Opera interior decoration 111

Figure 7: Süreyya Opera interior, upper box view. Photo by author. 113

Figure 8: Yeldeğirmeni Arts interior 115

Figure 9: exterior walls of Tekfur Palace. Photo by author. 119

Figure 10: pandemic concert seating configuration at Tekfur Palace during Summer 2020. Photo by author. 119

Figure 11: Tekfur Palace main façade and stage. Photo by author. 120

Figure 12: Harbiye Open Air Theater before Borusan Philharmonic concert 128

Figure 13: pre-Fuaye concert line at Süreyya Opera 135

Figure 14: Fuaye concert at Süreyya Opera 137

Figure 15: Fuaye concert at Süreyya Opera 137

Figure 16: Edirnekapı neighorhood outside of Tekfur Palace. Photo by author. 143

Figure 17: crossing the bridge from Beyoğlu to Moda. 158

Figure 18: All Saints Moda interior. Photo by author. 160

Figure 19: plaque in memory of Frederick Edwin Whittall (1864-1953) in All Saints Moda. Photo by author. 160

Figure 20: plaque in memory of Linda La Fontaine (?-1920) in All Saints Moda. Photo by author. 161
Figure 21: All Saints Moda. Photo by author. 164
Figure 22: advertisement for a tour of Levantine Kadıköy and Moda, Summer 2020. Advertisement for Ergican Acarbaş tour. 164
Figure 23: Mahmut Muhtar Paşa Mansion in Moda. Photo by author. 172
Figure 24: Assomption Church front façade. Photo by author. 174
Figure 25: Istanbul European Choir rehearsal in Assomption Church. Photo by author. 178
Figure 26: Istanbul European Choir performance in Assomption Church. Photo by author..... 179
Figure 27: Büyükyalı Fişekhane concert setup. Photo by author. 200
Figure 28: Façade of Tiled Pavilion re-imagined as performance space. Photo by author. 202
Figure 29: Yeni Moda Pharmacy on Moda Avenue. Photo by author..... 208
Figure 30: Melih Ziya Sezer in his antique, Moda Avenue pharmacy. Photo by author..... 209
Figure 31: Nazım Hikmet verse in Moda. Photo by author. 228
Figure 32: sitting in the Soylus' salon pre-performance. Photo by author. 238
Figure 33: Meriç Soylu House Concerts photo wall. Photo by author. 240
Figure 34: audience for Meriç Soylu House Concert. Photo by author. 241
Figure 35: Meriç Soylu House Concert. Photo by author. 242
Figure 36: my November 6 article commemorating Meriç Soylu's birthday concert at the Arter Museum. Screenshot by author. 277

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Abstract

Over the past several decades, the city of Istanbul has been transformed under Turkey's Islamic populist regime by processes of economic and cultural liberalization that have challenged twentieth-century state secularist and Occidentalist orthodoxies. Among these transformations has been a proliferation of practices of performing and listening to Western art music long associated with those orthodoxies. In this dissertation, I examine the ways that practices of listening shape secular bodies and their modes of belonging in Istanbul. With the rise of Islamic populism and a widespread sense among secularists that contemporary Turkey is defined by an inability to listen, practices of listening to Western art music become a primary means through which people tune their emotions and senses to shape themselves as secular sovereign subjects. These ostensibly universal practices of listening produce novel modes of belonging to the city that draw upon material traces of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past activated by Western art music to produce a secular acoustic urban geography. Scholars have alternately tended to deploy the autonomous, secular body as an aspirational straw man of Western modernity against which to frame accounts of the particularity of its religious others or, more recently, claimed that secular bodies themselves only emerge through differentiation from religion. Here, I demonstrate ethnographically that secular bodies and the secular sovereign subjectivity that they undergird are actively forged through practices of listening to Western art music. At the same time, where scholars have suggested that listening transcends the borders of the body and subjectivity, I show that listening is integral to constructing and maintaining the boundaries of secular bodies in Istanbul.

Introduction

Mehmet: If I hadn't listened to classical music, I wouldn't be the Mehmet I am today. I know from myself. I didn't amount to anything, but what I did amount to happened with classical music. It was imposed so that we would develop. ...
Erol: I see. So, what do you notice about people who don't listen [to classical music]? Can you notice it when they speak, for example?
Mehmet: You notice it when they speak. It develops the brain. It happens without you noticing. To help you understand, let me explain it like this: I was a strict Muslim. At concerts at Aya İrini, people would bring me the iftar meal—so that I could break the fast. I was that kind of crazy. I couldn't sleep in the morning while the ezan was being recited. I would get up and sit and wait. Out of respect, I couldn't lie down. I woke up when I was thirty-seven. I saw the emptiness of religion, but I never would have woken up had it not been for classical music. Let's talk a lot about this topic!
Erol: Interesting ...
Mehmet: Whoever got married, I took a Kuran as a gift. I was a strict Muslim. There was a girl who worked at the opera box office—I took a Kuran to her wedding. Whoever's kid got married, I take a Kuran. I took the most beautiful editions.
Erol: So, did it just end with a snap? Did it come from your family?
Mehmet: Yes, it came from my family. It lasted until Mevlid Kandili one day. You know the first [courtyard] of the [Istanbul] Archaeology Museum? There was a concert there and it was Kandil that evening. Those were the years when I was wavering. Even though it was Kandil that day, I drank whiskey at the *kokteyl.* I woke up that day. It was a special concert. I listened to the "Pace Pace" aria [from *La Forza del Destino*]. I am thinking about it, I think I woke up that day. I beat religion.
Erol: I see. How ... I understand, but ...
Mehmet: It activates your brain. I didn't learn the emptiness of religion with music, I activated my brain. But without noticing it. I didn't listen to music to activate my brain.
Erol: I understand, but ... how did music activate your brain?
Mehmet: I have been listening to music without pause for fifty years (interview, December 4, 2021).[1]

[1] Mehmet bey: Ben eğer klasik müzik dinlemeseydim bugünkü Mehmet olmazdım. Kendimden biliyorum. Bir şey olamadım ama olduysam da bu klasik müzikle oldu. Biz gelişelim diye empoze edildi. Şimdi bir bayan var devlet tiyatrosunda görevli ve 40 yıldır tanırım. Senfoni konserlerine yukarı çıkardı. Bakıyorum herkesi tanıyorum ben. O kadın diğerlerinden farklıydı. Gelişmişliği ile giyindi üstüne.
Moderatör: Anladım. Peki dinlemeyen insanlarda ne fark ediyorsunuz? Konuşunca fark edebiliyor musunuz mesela?
Mehmet bey: Konuşunca fark ediyorsun. Beyin de geliştiriyor. Sen farkında varmadan oluyor. Daha iyi anlaman için şöyle anlatayım sana. Ben koyu bir Müslümandım. Aya irine'de bana insanlar konserde iftarlık getirirdi. Oruçta yiyeyim diye. Böyle bir deliydim. Sabah ezanı okunurken ben yatamazdım. Kalkar oturur, beklerdim. Saygıdan yatamazdım. 37 yaşında uyandım ben. Dinlerin boşluğunu gördüm ama klasik müzik olmasaydı ben uyanmazdım. Bu konuyu çok konuşalım!

Was it the "force of destiny" (la Forza del Destino) that led Mehmet Bey to "wake up" from his religious sleep? This question can be interpreted in at least two ways. Was it something about that aria, that evening, in the court of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, that finally struck him with enough force to break through his religious sensibilities, enabling him (his conviction strengthened, perhaps, by *haram* whiskey) to "beat religion"? Or, was it inevitable—destiny—that he should hear the call to rationality and give up the strict shackles of Islam? If the first question implies a kind of shock of secular revelation, the second alludes to the ostensible inevitability of the secularization process in the Turkish Republic and elsewhere in modernity.

Certainly, sitting across from Mehmet Bey in a cafe in Istanbul's posh Nişantaşı district after a concert at the nearby Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall, I was a bit shocked by his account of secular conversion through listening, as my stumbled responses and questions indicate. At the same time, though, it carried a sense of the inevitable. I had been thinking about questions of secularity and secular bodies for some time in connection with the topic of Western art music in Turkey and Istanbul. Often, these issues had coursed palpably just beneath the discursive surface,

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Moderatör: Enteresan.
Mehmet bey: Kim evleniyorsa düğününde kuran hediye ediyordum. Ben koyu bir Müslümandım. Operanın gişesinde bir kız vardı çalışan, onun düğününde de kuran götürdüm. Kimin çocuğu oluyor kuran götürüyorum. En güzel baskılarını götürürdüm.
Moderatör: Peki çat diye mi bitti? Ailenizden mi aldınız bu durumu?
Mehmet bey: Evet, aileden aldım. Ama ta ki bir gün mevlid kandilinde arkeoloji müzesinin ilk bölümü var ya, orada bir konser oldu ve o akşam kandildi. Benim bocaladığım yıllardı. O gece ben kandil günü olduğu halde kokteylde viski içtim. Ben o gün uyandım. Özel bir konserdi. Pace pace areasını orada dinledim. Araştırıyorum, o gün uyanmışım kendime. Yendim dini.
Moderatör: Anladım. Nasıl hala… anladım ama…
Mehmet bey: Beyni çalıştırıyor. Müzikle öğrenmedim dinin boşluğunu, kafamı çalıştırdım. Farkına varmadan ama. Kafam çalışsın diye müzik dinlemedim.
Moderatör: Anladım da… ne kadar bu işte detay çıkarabilirsem o kadar iyi. Müzik nasıl çalıştırdı beyni?
Mehmet bey: Ben 50 yıldır hiç kaçırmadan müzik dinlerim.

but never had I heard such a bald statement of the relationship between listening to Western art music and secularity. The answer that Mehmet Bey alludes to, though, indicates that his conversion was not the result of a shocking blow, but rather a slow process of shaping over the course of decades of listening to Western art music that had "[developed] the brain." Indeed, on that evening, the aria "Pace pace"s opening cry of "peace" described his conversion well: he had been as the proverbial boiling frog, not realizing until the point of no return that a significant transformation had been simmering for some time.

In Mehmet Bey's account, it was his brain that was transformed, having been activated and developed through listening. With his activated brain and its enhanced capacity for rational distance, the story would no doubt go, he was able to perceive the "emptiness of religion." By contrast, I might point to the "fullness of secularity" undergirding his newfound rationality: Mehmet Bey emphasizes the brain, but his whole body had been addressed that evening and on many others like it: he had climbed the hill to the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, taken in its atmospheric court, joined the sociability of the *kokteyl,* imbibed the whiskey and, not least, listened to the aria. If it was his brain that was shaped to see the light of secularism, this did not occur in a vacuum, but rather through the mediation of his listening body, its senses and perceptions.

Listening and Secular Bodies

This dissertation is a study of listening and secular bodies in Istanbul. I train the lenses of Ethnomusicology and Sound Studies on what might be considered their disciplinary opposite: Western art music. Listening in this way to Western art music in Istanbul throws both that music and its practices of listening, often framed as hegemonic, and secularity itself—the "water we

swim in" according to Charles Hirschkind, our present age according to Charles Taylor, the underlying grammar of modernity according to Talal Asad—into a new light. Though there is considerable research on the body, secularity, and religion as part of broad affective and sensory turns, this literature tends to deploy the autonomous secular body as an aspirational straw man of Western secular modernity against which to explore the dispositions and habitus of its religious others. Through ethnographic study, however, I show secular bodies to be actively forged and contested through practices of listening to Western art music, and I explore the modes of belonging and publicity to which these give rise in Istanbul. Indeed, as the sense organ often noted for its porosity—particularly in Islamicate contexts—the ear is a particularly fruitful portal through which to examine the shaping of boundaries that define the secular body.

Increasing appreciation for Western art music—"imposing" it, in Mehmet's phrasing—was an integral goal of the twentieth-century Turkish secular modern project. Regardless how much such a sentiment might clash with contemporary Western liberalism, however, my interlocutors repeatedly indicated that their lives are increasingly oppressed and constrained by the Islamic populist regime that has controlled the Turkish state for the past several decades—part of the rise of right-wing populist regimes globally that mobilize religion to advance their agendas (Aytaç and Öniş 2014; Moffitt 2016; Bilgrami 2018; Mazzarella 2019; Samet 2019). Over the course of my fieldwork, the sense was widespread that one of the primary problems confronting Turkey under the current regime has been a climate marked by an inability to listen in which (invariably) he who shouts the loudest wins. Listening to Western art music, in turn, was thought to be a means to develop individual and collective capacities for imagination and sensory refinement thought to be lacking in Turkey, and sensitive listening and good acoustics

often seemed to be among the most prized qualities when it came to engaging with Western art music.

Indeed, for my interlocutors, most of whom were not professional musicians or, in their view, musicians at all, listening was their primary mode of engagement. This they did with considerable zeal, however, attending multiple concerts and seminars per week, following diligently on social media when the pandemic forced a pause on live concerts, and returning to live concerts when restrictions were partially lifted. As this focus implies, it is primarily live, face-to-face encounters that I privilege in this dissertation, though I also attend to various forms of mediation. Certainly, for an ethnographic project interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, this may seem a striking path to follow. However, I found that many Istanbul listeners were deeply attuned to the atmospheres of their city. Perhaps for this reason, they were loath to go without them for a moment longer than necessary. More than this, though, I suggest that secular bodies emerge most clearly in contrapuntal engagement with other bodies in particular atmospheres in the city.

In this dissertation, I examine how listening to Western art music shapes secular bodies in Istanbul. I understand Western art music here primarily as common practice, "name brand," mostly European music, with music from Turkish composers occasionally thrown in. I do not elect to establish strict definitions of listening and secularity in advance. Rather, I seek over the course of the dissertation to establish their particularly Turkish and Istanbuller manifestations (recognizing that these are nevertheless complexly situated both historically and in the present in a variety of local, regional, and global contexts). To that end, at the most basic level, I ask: In Istanbul, how have practices of listening to Western art music changed over the past several decades of Islamic populist and neoliberal regimes? Amidst a perceived Islamic populist

transformation of Istanbul, what role does listening to Western art music play in secularists' struggle to maintain a sense of intimacy and belonging? In a city whose urban atmosphere is defined in many ways by Islamic sound, how does listening to WAM support emergent geographies and qualities of secularity and secular belonging? Which emotional and sensorial attunements are shaped by practices of listening to Western art music? What kinds of ethical commitments do these entail? Where scholars have studied practices of listening and self-fashioning through which religious bodies are forged in tension with modern secular regimes of power, here I study practices of listening that would prepare the body emotionally and sensorially for ethical and political participation as a secular sovereign subject in a would-be secular, democratic public sphere. In this sense, the practices of listening that forge the polyphonic body are aspirational, but for listeners to Western art music in Istanbul, they are nonetheless sensuously real.

The primary intervention of this dissertation lies at the intersection of literatures on secularity and listening. Over the past two decades, scholars working in anthropology and the humanistic social sciences more broadly have spearheaded a wide-ranging critique of the modernist secularization thesis—the so-called "critique of secularism." Particularly integral to this line of critique has been Talal Asad's deconstructive and genealogical analysis. In Asad's analysis, the secular is a grammar undergirding modernity according to which religion as a category can be constructed by the sovereign state and "the secular" in turn defined in dynamic opposition (Asad 2003). Likewise central has been Charles Taylor's historical analysis of the long process of Western Christian reform out of which the "immanent frame" of secular modernity and its new ways of being in the world with pluralism emerged (Taylor 2007). These and other critiques have led to a decisive move away from what Taylor labels "subtraction

theories" of secularization toward a conception of secularity as contingent rather than inevitable, particular rather than universal, and a product of regimes of power rather than a disencumbering of an always already sovereign subject.

In *Formations of the Secular* (2003), Talal Asad probes the limits of secularity by examining conceptions of pain and agency, human rights, and history that undergird Euro-American modernity. Exploring the contingency, limits, and contradictions of secularity, Asad reveals a particular conception of the human and its sensibilities presumed by and undergirding secularity. Indeed, a primary thread in this Asadian line of inquiry has to do with the relationships between the body and its sensory and affective configurations on the one hand, and conceptions of personhood, agency, and moral and political engagement on the other—in particular, embodied subjectivities that exceed or exist in tension with the presumptions of secular modernity. For example, in her highly influential book, *The Politics of Piety* (2005), Saba Mahmood puts pressure on the implicitly liberal assumption of a sovereign subject that undergirds much feminist critique. Rather than reify that subject, she examines the particular discourses and practices through which women participants in the Islamic piety movement in Cairo sediment pious subjectivity and its particular agential modalities. As I discuss more below, Charles Hirschkind pursues a similar project in connection with listening and the Islamic revival in Cairo.

Over much the same period that scholars working primarily in anthropology were rethinking secularism, scholars in other wings of the academy have engaged in a fruitful rethinking of the history of the senses, mounting an interrogation of the ostensible ocularity of modernity. A primary focus that this critique has taken has been an examination of the ear, aurality, hearing, and listening in modernity (Erlmann 2004; Helmreich 2007). A number of

recent studies have taken the form of inquiries into historical soundscapes and ways of hearing, mostly in Euro-America (Birdsall 2012; Bijsterveld 2013; Boutin 2015; Erlmann 2010; Dell'Antonio 2011) but increasingly with a global purview (Ochoa 2014; Fahmy 2020; Irvine 2020), as well as examinations of acoustics and performance spaces (Thompson 2002; Veit, Werner, and Bödeker 2008; Escher and Rempe 2019). Another important collection of studies has focused specifically on the relationship between listening and affect, with a particular focus on the materiality of sound and bodies (albeit in rather broad and often implicitly universalist terms) (DeNora 2000; Eidsheim 2015; Goodman 2010).

Studies focused specifically on practices of listening have followed several different paths. Two of the most relevant for me here are a line of primarily historical studies focused on listening to Western art music, and an ethnographic line of studies of listening in Islamicate contexts. In the former, James H. Johnson's study, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History,* was a watershed. In it, Johnson examines the rise of a "cult of silence" among mid-nineteenth century concert listeners resulting from more "absorbed" attention to music driven by various factors including changes in performance spaces and innovations in musical style (Johnson 1996). Recent studies have been concerned to deepen and complicate understanding of the bourgeois "art of listening" as it developed in nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Europe (Thorau and Ziemer 2019).

If historical studies of listening to Western art music in Euro-America have been significantly preoccupied by the body's silencing, studies of listening in the Muslim world have been primarily concerned with the body's (religious) ecstasy and the erosion of the individual subject. Building upon earlier studies of Islamic sacred audition—*sama* (During 1997, Racy 2003)—Deborah Kapchan has explored contemporary Sufi listening over a series of

publications, emphasizing the ways in which *sama* as a mode of active listening is understood to "polish the heart" and prepare the soul, resulting in "ecstatic performance" of religious ecstasy (Kapchan 2009; Kapchan 2016). Kapchan extends this analysis of sufi listening to an understanding of what she terms the "sound body." Shaped by listening that carries non-discursive, affective "sound knowledge," the "sound body," composed of vibration, is always porous and apt to shed the Enlightenment dualisms of the sovereign "legal body" (Kapchan 2015). At a more localized scale, Denise Gill examines listening as a mode of shaping "perfect" masculinity in *muhabbet* practices in Istanbul. Echoing Kapchan, Gill emphasizes listening as a modality for silencing the self and opening the body to emotional vulnerability, suggesting that listening in *muhabbet* challenges the notion of the autonomous subject (Gill 2018).

A sustained scholarly focus on the intersections of music, sound, and secularity is now in the offing, as indicated by a recent collection of essays framed by the topic "Sound and Secularity" (Adams and Sheehy 2020). Heretofore, though, important work has been done not on sounding secularity and its bodily attunements as such, but rather at the intersection of religion and music in (post)secular modernity. Jeffers Engelhardt, for example, examines "right" singing in Estonian Orthodox churches through the lens of "secular enchantment" negotiated at the level of vocal style situated between the religious absolute and modern, secular awareness of difference (Engelhardt 2014). In a particularly important precursor to this study, Denise Gill considers practices of musicking through which a collective and productive melancholic affect is produced among Turkish classical musicians in deep resonance with Islamic tradition and in excess of the categories and subject positions afforded by the secularist Turkish state (Gill 2017).

With his examination of the ear and hearing as a key sensory modality through which struggles over enchantment and disenchantment were waged in the American Enlightenment,

Leigh Eric Schmidt is an early pioneer on a nascent scholarly trajectory from listening and the ear to secularity (Schmidt 2000). Here, though, Charles Hirschkind's book, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*, is of primary importance. Taking up the aforementioned line of inquiry into the history of the senses and an Asadian concern for the body, Hirschkind examines the sensorial and affective tuning of pious Islamic bodies through practices of listening to Islamic cassette sermons. These practices, he suggests, are infrastructural to ethical and political engagement in an emergent Islamic counterpublic in Cairo. A primary intervention is to challenge a modern hierarchy of the senses and to question a Habermassian understanding of rational political deliberation by showing that embodied dispositions are infrastructural to political and ethical deliberation. Thus, in Hirschkind's view, the popular listening practices that shape these dispositions should not be regarded as dangerous, irrational threats to the possibility of rational, secular public deliberation, but rather on their own terms as one set of practices that shape and undergird political deliberation (Hirschkind 2006).

It was Hirschkind who issued the provocative question in a 2011 essay of the same name, "Is There a Secular Body?" (Hirschkind 2011). His tentative answer is that such a body would remain forever unstable and difficult to grasp in comparison to religious bodies. The reason for this, in his view, is inherent to the concept itself: because the secular is continuously defined and conditioned by a dynamic relationship to the category of religion, he suggests, "the analysis of the secular I am developing here directs us less toward a determinant set of embodied dispositions than to a distinct mode of power, one that mobilizes the productive tension between religious and secular to generate new practices through a process of internal self-differentiation" (Hirschkind 2011, 643). Though no doubt accurate in many cases, this orientation is ultimately premature in its foreclosing of a more substantive and positive account of secular embodiment.

In this dissertation, I examine practices of listening to Western art music through which secular bodies and secular sovereign subjects that they undergird are formed. Hirschkind's characterization of the secular body as inherently unstable and thus lacking a determinant set of embodied dispositions, I suggest, primarily reflects the limited scope of scholarly engagement, and it is here that I make my primary intervention. I identify a tradition of secular practices of listening that produces a specific set of embodied emotional and sensorial configurations. These are not analyzable simply in terms of self-differentiation or as being somehow *actually* religious. Rather, I illuminate a secular discursive tradition that articulates practices of listening that shape a distinctively secular bodily configuration characterized by dynamics of emotional and sensorial separation, codification, and distance infrastructural to sovereign subjectivity. I suggest that this secular discursive tradition is authorized by a Turkish discourse of Occidentalism (Ahıska 2010), thus participating in calls to provincialize secularism (Chakrabarty 2000; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2008; Medovoi and Bentley 2021).

I employ here both the terms "affect" and "emotion," intending "affect" to refer to more diffuse and intersubjective sensations and "emotion" to refer to named, consciously perceived ones (Lockhead, Mendieta, and Smith 2021). I argue in chapter 1 that Western art music is emically understood to facilitate the recognition and codification of emotions through listening—in other words, the distinguishing of emotion from affect. Specifically, I understand this listening secular body in terms of a conception of the rational subject that is supported by practices of listening through which distance from "excesses" of emotion and "irrationality" is forged and control asserted over its sensory apparatus. This I refer to as the secular sovereign subject--the rational, sensorially tuned autonomous subject aspirationally posited by secular modernity (Schmitt 2005; Mahmood 2005; Foucault 2007; Bonilla 2017; Clarke 2017).

This conception bears a resemblance to Charles Taylor's conception of the "buffered self" (Taylor 2007). Crucially, though, I do not couch this subject primarily in universal Western historical terms. Rather, I take seriously the claims and practices of self-identified secularists in an Islamicate Middle Eastern country. In the case of secularist listeners to Western art music in Istanbul, secular sovereign subjectivity is sought as an alternative to the ostensible irrationality of Islamism, unthinking populist allegiances, or the overrunning of the city by Anatolian migrants unfamiliar with and uninterested in Istanbul mores.

In sum, much like Western art music, I take secularity as a concept that might imply a particular geographical and historical background but can and should be taken up for global ethnographic study in the spirit of an anthropological and ethnomusicological project of cross-cultural concept comparison. Listening in this context, too, is characterized not by an implicitly universal vibrational effacing of subjective boundaries, but rather a dynamic tension between interiority and exteriority, publicity and privacy. In short, I take both secularity and listening to Western art music as concepts and practices shared broadly in global modernity that nevertheless maintain historical and local particularity in twenty-first century Turkey and Istanbul.

Secularity and the State

Much of the critique of secularism literature has been heavily oriented toward the state, as James Chappel has recently pointed out (Chappel 2020). Indeed, the early Republican Turkish state enacted a program of cultural "revolutions" (inkilaplar) in the wake of its 1923 founding to reshape bodies emotionally and sensorially as secular, sovereign subjects. With the goal of rapidly "reaching the level of universal civilization," (muasır medeniyetin seviyesine ulaşmak), in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's famous phrasing, the early Republican state enacted a series of

reforms and "revolutions." Sartorial and linguistic reforms targeted bodies both symbolically and materially (Yılmaz 2013). The built environment was transformed—particularly the new capital, Ankara—through new urban planning and architectural initiatives (Bozdoğan 2001; Kezer 2015). Urban musical practices and soundscapes were radically transformed by the abolition of important centers of urban art music and the mandate that the Islamic call to prayer be given in Turkish, rather than Arabic (Azak 2010). New technologies, such as radio, and institutions, such as the "People's Houses" offering education and training programs were deployed as pedagogical modalities for imagining, addressing, and shaping the new Turkish subject (Ahıska 2010; Bartsch 2011; Lamprou 2015). Not incidentally, both radio and the People's Houses were frequently cited by my interlocutors as sites at which they or their elders had first encountered Western art music.

The project of fostering a polyphonic Turkish music was part and parcel of these reforms. The Durkheimian sociologist Ziya Gökalp was particularly influential here, proposing a national musical formula based on a Tönnies-esque distinction between culture and civilization. Enthusiastically taken up by Mustafa Kemal (Emil, Neue Freie Press, 1930), Gökalp's proposal called for the rejection of Ottoman art music as Ottoman civilizational mongrel. In its place, he suggested in his book *The Principles of Turkism,* that:

> Our national music will be born from the mixing of the folk musics of our land with Western music. Our folk music has given us many melodies. If we collect these and harmonize them according to the style of Western music, we will have both a national and a European music (Gökalp, 1972;146-147).[2]

[2] Milli musikîmiz, memleketimizdeki Halk musikîsiyle Batı musikîsinin kaynaşmasından doğacaktır. Halk musikîmiz bize birçok melodiler vermiştir. Bunları toplar ve Batı musikîsi usulunegöre 'armonize' edersek, hem milli, hem de Avrupalı bir musikîye malik oluruz.

Though subject of an ongoing polemic (Arel 1969; O'Connell 2013), this project of polyphonicization was indeed undertaken with state sponsorship: folk songs were collected and harmonized (Gazimihal 2006; Değirmenci 2006). The modernizing state brought European music professionals such as Paul Hindemith to set up Western art music institutions (Rexroth 1986; Zimmerman-Kalyoncu 1985; Zimmerman-Kalyoncu 1986), while sending young composers and instrumentalists to Europe for study (Aydın 2002). Here, too, the radio was deployed aggressively—for example, a ban on all Turkish music for several years during the 1930s (Bartsch 2011). As Mehmet Bey noted, "[Western art music] was imposed so that we would develop …" (interview, December 4, 2021).

In light of these measures put in place by the state, Turkey was a primary mid-century laboratory for testing the secularization and modernization theses (Lerner 1958; Lewis 1961; Berkes 1964). With the rise of political Islamism in recent decades, Turkey has once more been a key site for reconsidering secularism and the state. In her 2002 book, *Faces of the State,* Yael Navaro studies the production and maintenance of the political in public life, examining quasi-mystical veneration of Atatürk and arguing that secularism and Islamism are both implicated in perpetuating a statist culture (Navaro 2002). Esra Özyürek examines the late-twentieth century privatization of the Turkish state and Kemalist ideology in her 2006 book, *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* (Özyürek 2006). With the rise of public, political Islamism, she argues, private Kemalist citizens voluntarily took up the symbols of the secular state through acts of consumption, thus transferring the "symbolic center of politics" from public institutions to civil society, consumer activism, and faith-based organizations. Charting a longer historical sweep rooted in Cultural Studies in his 2010 *The Republic of Love,* Martin Stokes takes up popular music and culture as a site of engagement in

public life alternate to state-formulated, top-down conceptions of Turkishness (Stokes 2010). Jenny White builds upon these studies in her 2012 book, *Muslim Nationalism and the New Turks,* by examining the rise of what she terms "Muslim nationalism" in Turkey's "Third Republic," and the challenge this poses to the secularist conception of Turkish identity long determined by the state (White 2012). White suggests that debates over Turkishness increasingly center around sacralized symbols of Kemalism and commodified symbols of Islam.

Recent studies have begun to de-center the state, however. In *Healing Secular Life,* Christopher Dole takes a Rancierian approach to debates on popular faith healers marginalized by both secularists and Islamists to examine processes through which boundaries between communities and "regimes of the sensible" are produced and maintained (Dole 2012). In his 2017 study, Jeremy Walton coins the term "civil society effect" to account for Islamic civil society organizations' fetishization of civil society as a realm of pre-political authenticity against the ostensibly corrosive politics of the secular modernist Turkish state and its will to sovereign power over Islam (Walton 2017). Finally, in a 2009 article, Kabir Tambar flips the script on top-down state secularism by examining secularist mass protests that erupted during the 2000s in Turkish cities. Focusing on what he terms the "semiotics of the crowd," Tambar asks whether there can be a secular populism in a context in which secularism has traditionally defined itself against a pious, rural popular class (Tambar 2009).

The state has remained a primary concern in recent literature on secular bodies, however. Largely following Hirschkind's conclusions regarding the inherent instability of the secular body, Schirin Amir-Moazami, for example, examines the ways in which a secular body becomes legible through practices of differentiation supported by state governmentalities that render the circumcised Islamic male body as other in Germany (Amir-Moazami 2016). In a 2022 article,

Jennifer Selby examines how the biopolitics of secular expectations of romance and free sexual choice shape Muslim male gendered bodies in France and Quebec. By focusing on laws and state-aligned discourses of power that articulate religious others to an implicitly normal secularity, these studies, as well as Asadian studies of Islamic practices of self-formation (Mahmood 2005; Hirschkind 2006), take the state as promulgator of secularism, and thus producer of religious others, for granted. This orientation toward critique of the state as modern power formation invested in distinguishing religion and secularity is not, on its face, misguided, but it increasingly obscures the visibility and audibility of secular bodies.

A similar dynamic can be observed in those studies that take Europe as their focus. In the case of studies of Europe and its Islamic others, no doubt the characterization of the secularist state is accurate. However, the accounts of the secular body that the above articles give as being defined by its Others, rather than by its own particular practices and dispositions, fall short of their own stated project of understanding secular embodiment. Indeed, these studies recapitulate the situation that led Hirschkind to ask his 2011 question in the first place: why so many studies of religious embodiment, why so few of its secular counterpart? A 2019 edited volume, *Secular Bodies, Affects, and Emotions: European Configurations* seeks to remedy this situation, devoting a collection of essays to exploring the processes through which "practices, habits, and life-forms [are marked] as neutral, universal, and real" and thus European secular bodies constituted (Scheer, Fadil, and Schepelern Johansen 2019). Insofar as it does focus on the shaping of secular bodies through examination of practices such as secular wedding ceremonies and the history of the moment of silence, this volume does not share the orientation of defining the secular body by its religious others. Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether a field of inquiry that continually foregrounds secularity in European bodies and European states, while identifying religious

embodiments in the Middle East and Middle Eastern diasporas in Europe, doesn't run the risk of reinscribing the very modern binaries it seeks to critique.

A key factor here is the changing relationship between the state and religion in Turkey resulting from the rise of Islamic populism. It is helpful here to draw a distinction between what we might refer to as a Taylorian conception of the secular and an Asadian one. By this I mean that, to the extent that we live in a "secular age," as Taylor puts it, it might make sense to say that contemporary Turkey is a secular country. However, according to an Asadian critique of the state and its wielding of secularism as a discourse of power, to suggest that there is no difference between the twentieth-century secularist Turkish state and the Islamist Turkish state of 2022 would be misleading. Though the ostensibly secularist Turkish state may have wielded Islam for political purposes (Kemerli 2019), and the contemporary, Islamist Turkish state may not succeed in achieving or even desire a full re-enchantment of Turkish society, it clearly establishes a different relationship with Islam and the category of religion than radically secularist Turkish states of past decades that largely sequestered Islam from a would-be secular public sphere. Certainly, in historical terms, the state looms large in my account insofar as the secular discursive tradition that I identify is rooted in the 20th-century Turkish state's secular modernist project. However, the rise of Islamic populism in Turkey over the past several decades renders a contemporary focus on the Turkish state as promulgator of secularism dubious. The situation is rather reversed, insofar as it is the contemporary Turkish state that sees an enlarged public role for Muslim affects and sensibilities (Koymen 2017) and Turkish secularists who feel their lifestyles to be increasingly threatened and hemmed in by this circumstance. This situation extends to the case of Western art music, the diminishing state support for which was much noted by Istanbul listeners. More than this, though, I suggest that, as the Turkish state has

retreated from this project over the past several decades, listening to Western art music provides an alternate means of cultivating and experiencing secularity. Where many of the above studies focus on the circulation of symbols of the secular state, I focus here on the tuning of secular bodies.

Listening in the Neo-liberal City

Concurrent with the weakening of Turkish state secularism, the past few decades have seen a period of economic and cultural liberalization in Turkey that render my focus on Istanbul significant. It is precisely the decoupling of secularism from the Turkish state that has rendered the secular discursive tradition supporting particular practices of listening to Western art music clearer by emplacing them in the city of Istanbul—as one interlocutor put it: "yes, when Atatürk founded Ankara, his elite friends were there, but the real site of culture is Istanbul."[3]

In the wake of global dynamics of (neo)liberalization that began to unfold in the 1980s in Turkey, many scholars have examined the emergence of new religious and other identitarian movements with a complex and often fractured relationship to the state—not least, the Islamic Revival, manifest as the "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" in Turkey (White 2002). During the same period, I suggest, there was a proliferation and dispersal of practices of performing and listening to Western Art Music in Istanbul. Upon arriving in the field, I was surprised by the diversity and sheer number of venues, groups, concerts, recitals, and seminars, and the efforts to which listeners went to attend them—often nearly every evening. Though the COVID-19 pandemic of course put a hold on live concerts (resulting in an explosion of online concerts), I found upon

[3] Ankara Atatürk'ün kurduğu zaman, Atatürk'ün elit arkadaşları oradaymış evet ama esas İstanbul'dur kültür yeri.

returning to the field in Summer 2021 that live concerts once again sold out consistently. Where I had naively expected dour, state-dominated performance organizations and venues, I found a plethora of smaller, independent groups and initiatives as well as novel venues.

Indeed, I came to learn that a transformation had indeed taken place from a Western art music field dominated by the state—the Istanbul State Symphony and State Opera performing in the large, modernist showpiece Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM) on Taksim Square—to one simultaneously more integrated into global currents and the local contexts of the city. As one interlocutor explained, prior to its 2008 closing and subsequent demolition, the AKM had been a central venue that attracted people from all over, serving as a kind of lightning rod: people knew the venue and knew what was playing. With its closure, though, she explained, the effect had been a kind of dispersal (dağılış)—the scene is now more spread out, and more defined by the people who attend and the variety of venues Istanbul offers. I argue that an "alternative infrastructure" of concert venues—many of them churches—has emerged out of the complex field of material traces of Istanbul's multi-ethnic and multi-confessional past and have rendered the Occidentalist discursive framing of this secular discursive tradition clearer.

Questions of memory, difference, and the urban landscape in the (neoliberal) city animate a growing literature focused on Istanbul. Geographer Amy Mills' study, *Streets of Memory: Landscape, Tolerance, and National Identity in Istanbul*, explores the Istanbul neighborhood of Kuzguncuk as cultural landscape and resource for performance and negotiation of national identity through remembering (and forgetting) the cosmopolitan past (Mills 2010). As part of a broader inquiry into religious civil society organizations, Jeremy Walton argues that Sunni organizations draw upon the material traces of a deep well of historical narrative to construct a "neo-Ottoman chronotope" in Istanbul that marginalizes those with different ethnic and religious

backgrounds (Walton 2017). Along these lines, several publications, such as Claudia Liebelt's account of secularist women's beauty practices and Gökarıksel and Secor's examination of Sunni Muslim women's negotiation of urban settings, have addressed the sharp boundaries drawn between Istanbul neighborhoods along lines of secularity and religion (Gökarıksel and Secor 2014, Liebelt 2019)

Two recent volumes are particularly relevant for their engagement with difference in/and the spaces of the city. In their 2019 edited volume, *Istanbul: Living with Difference in a Global City*, Fisher, Pearce, and Keyman identify intersecting and overlapping templates of "Ottoman-Islamic" and "Belle-Epoque" cosmopolitanism that draw upon the Sultanahmet and Beyoğlu districts, respectively, as models for engaging with and framing difference in early 21st-century Istanbul (Fisher, Pearce, and Keyman 2019). In their edited volume, *Landscapes of Music in Istanbul: A Cultural Politics of Place and Exclusion*, Papadapolous and Duru bring together urban space and music in Istanbul by examining articulations of "music-place-politics" through which musical practices and their urban cultural contexts form and transform identity, producing dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (Papadapolous and Duru 2019). The volume is situated in terms of "two globalizations"—the mid-nineteenth-century Westernizing Tanzimat reforms and opening to a Europe-led global economy and the neoliberal reforms in Turkey since the 1980 military coup—and examines genres of Alevi *Zakir,* Anatolian *Aşık,* Greek *Rembetiko,* and Turkish hip-hop in the contexts of Istanbul neighborhoods.

It is worth noting a distinct Istanbul history of Western art music that I came to know over the course of research which, moreover, resonates at many points with questions of cosmopolitanism, memory, and difference. Perhaps best known are this history's late-Ottoman chapters: for example, the Ottoman court and its orchestra led by "Donizetti Pasha" (Aracı

2006), the Naum Tiyatrosu Italian Opera Company on the then *Grand Rue du Pera*—today, Beyoğlu's İstiklal Avenue (Aracı 2010), or Franz Liszt's mid-nineteenth century Istanbul sojourn of several weeks—commemorated by a plaque just off of Istiklal, across the street from the French consulate and next to Istanbul's central Grand Masonic Lodge (Eğecioğlu 2008). Well into the twentieth century, several interlocutors explained to me, Western art music concerts were a setting in which Istanbul's Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and Levantine communities often composed a majority. The Moda neighborhood that constitutes a core site of my ethnography is likewise known for its cosmopolitan nineteenth century history of Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and English, Italian, and French Levantine communities.

The twentieth-century also saw the emergence of distinct threads of Istanbul music history. These were not infrequently marked by frustration as Ankara received the lion's share of state resources. One such thread is Istanbul's consistently thwarted efforts to maintain a large, acoustically-sophisticated concert hall and a trail of ashes left by concert halls alleged to have been deliberately "sabotaged": one Erol Bey, for example, indicated that the miniature La Scala Tepebaşı Dram Tiyatrosu was likely burned down. After describing the Şan Cinema where she had attended her first Western art music concert—held on Sundays alternately with Turkish classical music concerts during the 1960s—Fahriye Hanım indicated that it had been "sabotaged" as well. And, of course, the major space in Istanbul's recent music history—the large, modernist Atatürk Cultural Center on Taksim Square—was also alleged to have been the target of sabotage. After it, too, burned down within a year of its 1970 opening after decades of construction, there was a well-publicized series of "sabotage trials," at which it was alleged that a Marxist group had set fire to the AKM in order to hasten revolution (*Milliyet,* March 6, 1973). More recently, a plan finally to build a top-class concert hall on what was then Istanbul's

northern fringe was reported to me to have been sabotaged in the early 2000s by then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit over a personal dispute (Sarı 2022).

But a history of Western art music in Istanbul has its successes, too. There was Cemal Reşit Rey (1904-1985), for example—late-Ottoman cosmopolitan, composer, conductor, pianist, impresario, founder of the Istanbul City Orchestra that would become the Istanbul State Orchestra. He also founded the Istanbul Philharmonic Society that supported it, along with its *Orkestra* journal long under the control of Greek Istanbuler Panayot Abacı. The Istanbul Opera had enjoyed its heyday in the 1980s, I came to understand, when the economy was strong, singers and directors came from abroad, and conductor Cem Mansur was in the Atatürk Cultural Center pit (interview, February 1, 2020). Then, of course, there are the pianists—curiously, mostly from the Moda neighborhood: Tiraje Güneyman; İdil Biret, with her amazingly broad repertoire; and Ayşegül Sarıca and her huge family mansion on Moda Avenue (see Figure 1). According to one recent book, an important source of this early Republican pianistic flowering in Moda was the home music-making of its exiled German Jewish community (Bilen 2019). In short, Istanbul's (music) histories to be written are many (for example, Woodall 2011). Though this dissertation is, ultimately, *not* the history of Western art music in Istanbul that could be written, it does explore Istanbul as a polyphony of voices, past and present, and the ways that they become palpable in the present through practices of listening to Western art music.

To be clear, for many WAM listeners the decline in state support resulting from Turkey's neo-liberalization was a source of anger and pain and a sense that Istanbul has been "ruined" (bozuldu), leading to a crisis of memory. Pointing to out-of-control population growth driven by a massive (and ongoing) influx of rural migrants to the city, neoliberal profiteering sanctioned by, and outright sabotage perpetrated by the current regime, and a deliberate reorientation of the

central city toward (invariably, in their accounts, Arab) tourists, my interlocutors frequently exclaimed that they struggle to recognize their own city. They suggested that their urban memory has been (deliberately) erased, and that they now avoid going to districts and areas they formerly frequented.

Through my fieldwork, however, I observed that this transition also afforded new modes of engaging with the city through listening that opened new possibilities for belonging and accessing suppressed layers of memory in Istanbul. Specifically, I argue that my fieldwork in neo-liberal Istanbul coincided with the emergence of an alternative infrastructural network of listening spaces such as cinemas, private homes, and long-ignored churches that archive diverse voices and traces of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past that frame a contrast with its Islamist present. The atmospheric affordances of these spaces activated by Western art music opened pathways of memory and Occidental urban imaginaries, ultimately producing new sensorial configurations of secularity and new modes of secular belonging to the city. A significant cluster of these sites is located in the resolutely secularist Kadıköy district and Moda neighborhood—a major geographical center of my research. Others—for example, a renovated Byzantine palace opened by the municipal administration during the pandemic—necessitate spatially and temporally traversing the sprawling city.

Figure 1: Sarıca Mansion, Moda. Photo by author.

Indeed, atmosphere becomes a prime theoretical lens through which I approach listening in Istanbul. Building on a growing literature focused on sonic atmospheres (Böhme 2000; Riedel 2015; McGraw 2016; Abels 2017; Abels 2018b; Eisenlohr 2018; Riedel and Torvinen 2020), several scholars have recently taken up urban sonic atmospheres. For example, Patrick Eisenlohr examines "atmospheric citizenship" produced through Muharrem performances and rituals in Shia neighborhoods of Mumbai (Eisenlohr 2021). In the first book-length study of sonic urban atmospheres, *Tokyo Listening: Sound and Sense in a Contemporary City*, Lorraine Plourde examines how atmospheres are both sonically sensed and generated. Focusing on public sites, Plourde examines both practices of listening that produce particular attunements to the city and

corporate “techniques of affective management.” Proposing to listen both in and to the city, Plourde argues that “the individual’s relationship to the city is an embodied and sensory experience through which sound orients people’s movements, affects, labor practices, and consumption” (Plourde 2019, 132). I examine the ways in which Western art music produces atmospheres that activate pathways of cosmopolitan memory and Occidental imaginaries in Istanbul, These, in turn, produce a novel geography of secular belonging in the city centered in the Kadıköy district and its Moda neighborhood.

Polyphony and Post-Colonialism

The beginning of my field research in Fall 2019 coincided with the election of historically secularist Republican People’s Party candidate Ekrem Imamoğlu as Istanbul mayor. Imamoğlu gained victory only with considerable struggle: the Islamist Justice and Development Party was not prepared to lose Istanbul after having held it since the 1994 election of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as mayor, and, citing election fraud, managed to force a re-election upon Imamoğlu’s initial, March 2019 victory. Imamoğlu proceeded to win the May 2019 election repeat by a larger margin, though, making further attempts at disenfranchisement prohibitively challenging and thus ushering in a new era in Istanbul and, perhaps, Turkish politics. Just as I arrived in Istanbul in fall 2019, the major news for Istanbul’s classical music community was İmamoğlu’s appointment of conductor Cem Mansur as director of the municipal Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon and its consequent return to the secular path of “enlightenment,” as one critic put it. After decades of programming under ruling Islamic populist party-appointed directors that many listeners whom I spoke with had considered uneven and, at times, threateningly Islamist, Mansur took the reins with a clear vision for the role of Western art music at CRR—Istanbul’s only

large, purpose-built concert hall. He clarified to me in an interview his view that "polyphonic universal" music is part of a "package" of universal values, such as human rights, non-violence, and freedom of speech:

> I think that universalism is related to those values and that polyphonic music carries those values to people ... It is a package. That there is not sewage running in front of your door, that there is a symphony orchestra, that when you go to the hospital you are not going to be reprimanded but rather receive good service: that is a complete package (interview, January 2, 2020).

For Mansur, moreover, the coming together of multiple, distinct voices in polyphonic music indexes and performs a successful democratic society in which citizens listen to each other. He contended that "consciously listening to music teaches us that listening is an active thing ... There should be a society in which people listen to each other. The music of that polyphonically thinking society is polyphonic music ..." (interview, January 2, 2020).[4] There can be no question that Mansur's sense of mission is particularly clear and codified. I consistently encountered similar sentiments about Western art music, polyphony, and Turkey's faltering modern project during my fieldwork in Istanbul, though. Indeed, as in the field, in this dissertation, as well, polyphony is a core concept that emerges at multiple historical and conceptual levels.

One of these is a postcolonial literature with a complex relationship to Turkey. Edward Said famously proposed a method of "contrapuntal reading" that would open up hermeneutic ears to colonized voices:

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[4] Ben evrenselliğin o değerlerle ilgili olduğunu ve o değerleri çok sesli müziğin insanlara taşıdığını, kendimiz için, gelecek kuşaklar için, toplumumuz için özlediğimiz şeyler. O bir paket. Kapının önüne lağım akmaması ve senfoni orkestrası olması ve hastaneye gittiğin zaman birinden azar işitmeyeceğini ama iyi bir hizmet alacağını… bu bir bütün … Dinlemenin aktif bir şey olduğunu, sadece duymanın çok pasif ve kulağın aktif bir algı organı olduğunu bize bence bilinçli müzik dinlemek öğretiyor her şeyden önce. Birbirini dinleyen bir toplum olmayı. Çok sesli müzik, çok sesli düşünebilen toplumların müziği.

> As we look back at the cultural archive, we begin to reread it not univocally but contrapuntally, with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts. In the counterpoint of Western classical music, various themes play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work. In the same way, I believe, we can read and interpret English novels, for example, whose engagement (usually suppressed for the most part) with the West Indies or India, say, is shaped and perhaps even determined by the specific history of colonization, resistance, and finally native nationalism. At this point alternative or new narratives emerge, and they become institutionalized or discursively stable entities (Said 1993: 51).

Just as Edward Said drew upon the polyphonic texture of Western art music as a metaphor for reading with a heightened awareness of difference in literature, questions of colonial encounter, empire, the body, and agency have animated recent contributions to the ethnomusicology of Western art music. In a 2009 article, Yara el-Ghabdan draws on Saba Mahmood to analyze postcolonial Western art music composers' sense of belonging to the tradition of Western art music shaped through ritual and the ways that their agency is shaped by that tradition: "I argue that deeply anchored and structuralized traditions, like Western art music, tend to produce their own 'local subjects' or 'local identities.' Musicians who consider themselves and are recognized as part of that tradition feel a certain rootedness and enjoy a sense of belonging that mitigates the anxieties of their postcolonial identities." (el-Ghabdan 2009: 154). In her 2019 book, sociologist Anna Bull examines the relationship between Western Art Music and middle-class whiteness through ethnographic study of youth music groups in the UK (Bull 2019). Analyzing classical music rehearsal and performance as a bodily practice, Bull argues that whiteness and middle-class identity are encoded in the aesthetics of classical music—not least, an embodied configuration of "controlled excitement." Drawing parallels with Protestantism, she traces a historical line from these codes to the nineteenth century. Ultimately, she makes an applied call for de-centering classical music in music education.

Such calls no doubt have their place, but, in their Western monologism, they risk an imperialism of their own. As El-Ghabdan points out, there are postcolonial and non-Western subjects who belong deeply—if not without tensions—to the tradition of Western art music. I would count many Istanbul listeners among them, and it is a form of parochialism to not attend to their perspectives while making sweeping claims from the imperial center. It is precisely because I take up Western art music and secular bodies from the ethnographic perspective of Istanbul that Occidentalism becomes an important concept, because Occidentalism is key to the secular discursive tradition that I examine. In addition to illuminating Edward Said's noteworthy silence on the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, Meltem Ahıska offers a highly sophisticated account of Turkish Occidentalism. Understanding Occidentalism as a discourse of power simultaneously Western and ant-Western, Ahıska analyzes elite status in Turkey as a product of negotiation of a discursive space between the modern fantasy of the West and the backward but pure Turkish people (Ahıska 2010). References to the West and especially Western Europe were rife in contexts of listening to Western art music in Istanbul. More than this, an Occidental imaginary became palpable in atmospheres of listening to Western art music. Taking Said's conception of postcolonial polyphony, as well as more recent calls for decolonization, seriously, requires de-centering the perspectives of the West (Mignolo 2018). It cannot, in my view, however, involve ignoring non-Western relationships with and orientations to the West, which would simply constitute a non-historical and non-sociological, novel re-appearance of familiar Western imperialism.

A commitment to interrogating Western claims to universality must also, however, take up Said's metaphorical use of "counterpoint" and "polyphony" to denote an open field of difference. I do this from the perspective of Occidentalism, elucidating in chapter 1 a Turkish

secular discursive tradition that deploys polyphony both as tuner of emotional and sensorial bodily configurations through separation and codification mimetic of polyphonic musical texture, as well as microcosm of an ideal democratic society. Crucially, however, I demonstrate that this local conception of polyphony does not denote an open field of difference, but rather a solidarist and functionalist bodily and social ontology marked by hierarchy and subjugation to sovereign power. Picking up concerns for the (postcolonial) body shaped by Western art music and the polyphony of Western art music as a metaphor for postcolonial difference, I argue that secular listening bodies in Istanbul can be understood as polyphonic bodies both emically and etically: emically, in terms of a Turkish secular discursive tradition according to which polyphony serves as model for a harmonious whole defined by hierarchical, separated and codified internal definition; and etically, in the sense of secular bodies defined by a contrapuntal relationship between interiority and exteriority.

Polyphony is deployed within the secular discursive tradition that I illuminate as (solidarist and functionalist) exemplar of an ideal, democratic public sphere in which difference is channeled and controlled under sovereign power. Such a social ontology bears close relationship to the hegemony of the secular sovereign state in modernity against which scholars have articulated communities with counterpublic relations. Charles Hirschkind, for example, identifies an Islamic counterpublic in Cairo oriented orthogonally to a normative conception of the public sphere—crucial to his analysis is an aural challenge to the visual sensorial hierarchy through which modern publics were ostensibly formed. Jeremy Walton understands religious civil society organizations in Turkey to have a counterpublic relationship to the project of state sovereignty insofar as they participate in broader dynamics of liberal modernity that stress religious freedom, confessional pluralism, and an active, self-fashioning subject engaging

voluntarily in community, as opposed to taking up the passive subject positions of the state's pre-packaged Islam.

In the case of listeners to Western art music in Istanbul, the relationship between interior and exterior, public and private, public and counterpublic becomes more complex. Rather than communities that posit religious lifeworlds in tension with sovereign state secularity, this is a case in which a secular lifeworld stands in contrast to a public sphere increasingly contoured by religion under an Islamic populist regime. Where Western art music is understood emically to mold ideal democratic citizens through listening and to provide a model for an ideal, secular democratic public sphere, its community of listeners is increasingly alienated from the state and the public sphere shaped by the state. In this situation, moreover, there is no obvious hierarchy of senses: it is practices of listening that shape secular bodies, while the state deploys both auditory modes such as ubiquitous Islamic Call to Prayer and visual modes such as urban infrastructural mega-projects to reshape the urban public sphere.

These tensions also manifest at the level of media and the primarily live contexts of listening that I privilege. Michael Warner emphasizes the poetic, projective, and pragmatic nature of public discourse—the sense in which public address is necessarily directed toward unknown addressees even as it seeks, poetically, to mold and shape the character and texture of the public to be constituted (Warner 2002: 82). In Warner's view, this poetic character is frequently obscured, however, not least by an ideology of reduction to rational discourse. Once more, however, Western art music presents challenges. Universalism and rationality have (in)famously been attributed to Western art music, and many Istanbul listeners partake in this discourse. However, as I argue here, in Istanbul Western art music both shapes particular bodily configurations and addresses a public whose members often perceive themselves to be

marginalized, thus prompting a tension between public and private. Finally, the secular body itself, I argue, is defined by a contrapuntal tension between interiority and exteriority shaped by listening. Insofar as it lays claim to cultivating the legitimate public sphere, yet is increasingly alienated from the actual one, and insofar as it is contoured by contrapuntal tensions between public and private, interior and exterior, I suggest that it is neither a public nor a counterpublic, but rather a secular *contra*-public.

V: Moving Forward

At the most basic level, my argument is defined by twin, mutually co-constituting claims: first, I argue that there is no essential link between listening as a modality of sensory perception, religion, and particular bodily configurations—listening bodies might be inclined toward secular distance just as much as religious ecstasy. Related to this, I demonstrate that secular bodies are not simply defined in opposition to religion, but rather can be understood in terms of particular traditions, practices, emotional and sensory configurations, and modes of belonging. Specifically, I argue that secular listening bodies in Istanbul are defined by a dynamic tension between interiority and exteriority through which the boundaries of the (sovereign) subject are established and maintained. Through practices of listening to Western art music, emotional and sensorial attunements of the body are separated and codified, producing a felt sense of subject-object separation productive of secular sovereign subjectivity. Listeners' bodies are reshaped polyphonically in the culturally specific sense that I describe here: a set of distinct elements internally related to each other in particular ways whose exterior boundaries are clearly defined. This results in a sense of emotional and sensorial distance between the secular sovereign subject and the world that I understand to be constitutive of Turkish and Istanbuller secularity.

The public of Western art music listeners is neither clearly public nor counterpublic, but rather a secular *contra*-public. In an Istanbul transformed under Islamic populism, this public is mediated by atmospheres of listening that make palpable traces of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past to produce an Occidental imaginary, defining a novel geography of secular belonging in the city centered in the Kadıköy district and Moda neighborhood. Indeed, I suggest that this secular contra-public is secular other to a state-promulgated religious hegemony in contemporary, Islamic populist Turkey. In so doing, I do not propose to reinstate the secularization thesis or to reject the critique of secularism or the notion of post-secularism. Rather, I contend that it is precisely the erosion of the modernist convictions of secularism, its decoupling from the state, and the increasingly prominent role of religion in the Turkish public sphere characterizing the past several decades that render the discourses and practices of listening for secular bodies in Istanbul increasingly legible.

I develop these ideas and interventions over the course of five chapters. In the first chapter that frames the dissertation, I outline what I characterize as a "secular discursive tradition." Grounded by a Turkish discourse of Occidentalism, this discursive tradition authorizes discourses and practices of listening to polyphonic Western art music that separate and codify the emotions and senses, producing a felt sense of distance from ostensibly irrational and excessive religious and populist others. Over the next two chapters, I examine shifting modes of secular emplacement in the city supported by listening to Western art music over the last three decades. In chapter two, I explore the "secular acoustic atmospheres" of churches and other distinctive, "distant" spaces in the city repurposed as concert spaces, in which atmosphere is emergent at the resonant meeting of emotionally and sensorially-tuned bodies, Western art music, and the layered histories and materiality(s) of the city. I argue that a secular contra-public

is emergent from these secular acoustic atmospheres. The following chapter deepens this discussion by positing a "secular acoustic geography" of listening and belonging that hearkens to Istanbul's Levantine past and an Occidental urban imaginary, subverting Istanbul's present neo-Ottoman and neo-liberal refashioning. The following two chapters home in on particular practices and spaces through which contra-puntal tensions between interior and exterior, public and private, become legible. In chapter four, I turn to a specific practice of listening—concert applause and its misfires—as a particularly clear site at which the boundaries of the secular body and contra-public are asserted and contested. Finally, chapter five examines dynamics of ritualization and the hagiography of an ideal, listening secular saint at a series of private house chamber music concerts in Istanbul.

VII: Methodology

This research is based on nearly two years spent in the field from 2017-2021 in Istanbul, with the bulk of research having been conducted between 2019 and 2021. During this period, I conducted participant observation research by attending well over one hundred Western art music concerts, with primary sites at the municipal Cemal Reşit Rey concert hall and Süreyya Opera, at Anglican and Catholic churches in the city, and at a series of private house concerts, as well as by attending public and private Western art music seminars. I also participated as a bass in the Istanbul European Choir and took piano lessons at a private piano school. After the initial pandemic shutdown, during which I switched to online ethnography, I was able to resume limited in-person fieldwork from mid-June 2020. During this period, I completed well over forty formal, semi-structured interviews with musicians, arts managers and, above all, listeners. I also

continue to participate in the field as a critical listener and writer through two regular columns in Turkish-language Western art music publications.

For gathering interlocutors, I followed what can be understood as the "snowballing" method. I first made initial contacts in the field based largely on overlap among sites—that is to say, I initially tended to approach people whom I encountered at multiple different sites. These initial subjects in turn led me toward further research subjects. Targeted questions specific to the activities of individuals aside, during interviews I endeavored to ask general questions regarding interlocutors' background with Western art music, specific, noteworthy experiences they had had, and their listening practices. Whenever possible, I preferred to conduct interviews in interlocutors' homes. Nevertheless, particularly during the initial period of the pandemic, I conducted several interviews over zoom or WhatsApp (though I didn't necessarily find these to be less valuable).

While conducting participant observation research, I took notes on things that people said, conversations that I had, people's physical movements through spaces and while listening, applause practices, their dress, where they directed their attention before, during, and after performance, photographs they took, and so on. Where relevant, I made detailed observations about interlocutors' homes and foodways, as well as how they traveled through the city. If not always the very same evening, I endeavored to transcribe and expand these notes as soon as possible after they were gathered. From January 2020, I also began taking audio recording of concerts and seminars whenever possible, in addition to taking photographs. I tended to find the taking of extended video to be ultimately unhelpful, though I did generally take short videos to gain a record of the context.

In addition to interviews and participant-observation, in this dissertation I also draw on data gathered from several other media—in particular: literature, digital media, and radio. Whereas several of my interlocutors have hosted Western art music radio programs for some time, live concerts and programs related to Western art music over social media became significantly more prominent with the pandemic. I also endeavored throughout my research to follow certain newspapers—most prominently among them, *Cumhuriyet,* which employs a designated Western art music critic (my interlocutor, Evin İlyasoğlu) as well as other frequent writings with relevance for Western art music in Istanbul. Nevertheless, following the value that many of my interlocutors placed on live performance and proximity of performers—"real music," as Cem Mansur termed it in a series of live post-pandemic orchestra concerts—I too privilege face to face observation in this dissertation.

In sum, my ethnographic research is key to thinking of secularity not just as a concept constituting modernity that is "best pursued through its shadows" (Asad 2003, 16) or "the water we swim in" (Hirschkind 2011, 634), but rather a lived set of practices legible at the granular level of the body and its urban emplacement that come particularly to the fore with the rise of Islamic populism in Turkey. Moreover, alongside an account of the secular body and the practices of listening through which it is defined, I offer a novel account of secularity understood in terms of dynamics of separation, codification, and distance not just at the level of society as ordered by the modern state, but down to the level of the emotional and sensorial attunements of the body. It is not an ostensibly autonomous, ocular subject against which I make my intervention, but rather the implicit scholarly denial of the social reality of the project of shaping autonomous, secular subjectivity. In other words, I examine practices of listening to Western Art Music in Istanbul as a site at which secular bodies, their affective and sensorial attunements and

associated patterns of sociability and belonging, are produced and become legible. Finally, where nascent interest in secular bodies has been focused primarily on Europe, I take seriously the Occidentalist projects of non-Western subjects for whom practices of listening shape an emotional and sensory configuration distinct from Islamist and populist formations by situating. my inquiry ethnographically in a site with a complex and layered relationship to Western modernity: Istanbul.

Chapter 1: Listening for Secular Bodies

The Economy is Managed like a Symphony

As I was working on the first draft of this chapter in Istanbul during October and November 2021, it had become impossible to turn on the news or pick up a newspaper without being reminded of Turkey's increasingly dire economic straits. The strength of the lira already in precipitous decline since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising distrust in the country's economic stability had precipitated another dramatic rise in inflation. As the exchange rate inched ever closer to (and ultimately surpassed) the symbolically significant threshold of ten lira to the US dollar, alarms sounded from all sides in the remaining opposition media: food prices are exorbitant, we can't afford meat anymore; university students can't afford to stay in dorms, they have to return home and give up their studies; home and auto prices have skyrocketed, even second-hand cars cost well upwards of 100,000 lira. There is no sense in denying the fact that I was insulated from the crisis by one of its most widely-cited indicators—the US Dollar-Turkish Lira exchange rate—and by my residence in the posh Moda neighborhood. Nevertheless, I also found the rising inflation difficult to ignore: it seemed increasingly impossible to go to the market or eat a decent meal outside without dropping at least 100 lira, while classical concert tickets likewise hovered reliably over 100 lira (around 10 dollars), in some cases inching ever closer to 500 lira for a ticket. As my friend Çağdaş Bey said of prices for the Istanbul State Symphony orchestra's concerts at the newly opened Atatürk Cultural Center: "how can it be, 150 lira for tickets to the state orchestra?" (devlet orchestra için 150 TL ne demek?).

Though noteworthy in terms of questions of access, ticket prices weren't the only connection to be drawn between Western art music and the increasingly precarious economic

situation. While perusing the Monday, October 25, 2021, edition of the center-left, secularist opposition *Cumhuriyet* (*Republic*) newspaper, my eye fell upon a large-type, bold-print caption underneath a photo of a smiling, avuncular man: "The economy is managed like a symphony; you can't say I don't want the timpani and the flute" (Ekonomi, senfoni gibi yönetilir; davulu, flütü istemiyorum diyemezsin). As I looked again to determine whether dissertation writing had indeed compromised my faculties, my eye caught another, slightly smaller caption next to the avuncular photo: "to even debate laicism is meaningless" (Laikliğin tartışılması bile anlamsız) (Özbey, October 25, 2021).

Allah allah, I exclaimed, and quickly dove into the full-page interview with Professor Işın Çelebi, an economist and former member of parliament under the center-right Motherland Party regime of Turgut Özal that presided over Turkey's 1980s neo-liberal opening. In the *Cumhuriyet* interview, Çelebi expresses high praise for his political mentor while drawing a contrast with Turkey's present situation. Regarding the cooling in foreign investment, Çelebi identifies as primary causes a decline in the transparent rule of law and a move away from the technocratic professional management of the economy. Drawing a parallel with the late-90s efforts by the Tansu Çiller government to keep interest rates low to stimulate the economy, he argues that an economy's own dynamics must be respected—in his view, like an orchestra:

> The economy is not one or two [things], it has hundreds of variables. They should have their own internal relationships and integrity and they should move as a complete body. For example, there are forty or fifty musicians in a symphony orchestra. Some play violin, some play flute, but, in the accompaniment of a conductor, they produce a supremely beautiful product. Even though all of the musicians play different musical instruments, a single music emerges, they manage to produce a symphony—the economy is managed in this way. 'I want the timpani to enter, I don't want there to be flute, we are going to silence the violins …'—that is not how this works. If we disturb the balances and behave arbitrarily, we will return to the year 2001 [when Turkey suffered a severe financial crisis]. If it were up to me, I would want to invite the conductor Gürer Aykal to

> the Council of Ministers and have him give a concert to show how an orchestra must be run.[5]

For Çelebi, listening to a concert and observing the cooperation among the various instruments of the orchestra and its conductor would serve as a didactic exercise for the cabinet ministers. Through listening, in his view, they should learn about the independent yet harmonious co-operation of diverse elements in the production of a coherent whole. This in turn would awaken them to the necessity of respecting both the relative autonomy of the economy and its multifarious internal dynamics, and thus abandon the un-natural (and according to many, Islamist) policy of lowering interest rates to stimulate growth.

Indeed, over the course of my fieldwork, the sense was widespread amongst my interlocutors that people in Turkey don't know how to listen. On numerous occasions, I heard the accusation leveled that listeners at Western art music concerts don't really understand the music and are more interested in seeing and being seen. But more than this, along the lines that Çelebi suggests, I frequently encountered the sentiment that one of the primary problems confronting Turkey is a broader inability to listen, resulting in emotionally and sensorially stunted citizens and an autocratic and sclerotic political sphere, the economic results of which, in this case, are held to be evident.

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[5] Ekonomi bir-iki değil, 100'den fazla değişken var. Onların kendi iç ilişkileri ve bütünlüğü olmalı ve bir bütün halinde hareket etmeliler. Yani bir senfoni orkestrasında 40-50 müzisyen var, kimisi keman, kimisi flüt çalıyor ama bir orkestra şefinin eşliğinde son derece güzel bir ürün çıkıyor ortaya. Tüm müzisyenler farklı müzik aletleri çalmasına rağmen nasıl ki bir müziğin ortaya çıkmasını, bir senfoninin ortaya çıkmasını sağlıyorlarsa, ekonomi de böyle yönetilir. 'Ben davulun devreye girmesini istiyorum, flütün olmasını istemiyorum, kemanı susturacağız ….' Böyle olmaz bu iş. Dengeleri bozarsak ve keyfe keder davranırsak 2001 yılına döneriz. Ben olsam orkestra şefi Gürer Aykal'ı Bakanlar Kurulu'na davet eder, bir konser verdirir ve bir orkestranın nasıl işlemesi gerektiğini göstermesini isterim.

The results extend beyond the economy, though. In the interview, Çelebi points to increases in Islamophobia and anti-Turkish prejudice and argues that "we are debating from the wrong position: laicism [laiklik] is a form of life for Turkey. Rather than re-opening the definition of laicism once more to debate, I think that the entire society must agree, without discussion, that laicism is a lifestyle" (Özbey 2021).[6] Rather than invoke secularism as a political project of modernity or as the separation of religion and state, Çelebi defines laicity as a "lifestyle" or "form of life" (yaşam biçimi). By pointing to a way of being in the world rather than an inevitable historical process or a political project, Çelebi thus stumbles (unwittingly?) into academic debates about the secular and secularism. His assertion that *laiklik* is a "lifestyle" seems to point to secularity's positive conditions rooted in everyday lifeworlds and practices. Çelebi's prescription for how to manage the economy seems clear enough—listen to the orchestra and it will teach you how to lead: you cannot simply interfere with interest rates at the central bank and hope for the best. What, though, is the link between secularity conceived as a "lifestyle," the orchestra, and the proper management of the economy?

In this chapter, I attempt to understand this link by examining the ways in which Turkish secularity is shaped through practices of listening to polyphonic Western art music. How do people learn how to be secular subjects through practices of listening? How does listening shape their bodies and habitus? What practices of listening do they employ? How do they justify and explain these practices? Drawing primarily on interviews and ethnographic materials gathered at Western art music seminars and "narrated" concerts, I identify a secular discursive tradition

[6] Bence yanlış bir noktadan tartışıyoruz. Laiklik, Türkiye için bir yaşam biçimi. Bugün laiklik tanımını yeniden tartışmaya açmak yerine, laikliğe bir yaşam biçimi olarak bütün toplumun tartışmasız olarak kabul etmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

supporting practices of listening to Western art music that identify, separate, codify, and abstract the senses and emotions from each other, shaping a particular habitus and bodily dispositions distanced from what come to be constructed by contrast as "excessive" emotion and "irrationality." This habitus produces a separation and codification of the individual body from its surroundings and an enhanced capacity for abstract thought identified emically as imagination (hayal gücü), and ultimately undergirds a particular conception of the human and society. This mode of personhood shaped through practices of listening to polyphonic music is a subject sovereign over a polyphonic body prepared for participation in a democratic public sphere and a market economy, whose ideal model is thought to be, in turn, the polyphonic symphonic orchestra.

By "discursive tradition," I draw of course on Talal Asad's conception of Islam (and religion more generally) as a tradition of practices and beliefs that are "authorized" by an authoritative discourse (in the case of Islam, most obviously the Koran), and about which evaluations of correctness might be made by way of reference to the authorizing discourse (Asad 1986). I find it fruitful to think of secularity in terms of a discursive tradition because I am discussing discourses and practices that shape certain bodily configurations that undergird a secular mode of being in the world, including conceptions of the body, personhood, social relations, and ethical conduct. In other words, I am discussing a discursive tradition of listening to polyphonic Western art music in modern Turkey as a particularly important site at which secular bodies are forged. Thus, I understand my project in relation to the secular to be similar to Asad's way of thinking about Islam.

In the secular discursive tradition that I explore in this chapter, there is an isomorphic relationship established discursively among dynamics of separation and distance in the

polyphonic texture of Western art music, the body, the democratic public sphere, and the market economy. I understand this link to be a kind of ritualized isomorphism. The specific mode through which listening to polyphonic music is discursively understood to shape bodies for participation in secular life is what I refer to as "mimetic transduction," through which bodies are reshaped isomorphically by polyphonic musical texture. The "authorizing discourse" of this secular discursive tradition is, in turn, a discourse of Occidentalism.

Of course, there is a long history of accounts of this kind of modern subject reaching back to Descartes and, more recently, a long overdue critical orientation toward it. Postcolonial studies, in particular, has put pressure on Western assumptions of ontology and sovereignty by positing various alternative knowledges (Gandhi 2019: 34-37). In his recent book, *Restating Orientalism: a Critique of Modern Knowledge* (2018), for example, the scholar of Islamic law Wael Hallaq has argued for the key role of a modern, Western concept of sovereignty. This conception is rooted in what he refers to as "the distinction" constitutive of modern European epistemology, colonialism, genocide, and environmental degradation. The distinction is made, at its base, between fact and value, such that nature emerges as value neutral. According to Hallaq, the distinction opens the door to a mode of *secular* sovereignty, culminating in the state, in which nature (and, by extension, "natural" peoples) are rendered so much material to be worked on in the name of "progress," whether this be in the form of natural sciences or orientalism and colonialism. Secular sovereignty also extends, in his view, to the body itself, which becomes a value-free material to be re-shaped and subjectivized. Notably, Hallaq points to the Tanzimat-era Ottoman Empire and its dismantling of an ontology of the world permeated with value rooted in Sharia legality as a prime case of "self-colonization" and the cultural genocide wrought by Enlightenment modernity (Hallaq 2018).

I dwell at some length upon Hallaq's arguments for several reasons. Not least, there is a partial isomorphic resemblance between his formulation of "the distinction" and my own analysis of dynamics of polyphonic separation and codification as they pertain to the body and secular sovereign subjectivity. Though I do not find Hallaq's arguments to be exactly false, they seem to me to be claims made by, well, a philosopher, and not a social scientist. Leaving aside my own temperamental allergy to an argument that seems to me to flirt with essentialism, I find Hallaq's conclusions ultimately to be scientifically limiting. I know devoted classical music listeners in Istanbul whose family members participated in Tanzimat-era reforms (indeed, in a certain sense, I am one of these people). It may be that "self-colonization" is not an inapt term, but obviously it is of little use to understanding these people and their practices in a dynamic ethnographic context. While taking seriously his concerns about modern epistemology and its effects, I can't help but feel that Hallaq's argument ends up looking, well, somewhat imperialist. In this sense, this chapter can be understood as an ethnographic approach to some of the questions that animate the line of critique of which *Restating Orientalism* is a particularly clear example.

Thus, in this chapter I examine the practices of listening through which the autonomous, sovereign secular subject so often deconstructively revealed to be an effect of (Western) imperialist epistemology and ideology is constructed as natural through practices of listening in Istanbul. The chapter is structured as a kind of reverse engineering of the secular discursive tradition that I aim to elucidate. In the first two sections, I examine the separation and codification of the individual sensory and emotional apparatus and the cultivation of capacities for imagination through practices of listening to polyphonic music. In part three, I examine the relationship among these practices of listening, polyphony construed as "natural," and

democratic participation—in particular, the role that polyphonically-tuned bodies play in a democratic public sphere. In part four, I return to discussion of "mimetic transduction" as a ritual process and the secular discursive tradition that authorizes it. Finally, in part five, I turn more directly toward the texture of the secular discursive tradition that I aim to elucidate by homing in on the claims of several of its prominent contemporary keepers to tease out the full implications of the discourse for society and the city of Istanbul. I ultimately argue that secularity and secular bodies in Turkey are defined by dynamics of separation, codification, and abstraction established significantly through practices of listening.

Listening for a Refined Imagination

Shortly after arriving in the field in late September 2019, I picked up the October issue of the journal *Andante,* which bills itself as "Turkey's Classical Music Journal" (Türkiye'nin Klasik Müzik Dergisi). Perusing the issue back in my Airbnb apartment, I experienced what, in hindsight, I understand to have been a moment of true ethnographic synergy. As if timed to coincide with my fieldwork, the issue featured responses from a series of prominent Turkish (Western) classical musicians and arts managers to the question: "What do we expect from the year 2020?" (2020 yılından neler bekliyoruz?). Several themes emerged among the responses: one of the most consistently raised was the need for acoustically and aesthetically appropriate concert halls. Among the other threads were education, employment opportunities, and the need to keep up with global developments—of course, no one predicted the pandemic. Then and now, though, I was most struck by a concern across the contributions for polyphony and listening. This concern was articulated particularly forcefully by the orchestral conductor Orçun Orçunsel:

> The problems related to polyphonic music in this geography are so deep that we can't take up one problem without first solving another related problem … people don't know

> how to hear, to listen, to look, and to see. Their nervous systems are not in control of their bodies. Because they don't read books and because they don't know how to listen, they can't communicate in their native language. This is why babies and children continually cry and yell—because their families don't know how to listen. Because families don't know how to read the minimal sounds that their child produces, the child has to yell and scream to make itself heard. Listening is not just hearing sounds; it is comprehending the message that sounds contain. A person who has included polyphonic music in their life, by perceiving in the simplest form the layers "melody, accompaniment, bass," gains the discipline (terbiye) of hearing music and conceiving life in multiple dimensions (Orçunsel 2019).[7]

For Orçunsel, listening to and engaging with "polyphonic" (çoksesli) music is more than just a matter of appreciation or enrichment: it is important to the most basic capacities for controlling the body and perceiving and communicating about the world. In Turkey, he finds, this ability to hear and listen languishes, producing a society in which people lead dull and diminished lives. Listening to polyphonic music, Orçunsel suggests, opens up not only multiple dimensions of hearing, but of perception more broadly that allow the "nervous system" to assert control. In the next paragraph, Orçunsel returns to the plight of a citizenry deprived of polyphonic music:

> The sense of hearing, the most developed of the five senses, is dulled in this geography. You can fool the eye—illusionists do this, film does this—but you can't fool the ear. Cultivation (görgü) of hearing and listening are acquired during childhood. Because children are not refined (inceltilmemiş), when they grow up, they are condemned to live with these coarse (yontulmamış) senses. As a result, they prefer the world perceived with their unrefined senses to civility (bu terbiyeden yoksun duyularıyla kavradıkları dünyayı, inceliklere yeğ tutuyorlar). There is a serious need for music lessons in the schools. More than learning to play seven notes on the recorder and memorizing marches, students need to be interested in music; they should take sufficient lessons in piano and violin to be able

[7] Bu coğrafyada, çoksesli müzik alanındaki sorunlar öyle derin ki bir sorun bağlantılı bir başka sorunu çözmeden ele alamıyoruz … İnsanlar duymayı, dinlemeyi, bakmayı ve görmeyi bilmiyorlar. Sinir sistemleri bedenlerine hakim değil. Hem kitap okumadıkları için hem de dinlemeyi bilmedikleri için, anadillerinde iletişim kuramıyorlar. Bu yüzden bebekler, çocuklar sürekli ağlıyor ve bağırıyorlar, çünkü aileler dinlemeyi bilmiyor. Aileler çocuğun çıkarttığı minimal sesleri okumayı bilmediği için çocuğun kendini dinletebilmek için bağırıp çağırması gerekiyor. Dinlemek sadece sesleri duymak değil, seslerin içerdiği mesajı algılayabilmektir. Çoksesli müziği hayatında barındıran biri, en basit haliyle "melodi – eşlik – bas" katmanlarını algılayarak müziği çok boyutlu duyabilme terbiyesine ve hayatı çok boyutlu kavrayabilme yetisine sahip olur.

> to play Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin, they should regularly attend concerts (Orçunsel 2019).[8]

Taking up Orçunsel's emphasis on the dull lives to which those deprived of engagement with polyphonic music are ostensibly sentenced, in this section, I take up the matter of shaping and codifying the senses, particularly as these processes are understood to manifest in the development of imagination. Discussion of imagination was a regular feature of discourse about classical music. I argue that the significance of imagination in the secular discursive tradition is precisely the kind of distanced relationship with the world that it implies—in order to imagine and inhabit other worlds, it is necessary to be distanced and separated from immediate surroundings.

Before turning toward further accounts of listening and imagination, though, I wish to dwell at some length on Orçunsel's analysis. He deploys a battery of terminology to describe the problem of dulled aural perception in Turkey that sheds light on the discursive relationship between polyphonic music and the polyphonic body that I illuminate here: *görgü, terbiye, incelik, inceltilmemiş, yontulmamış* (see Table 1). *Görgü* is a particularly difficult concept to pin down. I heuristically translate *görgü* as "cultivation," but this is only a partial fit. The entries for *görgü* in the Tureng Turkish-English Dictionary include: (good) manners, convenances, experience, breeding, etiquette, cultivation, grace. Its absence, *"görgüsüz"* in adjective form, translates most closely as "uncouth." *Terbiye* is similarly thorny. Here, omitting the equestrian

[8] Beş duyunun en gelişmişi olan duyma duyusu, bu coğrafyada köreltilmiş durumdadır. Gözü kandırabilirsiniz; illüzyonistler bunu yapar, sinema bunu yapar. Ancak kulağı kandıramazsınız. Duyma ve dinleme görgüsü de çocuk yaşlarda edinilir. Çocuklar hiçbir konuda inceltilmedikleri için büyüdüklerinde bu yontulmamış duyularıyla yaşamaya mahkum ediliyor. Sonra da bu terbiyeden yoksun duyularıyla kavradıkları dünyayı, inceliklere yeğ tutuyorlar. Okullarda ciddi anlamda müzik dersi verilmesi gerekir. Öğrenciler düdükle yedi nota çalmayı öğrenmenin ve marşlar ezberlemenin ötesinde müzikle ilgilenmeli; temel düzeyde Bach, Mozart, Beethoven ve Chopin çalabilecek kadar piyano ve keman dersi almalı, düzenli olarak konserlere gitmeliler.

term “dressage,” I list the first ten entries for *terbiye* in the Tureng Turkish-English dictionary: nurture, education, training, manner, civility, breeding, discipline, decency, upbringing, politeness, culture. To be *terbiyesiz* might be translated as impertinent or impudent. Interestingly, *terbiyeli*—i.e., *with* terbiye—is also used in the sense of marination: I might go to the butcher and order *terbiyeli tavuk*—marinated chicken.

The terms *incelik, inceltilmemiş,* and *yontulmamış* likewise form something of a group. Here, I have translated *incelik* as “civility,” and the term is widely used metaphorically to connote gracefulness, subtlety, courtesy, and elegance. But it also carries the more literal meaning of “fineness” and “delicacy.” The adjective *inceltilmemiş,* which I have translated as “not refined,” is derived from the verb *inceltmek*, which literally means “to make thin” in a material sense. Likewise, the adjective *yontulmamış,* which I have translated as “coarse”, is derived from the verb *yontmak,* which, once more, in a material sense, means “to hew,” “to sculpt,” or “to sharpen.”

Table 1: Terminology Chart

Görgü	Noun	(good) manners, convenances, experience, breeding, etiquette, cultivation, grace
Terbiye	Noun	nurture, education, training, manner, civility, breeding, discipline, decency, upbringing, politeness, culture
Incelik	Noun	Civility, gracefulness, subtlety, courtesy, elegance
İnceltilmemiş	Adjective, derived from verb "inceltmek”	Not refined
Yontulmamış	Adjective, derived from verb “yontmak”	Coarse

My goal in explicating this terminology is to bring out the sense in which Orçunsel describes the development of the human sensorium through listening to and engaging with polyphonic music. Specifically, his description carries connotations of a dynamic material shaping of the human sensorial apparatus that is both synchronic and diachronic. That is, while descriptors like *inceltilmemiş* and *yontulmamış* imply a material shaping and chiseling of the sensory apparatus in the real time of listening, terms like *görgü* and *terbiye* point to the cumulative, sedimented effect of these processes to produce a qualitatively different human sensory apparatus with a refined, multi-dimensional capacity for engagement with the world. In other words, engaging with and being able to listen to polyphonic music is understood to shape a particular sensory configuration and habitus—both in the Bourdieuian sense of an embodied marker of class and structural position operating beneath the level of cognitive awareness and Saba Mahmood's Aristotelian conception of habitus as capacities and dispositions of the body through which subjectivity is actively, consciously formed (Mahmood 2005: 135-136). One longtime member of the Istanbul European Choir, for example, explained her father's decision to ban Turkish art music from their house such that Western art music might be heard in exclusivity in pursuit of "kulak terbiyesi" (aural breeding?). In this section, I suggest that an important result of this sensory refinement is understood to be an enhanced capacity for imagination.

At a weekly seminar for music teachers at a music atelier in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood of Kadıköy that I attended during Fall 2019, for example, possibilities for developing the faculty of imagination (hayal gücü) through listening were frequently cited. Introducing a session on program music, for instance, the seminar leader suggested that, by starting to teach Western art music with program music, we develop children's imaginations (onların hayal gücünü geliştiriyoruz). At a seminar focused on animal-themed pieces such as

Saint-Saens "Carnival of the Animals" and Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf," a particularly talkative music-education student named Volkan suggested that asking students to associate instruments with particular animals might be especially effective for this purpose.

Though these proposals suggest a more positive orientation than Orçunsel's, they were couched in a similar, overarching Occidentalist frame. This discursive frame came to the fore during a session focused on impressionism. When Volkan commented of Ravel's "Bolero" that he sensed an Arab, desert atmosphere in the music, a music teacher in attendance responded despairingly that "you have to know the stories and tales" to understand the music (hikayeleri ve öyküleri bilmek lazım), and "the resources that we have are very limited" (bizdeki kaynaklar da zaten kısıtlı). The seminar instructor, a Russian-trained Azeri immigrant to Istanbul, agreed, saying that she frequently encounters students who don't know anything about the music they are studying and performing. To this, the music teacher responded hopelessly "we really have a cultural deficiency" (gerçekten bir kültür eksikliğimiz var). This prompted Volkan to launch into a speech about how "we don't know that wordless music can say something to us" (sözsüz müziği bize bir şey söyleyebileceğini bilmiyoruz) and we need to know that music can express (ifade ediyor). However, because we are not really part of European culture, he said, we can't understand the music as they can—we don't know the fairy tales, for example, and need extra support. Here, seeming to echo Orçun Orçunsel's rather dismal view of the state of deprivation in which most people in Turkey lead their lives, Volkan specifically emphasizes the need to understand wordless music (sözsüz müziği). Wordless music, it would seem, is understood to be particularly effective for developing the capacity for imagination.

While describing his own experiences, my friend Emre identified the reason for the link between listening to polyphonic music and imagination and, I suggest, its relevance to the

secular body. Emre described to me that he grew up in a provincial Aegean city where there was nothing like classical music or art. Having completed university and begun a lucrative career in Istanbul, he has devoted considerable energy to developing his faculties, not least by regularly attending the concerts and Western art music seminars where we became acquainted. In an interview, he explained that he planned to try out learning different orchestral instruments, saying that his goal is not to give concerts, but rather to understand, for example, how vibrato is done to understand the performer better. As part of his program of self-education, he has also initiated a program of study in philosophy and taken up painting. When I asked him to compare the experience of, say, someone in a village or small town in Turkey and someone like him engaged in these kinds of pursuits, he couched his description in terms of the awakening and development of human creativity and difference:

> More than beauty or relaxation, it seems like they are removed from the horizons that it opens. To not be able to feel that ... you know how you draw something, and something comes into being? You are creating something and the happiness that comes from that creation is just something else. It awakens something totally different in you ...
> One person's liking Bach, the other Vivaldi ... the same notes. Why does one person like Bach, how do they like Baroque and not like new classical music at all? For example, I don't like new classical music at all. I don't like modern dance at all ... even if they come from the same sociocultural background, someone else might really like modern dance. So even though the notes are the same, there is something that is touched. Because different things are awakened even though the human body is the same, to be deprived of that is very dramatic to me. I find it very sad (interview, March 12, 2020).[9]

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[9] Bunun güzelliğinden ya da rahatlatıcı lığından sanki açtığı ufuklardan uzak kalıyorlar gibi. Bunu hissedememek… bir şey çiziyorsun ve bir şey oluşuyor ya, bir şey yaratıyorsunuz ve onu yaratmanın mutluluğu ayrı bir şey. Senden uyandırdıkları apayrı bir şey ve insanın yaşadığı hayat psikolojisi de çok etkiliyor. Onları da çok uyandıran şeyler geliyor. Bir insanın Vivaldi sevip, bir başkasının Bach sevmesi… Aynı notalar. Bir insan neden Bach'ı sever de, nasıl barok sever de, yeni klasik hiç sevmez? Ben hiç sevmem mesela yeni klasik. Modern dans hiç sevmem. Bale severim, tiyatro severim ama modern dans hiç sevemedim ama bir başkası da benzer sosyokültürel düzeyden gelmesine rağmen, o da modern dans çok sever. Demek ki aynı notalar olmasına rağmen dokunan bir şey var. İnsan vücudu aynı olmasına rağmen farklı şeyler uyandırdığı için, bunlardan mahrum kalması çok dramatik geliyor bana. Çok üzücü buluyorum.

Here, a theme of codification and separation emerges. Using the example of drawing, Emre describes a kind of subject-object relationship that emerges between the creator and their creation. For Emre, this process activates—"touches"—parts of the person that would otherwise, it seems, remain dormant, which in turn has the effect of drawing forth characteristics of sensory perception that distinguish individuals from one another. In Turkey, and even in Istanbul, Emre noted, however, these activities are very limited:

> We are very far. I mean, what I am explaining is very utopic. If you would go and see the villages, districts, cities in Anatolia, there is a much more fanatical (bağnaz), much more foreign culture. It has been like that for a very long time. Here in Istanbul, Kadıköy, we are in a different world, you know what I mean? (interview, March 12, 2020).[10]

In distinguishing the sites at which the kind of processes of sovereign individualization that he is describing occur, Emre contrasts Kadıköy with Anatolian sites that he characterizes as *bağnaz.* Turning once more to Tureng, the first ten translations suggested for *bağnaz* are: bigoted, blueness, fanatic(al), narrow-minded, straitlaced, illiberal, puritan(ical), hard shell, rabid, sectarian. These terms imply a kind of excess of emotion (fanatical, rabid) coupled with an intellectual rigidity (bigoted, hard shell). In conjunction with his discussion of the kind of individuation brought about by aesthetic engagement, a discursive picture begins to emerge of Anatolian subjects unable to distance themselves from their immediate worlds. In other words, the distinction that Emre is drawing here between Kadıköy and much of the rest of Turkey seems to be one between a more distanced sensory engagement with the world and extremism. Elsewhere in our conversation, he brought his point out more clearly:

> Art has a healing side, like behaving spontaneously. For example, you know how when young people do strange things they aren't regarded as strange, but then when they grow up, they are? That's what I mean: it's like, listening to music or painting a picture fill in

[10] Çok uzak bir noktadayız. Benim anlattığım çok ütopik yani. Gidip bir görsen Anadolu'nun köylerini, ilçelerini, şehirlerini çok daha bağnaz, çok daha uzak bir kültür var. Çok uzun bir süre var. Biz burada İstanbul Kadıköy olarak ayrı bir dünyadayız gibi anlatabiliyor muyum?

> that gap when you lose that childlike quality. That's how I see it … But there [in the village], you can't open a door to those people … those people are deprived of those feelings, and they grow up very quickly. When [music and art] are absent, you can't *abstract* yourself from the life (soyutlayamıyorsun) you are living (emphasis mine) (interview, March 12, 2020).[11]

I find Emre's use of the term "to abstract" (soyutlamak) to be useful here for elucidating the relationship among (instrumental) polyphonic music, listening, the senses, imagination, and the secular body that I discuss in this section. Tureng entries for the verb soyutlamak include, in addition to "to abstract": to isolate, seal off, alienate, or segregate into. These translations are in keeping with entries of "remove, separate," and "to consider apart from application to or association with a particular instance" for the verb form of "abstract" in the Merriam-Webster English Dictionary.

Indeed, at a concert at Süreyya Opera in Moda that we attended together in early November 2021, Emre exhibited several such modes of abstraction. The concert was part of a "Lied Haftası" (Song Week) that the Istanbul State Opera put on—we attend the French evening, which features two song cycles from Ravel, several Debussy piano preludes, and a collection of Faure songs. Our seats are not together, but afterward we walk to a nearby Moda café for a beer and concert breakdown, together with a work friend of his who has also attended. "My God, that [baritone] Kevork Tavitiyan always pisses me off--he's always stuck in the notes!," I say to get us started as we walk along Bahariye Avenue (Aman, bu Kevork Tavitiyan hep beni kızdırıyor,

[11] Sanatın insanı iyileştiren bir yanı var ya da içimizden geldiği gibi davranmak gibi. Mesela küçükken insanlar garip şeyler yaptığında garipsenmiyor ama büyüdükçe garipseniyor ya, işte onu, sanki o çocukluk azaldığında o boşluğu kapatma gibi resim yapmak, müzik dinlemek. Ben öyle görüyorum. Sevdiğin bir şeyle ilgilenmek. Orada insanlara bir kapı açamıyorsun. Müzik aleti ya da resim de öyle, ona resim defteri veremiyorsun, bir boya veremiyorsun ya da bir keman veremiyorsun. O insanlar o hissiyattan yoksun kalıyor ve çok çabuk büyüyorlar. Kendini o yaşadığın hayattan soyutlayamıyorsun bunlar olmadığı zaman.

hep notalara gömülüyor!). Emre agrees, saying that the soprano was better in terms of connecting with the audience.

This evening's concert was one of those Istanbul concerts in which applause erupted at every plausible pause—between the numbers of the song cycles, but in a few cases during dramatic pauses within songs as well. I know that Emre was not among the applauders, but still, out of an abundance of caution I tentatively suggest that this was a bit tedious. He says, "of course!" (tabii!), with an "are you kidding me?" expression. His friend had attended the recent London Philharmonic concert given as part of the Atatürk Cultural Center's (AKM) opening week. She said that, in addition to several comedic applause mishaps there (something about applause for the guy who brought out the pianist's sheet music) there was someone pounding on the door at one point during the concert. "That's very Turkish," Emre says (bu çok türk). It will be better to start going to concerts at the AKM in a few weeks, he says, after the initial rush of people who are only interested in the novelty of the new hall dies down.

As we sit down at the café and order beers, Emre lays some pieces of paper and a thick book down on the table. The book is a Turkish copy of Marx's *Capital*—Emre is working his way through the book with a reading group at the Nazım Hikmet Cultural Center (though, he notes, he works in finance and is just reading *Capital* out of interest). The papers, on the other hand, have two columns of relatively large-print text on them. His friend turns to me as if to say, do you believe this guy? Emre explains that he tried to learn French during the pandemic, so for this evening he prepared the song texts in French and English to follow along during the concert. I ask him if it worked, and he starts pointing out to me how the English and French are different from each other. He then turns to his phone, where he is trying to book a ticket to a concert at a church in the Yenikapı district—"We're sick of Aya İrini now," he says, showing me the

church's picture on his phone (Aya İrini'den bıktık artık—Aya İrini is a large Byzantine-era church in Sultanahmet and popular classical music venue since the 1980s).

My point is that Emre's practices of listening can be understood in terms of separation, codification, and abstraction in at least two senses. First, practices like printing out the original song text in large type to follow along during the performance separate out and codify his perception of the performance, breaking it down into its various elements. This separation and codification is likewise exhibited by his knowledge of when to applaud and when not to applaud—this involves a sense of abstraction and distance from his own response to the music that contrasts with spontaneous applause at every pause. Second, these practices shape a felt sense of social distance between Emre and his compatriots ostensibly unable to abstract themselves from the immediacy of the context in this way ("that's very Turkish"). Where they indiscriminately applaud and generally make inappropriate noises, Emre has control over his own body and the noises it might produce. With this distinction, he seeks out more distinct spaces in the city for concert attendance.

My interlocutor Murat Soylu, a retired chemical engineer known among friends for his love of Mahler and the house concerts he organizes with his wife, Sedef, certainly displays distinction. His family had close connections to Atatürk, and he studied first at Ankara's elite, leftist Middle East Technical University and then took a doctorate in Manchester. Murat Bey and Sedef now rarely venture out to concerts in Istanbul, devoting their energies instead to organizing private concerts in their home in memory of their deceased daughter, Meriç, which I discuss in detail in chapter 5.

His description of his childhood experiences of listening to music with his mother, a literature teacher, yields further insight into the discursive relationship between abstracted

practices of listening and imagination. Here, he describes his experience of listening to classical music on the radio while growing up in the province of Hatay on the Syrian border:

> When I was a child, my mother knew the radio schedule and listened. I remember that she would call me, 'come, run, Suna Kan is playing! Come on, now listen to this, this is a Tchaikovsky symphony.' She would ask 'Tell me, what comes up for you while you listen to this music? What does it make you think of? Is it scary? Is it a gratifying happiness? What kind of environment does it make you think of? Are you outside? Are you at home? Are you in the woods? What's happening? What does this music make you feel?' And I would explain 'we're in a forest, we're walking, but we're afraid. I think the weather is sunny.' Maybe, 'I see birds flying and we entered a garden, there are flowers. There is something going on, because it seems like there's a commotion of some sort ...' that kind of thing. My mother never interfered. She never criticized, saying 'this is what you say but it's really like that.' If that's what you think, that's what it is (interview, August 21, 2020).[12]

As I noted above, Murat Bey is a devotee of Mahler, whom he discovered for the first time in his late 30s. He described to me in detail how he felt "touched" by Mahler's music. Shortly after he and his family moved to Istanbul, he described, "I can vaguely recall that we listened to the Fourth Symphony in the 1985-1986 season, and then to the First Symphony in the following season. At the Istanbul State Symphony. This music touched something in me. When that happened, I got curious" (interview, August 26, 2020).[13] He went on to purchase (then new) disc recordings on foreign business trips in order to listen systematically to Mahler. The interest continued to develop:

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[12] Benim çocukluğumda radyodan annem saatlerini bilir, dinlerdi. Hatırlıyorum, bana seslenirdi, "koş gel, suna kan çalıyor!" işte gel, şimdi bunu dinle, bunu Çaykovski'nin senfonisi. Bana söyle bakalım, bu müziği dinlerken sende nasıl bir şey uyanıyor? Ne düşündürüyor bu müzik sana? Korku mu? Sevindirici bir mutluluk mu? Nasıl bir ortam düşündürüyor? Dışarıda mısın? Evde misin? Ormanda mısın? Ne oluyor? Bu müzik sende ne hisler uyandırıyor diye sorardı. Ben de anlatıyorum. Ormandayız, yürüyoruz ama korkuyoruz. Güneşli bir hava herhalde. İşte, uçan kuşlar görüyorum ya da bir bahçeye girdik, çiçekler var. Burada bir takım olaylar var, çünkü bir kargaşa var sanki… bu tarz şeyler. Annem de hiç müdahale etmemiştir. Sen öyle diyorsun ama böyle olmuştur diye hiç yorumlamamıştır yani. Sen ne düşünüyorsan o.

[13] 1985-1986da 4. Senfoniyi dinlemiş ve onu takip eden sezonda da titan 1. Senfoniyi dinlediğimiz hayal meyal diyebilirim. IDSO'da. Bu müzik bana bir şekilde bana dokundu. Böyle olunca ben merak ettim.

> With this interest, I began to read about his life. The thing with Alma, factors like the loss of his child; okay, we listened to the music, but who is this man? And there, a sympathy formed in me. I said to Meriç ... can you take out books from the school library? … She found a book and their diaries. Notes they took every day, in English. I read them, and that Alma's diaries were also interesting … She explains a lot. Alma is quite young at that time; they are trying to get to know each other. Reading that, reading about his own life, the death of his siblings, and so on—his life and generally the things he encountered seemed to me like a difficult and sad life. And its being reflected in the music ... now, there can be variances in the perception of liking something and admiring something according to the person. Something touches a particular place in someone. I don't know how we explain that. As my interest grew, I was impressed by all of [Mahler's music]—I liked it a lot. I liked the orchestration a lot. Beyond the melodies, it seemed to me like a very unique style. It was different than a lot of things I had heard—different in an interesting way. On that road, then I moved on from the symphonies to the songs written for dead children ... I found a place that touched me in each one. They touched me (interview, August 26, 2020).[14]

I had several occasions to go to the Soylus' penthouse apartment located in Kadıköy's tony Erenköy neighborhood and listen to Mahler with Murat Bey. On February 12, 2020, for example, I arrive at about 1:30 in the afternoon. Sedef greets me at the door and immediately whisks me into the elevator to go to the second floor where Murat Bey is waiting. I am invited to take a seat on a sofa opposite a large, wall-mounted television in the upstairs sitting area. I ask him if he has picked something to watch (bir şey seçtiniz mi?)—indeed, he has put a list

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[14] Bu şekilde başladı ve ondan sonra ben bu merakla hayatını okumaya başladım. Anna ile olan şey, çocuğunun vefatı gibi faktörlerle; tamam müziği dinledik ama kim bu adam. Orada da bir sempati oluştu bende. Derken Meriç'e dedim ki, ha deyince önüne bol miktarda bilgi dökülmüyor. Sen dedim dışarıya okul kütüphanesinden kitap çıkarabiliyor musun? Mahler ile ilgili dokümanlara bakar mısın, dedim. Bir kitap bir de günlüklerini bulmuş. Her gün not aldığı şeyler… İngilizce dilinde. Onları okudum ve bu anna'nın günlükleri de enteresan. Konser sonrası çıkıyorlar, en yakın bir yerde oturuluyor ve bir şeyler içilirken konser kritik ediliyor. Çok şeyler anlatmış. Anna o yıllarda çok genç, birbirlerini tartıp tanımaya çalışıyorlar. Onu okumak, kendi hayatını okumak, kardeşlerinin ölümü filan hem bana yaşadığı hayat ve genel karılaştırdığı şeyler olarak zor ve hüzünlü hayat. Onun da bir şekilde müziğe yansıması. Şimdi herkese göre bir şeyi sevmek ya da beğenmek algısında değişmeler olabilir. Bir şey birinin bir yerine dokunuyor. Bunu nasıl açıklarız bilmiyorum. İlgi uyandıkça hepsinden çok etkilendim ben, çok beğendim. Orkestrasyonu çok beğendim. Melodilerin ötesinde çok has bir tarz geldi. Çok duyageldiğim şeylerden farklıydı, ilginç bir şekilde farklı. O yolda derken artık senfonileri bırakıp ölen çocuklar için yazılmış şarkılar… Hepsinde bana dokunan bir yer buldum. O bana dokundu.

together, and we immediately take a seat and start working through it. We start with a video of a Leonard Bernstein children's concert and a performance of the finale of Mahler's Fourth Symphony. I mention that I first heard this symphony at the Musikverein in Vienna; he says that he first saw it at the AKM in Istanbul. Around this time, the jolliest member of the Soylus' household retinue, Zehra, brings up the first of several rounds of snacks: coffee in porcelain cups, accompanied by coconut cookies and multi-colored macrons. While we snack, we watch an episode from Michael Tilson Thomas' "Keeping Score" series, in which he visits Mahler's Bohemian hometown.

We listen to several songs from *Kindertotenlieder* and *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen* (accompanied by tea and a spectacular apple carrot cake with a basketweave crust). Of "Die zwei blauen Augen," sung by Thomas Hampson, Murat Bey observes that Mahler wrote it for a young love who married—"platonic love," he says (platonik aşk). Upon hearing the text "dem Lindenbaum," Murat Bey repeats "ein Lindenbaum." We then turn to our main musical course: "Das Lied von der Erde," from the Concertgebouw Orchestra with Haitink at the podium. While we watch, Murat Bey deploys a consistent repertoire of accompanying practices. He sometimes anticipates musical themes, singing them softly immediately before they appear. At several points, he repeats lines of text—for example, "mein Herz ist müde" from the final song (my heart is tired). He also waxes rhapsodic several times on Mahler's orchestrational skill—for example, the oboe part at the opening of the final song, "der Abschied." As a kind of "dessert" course (accompanied now by gustatorily salty cheese poğaça), we decide to listen to the first movement of Mahler's Fifth Symphony from Claudio Abbado in Lucerne. When I ask if he has heard the symphony live, he replies that, indeed, he went to see it with Abbado in Lucerne. As we are watching, he names many of the musicians in the orchestra (made up of Claudio Abbado's

selections from around the world), noting their home orchestra—for example, a wind musician from the Berlin Philharmonic.

Murat Bey's practices of listening exhibited by his commentary both produce and reflect abstraction, distance, and codification. He is not simply taken up and carried along by the music. Rather, his practices—anticipating themes before they are played, repeating lines of text, commenting on aspects of Mahler's orchestration, and naming members of Abbado's orchestra—indicate a subject-object relationship, a kind of distance and separation. Along these lines, in the instances that I discuss above, practices of listening to Western art music can be understood in terms of abstraction in several senses. The distinguishing of the multiple "layers" of polyphonic music is understood to aid in the development of a "multi-dimensional" (çok boyutlu) sensory apparatus capable of making "finer" distinctions in perceiving the world. This enhanced sensory refinement produces a different kind of engagement with the world that tends to develop toward a sense of remove and separation and, ultimately, the emergence of a subject-object relationship such as that Emre identifies as integral to the experience of aesthetic creation. In turn, this subject-object relation is understood to manifest in the emergence of a new capacity for abstraction divorced from particularity—imagination, or the ability to conceive of scenarios and possibilities at a remove from immediate surroundings. Here, the "abstraction" of wordless (sözsüz) polyphonic music seems to play a particularly important role in stimulating the imaginative capacity. In short, listening sharpens the boundaries between sovereign perceiving subjects, their own, increasingly polyphonic bodies, and an objective world. At the same time, insofar as the refined sensory apparatus is hewed and sculpted along different contours in different bodies, individuals become increasingly distinguished from each other—in other words, they emerge as more or less autonomous, sovereign individuals.

However, amidst all of this abstraction, both Emre and Murat Bey emphasized the ways in which they felt personally touched by music—indeed, this sense of being "touched" seems integral to the discursive understanding of subjectification that I am attempting to elucidate. I will return to it below. In the next section, though, I turn from the sensorial to the emotional apparatus and its shaping through practices of listening to polyphonic music.

Listening for Emotional Complexity

On October 22, 2019, I attended a seminar on the renaissance madrigal composer Carlo Gesualdo at the Yeldeğirmeni Sanat venue—a renovated French Catholic church in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood of Kadıköy. Free and open to the public, the seminar was part of a bi-monthly classical seminar series sponsored by the Kadıköy municipality that regularly attracted forty to fifty attendees on Tuesday evenings until the COVID-19 pandemic, during which it continued online. During each seminar, the presenters Serhan Bali (publisher of *Andante,* from which I quote above), and pianist/composer Hasan Ali Toker focused on a particular composer in a popular (if not popul*ist*) "great man" historical mode. Bali and Toker took a lighthearted approach: at each session, Toker would mimic the dress, persona, and (at the piano) music of the week's composer while Bali filled in biographical and historical background.

At the October 22, 2019, seminar, Gesualdo's dramatic personal background (he murdered his wife and her lover upon catching them *in flagrante delicto*) and use of highly chromatic harmonic language provided a context in which a discourse linking polyphony, emotional expression, Enlightenment notions of progress, and Turkish Occidentalism became legible. After introducing Gesualdo as a "very unusual character" (çok sıradışı bir karakter), Bali begins to explain Renaissance music history, noting that "an enlightenment was experienced"

(bir aydınlanma yaşandı) in the West. In terms of music, he characterizes this in terms of a shift from monophonic (teksesli) to polyphonic (çoksesli) that parallels a distinction between "religious and non-religious" (dini ve dindışı) or—adding an additional terminological framing—"sacred and secular" (dinsel veya seküler). Concluding his opening remarks, he characterizes madrigal as a "non-religious, polyphonic genre of music" (dindışı bir çoksesli müzik türü).

After this brief introduction, "Gesualdo" (played by Toker, complete with renaissance-style costume and exaggerated gestures) takes to the piano to begin to elaborate Gesualdo's relationship to polyphony. He begins by explaining different musical textures, noting that Turkish Art Music is heterophonic. As he demonstrates heterophonic texture at the piano by performing a melody with various ornaments, Bali joins in playfully by raising his arms and dancing in a stereotypically Turkish *efe* style. As Toker moves on to the texture of monody, Bali asks "are our songs not monody as well? Eastern monody--Turkish music's monody!" (bizim şarkılarımız da monodi değil mi? Doğunun monodisi, Türk müziğinin monodisi!).

Having begun to elucidate various musical textures, Toker and Bali then turn toward the topic of Gesualdo's chromatic innovations and their relationship to his dramatic personal background. Adopting the persona of Gesualdo, Toker recounts his experience of suspecting his wife's infidelity and carrying out his murderous revenge, striking a table with his fist for emphasis. He then turns back to the piano and begins explaining chromaticism in terms of the addition of "intermediate voices" (ara sesler) to emergent Renaissance polyphony, asking "What is music? Is it not the expression of emotions? "(Müzik nedir? Duygularının ifadesi değil mi?). Bringing home his point, he says (as Gesualdo) that he developed chromaticism for "more powerful, more free expression" (daha güçlü, daha özgür *expression* için). Mapping this account

of chromaticism onto Istanbul, “Gesualdo” suggests that “if C major is Taksim [at the center of the city], F-sharp is Tuzla [a district on its eastern fringe—the point being that they are distantly related]” (Do majör Taksimse Fa-diyez Tuzla). He extends the metaphor, comparing the various means through which one might move between keys to modes of moving through the city: “like, metro, ferry, bus” (yani metro, vapur, otobüs.)

“Gesualdo” continues his explanation of texture with polyphony. Drawing on a madrigal from the composer Luzzasco Luzzaschi as an example, he explains that what is important in polyphony is that the voices are “all independent” (hepsinin bağımsız olması). At this statement, the man sitting next to me in the seminar indicates assent and several others nod. Toker demonstrates the meaning of “independent” (bağımsız—literally, “sans ties”) at the piano. He deploys a drone and melody as a very basic form of bağımsızlık, but then plays melodies moving in different directions to illustrate a more sophisticated form, noting that bağımsızlık occurs within the context of a harmonic progression. “Dependent independence” (bağımlı bağımsızlık), adds Serhan Bey. They then draw an extended comparison to Monteverdi. Giving some background, Bali explains Monteverdi’s birthing of opera from Greek and Roman classical drama. He likens the monodic texture of operatic arias to monophony (tekseslilik), saying “he turned polyphony into monophony (çokseslilik teksesli yaptı) before correcting himself to say, “a simpler polyphony” (daha basit çoksesliliği). At any rate, using the term “irtica,” which connotes reactionary conservatism, he describes this as “reactionary action” (irtica eylem).

From this vignette, a discursive field emerges in which there is a link established among the development of polyphony in the direction of independent movement of voices, expanding capacities for individual emotional expression, and the progress of (European) secular modernity. For “Gesualdo,” developing the dimensions of polyphonic texture and, by extension,

his capacities for expression, form a positive contrast to his infamous inability to control his actions at the realization of his wife's infidelity. In other words, in this account, expansion of polyphonic possibilities becomes a means to codify and control emotions that might otherwise find an outlet in violent or otherwise irrational outburst. At the same time, comparisons to the ostensible absence of polyphony in traditional Turkish music and the suggestion that Monteverdi's development of operatic monody out of renaissance polyphony was "reactionary" indicate an Occidentalist chronotope of progress. Having begun to excavate the discourse in this way, I now turn to several field vignettes to illustrate it further.

If, to extend Toker's metaphor, Kadıköy might be understood as the Do major of this dissertation, on December 30, 2019, I set out for a concert in "F-sharp," for what conductor Cem Mansur billed as the first orchestral concert ever given in Sultangazi, a working-class district on Istanbul's northern fringe. The concert is part of a new initiative led by Cem Mansur and the Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon to take Western art music to residents of the far corners of Istanbul. On the far corners front, at least, I can say that it is successful. I set out from Moda with the usual ferry trip across the Bosphorus from Istanbul's Asian side. Realizing that I am going to be late, I hail a taxi, but the driver doesn't want to venture out so far, so he proposes to take me to a tramway that leads all the way out to Sultangazi. Along the way, he explains to me that there used to be a lot of traffic between Kadıköy and Taksim, but now the Kadıköy folks stay on the Asian side—it's lively there, why should they come to Taksim, he says. Indeed, I experience what will come to be a familiar sense of unease (chromatic modulation?) at leaving the comfortable confines of Kadıköy and journeying into the far regions of Istanbul—almost a palpable feeling of venturing into foreign, "enemy" territory. I am not alone in feeling intimidated by the expanse of Istanbul—when I discuss the concert a few days later with my

friend Çağdaş Bey—an aerospace engineer, classical music afficionado, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, Kadıköy resident—he says that he wanted to attend but didn't trust himself to go all the way out to Sultangazi. Sultangazi is very conservative, he says, adding: "Kadıköy isn't İstanbul; Kadıköy isn't Turkey!" (Kadıköy, İstanbul değil! Kadıköy, Türkiye değil!).

Finally, I board the tram and travel to the end of the line, where I hail another taxi to complete the journey to the Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Kültür Merkezi, named for a medieval Central Asian Sufi poet. I rush through the cultural center's massive, marble-clad lobby to the hall where, upon arrival, I am somewhat relieved to find Cem Mansur already waving the flag of enlightenment. This is a so-called "anlatımlı konser," or "narrated concert"—a form that has become popular in Istanbul in recent years. In front of a predominately younger audience of several hundred gathered in the cavernous hall, Mansur is situating the evening's Beethoven symphony in its European enlightenment context. Asking how it is that music from this period is still alive after two hundred fifty years, when so much else has changed, Mansur suggests that Beethoven lived in an important period for the development of humanistic values. Beethoven's music has a powerful and lasting effect because it "is at such a key point for the values of civilization" he explains (uygarlığın değerleri o kadar kilit bir nokta). He concludes his pre-concert talk with a plea that audience members turn off their telephones, saying that it has become a habit to take film at concerts, but this habit needs to be broken and they should take the opportunity just to listen.

The orchestra then takes the stage to perform Beethoven's Fifth Symphony—the only music on the evening's program. The performance passes smoothly enough, with relatively minimal coming and going but, alas, several phones out. Afterward, I strike up a conversation with a young man in his late twenties sitting nearby, asking what he thought of the concert. He

prefaces his response by saying that he had expected the hall to be full and had arranged his work schedule accordingly to be able to come early—I understand from him that this is the first live concert he has attended. Unfortunately, though, here in Istanbul, interest in classical music is not that great, he says. My new friend, Erdal, then launches into a detailed account of his experience of the music, saying that it touched all his emotions (duygular): “I felt sad, and then powerful in some places, powerless in some places, happy in some places” (hüzünlü hissettim, ondan sonra bazı yerlerde güçlü, bazı yerlerde güçsüz, bazı yerlerde mutlu). As we are talking, an Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality film crew approaches and asks Erdal if he would share his impressions of the concert. This he does, reproducing more or less the same account he has just delivered to me.

We agree to walk back to the tram together through the gray streets of Sultangazi, where it has now started to snow lightly. Along the way, I learn that Erdal lives in the working class Gaziosmanpaşa neighborhood with his mother. Having studied hotel management, he works at a posh hotel in the ancient city tourist district of Topkapı. He doesn’t like his job, though—he says that he finds it difficult to interact with Arab tourists—just as he didn’t really enjoy his studies. By now, we have reached the tram platform, and he asks me what I am studying in Turkey. When I tell him classical music, he says “then you’ve come to the wrong place,” echoing his earlier perception of low interest in classical music in Istanbul (yanlış yere geldin o zaman). Once on the train, though, we return to the concert and his experience. He explains that the series of repetitions at different levels of the famous opening theme of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony activated different emotions (duygular) in him. As he speaks, his face becomes increasingly expressive. Erdal reveals that he has recently gone through a difficult period in his life, and he said that the music helped him to experience and engage with his emotions. He explains that he

has already been listening to classical music on the radio for the past two years or so, having recalled a primary school teacher who used to play it in class. This evening's experience was heightened, though, by the specialness of seeing the musicians perform live, which he says is very different from listening to music with earbuds.

Certainly, there is material here for a standard postcolonial critique. Though the conductor, Cem Mansur, is an Istanbullu, he is a cosmopolitan elite of the first order—in our interview, he didn't hesitate to explain to me that he grew up in an Istanbul household in which three languages were spoken. In this sense, he can perhaps be understood to be carrying out the familiar *mission civilatrice* amongst Istanbul's ignorant masses. Nevertheless, though this analysis cannot be discounted completely, it is surely not the only possible or the most interesting one. The performance of Beethoven's Fifth at Sultangazi became a site at which, by taking up a particular discursive framework, Erdal could frame his experience of listening in a particular way and, in so doing, structure a particular mode of engaging, codifying, and refining his emotions and shaping his body. The performance was an important one for him: he had taken time off from work, though in the end his perception of low interest in Istanbul had rendered this unnecessary. In his telling, the different voices of Beethoven's music, steeped in the values of civilization as they were, activated an array of emotional responses that helped him to work through a challenging emotional period. That Beethoven's Fifth Symphony famously begins with several, clearly perceivable repetitions, at different pitch levels, of an unusually concise theme, helped to facilitate this experience. In other words, there was an elective affinity between a discourse linking polyphony and emotions that Erdal had at his disposal and the opening sounds of the performance. Reciting his experience several times deepened it, giving him a chance to reinscribe his visceral experience of the live music as part of a discursive tradition. As at the

Yeldeğirmeni Gesualdo seminar, Erdal's listening to Beethoven was shaped by an Occidentalist framing of the emergence and ongoing development of ostensibly universal humanistic values. Carrying out his *mission civilatrice* on the fringes of Istanbul, Cem Mansur articulated this connection between the progressive unfolding of humanistic values and polyphonic music particularly clearly. Erdal's almost scripted application of this discourse to his own experience could perhaps be interpreted as a strategic adoption of this discourse by someone otherwise short on claims to elite status.

Nevertheless, Erdal's engagement with emotions through listening to the different "levels" of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is similar to that of many of my interlocutors. My interlocutor Şehrazat Hanım, for example, has considerable symbolic, cultural, and material capital at her disposal: her great-grandfather, Hekimbaşı Salih Efendi, was head surgeon to the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman sultan Abdülmecit; she owns his priceless Bosphorus *yalı*, in which she organized a series of classical concerts until it was struck by a ship (the Hekimbaşı Salih Efendi Yalısı House Concerts were held at All Saints Moda as a stop-gap pending the *yalı*'s reconstruction); she is a graduate of Istanbul's prestigious Austrian *St. Georg* high school, and she hosts a classical music radio program on a major independent radio station. Despite differences of age, class, and gender, though, her account of listening shared much with Erdal's. In an interview at a pleasant café situated in a shady, cat-filled park before that evening's Istanbul State Symphony concert at the adjacent Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall, she explained to me how listening carefully to Western art music throughout her life had helped her successfully to engage with her emotions and negotiate interpersonal relations. She described a lifelong practice of reflecting on her listening that she employed for her own personal emotional development: "I have this kind of thing, since I was a child, I always wrote about the effects that

pieces that I listened to had on me. I personalize the music, and I used it for my own development. Did it make me angry? Did it infuriate me? Did it make me sad?"[15] As in the above cases, Şehrazat Hanım also made clear that her relationships to Western art music composers were defined by both affinity and a felt sense of cultural distance that she framed in terms of emotions:

> For example, I both like and am afraid of all of Beethoven's works. They are very powerful but, I mean, while I like them, I am also afraid of them, until … [when] I listened to the Pastoral Symphony, there was a sentence I said to my mother: 'mother, he was like us!' … that he had that softness, that polish, that fineness (incelik), I mean, that aside from that rebelliousness he had a soft heart … he was actually a man who said "you, me" …[16]

It wasn't only Beethoven, though. Of Mozart, for example, she noted: "I learned how to be fair from Mozart, I learned how to share from Mozart." Through this private listening practice, she explained, she had enjoyed good interpersonal relations throughout her life:

> Let me put it like this … in my life, I never experienced any problems with ill-tempered people. I know how to appeal to them. I will do all kinds of stuff to catch the warmth inside their heart. For that reason, I never have arguments, I never show a bad temper to anyone. They always say, "how do you get along with ill-tempered people?"

Moreover, Şehrazat Hanım's practices of listening had become fodder for her public radio program, on which she turns her practices of listening and their personal emotional didactics around: "This is what I explain in my programs: what I learned from the composers that I talk about. They are my educators."[17]

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[15] Benim şöyle bir şeyim vardır, çocukluğumdan beri dinlediğim her eserle ilgili bende yarattığı etkileri yazardım ben. Ben müziği kişiselleştiriyorum, kendi gelişimim için kullandım. Beni kızdırdı mı, beni öfkelendirdi mi, beni üzdü mü…

[16] Mesela Beethoven'in bütün eserlerinden hem beğeniyorum hem de ürküyorum. Çok güçlü ama yani çok beğenmekle beraber ürküyorum, pastoral senfoniyi dinleyene kadar. Pastoral senfoni dinlediğimde anneme söylediğim bir cümle var: "Anne, o da bizim gibiymiş!" onun içindeki o yumuşaklık, zarafet, incelik, yani o isyanın dışında da yumuşacık bir kalbi olduğunu… Seni beni diyen bir adam aslında.

[17] M: Bizim gibi derken?

In short, Şehrazat Hanım's conjecture, based upon listening, that Beethoven's and other composers' emotional dispositions were multifarious and complex, offered her a didactic template both for managing her own emotions and for reflecting and capitalizing upon the emotional multifariousness of others in her interpersonal relationships. In other words, her practices of listening enable her to separate and codify both her own emotions and thus manage her emotional engagement with others. Indeed, she went on immediately to discuss her practices of listening in terms of progressive aural codification and separation of polyphonic musical lines:

> When I like a piece, I ask, what did I like about it. I take the piece in front of me and listen to the whole thing again. Then I say, I wonder what were the factors that made it beautiful. Today I will listen to the clarinet, today I will listen to the oboe, today the violins, today the violas, today something else … now I can pull each of them out separately with my ear. Then I sit and think: ok, if that hadn't been there, this would have been missing, if this hadn't been there that would have been missing, consequently the whole—I mean, without any of the instruments sacrificing its own identity, they can be part of that whole.[18]

Like Serhan Bali at Yeldeğirmeni ("dependent independence"), like Erdal at the Sultangazi concert, Şehrazat Hanım establishes a connection between her practices of careful engagement with the various lines of polyphonic orchestral music and the refinement of her emotions. I

Bir şey tarafı da var, sadece hırçın değil yumuşak tarafı da var. Anlatabiliyor muyum? Sevgi dolu, ben sevgisiz zannediyordum. Ama tabi o zamanın yorumları da beni böyle düşündürmüş olabilir. Bir sürü faktör var ama yani şöyle diyeyim, tabi bu saptamam "o da bizim gibiymiş" saptaması, ben hayatta aksi hırçınlığına yansıyan insanla hiçbir problem yaşamadım. Onlara ben nasıl hitap edeceğimi bilirim. Onun böyle kalbinin içindeki sıcaklığı yakalayacak her türlü zımbırtıyı yaparım ben. O yüzden hiç kavgam da olmaz, kimseye de aksileşmem. Aksi adamlar için sen bununla nasıl geçiniyorsun derler. Bunu anlatıyorum şimdi programlarımda. Benim programlarda anlattığım bestecilerden neler öğrendiğim. Onlar benim eğitmenlerim.

[18] En azından bir şey daha anlatayım sana. Adil olmayı Mozart'tan öğrendim, paylaşımcılığı da Mozart'tan öğrendim. Böyle bir bakıyorsun, bir eseri beğendiğim zaman derim ki ben bunun nesini beğendim. Önüme eseri alırım hepsini birden dinleyeceğim. Sonra derim ki bunu güzel yapan acaba hangi faktörler olabilir. Bugün klarnet dinleyeceğim, bugün obua dinleyeceğim, bugün kemanları, bugün viyolaları, bugün bilmem neleri… Şimdi hepsini ayrı ayrı içinden çekip alabiliyorum kulağımla. Ondan sonra da otururum, düşünürüm ki tamam şu olmasaydı bu eksilirdi, bu olmasaydı şu eksilirdi, dolayısıyla bütünü yani hiçbir enstrüman kendi benliğinden ödün vermeden o bütünün bir parçası olabiliyor.

suggest that practices of listening emphasizing processes of codification and separation are understood to sculpt and hew a progressive separation and codification of emotions. To pick up a term from the previous section, this dynamic can also be understood in terms of abstraction—that is, Şehrazat Hanım is able to develop a secular sovereign, objectivizing relationship of distance to her own emotions and the emotions of others.

In multiple interviews and conversations, interlocutors gave accounts of situations when listening to Western art music helped them to manage their emotions through dynamics of abstraction. No doubt, the most striking instance comes from Murat Bey, with whom I listened to Mahler in the previous section. Like many older Turkish secularists whom I have encountered (not least, my father), Murat Bey believes strongly in the importance of positive science and rationality and holds religion in some disdain. He found these commitments strained, however, by the apparent relationship that emerged between his love for Mahler and the tragic, early loss of his daughter, Meriç, who was director of a prominent Istanbul classical music series at the time of her passing. He described that, shortly before her passing, they were listening together to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*:

> We listened to *Kindertotenlieder* with Meriç. I remember quite well. One evening I am listening; I like it so much that ... It has a very tragic theme, but its distribution among the instruments really impresses me ... When I listened to it, I liked it so much that [I said] 'come, Meriç, let's listen together. [I wonder] what are you going to say [about the music]' I said. I remember quite well. She came, we were in the salon of the old house. Our conversations about the piece while we listened, our interpretations of the music, death, death and the young girl, the death of Mahler's child—why was I listening to this? Was it a messenger of the things that were going to happen? Why me? Okay, I like music, but why these themes? I don't know. In all likelihood, it is all a coincidence—but what a coincidence![19]

[19] Şimdi onu Meriç ile dinledik. Çok iyi hatırlıyorum. Bir akşam dinliyorum, o kadar beğeniyorum ki kendimce. Meriç de okuldan mı geldi, o sırada Boğaziçi'nde mi okuyordu tam hatırlayamayacağım ama çok sevdiğim bir eser. Çok hüzünlü bir tema ama eserin bu çalgılar arasındaki dağıtımı beni çok etkileyen bir eser. Onu dinlediğim zaman o kadar beğendim ki, Meriç'e orada gel beraber dinleyelim. Sen ne diyeceksin dedim. Çok iyi hatırlıyorum. Geldi, eski

Murat Bey explained that immediately after Meriç's passing, he checked the birth and death dates of Mahler's daughter. Upon finding them to be almost exactly the same, he said that "this opened the door to a different connection" with Mahler's music (farklı bir bağ olmasına yol açtı). Acknowledging that after such a loss, one searches for any kind of message or hope for reunion, he reiterated that because he studied positive science, he knows that concrete evidence and hard data are necessary. Nevertheless, the connection that these coincidences with Mahler opened had a material effect on his emotions:

> We got the news [of Meriç's passing], I came home. All of a sudden, close friends and family came, and do you know what was the only thing that could calm me down, the thing that helped me a bit to keep my head on my shoulders: The songs for dead children that I had listened to and listening to a few of Mahler's symphonies. Everyone was in the salon; I was in the back room listening to that music. Some came to my side; they couldn't say anything. After that, still, the thing that relieved me or—let me not say comfort—but that helped me to cope a bit with that sadness was to listen to [Mahler's music].[20]

The idea that music might offer comfort to those who grieve is, of course, not a novel one. Nor, necessarily, is the fact that a member of twentieth-century Turkey's elite, secularist bourgeoisie should like Mahler. In this sense, Murat Bey's experiences of listening can be understood to belong more to a transurban, cosmopolitan formation than a Turkish or Istanbuller one. Nevertheless, it is the case that, in his account, listening to polyphonic music, with its impressive

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evin salonundaydık. Dinlerken onunla ilgili konuşmalarımız, müziği yorumlamamız, ölüm, ölüm ve genç kız, mahler çocuğunun ölmesi, bunları ben neden dinliyordum. Başıma geleceklerin bir habercisi miydi? Niye ben? Tamam, müzik seviyorum ama neden bu temalar? Bilmiyorum. Her şey büyük ihtimalle tesadüf. Nasıl bir tesadüfse!

[20] Haberi aldık, eve geldim ben. Ev bir anda seven eş dost gelmiş ve beni sakinleştirebilen, biraz kafamın yerinde durmasına yardım eden şey ne oldu dersin? Ölü çocuklar için dinlediklerim ve Mahler'in birkaç senfonisini dinlemek. Salondaydı herkes, ben arka odada bunları dinliyordum. Benim yanıma da gelenler var, bir şey diyemiyorlar. Ondan sonra yine beni rahatlatan ya da birazcık ferahlık demeyeyim ama o üzüntü ile baş etmemi sağlayan bunu dinlemek oldu.

"distribution" among the instruments, enabled Murat Bey to abstract himself from and to manage and control extreme emotions. I suggest that the framework of the Turkish secular discursive tradition and the secular sovereign subjectivity that it structures is perceptible, even through increasingly rarefied filters of cosmopolitan eliteness. In the next section, I turn toward the broader social implications of these practices of emotional and sensorial distance and abstraction.

Listening to the Polyphony of Nature, the Nature of Polyphony

On a Saturday afternoon in mid-February 2020, I am battling Istanbul traffic in a frantic rush to make it on time to a rehearsal of the Istanbul European Choir. After boarding two different taxis and taking the subway, I arrive to find the rehearsal site—the alumni house of Işık University on Istanbul's northern Maslak district—empty. Where is everyone? Am I *that* late? As it turns out, I have mixed up the times and inadvertently arrived an hour early, so I decide to have a meal at the alumni house's reliably mediocre cafeteria. Today there is Orman Kebabı (lamb stew) on offer, and I get my food and take a seat in the blandly decorated, fluorescent-lit dining area. The cafeteria is often a gathering spot for choristers before rehearsals and during breaks, and before long a fellow bass, Burak, comes and joins me with a bowl of soup. As we begin to eat, he wastes no time in asking me how my research is going. Several months into my fieldwork, I muddle through a response to the effect that I think that classical music might serve as a kind of escape for Istanbullers. He seems to understand what I am saying and begins talking about his own musical background. He explains that he studied bağlama with the famous folk musician, Arif Sağ. I express my admiration, but he says that he is angry at people like Sağ because they don't do more to develop Turkish music. He says that, were he in their position, he would do things like compose bağlama concertos. This leads us to the topic of çokseslilik

(polyphony). When I ask him why he thinks polyphony is so important, he replies simply: because it is beautiful. Six or eight voices together are very beautiful to the ear, he says. When you add an orchestra, he says, it becomes even more beautiful. “Atatürkists like classical music,” he says, adding that “Atatürk was a very open-minded man” (Atatürkçüler klasik müziği sever; Atatürk çok açık fikirli bir adamdı). He mentions the Turkish Five composers and (Ahmed Adnan) Saygun, saying that things should have continued in this vein. There were forces that didn’t want this, though—“it started to break down with Menderes,” he says, referring to Turkey’s first democratically elected prime minister, who was ultimately executed in the wake of a 1960 military coup. In Turkey, he says, “we have really gotten in the way of something natural” (aslında doğal bir şeyin önüne geçmişiz).

For Burak, Turkey was headed in the proper direction musically and socio-politically until the election of the populist Menderes in 1950. In that case, it was Turkey’s first major democratic election that undermined the “natural” unfolding of polyphonic music. Generally, however, I encountered a different set of claims that Turkish writer Uğur Küçükkaplan has labeled the “democracy-polyphony litany” (demokrasi-çokseslilik terânesi) (Küçükkaplan 2016). According to this litany, engagement with polyphonic music is key to Turkey’s realizing its democratic potential, “nature” is *by* nature polyphonic, and it is *in* the nature of polyphonic music to foster democracy.

The Istanbul European Choir proved to be an important site for reflection on the relationship between democracy and polyphony. One evening in January 2020, for example, after a dress rehearsal at the Assomption Catholic Church in Moda for our upcoming concert, I end up going for tea and desert at a nearby café with two fellow choir members, both in their mid-forties: Ali, a dentist who lives in nearby Ataşehir, and Tamer, a translator active in

LGBTQI politics who lives in Moda. We walk down Cem Street from the church to the Moda Çikolatacısı at the corner of Şair Nefi Street. After a rather extended conversation with the staff, we select our chocolates—we all prefer bitter, as it turns out—order our teas, and take a seat. We start talking about our backgrounds in music: Ali and Tamer became friends singing in the Istanbul University Polyphonic Choir (İstanbul Üniversitesi Çok Sesli Korosu) and also both worked part time on degrees in choral singing at the Istanbul Conservatory (though only Öner finished). Of the two, though, Ali now seems to be more serious about choral singing. He explains that he listens regularly to classical music and served for a long time on the European Choir's musical advisory board, for which he had to listen to and research a lot of different choral music.

When I ask them what it is about classical music that appeals to them, they both say that it carries a lot of meaning. Ali begins by explaining that it takes a lot of effort—more effort than other music. Tamer agrees with this, saying that hearing the different voices together is especially interesting for them. He compares to Turkish music, in which, he says, everyone sings the same thing. I pick up this thread, noting that, in my interview with Cem Mansur, he discussed a link between çokseslilik (polyphony) and democracy—his "Demokrasi Laboratuvarı," orchestra rehearsals, for example. Tamer agrees that "çokseslilik demokrasiye eşittir" is indeed kind of a trope (polyphony equals democracy). At this, Ali perks up, saying that he thinks this *is* so. Acknowledging that the relationship is kind of idealistic, he says that you must listen to sing classical music—if you don't listen, you can't do it. He adds as an example that he recommended to a friend that they get their child started singing in a polyphonic choir for this reason: there, you can learn how to participate in democracy, he says.

Indeed, these kinds of comments on the necessity of listening were common in the Istanbul European choir. When a foreign, operatically trained bass with a powerful voice joined the choir, he was initially object of much interest, but this quickly turned into skepticism and displeasure. Burak, for example, noted that his voice was great, but not really suitable. It is too soloistic, he said—you can't sing like that in a choir. Ali frequently made comments to the effect that members of the choir were singing too loudly and not listening enough—"shouting" (bağırarak)—and that if they would sing more quietly the sound would "resonate" (tınlamak) more. On another occasion, a confusion having to do with listening arose during rehearsal about the duration of two eighth notes closing a phrase before a sudden adagio—were the notes to be sung in the old tempo or the new tempo, Ali asked politely. Six or seven others jumped in, offering their opinions, but the rehearsal director answered with an impatient, noncommittal "possibly" (olabilir) and moved on. "Anlaşamadık" (we couldn't understand each other), Ali said softly in resignation.

These incidents in the Istanbul European choir indicate two important discursive elements: first, that polyphony is somehow more natural than monophony, and Turkey has left the path of natural musical development; second, that it is somehow in the nature of polyphony to foster democracy. I encountered both of these sentiments, for example, from Ece, a Moda resident about my age and piano instructor at the nearby Istanbul State Conservatory whom I interviewed in February 2020 at a Moda coffeeshop. Ece has clear views on the role of Western art music in society. Affiliated with the Turkish left, she strongly denied to me that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and classical music that obtained in nineteenth-century Europe is relevant in Turkey, with its distinct pathway of class struggle. Indeed, she had previously offered a session of the "Listeners School" (Dinleyici Okul) at the nearby Nazım

Hikmet Cultural Center founded by members of the Turkish Communist Party. While explaining her view that music students in Turkey don't know how to listen properly, Ece emphasized the importance of listening to polyphonic music:

> **Erol**: you emphasized polyphony.
> **Ece**: It's something that doesn't exist in Turkey.
> **Erol**: I wasn't going to say that, but the importance of polyphony is emphasized a lot. Why is polyphony important for you? Or, why do you say that it doesn't exist in Turkey?
> **Ece**: Because it doesn't exist in Turkish music … What I mean is, the importance of polyphony … actually, it sort of hypnotizes you. I mean, it is actually the rhythm of birds flying with the sound of waves on the one hand while you are looking at a landscape and the sun is setting on the other hand. It's the same. I mean, it is the form of that picture of birds chirping while the sound of the waves is coming, transferred into music. Polyphony is actually something very natural. It is really a must, something that is necessary. Polyphony isn't some fantastic thing.
> **Erol:** I did an interview with Cem Mansur. He very clearly identifies polyphony with democracy.
> **Ece:** Very good.
> **Erol:** Why?
> **Ece:** I mean, it's the ability of multiple people to be able to speak, express different theories, and reach an accord (interview, February 15, 2020).[21]

Here, Ece employs an image from "nature" to illustrate that musical polyphony is a manifestation of a more general natural ontology. In this sense, the term polyphony seems to

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[21] Erol: Çok sesliliğini vurguladın.
Ece: Türkiye'de olmayan bir şey.
Erol: Onu demeyecektim ama çok sesliliğin önemi öne çok sürülüyor. Senin için çok seslilik neden önemli? Yoksa Türkiye'de olmayan bir şey neden diyorsun?
Ece: Türk müziğinde olmadığı için. Yapılıyordur illa ki. Yani çok sesliliğin önemi, şöyle hipnotize ediyor aslında. Hani bir manzaraya baktığın zaman bir tarafta güneş batarken bir taraftan dalgaların sesiyle kuşların uçmasının tuttuğu ritim aslında. O da aynı. Yani bir dalganın sesi gelirken, kuşlar cik cik yaparken o Picture müziğe taşınmış hali. Çok seslilik doğada var olan bir şey. O yüzden zaten must bir şey, olması gereken. Çok seslilik ama fantastik bir şey değil.
Erol: Cem Mansur ile bir röportaj yaptım. Çok net bir şekilde çok seslilik demokrasi ile özdeşleştiriyor.
Ece: Çok güzel.
Erol: Niye?
Ece: Eş zamanlı bir çok insanın konuşabilip farklı fikirleri söyleyip aynı noktada uyum sağlaması yani.

connote merely the simultaneous co-existence of various distinct elements. However, when I raised the connection to democracy, Ece gave voice to the kind of sentiment I encountered from Ali Bey and others, to the effect that there is a close link between musical polyphony and democracy—or stated the other way around, that democracy is by nature polyphonic. Here, the discursive texture that emerges is somewhat different from Wael Hallaq's "distinction," in which the concept of nature is the result of a secular sovereignty that ruptures a value-saturated world. Though I acknowledge the prevailing scholarly view by impugning the concept of "nature" with scare quotes, the ontology that becomes legible in this case reverses this view by positing a natural state rife with differences that have somehow been flattened by ideology (the most proximate ideology in this case being Islamism, perhaps understood by Ece in a Marxist vein as an ideological front for capitalism). Polyphonic music emerges from this discursive frame not only as itself "natural," but as a privileged mode of forging a natural state of democracy. What exactly is the relationship among these natural, bodily, and social ontologies of distinction, though?

Listening as Mimetic Transduction

> **Gülnur**: I always grew up like this: Turkey could never become a democracy, it couldn't become polyphonic (çok sesli), because the music is like this, and so on. In our family, among Atatürkists, there was that kind of thinking.
> **Erol**: Could you explain that a bit? That thought?
> **Gülnur**: Because they used music as a conception (görüş), an idea (fikir), a metaphor (metafor). Turkish folk music, Turkish art music, and so on are monophonic (tek sesli) ... on the other hand, there is the four-voiced (dört sesli) music that we are making, the orchestra is polyphonic (çok sesli) and so on. That is to say: polyphony—mentally, they made that kind of connection with polyphony. They didn't say it openly, but I know it. Tacitly it was something that was caused to be felt (hissettirilen bir şeydi). It was said:

> Ah, we couldn't transition into democracy! Our music is like this ... (interview, June 26, 2020).[22]

As part of the chapter's overall project of elucidating a particular Turkish secular discursive tradition, in the previous sections, I discussed practices of listening through which individuals shape their sensorial and emotional apparatus to foster secular sovereign subjectivity, and I began to explore the emic discursive relationship among these configurations, nature, and democracy. But what kind of interface is there, exactly, among listening to polyphonic music, "layered" sensorial perception and imagination, a distanced and controlled emotional life, and democracy?

In the above quote from our interview, Gülnur Hanım, a novelist, pianist, and member of the Istanbul European Choir, suggests that the relationship between polyphonic music and democracy in Turkey has been one of metaphor deployed by Kemalist elites. She would know: her father was a foreign diplomat who was also one of the founders of the Atatürkist Thought Association (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği), a secularist civil society organization founded in the 1980s. Indeed, beyond Turkey, polyphony has been employed extensively and prominently across diverse academic fields as a metaphor for the juxtaposition of multiple voices, temporalities, and geographies—most prominently, of course, in the postcolonial work of

[22] Gülnur: Ben evde hep şöyle büyüdüm, Türkiye hiçbir zaman demokrasiye geçemedi, çok sesliliğe geçemedi, çünkü müzik böyle diye bir şey vardı. Bizim ailede, Atatürkçülerde böyle bir düşünce var.
Erol: Bunu biraz açıklayabilir misin? O düşünce?
Gülnur: Çünkü çok seslilik görüş olarak fikir olarak, metafor olarak müziği kullanıyorlardı. Tek sesli müzik türkü, Türk sanat müziği vs… diğer tarafta bizim yaptığımız dört sesli, orkestra çok sesli vs. Yani çok seslilik, mental olarak da çok seslilik, böyle bir bağlantı kuruyorlardı. Bunu açık açığa söylemiyorlardı ama biliyorum. Üstü kapalı olarak bu hissettirilen bir şeydi, söylenirdi. Ah çok sesliliğe de geçemedik. Müziğimiz de bilmem ne, anlatabiliyor muyum?

Edward Said, as well Mikhail Bakhtin's heteroglossic conception of literary analysis (Bahktin 1981, Said 1993, Fry 2008, de Groot 2005, Pesic 2017).

Without rejecting metaphorical usage, I do not find this analysis to be exhaustive insofar as I discuss *practices* of listening through which, it is implied, ontological and epistemological *transformations* are effected. At the joint between practices of listening to polyphonic music and the shaping and transformation of the self and society, I argue, is an interface through which polyphonic music produces a complex, layered sensory apparatus and emotional attunement suitable for democratic participation. I understand this interface in terms of transduction. I follow here most closely on Patrick Eisenlohr's recent invocation, in his analysis of Maurition na't vocal performance, of philosopher Gilbert Simondon's theorization of transduction:

> Simondon took transduction to be the chief mechanism for the creation of new entities, or 'individuals,' across a broad spectrum of phenomena, from the creation of biological organisms to psychological phenomena and states. With this, he described how an activity propagates through a given domain in a structuring move, moving from area to area in a manner so that the structuring effected in one area serves as the model for the structuring of adjacent areas (Eisenlohr 2018: 84).

In other words, I take this theory of transduction to account for the ways in which bodies—their sensorial and emotional configurations—are rendered isomorphically polyphonic through practices of listening to polyphonic music. However, as a corrective to the naively materialist model of transductive resonance that Gavin Steingo has recently critiqued for its unexamined, would-be universalism (2019), I find the concept of mimesis to be useful. What I mean by mimesis, broadly, is a kind of participation rather than representation. Specifically, I draw upon William Mazarrella's theorization of the "mimetic archive," which proposes a workaround for static/structuralist culture conceptions that would seek to explain behavior thickly/semiotically (and obviously tend not to work in a case such as WAM in Turkey) (Mazzarella 2017). The "mimetic archive" facilitates processes in which traces of memory deposited and sedimented in

individual bodies, objects, and places come to resonate in such a way that they produce an effect akin to interpellation—"this is right, finally." This happens by way of elective affinities (borrowing from Weber) in which certain sets of potentialities come into contact and resonate in such a way that both subject and object are transformed.

What I am referring to specifically are the numerous instances above in which listeners describe an instance in which they are "touched," "awakened," felt that "he was like us," or felt that the music "said something" to them. In those cases, I suggest, this moment of mimesis opened the door to the ritual transduction of polyphony. For those who would sing too loudly—"shouting" (bağırarak)—on the other hand, mimesis becomes impossible. In this way, I describe practices of listening in which a mode of participation in the music that is contingent, not universal, is first established. Once established, transductive processes of separating, codifying, and abstracting the senses and emotions can take place, shaping the polyphonic body and, ultimately, the sovereign subject. In other words, it is through mimetic participation that the capacity for representation characteristic of the autonomous secular subject is developed. By invoking mimesis and the particularity of transduction that it implies, I intervene in universalizing metaphorizations of polyphony.

There is a surface-level resemblance between what I am discussing as mimesis and Althusser's famous discussion of interpellation, in which subjectivation occurs in a moment of address (Althusser 2008). Following this line, the practices of listening that I discuss here would be analyzable as another "ideological state apparatus." The reason that I *don't* follow this Althusserian path has to do with this "ideological" component. According to that view, it would seem, it would be secular*ism* that I would be treating as an ideology that in some way mystifies the "real" out in the world. This, however, begins to look like just another "subtraction story."

Just as much as I don't argue for the superiority of secularity, it is not my aim to elucidate the falsehood or inauthenticity of secular bodies. Rather, I suggest that, according to a particular conception of secularity and a secular way of being in the world, the bodies that I discuss in this chapter *really are* secular.

Listening in and as a Secular Discursive Tradition

Thus far, I have primarily discussed practices through which individuals shape their sensorial and emotional apparatus through listening to polyphonic Western art music. In the instances that I discuss above, I examine claims and practices authorized by the secular discursive tradition that I am elucidating in this chapter, and I theorize these claims and practices and the bodily transformations they effect in terms of a ritual process that I describe as mimetic transduction. In this section, I turn more fully toward "orthodox" enunciations of the discursive tradition from some of its contemporary authorized representatives. Specifically, I turn toward extended accounts from four contemporary "keepers of the tradition": Efruz Çakırkaya, the director of the Istanbul Music Festival; Cem Mansur, orchestral conductor and director of the municipal Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon; Bülent Evcil, flutist and president of the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra; and Cihat Aşkın, prominent violinist and pedagogue. In this section I parse extended, emic summaries of the secular discursive tradition that authorizes and shapes the practices of listening discussed above.

The director of the Istanbul Music festival, Efruz Çakırkaya, gave a particularly clear example of many of the central assumptions of the secular discursive tradition while discussing future festival programs designed to appeal to children:

> **Erol:** Why do you think children are important? Why should children listen to classical music? What is important about it?

> **Efruz:** Polyphonic music is very colorful. I also think that it has a number of vital messages to teach. When you think of an orchestra, everyone has a duty there. Think of the human body. It is all organs, and those organs [together] produce something wonderful. There is moving together and with mutual respect. That also exists in society. I mean, if we think of it as the smallest unit of society, if each instrument does something in its own right but, by hearing each other and showing respect to each other, to produce something. Really, that should be regarded as a philosophy of life. Sometimes, there is a hierarchical relationship but, I mean, polyphony (çok seslilik), polychromy (çok renklilik) harbor a number of societal situations. That's why, starting from there, like you provide [in polyphonic music], in society as well it helps to foster mutual respect, listening to each other and to the person across from you. Really, [polyphonic music] harbors very basic messages regarding living in society ... I think that, in terms of imagination and rendering their world colorful, polyphonic music plays a very important role in children's lives (interview November 10, 2020).[23]

Taking this statement as a jumping off point, there are several points that I want to unpack by way of laying out the discursive terrain. The first has to do with terminology. I include my question in the quote to bring out the point that Efruz Hanım does not follow my casual use of the term "classical music" (klasik müzik), but rather employs the term "polyphonic" (çok sesli). As I have suggested in the section on democracy above, this term is often deployed in connection with both society and democracy. Likewise responding to my casual use of the term "klasik müzik," Cem Mansur elaborated on this point, noting his preference for "polyphonic universal" music (çok sesli evrensel):

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[23] Erol: Sizce niye çocuklar önemli? Çocuklar neden klasik müzik dinlesin? Önemi nedir onun? Efruz: Çok sesli müzik çok renkli bir şey. Öğreteceği bir takım hayati mesajlar da olduğunu düşünüyorum. Bir orkestrayı düşündüğünüz zaman orada herkesin bir görevi var. İnsan bedenini düşünün. Hepsi bir organ ve o organlar ortaya müthiş bir şey çıkarıyorlar. Karşılıklı saygı var ve beraber hareket etme var. Toplum içerisinde de bu var. Yani o en küçük bir toplum birimi olarak düşünecek olursanız eğer her enstrüman kendi içinde bir şey yapıyor ama birbirini duyarak, saygı göstererek ortaya bir şey çıkarmak var. Aslında o bir hayat felsefesi olarak bakılmalı. Kimi zaman bir hiyerarşi ilişkisi de var ama yani çok seslilik, çok renklilik hani toplumsal bir takım durumları da içinde barındırıyor. Onun için oradan başlayarak işte toplum içinde de karşılıklı saygı, birbirini dinleme ve karşısındakinin de bu topluma sağladığı bir fayda senin sağladığın gibi. Aslında çok temel toplum içinde yaşamaya dair mesajları da barındırıyor. Müzik her şekliyle güzel. Hayal gücü ve dünyasını renklendirme anlamında da çok sesli müziğin çocukların hayatında önemli bir yer olduğunu düşünüyorum.

> One has to know what one is identifying with classical music. I don't like the 'classical music' thing very much and, as you know, more or less from the middle of the eighteenth century ... after that it is possible to understand it as classical music. For my part, I say 'polyphonic universal' [çok sesli evrensel]. Of course, I made up the 'universal.' That's how I see it, but there are reasons why I see it that way. There were many alternative names sought for this. 'Serious music'—why? Are the others unserious? 'Art music' but which art music? Yes, are musics not art? What we do is art but what they do is shoemaking? What? It's 'classical music' because there isn't a good alternative. I think that it's being written—that is, notated—that is an important distinguishing factor from the other world music cultures. Written, composed, planned polyphonic music. It has been written in a language that everyone can understand. I think that it has a claim to universality (interview, January 2, 2020).[24]

Expanding on his reasoning for preferring the term "universal," Mansur develops another thread in Efruz Hanım's account: the idea that there are ethical values embedded in polyphonic music ("very basic messages regarding living in society"). Mansur explained that:

> The resounding together of so much difference within the sophistication of polyphonic music, those differences being able to exist in harmony—this is the mirror of Western democracy. It is not something that happened in Saudi Arabia or in America three hundred years ago, but rather two-hundred years prior in Europe. When you look at all of these values: the declaration of human rights or everyone's being able to access medical care or surgery of a certain quality, zero tolerance for violence, freedom of expression provided that it doesn't lead to violence, one-hundred percent freedom of the press. These are things that have been won at important points with major struggle … I think that universality has to do with those values and that polyphonic music carries those values to people—things for which we yearn for ourselves, for future generations, for our society. That is a package. There not being sewage in front of your door and there being a symphony orchestra and that when you go to the hospital you are not going to be rebuked but receive quality service … that is a totality. It is necessary not to take offence at acknowledging it. Yes, some societies led the way. So what? Did you invent the internal

[24] Klasik müzik ile ilgili neyi tanımladığımızı bilmek lazım öncelikle. Ben klasik müzik şeyini çok sevmiyorum ve biliyorsunuz 18.yy'ın ikinci yarısı aşağı yukarı Barok'tan önce, … Sonra diye klasik müzik anlamak mümkün. Ben çok sesli evrensel diyorum kendi kendime. Evrenseli de ben uydurdum tabi. Öyle gördüm ama öyle görmemin nedenleri var. Bunun için çok alternatif isim arandı. Serious müzik, neden; Ötekiler ciddiyetsiz miydi? Sanat müziği ama hangi sanat müziği. Evet, müzikler sanat mı değil? bizim yaptığımız sanat da onların yaptığı kunduracılık mı? Ne? İyi bir alternatif olmadığı için klasik müzik. Bence yazılmış yani nota edilmiş, bu önemli bir ayırıcı unsur diğer dünya müzik kültürlerinden. Yazılmış, bestelenmiş, planlanmış çok sesli müzik. Herkesin anlayacağı dilde yazılmış. Onun bence bir evrensellik iddiası var.

combustion engine? Or Penicillin? Someone else did, and this is their music … (interview, January 2, 2020).[25]

Here, Cem Bey takes the polyphony modeled in an orchestra as a modality for conveying values of living peacefully with difference in society and calls for a clear-eyed recognition of its European history. Aşkın, a violinist currently at the peak of his career, extended this line of thinking to nature, suggesting that "if people develop their aesthetic apprehensions and they acquire aesthetic values, they are more compassionate toward nature and they become a better person with regard to nature. They protect natural life. For this reason, two things are important for me [sic]: first, in order to become a better person … they have to acquire certain moral virtues. I think that music is a very good tool for this."[26] The flutist Bülent Evcil made a similar connection:

> Now, think of countries that don't have [polyphonic music], how much [Turkey] has advanced when you compare [it] to those kinds of countries. Music is like math: it develops your intelligence, your personality, your success. People who make music cannot be bad people. It activates intelligences, minds. Notes are processed entirely with mathematical sequencing. people who are interested in it—whatever the form of music—it is impossible for them to become possessed with bad thoughts, to be occupied in war, to have thoughts of killing someone. For this reason, countries that have these institutions, where peace and prosperity are at a high level, culture and democracy are at a higher level (interview, March 11, 2020).[27]

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[25] O çok sesli müziğin sofistikasyonu içinde o kadar farklılığın bir arada tınlaması, o farklılıkların bir armoni içinde var olabilmesi için bir batı demokrasisinin aynasıdır o. Suudi Arabistan'da veya 300 yıl öncesi Amerika'sında değil, 200 yıl öncesinin Avrupa'sında olan bir şey. Bütün bu değerler baktığın zaman insan hakları beyannamesi veya herkesin belli bir kalitede sağlık hizmeti veya hekim hizmetine ulaşabilmesi, şiddete işkenceye sıfır tolerans, şiddete yönelmedikçe ifade özgürlüğüne, basın özgürlüğüne %100 özgürlük. Bunlar büyük noktalarda büyük mücadeleler ile kazanılan şeyler ... bu bir bütün. Bunu kabul etmekten de gocunmamak lazım. Evet, bazı toplumlar önden gitti. Ne var? Sen mi icat ettin içten yanmalı roketi? Veya penisilini? Başkası etti. Onun müziği de işte…
[26] İnsanlar eğer estetik kaygılarını geliştirirlerse ve estetik değerleri olursa, doğaya karşı daha şefkatli olurlar ve doğaya karşı iyi bir insan olurlar. Doğal hayatı korurlar. Dolayısıyla benim için iki şey önemli: Birisi, insanın kendisinin ilerlemesi yolunda daha iyi bir insan olabilmesi için bir takım ahlaki Erdemlere sahip olması. Müzik bence bunun için bir araç.
[27] Şimdi olmayan ülkeleri düşünün. O tarz ülkeleri Türkiye ile kıyasladığınız zaman memleketin ne kadar bu konuda ileri gittiğini. Müzik matematik gibidir; zekânızı, kişiliğinizi, başarınızı

Following upon my discussion above of sensory and emotional development through listening, I suggest that this relationship between ethical values of diversity and tolerance and listening to "polyphonic universal" music stems from the way that listening is understood to shape and mold the body and its sensory and emotional configurations such that distance and separation are cultivated.

As much as these ethical values and the sensory and emotional attunements that support them are framed in universalist terms, they are also frequently localized at the level of the society and the orchestra as the "smallest unit of society," as Efruz Çakırkaya suggested. In this way, the secular discursive tradition that I discuss can be understood to emphasize organic solidarity. By "organic solidarity," I refer to Emile Durkheim's likening of the division of labor characteristic of modern society to the inter-dependency of the different components of the human body. Indeed, Durkheim's sociology exerted a strong influence on modern, secular Turkish society (Berkes 1936, Spencer 1958, Arjomand 1982). Sociologist Susan Pearce emphasizes the profound influence of Durkheimian sociology on the founding of the Turkish Republic, noting that Mustafa Kemal himself consulted Durkheim—particularly the *Division of Labor in Society*—and that Ziya Gökalp, the Republic's founding sociologist, had studied with Durkheim (Pearce 2012). Indeed, it is difficult not to hear the Durkheimian resonances in Efruz Çakırkaya's suggestion to "think of the human body. It is all organs, and those organs [together] produce something wonderful." When I mentioned Cem Mansur's comparison between democracy and

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geliştirir. Müzik yapan insanlar kötü insanlar olamazlar. Zekâları, kafaları daha çok çalıştırır. Notalar tamamen matematiksel dizilimlerle işler. Bununla ilgilenen insanların da kötü düşünceye, müziğin her ne şekli olursa olsun, müzikle uğraşan kişinin savaşla uğraşmaya, birini öldürmeyi düşüncelerine kapılması imkânsızdır. Dolayısıyla bu kurumların olduğu ülkelerde barış, refah, yüksek düzeyde kültür ve demokrasi kavramı daha yukarıdadır.

polyphony, Cihat Aşkın responded by saying: “Of course, the best example of this is ability of an organ to carry out different functions in harmony and to carry this out in an orderly way.”[28]

As Efruz Çakırkaya notes, this organic solidarist social ontology leaves open the possibility of hierarchy (“Sometimes, there is a hierarchical relationship”). Though he doesn’t use the physiological terminology, Cem Mansur also explores questions of inter-dependency and hierarchy in a public orchestral rehearsal program that he refers to as the “Laboratory of Democracy”:

> The thing that [I] call the Laboratory of Democracy, I can use at any rehearsal … whichever one of [these scores] I open here teaches you how to live together, how to listen to each other, not to Other, to take authority and responsibility at different levels: from this page, I can pull out ten questions related to the connections among [members of a society] or their responsibility to each other … perhaps as Nietzsche said, polyphonic music ‘opens the door to a better world to us,’ but the orchestra is a microcosm and I use it as a metaphor for democracy in those narrated rehearsals (interview, January 2, 2020).[29]

Here, like Gülnur Hanım above, Mansur suggests that he uses the orchestra as a metaphor. Following the analysis of mimetic transduction above, I suggest that, according to the Turkish secular discursive tradition, the polyphonic orchestra is not simply a metaphor, but also embedded in an active process of transformation of bodies. Mansur goes on to elaborate on the nature of authority as worked out in the orchestra:

> There is an authority figure: do they have the right to be a dictator like fifty years ago? Of course not. You see, it can also work without being a dictator. [The Turkish Youth Orchestra] is a space in which people from the various regions of Turkey, who produce different sounds, can come together with the purpose of being in harmony and

[28] Bir harmoni içerisinde bir organın farklı işlevleri yapabilmesi ve bunu bir düzen içerisinde götürebilmesinin en güzel örneği tabi ki.
[29] Demokrasi laboratuvarı dediğimiz şey herhangi bir provayı kullanmam mümkün, çünkü bir hazırlık gerekmiyor. Ne var burada; bunların hangisini açsam burada size birbiri ile yaşamak, birbirini dinlemek, ötekileştirmeme, otorite, farklı seviyelerde sorumluluk almak, toplumun birbirine bağımlılığı veya birbirine karşı sorumluluğu ile ilgili şu sayfadan on tane soru çıkarabilirim size. Veya başka bir sayfadan… bunun esprisi bu yani, orkestra – çok sesli müzik, belki Nietzsche dediği gibi “daha iyi bir dünyanın kapısını bize açıyor” fakat orkestranın kendisi bir mikrokozmoz ve demokrasinin bir metaformu olarak kullanıyorum o açıklamalı provalarda.

understanding. Music actually gives us the dynamics of society: doing something alone, doing something in a small group, who has responsibility? What is the responsibility toward the person carrying the responsibility? How much can we accomplish without taking orders, just by listening to each other. How much are [orders] really necessary, how much are they unnecessary, or when there is a dispute will the one who yells the loudest win? [en çok bağıran mı kazanacak?]. Once more, all of these are actually fundamental values, and they enter universally. All of these social issues and their solutions are written on every page of Western music (interview, January 2, 2020).[30]

Nevertheless, despite Mansur's shading of reasonableness and tolerance, more authoritarian takes on the secular discursive tradition are possible. Echoing Carl Schmitt's critique of modern liberalism's obfuscation of the nature of sovereignty (Schmitt 1922), Bülent Evcil elaborates on the nature of polyphonic authority:

> **Bülent:** We make polyphony but, in the orchestra, we look at one person: the conductor. I mean, that conductor is alone. You can't say, 'here I'm going to play like this.' For this reason, in the world's biggest democracies there are presidents and prime ministers. With polyphony, it is necessary to work within a given culture, a given civility (terbiye), and discipline.
> **Erol:** After all, it's not anarchy
> **Bülent:** It's not anarchy. Saying 'I want democracy, I want freedom,' I still need to not punch you in the face, right? For this reason, while playing in the orchestra, you can't play saying 'let me play flute like a maniac.' There, the conductor keeps a rhythm. For this reason, I see and experience that both democracy and an orchestra must be within a standard of discipline. That's what I think. It has to pass through an education of discipline, administration, order, education (interview, March 11, 2020).[31]

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[30] Ne var işte, otorite figürü var, onun bir diktatör olma hakkı var mı? 50 yıl önce olduğu gibi? Yok tabi. Pekâlâ diktatör olmadan da olabiliyor. Orkestranın farklı sesler çıkartan, özellikle Türkiye'nin farklı yerlerinden gelen, farklı sesler çıkartan insanların bir ahenk içinde var olma amacıyla, anlaşma amacıyla bir araya geldikleri bir alan. Müzik aslında bizi toplumdaki dinamikleri veriyor; tek başına bir şey yapmak, küçük bir grupta yapmak, sorumluluk kimin? O sorumluluk sahibinin en baştaki kişiye karşı sorumluluğu ne? Emir almadan sadece birbirimizi dinleyebilmek ne kadar işimizi halledebiliriz? Aslında buna ne kadar ihtiyaç var, ne kadar yok veya bir çatışma mı var ve en çok bağıran mı kazanacak? Bütün bunlar aslında yine asıl değerler ve bu evrensel olarak konuya geliyor. Toplumsal bu soruların hepsi ve çözümleri batı müziğinin her sayfasında yazıyor.

[31] Bülent: Çok sesli yapıyoruz ama biz de orkestrada bir kişiye bakıyoruz, şef. Yani o şef de tek başına. Ben orada böyle çalacağım diye yapamıyorsun. Dolayısıyla dünyanın en büyük demokrasilerinde başkanlar, cumhurbaşkanları, başbakanlar oluyor. Çok seslilik derken belli bir kültürde, belli bir terbiye ve disiplin içerisinde de çalışmayı gerektiriyor.
Erol: Anarşi değil sonuçta.

As Navaro describes, there is a long tradition of strong statism in Turkey (Navaro 2002). Indeed, while describing the function of Western art music in society, Evcil mounted a spirited defense of elites:

> **Bülent:** We are the founders of the Republic: Atatürk, who founded the Republic and created these things … you know that while he was in Bulgaria … he went constantly to the Sofia opera, he was very impressed by the Sofia opera. He saw the effect that opera has over people. How valuable and influential in the society, how it relaxes people, how it affects them, what an important population … now, you may evaluate the people who go there as elite, but we must not forget what that elite person influences, the pyramid underneath. An elite person there perhaps gives the opportunity to work to thousands of people or is a mayor who leads thousands of people, a provincial governor, they could be leader of an international company. For that reason, I don't think it's very correct to see them as elite. In all likelihood, Atatürk saw how culture affected people who went there and watched opera as elitists and how well-tempered and how positive they were, how reconciled they were with life and politics. I think that he wanted this to come to Turkey.
> **Erol:** I see
> **Bülent:** For that reason, I am definitely against the idea that this music only appeals to elites. I am totally a person of the people and I have seen and witnessed that the music I make appeals to the people and addresses their hearts. Having come to my age, I have witnessed that, the music we play as an orchestra has an effect wherever we go and causes people to say 'hey, this stuff is great.' For this reason, this is not just something that appeals to a single community—it appeals to all levels of the society from the top down. By bringing this to the country, founding the republic and settling it, his founding conservatories, opera ballet, orchestras, he created an effect on the flowing of the cultural and artistic veins of the country (interview, March 11, 2020).[32]

Bülent: Anarşi değil. Ben demokrasi istiyorum, özgürlük istiyorum deyip sana yumruk atmamam gerekiyor değil mi? Dolayısıyla orkestrada çalarken de ben flütü böyle manyak çalarım diye çalamıyorsunuz. Orada şef ritim vuruyor. Dolayısıyla demokrasinin de bir disiplin standart içerisinde orkestranın içerisinde de öyle olduğunu görüyorum, yaşıyorum. Öyle olduğunu düşünüyorum. Disiplin, yönetim, düzgünlük, eğitimden geçmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

[32] Bülent: Cumhuriyeti kuranlarız biz. Cumhuriyeti kuran Atatürk de bunları yaratan insan. Davet ediyor konservatuarın kurulmasını, biliyorsunuz Bulgaristan'da ateşe iken sürekli Sofya'ya operaya gidiyor, Sofya operasından çok etkileniyor. Operanın insanlar üzerindeki etkisini görüyor. Toplumda ne kadar faydalı ve etkili, insanları nasıl rahatlattığını, nasıl etkilediğini, nasıl bir önemli kitlenin… Şimdi oraya gelen insanları belki elit olarak değerlendirebilirsiniz ama o elit insanı etkilediği, o aşağıdaki piramidi de çok unutmamak gerekiyor. Oradaki bir elit insan belki binlerce insana iş imkânı sağlayan ya da binlerce insanı yöneten bir belediye başkanı, bir vali, uluslararası bir şirketin yöneticisi olabilir. Dolayısıyla buna elit olarak bakmanın çok doğru olmadığını düşünüyorum. Belki elitist olarak oraya gelip opera izlediğini ve ondan sonraki kültürü nasıl etkilediğini ve insanların ne kadar yumuşak

Here, a kind of scaling up of the processes of mimetic transduction that I describe above can be observed. The "well-tempered" bodies of individual elites have an outsized influence on society, in turn shaping it as a well-tempered body, as indicated by the striking organicist reference to the country as a single body with veins. Again, though, perhaps the most salient aspect of the solidarism exhibited here to my account of a secular discursive tradition is the dynamics of separation and codification that they entail. I have argued that practices of listening produce a separation and codification of the senses and emotions under the direction of a secular sovereign subject resulting in a sense of abstraction from the world. As a social ontology, solidarism is likewise defined by a natural separation and codification of social life organized under sovereign elites in a manner similar to the functioning of organs in the human body—"dependent independence," to borrow Serhan Bali's phrase. In this sense, the secular discursive tradition that I describe is circular, ouroboros-like: polyphonic music is natural, it resembles the organization of the natural world; listening to it shapes the sensorial and emotional apparatus for democracy, which is a natural product of polyphony, while polyphony is in turn a microcosm of a democratic social body whose structures of hierarchy are always already known because natural, like the human body that listens to polyphonic music.

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mizaçlı ve ne kadar olumlu olduğunu, hayata, siyasete barışık olduğunu görmüştür Atatürk büyük ihtimalle. Bunun da Türkiye'ye gelmesini istemiştir diye düşünüyorum.
Erol: Anladım.
Bülent: Dolayısıyla bu müziğin sadece elitlere hitap ettiği konusunda kesinlikle karşıyım. Ben tamamen bir halk insanıyım ve yaptığım müziğin de halka hitap ettiğini ve kalbine işlediğine çok şahit oldum, gördüm. Orkestra olarak da çaldığımız, gittiğimiz her yerde bunun etkili olduğunu, insanlara yahu güzel bir şeymiş dedirttiğine şahit oldum bu yaşıma gelinceye kadar. Dolayısıyla bu sadece bir kesime hitap eden değil, toplumun her kesimine tepeden aşağıya kadar hitap edecek bir olaydır. Atatürk'ün de bunu memlekete getirip cumhuriyet kurup yerleştirerek, konservatuarları, opera baleyi, orkestralar kurması memleketin kültür, sanat damarlarının akmasında bir etki yaratmıştır bence.

To zoom out a bit: polyphony here is far from just a musical texture. It is also an emic discursive category that both elucidates and effaces difference. As is clear by now, the Turkish term for polyphonic is "çok sesli"—literally, "many-voiced," from the combination of "çok," meaning "much," or many" and "sesli," meaning "voiced." The noun form, "çok seslilik," thus becomes "the quality of being many-voiced." Here, though, even as "polyphonic" and "çok sesli," are deployed in both English and Turkish to denote a specific musical texture involving the harmonious combination of independent voices, there is an erasure of difference in the Turkish, whereby the term "çok sesli" is commonly used to refer simply to the quality of having multiple voices and not the specific musical texture of polyphony. Though it is of course linguistically possible, in everyday parlance the distinction between, say, homophonic and polyphonic texture is dissolved into the category of "çok sesli." At the same time the distinction between monophonic and heterophonic textures is often casually dissolved under the category of "tek sesli", or, literally, single-voiced.

At the same time, there is a slippery discursive relationship between usages of "çok seslilik" and "tek seslilik" to describe musical texture and their metaphorical or synecdochic invocations to refer to sociopolitical forms—in particular: democracy and authoritarianism. As becomes evident above, the term "çoksesli," is frequently deployed to refer to democracy; "tek sesli," on the other hand, to refer disparagingly to the creeping authoritarianism of the current Turkish regime. A recent manifestation of this discursive slippage can be found in an April 23, 2021, editorial titled "The 101st Year of the First Parliament: Polyphonic Music and Democratic Society" (Birinci Meclis'in 101. Yılı: Çok Sesli Müzik ve Demokratik Toplum) in the İzmir newspaper, Ege Meclisi, from the professional historian, Hakkı Uyar. The editorial begins:

> Democratic society is polyphonic (çok sesli). The places where this is reflected are parliaments. We can liken the parliament to polyphonic music. Democracy encapsulates a

> kind of orchestral or choral-type music. It is not possible to paint monophonic (tek sesli) music as a choir. Even if single man regimes under the guise of democracy exhibit a polyphonic image, they are like a monophonic choir (Hakkı 2021).[33]

To be clear, I don't mean to imply that this kind of discourse is monolithic or that all of my interlocutors would necessarily espouse it. Rather, this quote is a particularly bald statement of a discursive slippage that is often more or less close to the discursive surface.

In this vein, çok seslilik and, particularly frequently, the polyphonic orchestra, are taken up discursively as aspirational microcosm of a particular social ontology. According to this discursive usage, polyphonic music models and also produces a configuration of society in which social roles are separated, codified, and inter-dependent, and potentially situated within hierarchies. In other words, the social ontology of which the polyphonic orchestra is taken as a model is organic solidarist in a Durkheimian sense. As I argue above, this usage can ultimately be traced to significant Durkheimian foundations of Turkish society and a prevailing hierarchical statism.

There is an isomorphic relationship between this Turkish conception of polyphony and several other concepts important to this dissertation. Perhaps most significantly, one of these is the body whose emotional and sensory separation and codification I discuss above. Through the ritual practices of listening that I describe, listening to polyphonic music is understood to reconfigure the body through a process of separating and codifying the emotions and senses to produce a sovereign subject with a sense of felt distance from the world. Here, the social

[33] Demokratik toplum çok seslidir. Bunun yansıdığı yerler parlamentolardır. Parlamentoyu çok sesli müziğe benzetebiliriz. Bir tür orkestra ya da koro tarzı müziği içerir demokrasi. Tek seslimüziği koro diye yutturma imkanı yoktur. Demokrasi kisvesi altındaki tek adam yönetimleri, çok sesli bir görünüm sergilese de tek sesli koro gibidir.

solidarist model reappears at the level of the body in which emotions and sensory modalities are separated, codified, and subordinated to a sovereign subjectivity. In this contextual sense, the secular body can be understood to be a polyphonic body.

Here, too, I suggest that processes through which secular bodies are shaped are inflected by polyphony. Scholars working in an Asadian vein have discussed bodily attunement in terms of sedimentation of particular bodily attunements and ethical content that prepare the subject for proper religious engagement (Mahmood 2005; Hirschkind 2006). For these contexts, the sediment metaphor of gradual accrual of particular ethical content through repeated practices for processes of bodily attunement is appropriate. However, in the case of secular bodies, a paradox emerges: insofar as they are understood discursively to be particularly adept at engaging with difference, secular bodies are better understood as having form rather than specific content—emotions and senses separated and codified and submitted to the control of a sovereign subject in such a way that responses to any and all stimuli are moderated and buffered, and thus reason allowed to govern. In other words, the body is formed so as not to have specific ethical commitments, but rather to be distanced from its own commitments so that it can enter the public sphere as an abstracted individual. Critics have accurately pointed out that this way of being in the world is in fact particular and not universal. Nevertheless, my inquiry here is premised on taking ethnographic data seriously and, indeed, understanding it in its geographical and historical particularity. Thus, I propose that the dynamic through which the attunements of secular bodies are shaped is better understood as a process of "mimetic transduction" of hewing and sculpting through which emotional interiority and the senses are rendered polyphonic.

Indeed, this conception of separated and codified elements situated within power-saturated social structures resonates conceptually with an Asadian understanding of modern

secularity writ large. According to this understanding, secularity is defined by separate domains—religion, the social, the secular, education, health, leisure—situated within a regime of power defined by the sovereign state in modernity. This is certainly an apt description of modern Turkish secularism, in which the state attempted to codify and control Islam by bringing it under the jurisdiction of a state ministry while concomitantly promulgating a secularist ideology of religion as private, individual matter. In this way, according to the discursive conception of polyphony that I articulate, secularity itself can be understood fruitfully in terms of polyphony.

A final way in which the concept of polyphony resonates with an element of this dissertation has to do with the city of Istanbul. Istanbul, itself, is often thought of as a city of many voices—a polyphonic city. During a February 19, 2022 conversation titled, "The Role of Cities: Democratic Game Changers," held as part of the Munich Security Conference, for example, Istanbul mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu made the following statement: "The story of Istanbul is critical in this framework, because it's a very polyphonic and very colorful city, and it has demanded freedom at every stage of its history." At least, this was how his English-language statement was translated and reported in Turkey. What he actually said was: "The story of Istanbul is critical in this framework, because it's a very diverse and dynamic city." İmamoğlu was speaking in English—this is a direct quote. Revealingly, though, his remarks were conveyed in the Turkish media substituting the term "çok sesli," or "polyphonic" ("Ekrem İmamoğlu: 'İstanbul demokrasiye aç, demokrasiyi arzulayan bir şehir'" 2022). In other words, where İmamoğlu said "diverse and dynamic," Cumhuriyet preferred, "polyphonic" and "colorful."

Before I undertook serious fieldwork in Istanbul, the series of early Turkish Republican music reforms had become almost like a litany for me. Once on the ground in Istanbul, though, I quickly began to piece together the outlines of a different, but equally important, polyphonic

history. When I suggested in an interview that Mustafa Kemal is often associated with polyphonic music in Turkey, Cem Mansur replied that "There has always been polyphonic music in Istanbul. There were minorities, there were Levantines" (interview, January 2, 2020: İstanbul'da her zaman çok sesli müzik var. Azınlıklar var, Levantenler var). Taking up a polemical tack against those who suggest that classical music in Turkey is "top down" (tepeden inme), musicologist (and CRR's first director) Filiz Ali exclaimed:

> There is polyphony in this culture. Why? It is in the cosmopolitan big cities. There are Jews, there are Armenians, there are Greeks, there are Levantines. In everyone's home, in the homes of White Turks who resemble them, there is a piano, piano is played. Some play violin, and I can't understand why this is denied. Top down—for example, they say that Atatürk's music revolution was top down. In actuality, it was bottom up. If it doesn't come up from the bottom, where is it going to come from? … For God's sake! (interview, December 2, 2019).[34]

Erol Ertemsir, an elderly Istanbul man well known for attending hundreds of concerts per year, described to me the first classical concert he ever attended, around 1960 at the Dram Tiyatrosu in the Tepebaşı neighborhood—"a miniature of the Scala Opera," he said (Scala Operası'nın ufağıydı). At those early concerts, he said, around half of the listeners were "non-Muslim" (gayrimüslim) —Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Levantines (interview, December 4, 2021). Longtime Istanbul State Opera Chorus member Anais Martin described to me the Istanbul City choir that her parents had belonged to and that had provided the foundation for the opera chorus:

> A big portion of the city chorus was made up of Jews, Armenians, Greeks. For example, a Madam Ani also knew me … There was a Mösyö Möis, what an elegant man. A prince entered, you would say. Aydın Bey [then director of the opera] would use him in dance scenes. Then the guy got angry and went to Israel. They were very nice people … I knew a Mösyö Agop, for example. Where do I know this man from, I would say? He was the

[34] Demek ki var, bu kültürde var çok seslilik var. Neden var, büyük şehirlerde var, cozmopolit. Yahudisi var, Ermenisi var, Rum var, Lavanteni var. Herkesin evinde, bu insanlara benzeyen Beyaz Türklerin evinde de piyano var. Piyano çalınıyor. Kimisi keman çalıyor ve bunlar neden inkâr ediliyor ben anlamıyorum. Tepeden inme mesela Atatürk'ün müzik devrimini tepeden inme derler. Esasında bu aşağıdan yukarı çıkmadır. Aşağıdan yukarı nereden çıkacak? Topraktan bağlamasından başka hiçbir şey çalmayan bir halktan ne bekliyorsun sen? Allah allah!

> guy who painted my friend's house in [the traditionally Armenian neighborhood] Kurtuluş! (interview, Dec. 1, 2020).[35]

In this sense, Istanbul can be understood discursively as a polyphonic city resounding with polyphonic music. The polyphonic "old Istanbul," of course, is understood largely to have been eroded by nationalism, bigotry, and extremism of various forms (even as present-day difference in Istanbul—brought, for example, by Syrian refugees—is often rejected). Nevertheless, its traces remain and are rendered accessible through Western art music, as I discuss in the next two chapters.

Authorizing Distance

The dynamics of distance, separation, codification, and abstraction that I suggest are constitutive of the secular body are present throughout this discursive circle and the practices of listening it authorizes. Where I have held off on discussions of power throughout most of this chapter and emphasized that I do not consider the secular to be reducible to ideology, this does not mean that it is free from relations of power. I suggest that, by way of the secular circle of separation, codification, and abstraction, we have arrived via back roads (again, chromatic modulation?) at an ideological justification of elite status and taste that hides its claims behind an Occidentalist discourse of universality. Where Bourdieu argues that practices of engagement with "high art" such as listening to Western art music serve to mystify class hegemony by appearing to

[35] Şehir korosunun büyük bölümü çok Musevi var, ermeni var, Rum var. Mesela madam ani o da beni tanıdı. Sonra operanın korosuna… Yılları geçmiş. Mesela Mösyö Möis vardı, nasıl zarif bir adam. Prens giriyor içeri dersin. Dans sahnelerinde Aydın Bey onu kullanırdı. Sonra adam küstü gitti İsrail'e. Çok hoş insanlardı. Ben böyle deyince manevi ablam ooo! Sen gördün ki? Sen bizim koroyu görecektin der. Bir mösyö agop tanıdım mesela. Nereden biliyorum bu adamı derdim. Kurtuluş'ta bir arkadaşımın evini boyayan boyacıymış!

naturalize (hegemonic) "good" taste through habitus, here it is the case that distinction becomes yet another instance of separation and codification produced by secularity. It is, moreover, naturalized through the circular dynamic that I outline above.

I encountered a particularly jarring exemplification of this dynamic at a February 20, 2020, concert titled "Puccini's women" put on by the Istanbul State Opera as one of its "Fuaye Konserleri" (Foyer Concerts). These concerts, held in Süreyya Opera's foyer, were free, and thus encouraged the diligent to go to elaborate lengths to get a front row seat. Şadan Hanım was consistently the most diligent, traveling some two hours in public transportation from the distant Yeşilköy neighborhood on Istanbul's European side to wait outside of Süreyya Opera. She was consistently at the front of the line, and consistently sat at the center of the front row for the concerts. At the February 20 concert, I fell into a conversation with Şadan Hanım. She explained how often she goes to the theater—she loves Shakespeare; for her, Shakespeare is the beginning of theater, she said. I asked her where she likes to go, and she started to mention the theater in Üsküdar, but then abruptly told me to leave this place, it is ruined—"he who must not be named" ruined it, she said (referring to the Turkish president). By way of illustration, she excused herself profusely before saying that, for the president, ballet "orients the person toward the genital region" (insanı belden aşağısıyla meşgul etmek). For her, on the other hand, ballet is one of the most beautiful arts and the peak of human capability, she said. Turkey has now been filled with Arabs, she explained, adding that were she lives, they sit and fill the beach and grill meat and smoke hookah—previously, she didn't know what this was, she said. Moreover, they go into stores "stark naked" (çırılçıplak)—when I expressed surprise, she clarified that they enter wearing only sandals and shorts. She said that these people here, the men, force their wives to cover, then they divorce them, then they follow them and beat them. They hurt animals, she said,

they cut them and torture them. But, she said, her mother's side came from Crete during the *Mübadele,* and her father's side came from Salonica: "so I'm not one of them!" she repeated several times (o yüzden ben onlardan değilim!). Though Şadan's outburst was rather extreme, my point is that the dynamics of separation and codification that characterize the secular discursive tradition that I unpack in this chapter tend not only toward class-based subject positions and their embodiment in habitus, as for Bourdieu, but also toward different conceptions of the human and ontologies of personhood.

It is not incidental that Şadan Hanım stakes her claim to ontological distinction on the Western origins of her family. Indeed, references to the West have been consistent throughout the accounts and contexts I have discussed in this chapter, and this points to one final aspect of the secular discursive tradition that needs unpacking. In positing a secular discursive tradition, I encounter a potential challenge at the point of the "authorizing discourse." There is no obvious parallel to be drawn in this case with the Koran in the case of Islam—no single, authoritative text that might be identified as an authorizing discourse.

Here, I follow upon anthropologist Steve Caton's discussion of metapragmatic authorization of rain prayers in Yemen through reference to the Koran (Caton 2006). What I understand Caton to be suggesting is that Asad may have limited the scope of what might constitute an authorizing discourse in his discussion of the role of the Koran in Islamic tradition. In his account, rain prayers in Yemen must constitute themselves as a tradition in the absence of explicit Koranic metapragmatic discourse:

> The invocation cites Qur'anic discourse in order, metapragmatically, to authorize its own performance or instance of speaking, and it does so in order to call forth a response from God that is material in the form of rain but also spiritual as a sign of forgiveness. It is a dialogical act, or attempts to be one, between man and God. Precisely because there is no explicit metapragmatic discourse in the Qur'an, the hadith, the sunna, the fiqh, or elsewhere in Zaidi doctrine that says what the rain prayer should be, it must constitute

> itself as an event in the world—it must authorize itself—and does so metapragmatically. To be sure, like reported speech, without something like the text of the Qur'an to depend on it would not be entirely persuasive, but it nonetheless constitutes or creates itself in its own utterance (Caton 2006: 55)."

For Caton, the issue is to account for religious practices that could not be understood in the (in his view) narrow conception of an authorizing discourse that Asad describes. In the case of the Yemeni rain prayers, appeal is still made to the Koran in a general sense for legitimacy, but the specific tradition of praying for rain must constitute itself as a tradition metapragmatically, during the discursive act, so to speak— "citing as it must an anterior discourse but constituting something other than this discourse" (Caton 2006: 56).

Like Caton, I find that the practices I discuss are authorized not by a single, authoritative discourse like the Koran, but rather through a much more implicit and diffuse metapragmatic authorization supplied by the discourse of Turkish Occidentalism. Here, I draw upon Meltem Ahıska's explication of this discourse in her history of early Turkish Republican radio (Ahıska 2010). Ahıska argues that Occidentalism is a discourse forged dialogically with the West through which Turkish elites managed boundaries between modern, excessively modern, backward, and so on. Indeed, I understand her to suggest that elite status in the early Turkish Republic was an effect of the ability to negotiate and legislate these boundaries. Radio, in turn, for Ahıska, was a sonic medium through which elites were able to imagine the modern nation through sonic fantasy, insofar as the medium of radio afforded the possibility that the entire nation could be (theoretically) addressed and thus imagined with the voices of the elite.

Here, I suggest that the discursive field of Occidentalism constituted by an imaginary of the West meta-discursively authorizes the secular discursive field and its practices of listening that I discuss in this chapter. In other words, it is through an Occidentalist meta-discursive framing that the practices that I discuss gain legitimacy as practices. This becomes evident, for

example, through references to specific Western classical composers, but is also more explicitly articulated: for example, once more, by Cem Mansur:

> I think that there are some who try to explain this with cultural imperialism. For me, the only cause to explain this has to do with universalism, because music comes coded with certain values. The ability of so much difference to sound together within the sophistication of polyphonic music, those differences being able to exist together in harmony: that is the mirror of Western democracy ... Bach, for example, doesn't just come out of a hat like a rabbit. When you look at the factors that shaped Bach, there is reform, the arrival of printed music in Germany, acquaintance with Italian music—with all of these factors together a man is born in 1685: Bach. Those factors come together in such a way at that date and the materials come together in that place for a genius like that to pass through the strainer. Not one-hundred kilometers to the north or fifty years earlier (interview, January 2, 2020).[36]

Here, Mansur identifies a quite specific European chronotope as origin of modern civilization. When I pressed him on this Eurocentrism, he replied:

> I think that it's necessary not to be uncomfortable with it. It's necessary to understand its causes, to research and think about its causes, and for me, it's very clear. There is a thing called civilization and there is a geography where those values were won. That the whole world now feels a sense of belonging to the music that emerged from that geography and that time when civilizational values were won, that it can find something of itself in that music, that beyond finding other musics very eccentric, very nice, very exotic, [the whole world]—even more than feeling belonging—finds a universality in that music, finds an appeal in it, this doesn't surprise me (interview, January 2, 2020).[37]

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[36] Bunu bence kültürel emperyalizm ile açıklamaya çalışanlar var. Bunu, kendime göre açıklayabildiğim tek nedeni evrensellikle ilgili, çünkü değerler müzik bir takım kodlarla oluyor. O çok sesli müziğin sofistikasyonu içinde o kadar farklılığın bir arada tınlaması, o farklılıkların bir armoni içinde var olabilmesi için bir batı demokrasisinin aynasıdır o … Bach mesela böyle şapkadan tavşan çıkar gibi çıkmıyor. Bach'ı oluşturan etkenlere baktığın zaman işte Reform var, basılı müziğin Almanya'ya gelişi, orada İtalyan müziği tanışı, bütün bu faktörler bir arada 1685te bir adam doğuyor, Bach. O etkiler, o tarihte öyle bir araya geliyor ve öyle bir dehanın süzgecinden geçebilecek malzeme orada bir araya geliyor. 100 km kuzeyde veya 50 yıl önce değil.

[37] Bence bundan rahatsız olmamak lazım. Bunun sebeplerini anlamak lazım. Sebeplerini araştırmak lazım, düşünmek lazım üzerine ve benim için çok açık. Uygarlık diye bir şey var ve bu uygarlığın değerlerini kazanıldığı bir coğrafya var. O coğrafyada, o uygarlığın değerleri kazanıldığı zamanlarda çıkan müziğe bütün dünyanın bugün kendine ait hissetmesi, kendinde ondan bir şey bulabilmesi; başka müziklerin çok eksantrik, çok hoş, çok egzotik, çok kendine ait bulmasının ötesinde bir evrensellik bulması bunda, biz cazibe bulması beni şaşırtmıyor.

Once more, I will note that the pathways through which a position such as this might be critiqued are quite clear: not least, one might suggest that Mansur is missing a postcolonialist critique that would reveal the relationship between "Western values" and the rest of the world in the form of colonialism, and that the latter also has something to do with the ostensible universality that Mansur describes. However, it is not my goal here to rehearse existing critiques of European imperialism and colonialism, but rather to understand secularity in Turkey and Istanbul. On this front, I can point out that Occidentalism, as an authorizing discourse, is itself defined by dynamics of distance, codification, and abstraction. However, as Şadan Hanım's account indicates with particular violence, these dynamics do not ultimately produce an endless, rhizomatic field of difference, but rather hard boundaries and hierarchical orders in and among bodies, whether these be among the emotions and sensorium of the individual body, the individual subject and the world, the body suitable for democratic participation, the social body, the economy, or, indeed, the orchestra. This too, is not surprising: others—not least Asad—have pointed out the particularity of the secular's claims to universality. What I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, however, is that secularity and secular bodies—individual and social—shaped by a Turkish secular discursive tradition are defined by the establishment of boundaries and hierarchies through dynamics of separation, codification, and abstraction, and that practices of listening are key to this process.

Chapter 2: Secular Acoustic Atmospheres: Bodies and Contra-Public in Suspension

Even throughout much of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Western art music listeners in Istanbul couldn't give up live concerts. Witness, the 2020 Istanbul Opera Festival: the show went on, albeit in truncated, mostly un-staged form. Istanbullers were able to return to the garden of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, with its large court situated between the late-nineteenth-century museum building's Corinthian-columned porticos and adjacent antiquity-filled garden shaded by massive plane trees (see Figure 2). On the evening of September 19, 2020, I join them, though I have to rush by ferry from a performance held the same afternoon in the San Pasifiko Catholic Church on the Princes' Islands. Fortunately, I learn en route that the evening's opera festival performance has been delayed until 20:45. The reason for the delay is initially obscure, but after arriving and taking a seat, I understand—an extended ezan being given from the numerous mosques of the Eminönü and Sultanahmet districts forms a sonic obstacle to outdoor opera performance.

Nevertheless, the wait is apparently worth it. After the program's first half of selected Italian opera arias, I head up toward the stage to mingle. Here is Murat Karahan—the state opera's controversial young director, with his close ties to the ruling Turkish regime and program for a global Turkish opera brand. There is İsmail Küçükkaya, host of a popular morning news program on the Fox channel favored by secularists. I steer clear of Karahan, but exchange greetings with Küçükkaya. I describe my project a bit—he suggests that I should go to the concert hall at İşBank, where there is a "higher quality audience" (daha kaliteli bir kitle). Finally, I see my interlocutor Mehmet Bey, who "beat religion" by listening to Western art music. A single man in his sixties, Mehmet is youthful and widely known: for his distinctive dress, his

massive collection of Yıldız Porcelain, and, most of all, his "religious" attendance at any and all classical performances in Istanbul—wherever I went, Mehmet Bey would turn up. I explain to him the interesting performance that I had attended on the Big Island (Büyükada) that afternoon, but he says that he can't risk it. Referring to COVID-related evening lockdowns for people over sixty-five, he says that he doesn't want to pay the current president the 3000 lira fine. He is at this evening's performance illegally, as well, but says that he can take the risk to attend because there is a good connection with the Marmaray regional train between his neighborhood and the Eminönü station. Anyway, he says, looking up at the Archaeology Museum's facade, he loves this atmosphere—after all, it was where he first heard the light.

Figure 2: Istanbul State Opera production in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum's main court. Photo by author.

At the time, I registered Mehmet Bey's comment as an indication of his devoted listening habits. Later, though, as I looked through my field materials, I found that explicit references to "atmosphere" (atmosfer), and other similar terms—"ortam, ruh hali"—were rife. Indeed, I myself had casually employed the term while writing up notes. Soaking in a certain atmosphere, I began to realize, was a major goal of many of my Istanbuller interlocutors; listening to Western art music seemed to play an important role in its cultivation. No less important to the cultivation of atmosphere, though, it seemed, were spaces in the city marked by both a distinctly Occidental aesthetic and history—for example, Protestant and Catholic churches left over from Istanbul's former Levantine communities. In this chapter, I pick up these ethnographic threads to theorize what I refer to as "secular acoustic atmospheres" and their "atmospheric emplacment" in Istanbul. In her 2019 book, *Tokyo Listening: Sound and Sense in a Contemporary City,* Lorraine Plourde argues that practices of listening—to, say *Onkyo* music in an experimental venue or to recordings of Bach in Tokyo's classical music cafes—are shaped by and shape sensorial attunements to the broader city. In a 2019 article, sociologist Sana Chavoshian begins to theorize "secular atmospheres" and affective orientations to the city that emerged from efforts to re-order urban environments in 1930s Iran (Chavoshian 2019). I combine these approaches, suggesting that secular acoustic atmospheres in Istanbul are emergent at the resonant meeting of emotionally and sensorially-tuned bodies, Western art music, and the materiality(s) of the city, and become affectively loaded nodes in an emergent secularist mode of belonging in the city. This secular emplacement is both shaped by and continues to shape the bodies tuned according to the secular discursive tradition that I describe in chapter one. In this sense, in this chapter I discuss the ongoing shaping of secular bodies through listening.

I: Sonic Atmospheres

A growing scholarly momentum has emerged at the intersection of music, sound, and atmospheres in recent years in dialogue with neo-phenomenology and affect studies (McGraw 2016, Abels 2017, Abels 2018b, Riedel and Torvinen 2020, Scassillo 2020). From the new phenomenology of German philosophers Hermann Schmitz and Gernot Böhme comes an understanding of atmospheres as "spatially poured out emotions" (Schmitz, Müllan, & Slaby 2011) emergent in the domain between environmental qualities and a porous "felt body" (Leib) located at the nexus of the corporeal and the mental. Birgit Abels summarizes effectively that atmospheres conceived in this way "activate modalities for the (felt) body to align with the world" (Abels 2018b: 12). Scholars have tended to discuss the relationship between atmosphere and affect in several ways. One has to do with what Riedel and Torvinen understand in terms of mereology: whereas affect has generally been theorized as a kind of intersubjective, emergent field, atmospheres are understood in some sense as coherent entities that can exert an effect on individuals and intersubjective relations (Riedel and Torvinen 2020). Another distinction emphasizes the neo-phenomenological felt body and the manifold channels of meaningfulness (in Peircian terms) that it affords as opposed to a Massumian conception of affect as essentially pre-cognitive (and unnecessarily limited to a Sausseurian conception of signification) (Massumi 1995, Eisenlohr 2018).

I am particularly influenced by Friedlind Riedel's reflections on the study of music as atmosphere—what she refers to as a "methodological movement ontology." Taking up Schmitz' conception of the *half-thing,* Riedel emphasizes that music is not a thing that moves but rather a thing that *is* movement: "a half-thing is not a movement of air unless one does reframe it as a

full-thing, rather, it *is* its motion" (Riedel 2015, 91). An important implication of this line of thinking is that musical performances, insofar as they are half-things ontologically one with their movement, are always atmospheric, and thus activate modalities for felt bodies to align with the world by moving them. For Riedel, this brings implications for Schmitz' situation ontology*,* As opposed to Böhme's analysis of atmospheres as emergent from constellations of things collectively producing atmospheres by radiating their "ecstasies," Schmitz thinks in terms of *situations,* which precede constellations. He understands situations as totalities marked by an "internally diffuse meaningfulness" perceived by the felt body—i.e., neither pre-cognitive in a Massumian sense nor cognitive, as in the sense of hermeneutics (Abels 2018b). For Riedel, this has the implication that perceiving subjects and ecstasy-emitting objects do not simply enter into a given atmosphere but are also emergent from it: "they are embedded in atmosphere, they produce and alter atmosphere and are themselves permeated and shifted by it" (94). Drawing on Tim Ingold's (Deleuzian) conception of the "primacy of movement" in which things are embedded into the *currents of materials,* Riedel conceives of the subject and things as "embedded in movement" in such a way that a mutually transformative general state of becoming prevails. Riedel sums up:

> This means to describe the elements out of which atmospheres emerge not as an assemblage of *things* but of (musical) currents and motions. Movements, differently from the common understanding of things, have no surface, they cannot be differentiated and delineated concisely. Sound, the paragon of my proposed movement ontology, is exemplary here since—as Schmitz's atmosphere—sonic motion occupies an unbounded space, fringed at its margins; one cannot say where a sonic motion ends, since it is transduced across substances and extends into immeasurable spaces. Then, to trace movements as they cohere within the atmosphere is to acknowledge the motion that powerfully and fragmentarily links the former things and subjects through particular vibrations across the various sensory strata. It equally implies a turn away from the subject, the 'interiorised human centre of being and feelings', as the ultimate perceiver of music and atmosphere and a turn, instead, towards the multifarious atmospheric and musical movements that constitute subjectivities (Riedel 2015: 95).

At the same time, insofar as musical performance is embedded in an atmospheric situation, "the atmosphere is not solely what we hear, and neither can it be penetrated analytically via the aural" (94): atmosphere is always multi-sensory. For this reason, she suggests speaking of music not as performance, but rather *as* atmosphere.

Even as it explores the ways that secular bodies become attuned to the city, this chapter contributes to the literature on atmospheres by foregrounding questions of boundaries and borders. On the one hand, despite a conception of sonic atmospheres as unbounded and "fringed," atmospheres tend to emerge in the literature as distinctly bounded and self-contained. On the other hand, the body as discussed in studies of sonic atmospheres is always already porous, both in the sense of the intra-subjective mind-body porosity of the neo-phenomenological felt-body, and its dynamic, porous atmospheric situation. However, while they are, by definition, distinctive, atmospheres are also situated in broader contexts with which they interact. Moreover, while the paradigm of the "felt-body" and its privileging over humanistic interiority that animate work in new phenomenology no doubt have value as a corrective to a long tradition of mind-body split in Western philosophy, this line of thinking runs the risk of reifying a line of philosophical debate that is in and of the West and then selectively taking up non-Western examples insofar as they are useful for confirming the West's own self-critique.

To that end, in this chapter, I ask: how can there be secular acoustic atmospheres, given theorizations of atmosphere that emphasize the porosity of the felt body on the one hand and an understanding of the secular body defined by dynamics of emotional and sensorial separation, codification, and distance on the other? How do these atmospheres shape the orientation of secular bodies to the city? Vice versa, how does the city shape attunements to atmospheres?

What are the relationships between acoustic atmospheres and broader dynamics of history and power in Istanbul? I build upon these studies by considering emergent modes in which the secular body becomes affectively and sensorially attuned to the city through practices of listening to Western art music in Istanbul. I undertake two, related tasks. First, I analyze "secular acoustic atmospheres" in which felt bodies shaped by a secular discursive tradition and its practices of listening become attuned to the city. Second, I analyze the relationship between secular acoustic atmospheres and the city, which I refer to as "atmospheric emplacement." I argue that in secular acoustic atmospheres, the separation and distance that define the secular body is maintained insofar as objectifying distance from the body is performed both at subjective and intersubjective levels through practices of disciplined listening, even as the collective, atmospheric body of listeners is defined by its separation and distance from the city more broadly. In this way, I add some borders and boundaries to the ostensibly ever-porous atmospheric "felt body." At the same time, by situating this atmospherically tuned body in Istanbul, I open the boundaries of sonic atmospheres to a fuller understanding of their broader urban situation(s).

Secular Acoustic Atmospheres

As I do on nearly every Monday evening throughout much of my time in the field, on Monday, December 9, 2019, I attend the chamber music concert organized by the Kadıköy Municipality at Süreyya Opera. Leaving lively Bahariye Avenue, with its small shops, cafes, thronging pedestrians, and antique trolley car, I pass through the double doors and into the Süreyya Opera. In its lobby, the contrast is immediate, embodied in distinct sensorialities, movements, and rhythms: checking my ticket at the door, I enter slowly, venturing first to the

round, dark wood, antique pedestal table a few meters away from the entrance, with its familiar faux flower arrangement, to pick up a program. Then a bit of mingling—this evening, I run into Erol Bey, a quiet Bursa man who seems to fill his days with reading interrupted by concert and exhibit-packed cultural outings to Istanbul. I follow the directive from the art deco lettering on the wall reading "KAFE" up one of the lobby's twin, red-carpeted, art-nouveau-banistered stairways for a tea in a paper cup from the canteen upstairs. Ambling over to one of the burgundy leather chairs that line the lobby's perimeter to sit and check out the program, I cast a quick glance at myself in one of several ornate, gilt mirrors —the one near the bust of Suzan Lütfullah (1909-1932) in the corner, whose inscription introduces her as a member of the Süreyya Opereti and "the first Turkish operetta primadonna" (ilk Türk operet primadonası). On the program this evening is the English Leonore Piano Trio performing two Haydn trios and Beethoven "Archduke"—a solid chamber program if ever there was one.

Figure 3: Süreyya Opera's main façade on Moda's Bahariye Avenue. Photo by author.

Figure 4: Süreyya Opera lobby. Photo by author.

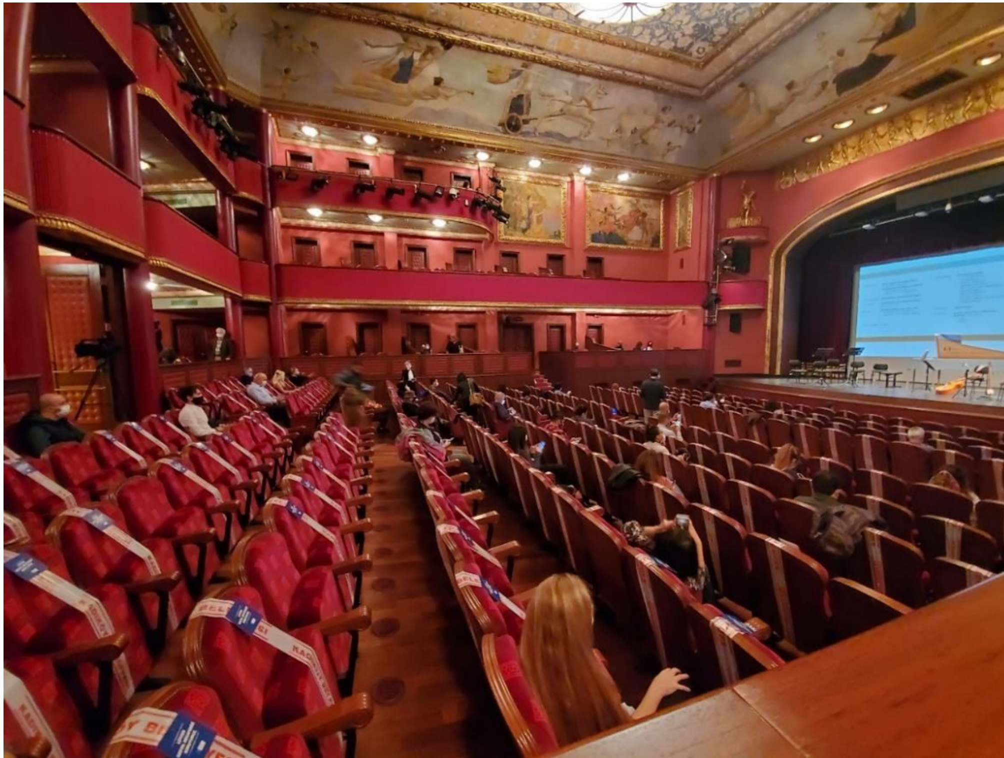

Figure 5: Süreyya Opera interior. Photo by author.

After a few moments, it's time to head into the intimate hall, with its deep red walls, burgundy velvet seats, and decorative gilding. A glance up reveals unexpected splendor—how many times did I observe those entering as they let their gaze and perhaps their phone camera lens linger on the ceiling decoration, with its vaguely Hellenic scenes of heavenly horse-drawn chariots, trumpeting putti, semi-nude dancers, and art nouveau flowers against a deep blue backdrop, with a large glass and bronze chandelier at the center. Before eyes turn toward performances framed by Süreyya's gilded proscenium topped by a gilded parade of frolicking *putti*, the space itself puts on a memorable performance for Istanbul listeners.

Süreyya Opera was built during the 1920s by Süreyya İlmen Paşa, a prominent citizen of late-Ottoman and early Republican Kadıköy responsible for several other infrastructure projects large and small, such as Moda's popular Yoğurtçu Park, a prominent Moda staircase (İlmen 2001: 140), and the bringing of tram lines and electricity to Kadıköy. In his memoires, Süreyya Paşa explains that the idea for a combined theater and cinema came to him after Kadıköy Armenian and Greek communities refused the use of their spaces to the Turkish community (İlmen 2001 [orig. 1949]). The building's stage apparati, however, remained uncompleted until 2007, at which time Süreyya Operası was finally opened as an opera house after eight decades of service as a movie theater known to Kadıköy residents as *Süreyya Sineması.* The booklet put out by the Kadıköy Municipality for the 2007 re-opening dwells on the building's extremely close resemblance to the Champs-Elysees Theater in Paris (its lobby is a near copy) and quotes from Süreyya Paşa's memoire:

> The interior is copied from German theaters ... In particular, I wanted to bring to life on its stage a scene that I had seen at the opera during a trip to Vienna in the year 1900. That evening, when the stage of the Vienna Opera opened, we were greeted by a beautiful moonlight seen among clouds. Several angels were flying over the clouds—some of them percolating down to the earth and flying about up into the clouds again. Since that time, I

wanted to fulfill the wish of showing that scene to the crowd at my theater in Istanbul (İlmen, 2001: 80).[38]

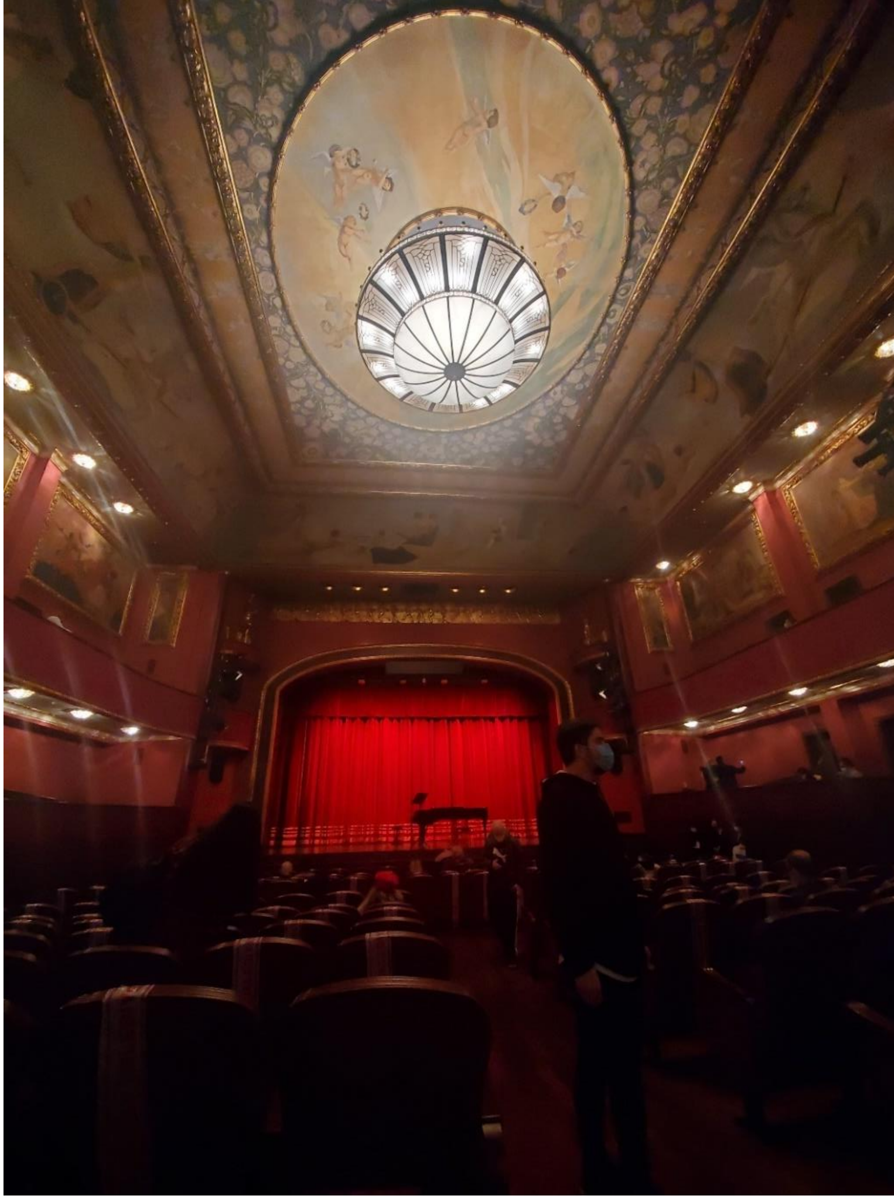

Figure 6: Süreyya Opera interior decoration. Photo by author.

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[38] İç bölüm Alman tiyatrolarından kopya edilmiştir ... Özelikle sahnesinde, 1900 yılında Viyana seyahatinde operada görmüş olduğum bir sahneyi canladırmak istiyordum. O akşam Viyana Operası'nın sahnesi açıldığı zaman bulutlar arasında görülen güzel bir mehtap ile karşılaşmıştık. Bulutların üzerinde birçok melek uçuşuyordu, bazıları da süzülerek yere iniyorlar ve tekrar uçuşarak bulutlara çıkyorlardı. Bu manzarayı en önce İstanbul'da benim tiyatromda halka göstermek arzusuna o zamanlardan beri kavuşmak istiyordum ...

I include this quote not merely as historical curiosity, but rather as a primer for perceiving Süreyya Opera's contemporary significance. If it was originally conceived in a spirit of eclectic Occidentalist mimesis, echoes of this founding ethos persist in the present day.

On Monday, December 9, shortly after taking my seat in an upper box, for example, I strike up a conversation with the young woman sitting next to me, asking if she too attends weekly. No, she says, she's here for the first time, but says that she will probably come every week hereafter. Gesturing to the ceiling decorations, she says "there is a very different atmosphere here" (burada çok farklı bir atmosfer var). She further notes that she had researched the space before coming and learned that it had been designed by an Armenian architect. My ethnographic ears perking up, I briefly explain my project and ask if she would mind if I took a few notes while we talk. She agrees, going on to explain that she is a high school history teacher, but developed a love for classical music while studying in Eskişehir, a provincial Anatolian city widely praised in my ethnographic circles for its progressive mayor and strong arts and cultural scene. For her, she says, classical music has a "different mood" (farklı bir ruh hali) that she uses for inspiration, for example while writing. During the pause following the Haydn trios, our conversation shifts to the ostensible backwardness of Turkey—a topic by now familiar to me from my interlocutors. She explains that "I can't say that we are very fond of our Turkish society" (Türk toplumumuzu çok beğendiğimizi söyleyemiyorum) and that "the society has to develop more" (toplumun daha çok gelimeşi lazım) pointing especially to the beleaguered status of women, though she notes that "Kadıköy is a bit better ... the people here are more educated" (Kadıköy bir nebze daha iyi ... burada insanlar daha eğitimli.) Much like an acquaintance who explained to me that when she attends Süreyya "[she] feels as if she is not in Turkey"

(Türkiye'de değilmişim gibi hissediyorum), for my interlocutor this evening, a concert at Süreyya Opera became an extra-ordinary experience in a "different atmosphere" resounding with classical music.

Figure 7: Süreyya Opera interior, upper box view. Photo by author.

I stumbled upon this kind of sentiment several times early on in the field. Around a month earlier, for example, I had met "Orchestral Orhan" (Orkestracı Orhan), a middle-aged engineer, at a November 6, 2019, "narrated piano recital" with the theme of "Fate and Satan" (Kader ve Şeytan)—he explained that his friends gave him this nickname because he attended the opera and symphony so frequently. This concert was in the Yeldeğirmeni Sanat venue (Windmill Arts), housed in a late nineteenth-century building that had originally served as a

French Catholic Church: Eglise Notre Dame du Rosaire. Over the course of the twentieth century, the church served various purposes—including as a gymnasium for the adjacent school—until it was finally purchased from the Catholic church by the Kadıköy Municipality in 2012 for renovation as a cultural center (Yeldeğirmeni Sanat Merkezi | Tanzimat Dönemi Tarihsel Mimarlık Anıtı | Kadikoy.com; Baştakar 2012). Yeldeğirmeni Arts is likewise visually and historically distinctive with its high, barrel-vaulted ceiling, stained-glass windows, and prominent Latin inscription around the proscenium: "Regina sacratissimi rosarii, ora pro nobis." Saying "I have no ear, I can't remember the names of composers," Orchestral Orhan gestured to the space, adding "I am not a religious fanatic, but I adore this atmosphere with this music" (ben dinci değilim, ama bu ortam, bu müzikle, bayılıyorum).

Figure 8: Yeldeğirmeni Arts interior. Photo by author.

Considering Riedel's methodological movement ontology, it follows that decorative elements, histories, and bodies were both drawn into atmospheric movement by the sonic movement of Western art music performance and emergent from sonic atmosphere. Süreyya Opera's managers pointed to this distinct multisensoriality and temporality in an informal interview. They emphasized that Süreyya has a *history*, and that, with its ornamentation and the frescoes on the walls and ceiling, "the architecture itself is an artwork" (mimari de kendisi bir sanat). "Perhaps," one of them ventured, "it's that the effect of the music together with the effect of the building might dovetail with each other ... support each other" (müziğin işleyişiyle binanın işleyişi birbiriyle örtüşüyor olabilir ... birbirlerine destek olabilir). They noted that some listeners

choose to travel from Istanbul's European side—foregoing duplicate concerts there—because they prefer to listen in Süreyya (interview, November 22, 2019). This sense of distinctiveness can also be understood from a more vulnerable perspective, however. For the history teacher, for example, her feeling of belonging in the space was set against a threatening, un-educated, and misogynist outside. For Orkestracı Orhan, it became necessary to situate his resonance with the Yeldeğirmeni Sanat atmosphere at a safe distance from any indication of being "dinci," a term carrying resonances of religious fundamentalism or fanaticism that can be contrasted with "dindar"—acceptable, enlightened piety by secularist standards. In any case, these ethnographic examples indicate dynamic, multi-sensorial sonic atmospheres that activate material traces of Istanbul's layered past to produce a felt sense of distinction from the everyday.

Secular Acoustic Atmospheres "in Suspension" and a Secular Contra-public

Troublingly, though, in these vignettes the movement lent to these atmospheres by musical sound remains somewhat ethnographically elusive. It was often difficult to get much purchase on what work, exactly, listening to sound was doing. The highly formalized and presentational performance practices of much Western art music means that there is very little collective involvement or movement coordinated to the music. Nor are participants invited freely to call out or otherwise register their responses, as I discuss in chapter four. I also don't find much use for spectrographic analysis, along the lines of Patrick Eisenlohr's (2018) suggestion that sonic suggestions of movement (indicated by changes in pitch, timbre, intensity, etc.) coincide with textual lines that indicate Mauritian Muslims' journey toward and arrival in Medina, producing religious atmosphere. There is a strong (if not necessarily unreasonable, in that case) culturalist lens employed in such studies that I am unable to square with, say, Haydn

piano trios in Istanbul—even as the latter may well evoke particular historical and other resonances in the city.

In a study of the emergence of the moment of silence in post-WWII Europe, Karsten Lichau takes up the tension between outer silence and inner emotion to suggest that the secular may manifest in more vague emotions and outward bodily practices than religion (Lichau 2019). In a similar vein, I suggest that the absence of obvious bodily listener engagement in the cases I discuss is a feature, not a bug. In other words, there *is* something specifically secular about the particular listening body that comes to resonate in these atmospheres. To get at this point, I turn now to accounts of listening and atmosphere from Canan and Emre, two diligent listeners and concertgoers. They are both professionals in their early 30s: she works in law, he in finance; she is a lifetime Istanbuller, he came for college from a provincial Aegean city.

At one of the first live concerts after the initial phase of the pandemic, organized by the İstanbul State Opera during July 2020 at the novel Büyükyalı Fişekhane venue near the Marmara Sea, I noticed an audience member about my age, sitting on the edge of her seat, gently shaking her head back and forth during Saint-Saens' "The Swan." After the concert, we got to chatting, and on the Marmaray train back to Kadıköy, she explained that she was a lawyer but interested in classical music—she had taken piano as a child and had recently gotten involved once more as a listener. She said that because the evening's concert was outside, she felt that the sound was a bit disbursed, whereas she emphasized several times that she much preferred the acoustics of the Archaeology Museum. She also talked at some length about her participation in the 2013 Gezi Park protests, saying that they brought quite different groups of people together in solidarity. She recalled, for example, older "teyzeler" (aunties) bringing börek and watermelon for an LGBTQ group with which she was associated at the time. Now, though, she says, the solidarity and trust

forged at Gezi had "dissipated" (dağılmış), and people have begun to behave "apolitically" (apolitik).

Over the next few months, these encounters with my new friend, Canan, continued at concerts spread across the city. She invariably attended alone, and her listening as I observed it seemed consistently to reach a distinct level of intensity and pleasure. Another concert at which I encountered Canan was at the Tekfur Palace, a new classical music venue opened during Summer 2020 by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality as part of the İmamoğlu administration's new cultural political regime. The concert featured the prominent Istanbul flutist Bülent Evcil performing arrangements of works by Mozart, Gluck, and Bach with an ensemble called the "Istanbul Virtuosos" (İstanbul Virtüözleri). Located in the courtyard of the thirteenth century Byzantine Palace of the Porphyrogenitus on top of one of Istanbul's seven hills, this was a truly spectacular venue: a partially ruined, restored open court, with the stage set up before an imposing façade of stone and brick, columns, and arched doors and windows.

Figure 9: exterior walls of Tekfur Palace. Photo by author.

Figure 10: pandemic concert seating configuration at Tekfur Palace during Summer 2020. Photo by author.

Figure 11: Tekfur Palace main façade and stage. Photo by author.

Opening during the pandemic, the space received a lot of attention. After the first concert at Tekfur, the music writer Osman Enfiyecizade quoted from a performer emphasizing the quality of its "natural acoustics" (doğal akustiği) and emphasizing that "ambience plays a big role in the adventure of music with listener. It's as if [Tekfur's] acoustics, its being discrete from the outside, the bird sounds and the historical structure swathe [the listener]" (Enfiyecizade, July 12, 2020).[39] Canan was also animated by the space of Tekfur:

> It's actually quite exciting that a concert is being given at Tekfur. On the way there, I am thinking: 'how am I going to feel?' … When you enter that geography—those old, classic buildings—you are removed in a way from city life. Consequently, it becomes easier to transition to that period ...
> **Erol:** I see ... with both Tekfur and the Archaeology Museum, you go up. While you were talking that came to my mind. There is a similarity.

[39] Ambiyans, müziğin seyirciyle buluşma serüveninde çok büyük bir katkı sağlıyor. Akustiği, dışarıdan soyut olması, kuş sesleri ve tarihi yapısı sarıp sarmalıyor adeta.

Canan: You are far away (interview, December 5, 2020).[40]

She went on to describe her concert listening experience in terms of the achievement of a kind of cathartic emptying of thoughts from her mind. She noted that, before the concert "there is a certain anxiety. For example, the concert might last fifty minutes, it might last an hour-and-a-half. I wonder, will I be able to be present for the whole fifty minutes of the performance? Will there be times when I get bored? I experience that anxiety. I don't want my emotional state to be spoiled" (interview, December 5, 2020).[41] Describing her normal mental state as one of constant multitasking—even while asleep—she said that listening at concerts allows her to enter a different space. In an interview, though, Canan indicated that, as powerful as the affinity she felt for Western art music was, she was also somewhat mystified by it:

> **Erol:** What aspect of classical music do you take so much pleasure from? Where is it that you find so much peace? Does anything come to mind?
> **Canan:** I really don't know. It happened the first time when I was eight. I was going to the conservatory at that time. For the first time I saw a classical music rehearsal. I really don't know the reason. If you ask me, it's something like lifting up into the sky. Why does it have such a staggering effect over me? Why does it have such a chemical effect? I also wonder about this. In fact, since you are a researcher, I can tell you openly: it's something close to sexual pleasure, sometimes I even feel that it is better than that. I thought about this a lot actually, but I couldn't find the cause. I don't know…
> **Erol:** Does it happen with other music or other activities?

[40] Canan: Şöyle, şimdi aslında bir konserin Tekfur 'da yapılması çok daha heyecan verici. O yolda giderken şunu düşünüyorum, nasıl hissedeceğim? O coğrafya, o eski binalara, o klasik binaların arasına girdiğiniz zaman şehir hayatından soyutlanıyorsunuz. Dolayısıyla o döneme geçiş yapmak kolay oluyor. Süreyya'da tabi caddenin daha gürültüsü kesilmeden konsere giriyorsunuz. Duyulmuyor ama kısa mesafe var. Konsantremi ilk on dakikada toplayamıyorum. Mesela o heyecanı orada taşımıyorum.
Erol: Anladım. Peki, evet. Hem tekfur 'da hem de Arkeoloji müzesinin bahçesinde yukarı doğru gidiyorsun. Aklıma geldi sen öyle deyince, benzer bir şey var.
Uzaktasın.

[41] Bir şeyin kaygısı oluyor. Mesela konser elli dakika da sürebilir, bir buçuk saat de sürebilir. Acaba elli dakikalık o performansın elli dakikasında da orada olabilecek miyim? Bazı zamanlar sıkılacak mıyım? O kaygıyı yaşıyorum. Duygu durumumun bozulmasını istemiyorum.

> **Canan:** No, I went to a lot of electronic music, [for example]. (interview, December 5, 2020).[42]

Mystified though she was by this intensity of effect, Canan was clear that live performance in distinctive spaces helped to bring it about:

> **Canan:** When I sit down at a concert, it's like, now you are going to be distanced from all of the thoughts in your life. One hour … and really that is enough for a week for me, that relaxation … before it starts … for example I try to arrive early. If it opens a half hour early, for example, I'm there. They opened Tekfur like that and I was very happy. I turned off my phone and put it in my bag. I really love it when that happens. In the open air, an old building. I wonder if there were people here who listened to this music? You know how concerts are usually held in the evening? With the darkening sky it's like a return to nature for me. It's the only time that I look around and I feel happy. It's a moment that you can't pin down, it's like, how nice that I caught it again (interview, December 5, 2020).[43]

The feeling that Canan tries to catch at concerts—a sense of intense presence that, she suggests, resembles even sexual pleasure, like lifting up into the sky—seems clearly to describe a state of bodily porosity; a breakdown of boundaries separating and defining the self. Her catharsis and

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[42] Erol: Klasik müziğin neyinden o kadar çok haz alıyorsun? O kadar çok huzur aldığın yer neresi? Aklına bir şey geliyor mu?
Canan: Açıkçası bilmiyorum. Bu ilk kez başıma 8 yaşındayken gelmişti. O zamanlar konservatuara gidiyordum. İlk kez klasik müzik provası ediyorlardı. Bunun sebebini gerçekten bilmiyorum. Bana sorsan göğe yükselmek gibi bir şey. Neden bu kadar üzerimde sarsıcı etkisi var, neden bu kadar kimyasal etkisi var? Bunu bende merak ediyorum. Hatta araştırmacı olduğun için sana bunu açıkça söyleyebilirim. Bu cinsel hazza yakın bir şey, hatta bazen onun bile üstündeymiş gibi hissediyorum. Bunun sebebini çok düşündüm aslında ama bulamadım. Bilmiyorum.
Erol: Başka müziklerle ya da faaliyetlerle böyle bir şey oluyor mu?
Canan: Hayır olmuyor. Elektronik müzik çok gittim.

[43] Konserde oturduğum zaman şu oluyor, şimdi hayatının bütün düşüncelerinden uzaklaşacaksın. Bir saat… Ve gerçekten bu bana bir hafta kadar yetiyor, o dinlenme hali. Uyurken bile bazen kendimi düşünürken yakalıyorum ama orada başlamadan önce mesela erken gelmeye çalışıyorum. Yarım saat önce mesela açılıyorsa oradayımdır. Tekfur'da öyle açıyorlardı, çok mutlu oluyordum. Telefonumu kilitleyip çantama koyuyordum. Çok seviyorum öyle olunca. Açık hava, eski bir bina. Acaba bunları dinleyenler de burada var mıydı? Genelde akşamüstü yapılıyor ya, havanın kararması ile beraber doğaya dönüş benim için. Etrafıma baktığım tek an ve hissettiğim mutluluk. Takmayacak bir an, ne güzel tekrar yakaladım bu an'ı gibi bir şey.

relaxation resemble what Schmitz describes as the "primitive present": "a form of awareness that fuses together [Schmitz'] five basic existential dimensions of here, now, being, this and I, so that an undifferentiated pure presence of 'mine-ness' is all that remains" and is representative of the felt-body in its purest manifestation (Schmitz et. Al., 2011: 246). In Riedel's terms, these imply "a turn away from the subject, the 'interiorised human centre of being and feelings', as the ultimate perceiver of music and atmosphere and a turn, instead, towards the multifarious atmospheric and musical movements that constitute subjectivities." When Canan listens, she enters state of becoming in which her body is resonantly permeated and shifted by musical movement.

The significance of the space's historical resonances to this state is clear from Canan's comments noting the removal from city life and her musings about possible earlier listeners to the same music in the space. It is interesting, moreover, that the historical connections she draws are rather loose. It is historically impossible that anyone would have listened to music from Mozart, Gluck, and Bach in Tekfur's iteration as Byzantine Palace, and highly unlikely during the various uses to which the structure was put under Ottoman rule. In her analysis of listening in Tokyo classical music cafes, Lorraine Plourde takes up the concept of patina—a quality of surfaces accumulated through repeated touch that "converts time into a positive aesthetic agent"—to suggest that recorded sound in the cafes can be understood to exhibit tactile sonic patina (Plourde 2019: 51). In the case of Tekfur, patina was taken up in atmospheric movement and situational becoming such that it became attached to and permeated the materialities of space, sounds, and bodies within it—it didn't matter that Bach was likely encountering Tekfur Palace for the first time; they were both infused with patina. Just as Canan's experiences of catharsis suggest bodily porosity—a loosening of subjective boundaries—her invocation of

historical presence seems to indicate a loosening of linear time to produce an alternate chronotope akin to Talal Asad's invocation of "gothic complex space" as opposed to "Enlightenment simple space" (Asad 2003, 178-180). In other words, for Canan and others, the Tekfur atmosphere encodes traces of pasts at some remove from the present, rather than a specific and known history, that heighten cathartic experiences of listening. Her senses overwhelmed by multisensorial address, Canan is taken up by sonic motion, her subjectivity dissolves into atmosphere.

However, it is precisely in the relationship among the senses that this acoustic atmosphere becomes distinctly secular. Trying to get under the surface of Canan's listening, I asked:

> **Erol:** So, do you watch the musicians? Do you close your eyes?
> **Canan:** Actually, I like to watch the musicians, but I catch myself involuntarily closing my eyes. That is also very nice. I like to see gestures and facial expressions, but I feel more when I close my eyes. These could definitely be somatic responses (interview, December 5, 2020).[44]

For Canan, closing her eyes while listening would seem to offer a path toward deepening the dissolution of the interiorized center of perception on the path toward the catharsis of the "primitive present." However, in the next sentence, Canan reveals the limits of bodily and temporal porosity:

> For example, when my eyes are closed, I often tell myself 'you're in public, pull yourself together!' I mean, I am forced to intervene with myself. If I were alone and nobody were going to see me, if I could behave in a more relaxed manner, my eyes would probably be closed (interview, December 5, 2020).[45]

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[44] M: Anladım. Peki müzisyenleri izliyor musun, yoksa gözlerini mi kapatıyorsun?
Aslında seviyorum izlemeyi ama istemsizce gözlerimi kapalı da yakalıyorum kendimi. O da çok güzel. Jest mimikleri görmeyi seviyorum ama gözlerimi kapadığımda daha fazlasını hissediyorum. Bunlar somatik tepkiler olabilir mutlaka …

[45] mesela gözlerim kapalı olduğunda kalabalıktasın artık kendine gel demeyi çok yapıyorum yani kendime müdahale etmek zorunda kalıyorum. Tek başıma kalsam ve kimse görmeyecek olsa beni, daha rahat davranabilecek olsam herhalde gözlerim kapalı olurdum.

I suggest that this statement is revealing of the secular listening body and its atmospheric engagement. In chapter one, I argued that practices of listening to Western art music authorized by a Turkish secular discursive tradition bring about a separation and codification of the emotions and senses through ritual processes of mimetic transduction, shaping a sovereign secular subject and a sense of separation from the body and the world. Here, Canan demonstrates a distance from and will to sovereign control over her own body by opening her eyes to limit its resonant porosity. Emre made a similar point about the interaction between visuality and listening: "Before [the concert], there is a slight adrenaline and then relaxation afterward. While I am listening, I listen with pure focus, I never get sleepy. I listen without blinking, and that's very relaxing to me. I feel that I am relaxing (interview, March 12, 2020)."[46] Here, maintaining the focus of the eye acts in conjunction with the ear to maintain control over the listening body. In this context, left to its own devices, it would seem that the ear might lead to precisely the dissolution of interiority and the conscious subject that Riedel understands to be part and parcel of atmospheric situations. The eye, however—keeping it open and focused—controls this tendency and maintains the presence of the sovereign subject in productive suspension with atmospheric movement.

This sense of tension and suspension is not only characteristic of the relationship between the sovereign subject and its body in secular acoustic atmospheres, but also among the various bodies absorbed into atmospheric movement. Indeed, as Canan's comment indicates ("'you're in public, pull yourself together!'"), their interventions in potentially excessive erosion of separation and distance are motivated by the presence of other bodies in the atmospheric space

[46] Öncesinde hafif bir adrenalin ve sonrasında rahatlama. Dinlerken de pür dikkat dinlerim, hiç uykum gelmez. Gözümü kırpmadan dinlerim ve bana çok rahatlatıcı geliyor. Rahatladığımı hissediyorum yani.

and the public that they come to constitute. Canan went on to explain that part of the pleasure of attending live concerts stems from a sense of sociability contoured by social separation:

> I think that there is the happiness of sharing a common pleasure and also perhaps the conceitedness. Like: we are together with the handful of people who think like me, come, let's be nice to each other. It could also be a kind of vanity of weakness. After all, we Turks are not people who have grown accustomed to this culture. I mean, classical music is something that came to us from outside. It has its roots in the Tanzimat. It didn't reach down to the people, either. Now, with the economy this embattled, and having lost so much social position, having possession of a pleasure and taste for something that didn't lower to the people might even seem like the only thing that we have (interview, December 5, 2020).[47]

Emre shared a similar sentiment. In our interview, he mentioned that, like Canan, he likes to arrive early to concerts in order to take in the atmosphere:

> **Erol**: You say 'I love the atmosphere'—that is interesting …
> **Emre:** Being together with people who have the same mentality as you, people from the same sociocultural frame; I got into the psychological side of it, but to be in the same place, to have the same conversations, there is the possibility to meet people—perhaps that is relaxing to me. For me, it is a relaxing activity after the exhaustion and stress of the day. For example, I have a ticket for April 3—today is March 12 and I already feel the April 3 ticket, I am excited (interview, March 12, 2020).[48]

Canan's references to "having lost so much social position" and "lowering to the people" and Emre's reference to "people from the same sociocultural frame" are, of course, references to secularists' perceived loss of social, cultural, and political hegemony in Turkey and Istanbul over

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[47] Bence ortak bir zevki paylaşmanın hem mutluluğu oluyor, belki de kibri de oluyor. Benim gibi düşünen bir avuç insanla beraberiz, hadi birbirimize iyi davranalım gibi. Alttan bir kibir de olabilir. Sonuçta biz Türkler bu kültürü kanıksamış insanlar değiliz, yani klasik müzik bize dışarıdan gelme bir şey. Kökeni Tanzimat ile başlıyor. Hatta halka inmiyor. Şimdi halka inmemiş bir şeyin zevk sahibi olması, bu kadar ekonomi ile sıkışmış, bu kadar kaybettiğimiz sınıfsal konumumuzda belki sahip olduğumuz tek şey geliyor bile olabilir.

[48] Erol: Peki, atmosferi seviyorum derken enteresan bir şey.
Emre: Seninle aynı düşünce yapısından, seninle aynı sosyokültürel insanların bir arada olması… işin psikolojik yanına girdim ama aynı yerde olmak, aynı sohbetleri etmek, birileriyle tanışma imkanı oluyor, o da beni belki rahatlatıyor. Günün yorgunluğu ve stresi üzerine rahatlatıcı aktivite gibi geliyor bana. Mesela bedim 3 Nisan için biletim var. bugün 12 Mart ve ben 3 Nisan biletini şimdiden hissediyorum, heyecan duyuyorum..

the past several decades—as Canan explained, particularly since Gezi Park. This type of sentiment was rarely this openly expressed, but Canan seemed to make a point of freely sharing her views. For example, after a Borusan Philharmonic concert given at the Harbiye Open Air Theater in August 2020 (where she mimicked piano playing on her knee during the evening's Mozart piano concerto), Canan brought up a much-contested symbol of Islam in Turkey: the headscarf (Göle 1996). Referencing a group of headscarved women in attendance, she said that she thinks that some of the women really are interested in classical music, but that their ultimate goal is to claim classical music for themselves and put it in a subordinate position to Islamic arts such as *hattat* (calligraphy). On another occasion, Canan told me about a friend of her sister's who had been a pious Muslim who wore the headscarf until, in her 30s, she became an atheist and removed it. Canan said that, as part of the friend's "opening," she had the idea to take her to a concert of "Western music" (batılı müzik) and said that she thinks the friend will now probably go all in on Western art music.

Figure 12: Harbiye Open Air Theater before Borusan Philharmonic concert. Photo by author.

For Canan and Emre, in other words, Western art music concerts were most pleasurable when listeners attuned to Western art music adhered to certain codes. She contrasted the pleasure of these interactions to the "toxic" exterior of Istanbul:

> **Erol:** You said Istanbul's … toxicity: I wanted to open that up a bit. What are you referring to with that term?
> **Canan:** Well, I might be thinking in a bit of an old-fashioned way, but in places like that I want to see people who are a bit more … more polite, more respectful, for example I want to see people who apologize when you bump into them. That may be kind of an exclusionary or supremacist attitude, but at least in this place I want to see these kinds of things. The majority of the Istanbul that I live in—except for the districts that have been saved—is not like that. For that reason, what I want to leave behind me is really people and of course ugly buildings that cramp us, architecture that is not horizontal but vertical. I want them to be behind me. For that reason, I'm actually glad that not every person I see or run into on the street takes pleasure from this. I wouldn't want everyone to go and love it. I wouldn't want it to be like a normal concert, like a Tarkan concert. That may be a bad way to think but that's how it is. I am honest, because that's the truth.
> **Erol:** You say you don't want it to be like a Tarkan concert.

Canan: I don’t think it needs to be that cosmopolitan (interview, December 5, 2020).[49]

The politeness and respect that Canan references are defined by the maintenance of distance. This is literally the case: accidental contact in the form of bumping into each other is to be controlled and avoided in favor of physical distance and implied bodily integrity. Should physical contact occur, social distance is to be maintained through appropriate politeness. The contrast with the presumed atmosphere of a concert from the pop star Tarkan is illustrative: at such a concert, people might stand in close proximity, perhaps singing and even dancing together in ways that tend to produce a sense of collective euphoria for which, given the casual context, there would be little restraint. In contrast, Canan and Emre take pleasure from the distance and separation that characterize bodies’ relationships in secular acoustic atmospheres—on this level, too, bodies are held in suspension. This intersubjective distance is itself mediated by Occidental distance—"classical music is something that came to us from outside.” This distance provides a metric—indeed, as I argue in chapter 1, an authorizing discourse—through which to judge and maintain practices of listening in suspension.

To sum up thus far, the concerts in which Canan and Emre say they take pleasure are made up, ideally, of bodies that are defined by a state of atmospheric becoming in which the

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[49] Erol: Biraz açmak istedim İstanbul’un şehirleşmesini, toksikliğini söyledin. Ne kastediyorsun o ifadede?
Canan: Şöyle, biraz daha eski kafalı düşünüyorum ama böyle yerlerde biraz daha şey görmek istiyorum insanları; daha kibar, daha saygılı, mesela çarpıştığın zaman özür dileyen insanları görmek istiyorum. Biraz dışlayıcı, biraz üstenci bir tutum olabilir ama en azından burada bunları görmek istiyorum. Yaşadığım İstanbul’un büyük bir kısmı – kurtarılmış bölgeler dışında- bunlardan oluşmuyor. Dolayısıyla arkamda bırakmak istediğim şey aslında insanlar ve tabi ki çirkin binalar, bizi kısıtlayan binalar, yatay değil dikey mimariler. Onun için arkamda kalsınlar istiyorum. Onun içi her sokakta gördüğüm, karşılaştığım insanın bundan zevk almamasından hoşnudum yani. Herkes gitsin, herkes bunu sevsin istemezdim. Düz bir konser, Tarkan konseri gibi olmasını istemezdim. Bu kötü bir düşünce belki ama böyle. Dürüstüm, doğrusu bu çünkü.
Erol: Teşekkürler. Tarkan konseri gibi olmasını istemiyorum diyorsun.
Canan: Evet. Bu kadar kozmopolit olmasına gerek yok bence.

sovereign subject and its objectified relationship to its sensorially and emotionally-tuned bodily apparatus is in tension with atmospheric movements that would tend toward dissolving the self—they are held in suspension. This sense of distance and control also translates to the social interactions that would obtain in these settings. Once more, how does Western art music set this atmosphere in motion? Eisenlohr summarizes that:

> Sound's seizing of the phenomenological felt-body thus operates by suggestions of movement that interact with the felt-body's vital dynamics and movements. It is in this way that we can speak, in Böhme's terms, about sound reaching into corporeal economies, as sound's suggestions of movement are modifications of space sensed by the felt-body (Eisenlohr 2018, 92).

In chapter one, I analyzed a Turkish secular discursive tradition that emphasizes Western art music's polyphony and its transductive forging of secular bodies and modeling of solidarist social ontology. Here, I argue that felt bodies shaped by a secular discursive tradition and its practices of listening become attuned to the world through the isomorphic resemblance of elements defined by internally diffuse meaningfulness: Western art music as atmospheric movement defined by a polyphonic totality analyzable as but not reducible to its individual voices, polyphonic secular bodies contoured by a separation and codification of the emotions and senses controlled by secular sovereign subjectivity, listening as social interaction defined by careful control exerted over the listening body, carefully moderated and controlled distances between bodies, and a non-linear and non-contiguous time-space defined by difference and separateness from the Istanbul everyday shaped by aural, visual, and haptic senses. To employ the music *as* (moving) *atmosphere* metaphor a bit more literally, it could be said that Western art music *as* movement aligns and blows through the aligned separations and codifications of these elements, working them into a kind of wind tunnel in which elements—minds, bodies, time, space—are held in separated and codified atmospheric suspension. In such an atmospheric

context, listeners like Canan and Emre with bodies already shaped according to the secular discursive tradition of listening emerge from secular acoustic atmospheres become more themselves than they were when they entered.

The "tense" and "suspended" public that emerges from the collectivity of listening bodies configured in this way is likewise defined by dynamics of separation and distance and interpenetrations of public and private, interiority and exteriority. Concerts of Western art music in Istanbul are, by and large, clearly public insofar as anyone with a ticket can attend. Indeed, however limited in actual scope, throughout much of the history of the modern Turkish Republic contexts such as Western art music concerts were thought by ruling elites to be the site of the real and proper Turkish public, with the corrosive residues of Islam safely sequestered to the private domain. In recent decades, however, as Canan and Emre indicate, contexts of listening to Western art music have had their sense of publicity eroded along with their secularist presuppositions as Islamism gained increasing public visibility and control over the state. In this sense, the presuppositions of the secular public sphere long since critiqued by scholars become evident in a different register (Habermas 1989, Fraser 1990, Warner 2002).

At the same time, in practice, these concerts become sites at which bodies whose private interiority is defined by dynamics of separation and codification belong more comfortably, thereby lending the concerts a sense of intimacy and privacy. Public and private are likewise heterogeneous in the sense that bodies experience a heightened sense of private interiority fostered through listening in a space they share with other bodies—the dissolution of the self into atmospheric movement is deliberately arrested, preserving interiority. Paradoxically, they perform this interiority for each other through a significant lack of exterior signification, thereby

indicating that their interiority is contoured by dynamics of separation and codification of emotions and senses that impede "excessive," immediate response.

In sum, I suggest that listening publics to Western art music in Istanbul tend to be neither straightforwardly public nor private. At moments of maximum publicity, private interiority gains in importance. As privacy increases, strict public-oriented control over the body is re-emphasized. I suggest that the listening social body that I describe here, with its heterogeneously interwoven dynamics of publicity and privacy, is neither a public, nor a counterpublic. Listening to polyphony shapes secular bodies whose private interiority is defined by a sense of separation and distance from publicity, and this publicity in turn can come into tension with private interiority. The secular public that I describe is defined by a contrapuntal tension between interior and exterior, public and private, that has become more exposed under regnant Islamic populism and is made particularly evident in live, atmospheric contexts of listening to Western art music. Thus, I refer to this realm of social interaction in which publicity and privacy are in constant contrapuntal tension with each other as a secular contra-public.

Ethnographies of religious atmospheres have emphasized the ways in which individual bodily boundaries are overcome through sonic atmospheric attunement. Perhaps most significant among these is anthropologist Patrick Eisenlohr's fine study of voice and *na'at* devotional singing in Mauritian Muslim communities. Proceeding with the view that "an analytic of atmospheres stresses the boundary-weakening affordances of sound" Eisenlohr contends that "sonic transduction as a process relativizes the limits of bodies and, therefore, also the boundaries between bodies …" (Eisenlohr 2018: 132). In his analysis, he deploys a conception of "intercorporality" to understand the ways in which a pious "we-body" of Mauritian Muslims brought about through sonic atmospheric processes of encorporation through proper vocal style

moves toward the presence of the Prophet. Thus far, I have explored the paradox of the cultivation of atmospheric relations from dynamics of separation and codification that are apparently antithetical to the internally diffuse meaningfulness and breaking down of (bodily) barriers in terms of which atmospheres have heretofore been theorized. I do not reject the conception of bodily porosity central to the concept of atmospheres. Rather, I suggest that atmospheric bodily porosity is not universal. In the case of listening in secular acoustic atmospheres in Istanbul, the management of bodily porosity is a key modality through which the boundaries of secular bodies and secular contra-publics are negotiated. Moreover, this sensory relationship not only adds a new dimension to studies of atmospheres, but it would also appear to be in tension with Western-centric critiques of the ocularcentrism of modernity insofar as it might revive conceptions of the aural faculty as portal to interiority and immediacy and the ocular faculty as producer of rational distance (Sterne 2003; Erlmann 2010). In the next section, I turn toward the ways in which the body becomes an interface between secular acoustic atmospheres and the city.

Atmospheric Emplacement

On the afternoon of Monday, February 10, 2020, I hurry over to Süreyya Opera on Moda's Bahariye Avenue to be at the front of the line for the free, Kadıköy Municipality-sponsored "Fuaye Konseri," or "Foyer Concert" to be given that evening. For these Foyer Concerts, Süreyya's spacious lobby is filled with seats, which nonetheless fail to accommodate all of those who attend, forcing listeners onto the staircases and upper balcony. When I arrive an hour and a half out, there are already a few people waiting: at the very front is a woman whom I've seen before and whose name, I will learn, is Şadan Hanım. Next is my interlocutor Hakan

Bey, who always strives to sit on the front row. Though we are all ostensibly waiting in line early to get good seats for the concert, however, the line itself and the various forms of "terbiyesizlik" that it might invite have momentarily become a primary concern: in other words, my companions are tremendously concerned that someone will try to jump the line. At one point, Hakan Bey and Şadan Hanım enter the lobby together to dispute a point of line justice. When they emerge a few moments later, Şadan Hanım says that they told her "Don't raise your voice!" (sesinizi yükseltme!), to which she replied, "I'm not raising my voice!" (sesimi yükseltmiyorum!). You go to dispute *haksızlık* (injustice), and they call you *haksız* (unjust), Hakan Bey says resentfully. I enter the lobby at one point to purchase a ticket for an upcoming concert. When I return to retake my position in the line, Hakan Bey somewhat menacingly tells me that my place was actually one position back in the line that has by now started to form behind us—I don't argue.

Figure 13: pre-Fuaye concert line at Süreyya Opera. Photo by author.

It is not entirely unreasonable that they should be so concerned: they have exerted considerable effort to reach their positions in the line. A bit later, I get to chatting with Şadan Hanım, and she explains that she arrived a full two-and-a-half hours before the concert start time to stand in line, having made a more than hour long trip from the European-side Yeşilköy neighborhood with the Marmaray regional train. She explains that her neighborhood is died-in-the-wool CHP'li (referring to the secularist Republican People's Party), and emphasizes several times that she, too, is dyed-in-the-wool CHP'li. Atatürk gave her family its name, she explains: "one half of my heart is Atatürk, the other half is İnönü [the second president of Turkey]—I don't know anyone else!" she adds, emphasizing the two sides of her heart by placing her hands on her chest (kalbimin bir tarafı Atatürk, öbür tarafı, İnönü, başkasını tanımıyorum!). A few moments after this dramatic proclamation, the man behind me in line explains in a low voice about a time when a big argument broke out after she entered the foyer to find someone sitting in "her" seat on the front row. I ask what ended up happening—well, she ended up sitting in her seat, he says. At another Fuaye concert a week or so later on February 20, 2020, Şadan Hanım was, of course, sitting in "her seat" on the front row. Prior to the concert, she repeated her line about the spatial distribution of Atatürk and İnönü onto her heart. During the performance, though, she seemed to be in ecstasy, shaking her head in pleasure to classic Puccini arias such as "O mio babino caro" sung by members of the Istanbul State Opera. This didn't stop her, though, from leaning forward and sending a glance in the direction of someone who dropped something during the performance.

Figure 14: Fuaye concert at Süreyya Opera. Photo by author.

Figure 15: Fuaye concert at Süreyya Opera. Photo by author.

Unlike Şadan Hanım, Hakan Bey lives a ten-minute walk away from Süreyya Opera in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood. Over tea in the café of the Hoş Atelier a few weeks earlier, he had explained to me his childhood in Yeldeğirmeni growing up together with Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, and the pleasures of living in Yeldeğirmeni today in terms of convenient access to concerts. Mapping the city with his hands on the table, he described how easy it is to walk to the concert venues in Kadıköy: Süreyya Opera, Yeldeğirmeni Arts, All Saints Moda Church. A quick walk over to the nearby Ayrılık Çeşmesi Metro Station, he adds, and you can take the Marmaray train under the Bosporus to the European side for concerts at Cemal Reşit Rey, Lütfi Kırdar, Saint-Michel Lisesi (Emre, too, had noted to me that he chose his residence in Koşuyolu in part for its easy access to concerts both in Kadıköy and on the European side). No matter where Hakan Bey goes, he always arrives early to sit on the front row so as to have a connection to the performer, see their face, their expressions—"I feel as if I'm playing the instrument," he says (sanki ben enstrümanı calmışım gibi hissediyorum). He has turned this proximity into a hobby, taking short, up-close videos of the performances he attends and posting them to Facebook for his friends (interview, January 21, 2020).

At the February 10 Süreyya Fuaye concert, we are successful: I, Şadan Hanım, Hakan Bey, the man in line behind me, and a few others end up on the front row. While we wait, I chat with the man behind me—friends with Hakan Bey and resident of nearby Feneryolu, just across Moda Cove. We talk about Kadıköy, and he describes that, in comparison to most of the city, Kadıköy is "more homogeneous" (daha homojen) and that Kadıköy, along with the districts of Beşiktaş and Bakırköy (where Şadan Hanım lives), is "like a fortress" (kale gibi). He says that sitting in the front row puts an extra responsibility on you--that you have to really pay attention and you can't fiddle around with your phone or program. As always, Hakan Bey takes on this

responsibility with relish, emitting elaborate calls of affirmation between arias, but quietly saying "don't applaud!" (alkışlanmayın!) when inopportune clapping breaks out.

These cases exemplify the kinds of relationships that emerge between atmospheres and their urban exteriors. As I note above, discussion of atmospheres has focused on embodiment—specifically the "felt body" and its porosity. However, participating in an atmosphere requires traveling to it, and, as the cases of Şadan Hanım and Hakan Bey show, different pathways of movement produce different engagements. Practices such as waiting, too, become sites at which the body is prepared and at which proximity is carefully managed, as the line experience indicates. I find a conception of "emplacement" articulated by Sarah Pink to be helpful here:

> Moving from a theory of embodiment to one of emplacement that recognises the competing/performing body as part of an ecology of things in progress offers a series of analytical advantages. It locates the performing/competing body within a wider ecology, allowing us to see it as an organism in relation to other organisms and its representations in relation to other representations (Pink 2011: 354).

I suggest that this invocation of the situation of bodies within emergent, mutually co-constituting ecologies is conceptually proximate to atmosphere theory and Riedel's methodological movement ontology. Without necessarily "moving from" embodiment as Pink proposes, I take up the concept of emplacement to understand the ways in which secular acoustic atmospheres are forged in resonance with and defined against their exteriors and the ways in which their effects and affects extend physically and temporally beyond the spaces of their instantiation, shaping secular belonging in the city. In other words, where in the previous section I questioned the boundarylessness of bodies in atmospheric situations, here I impugn atmospheric boundaries. This leads me to the concept of "atmospheric emplacement." In this section, I demonstrate that in Istanbul, even as Western art music forges acoustic atmospheres defined by internally diffuse

meaningfulness, secular acoustic atmospheres are shaped in their very autonomy by their material interfaces with the city.

I turn here once more to Canan's phenomenological account. Indeed, the theme of separation and distance from the city surfaced throughout Canan's description of her listening experience. As she lived on the Asian side near Moda as well, we would often travel back together and talk about concerts and classical music in Turkey, returning again and again to themes of acoustics, Istanbul and Turkish politics, and the pleasures of listening. After the Borusan Philharmonic concert in August, for example, as we walked down the hill along Maçka Park to the Beşiktaş Ferry Station, I was surprised to hear Canan say that she had not found the concert particularly satisfying. I suggested that perhaps the concert organizers had chosen an overly large venue in the name of social distancing and the sound system wasn't quite up to the task. She interrupted me, saying that it's Turkey and they can't really manage these things. When she went to outdoor concerts in England, she said, they were in more enclosed spaces and the acoustics were better.

Drawing a connection with the conditions of her initial acquaintance with concert listening, she described a kind of Occidentalist resonance between classical music and particular atmospheres:

> **Canan:** I first started going to concerts while I was in a foreign country ... in England. I was in Oxford there … The first times that I appreciated [classical music] were during that period. I wasn't even in a big city like London. You know, because it is a place that hasn't yet been spoiled, hasn't yet been messed with, I think [the music] goes with the space better. Really, I want to catch that in Istanbul, too. I'm not even going to dispute Istanbul's urban toxicity anymore (interview, December 5, 2020).[50]

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[50] Ben ilk bu konserlere yabancı bir ülkedeyken gitmeye başlamıştım. Ailemle birkaç kez gittiysem bile o alışkanlık değildi. İlk kez böyle İngiltere'de iken gidiyordum. Orada da Oxford' ta idim, Londra'da yine büyük şehir içinde değildim. İlk sevdiğim zamanlar da benim o zamana denk geliyor. Hani daha bozulmamış, daha tarihi dokusu oynanmamış yerler olduğu için bence

Canan's comment indicates a resonance between Western art music and her experiences of listening in the UK. She suggests that listening to Western art music in Istanbul might activate these resonances in an urban sphere she perceives to be "toxic." Indeed, Istanbul's very "urban toxicity" was in a sense intimately connected to the pleasure Canan took in the separate and distinct atmospheres of its spaces. As I describe in the previous section, Canan and others indicated that part of their pleasure in Western art music concerts in Istanbul stems from a sense of joining a public united by a particular habitus. Here, Canan draws a sharper contrast between the "outside"—the "majority of the Istanbul that [she lives] in"—and the concert atmosphere. The "vertical" buildings that she references, for example, are the skyscrapers that have transformed Istanbul's skyline under AKP rule and are considered by some to be woefully out of scale tokens of foreign profiteering to which the ruling government has delivered their beautiful city. At the same time, the toxicity to which she refers is not only fostered by oversized buildings, but also by people—ostensibly, the majority of people in Istanbul whom, she implies, are rude, wantonly bumping into each other on the sidewalk with nary a thought. These she contrasts to the "suspended" public she finds at atmospheric concerts of Western art music.

She went on to describe how the emotional and sensorial effects of this contrast actually help to *constitute* that atmosphere. The Tekfur Palace is located in the conservative European-side Fatih district up a hill from the Golden Horn—distant from Kadıköy both geographically and ideologically. Its hilltop remoteness rendered access rather difficult—it took me at least an hour and a half from Moda with several ferries and a taxi. For Canan, though, this remoteness

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mekâna çok uyum sağlıyor. Onu yakalamak istiyorum aslında İstanbul'da da. İstanbul'un o şehir toksikliğini de tartışmayacağım zaten.

became a factor in constituting the concert atmosphere. When I asked her how she traveled to the Tekfur concerts, she replied:

> **Canan:** Well, I don't drive. I use public transportation. The fact that public transportation doesn't take you all the way there is actually an advantage for me. You are forced to walk a certain portion: ten or fifteen minutes. I think that that walk prepares you. It's like getting out of the bus and leaving the industrial revolution and passing into the classical period. It's not something that I do on purpose, but I'm happy that it happens that way (interview, December 5, 2020).[51]

The experience of negotiating public transportation and then walking up the hill opens up a geographical and temporal distance between the city and the concert space, indicated in her description by the "industrial revolution," and an alternate space of listening that she glosses as the "classical period"—once more, a kind of patina of desirable pastness activated through Western art music. In this sense, the distinctiveness of the concert atmosphere is constituted negatively by its sense of chronotopic distance from the "toxic" city.

Other factors could also influence this felt distance. Tekfur's hilltop location places it above the evidently impoverished Edirnekapı neighborhood, through which one travels up from the Golden Horn shore. While I was traveling up (alas, by taxi so as not to be late) through Edirnekapı's narrow, twisting hillside streets to a concert by the popular Rezonanz Choir at Tekfur Palace on July 25, 2020, I was struck along the way by the contrast between the folk popular song "Ankara'nın Bağları" blaring out of the large speakers mounted in the open hatch of a parked car, with facemaskless folks standing around outside it, and the 45 lira choral concert and its rigorous protocols to which I was rushing. Before the August 22, 2020, flute concert, Canan described to me that, having arrived some 30 minutes early, she was witness to a local

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[51] Araba kullanmıyorum zaten. Toplu taşıma kullanıyorum. Toplu taşımanın oralara varmaması da benim için aslında bir avantaj. Belli bir yolu yürümek zorundasınız, 10-15 dakika kadar. O yürüme yolu bence sizi hazırlıyor. O taşıttan kopup; sanayi devriminden kopup klasik döneme geçiyormuş gibi oluyor. Bilerek yaptığım bir şey değil ama ben memnunum böyle olmasından.

teyze (auntie) who, seeing concertgoers starting to arrive, said "hey, the classic folks have come, go somewhere else" (eh, klasikçiler gelmiş, başka bir yere git) to some young people sitting in the park outside the palace. Canan observed that it is funny that, whereas the local residents have gotten accustomed to these new visitors, there is absolutely no attempt made by the municipal concert organizers to bridge the gap between the concerts and the locals.

Figure 16: Edirnekapı neighorhood outside of Tekfur Palace. Photo by author.

In *The Feel of the City,* Nicholas Kenny argues that the body was a nexus bringing together physical changes in the rapidly modernizing, fin de siècle city, physiological responses to them, and ideas about these changes. He describes new modes of sensory perception that developed in conjunction with urban modernity, including new haptic modes of moving through

and thus perceiving urban space (Kenny 2014). I suggest that moving through the city as Canan describes shapes the body by molding visual, aural, and haptic senses and thus, following Riedel's methodological movement ontology, shapes secular acoustic atmospheres. The haptic sense of traveling and walking a great distance becomes part of the multi-sensory atmosphere of the concert space insofar as bodies shaped in this way are taken up, permeated and shifted by, and also produce, atmosphere. For Canan, the sense of removal from city life gained from sitting on the bus and then walking up the hill through the working class Edirnekapı neighborhood to the Tekfur Palace produces a somatic awareness of removal from the "toxic" city that resonates with her first serious experiences with classical music in Oxford. Moreover, once inside, Western art music signifies Oxford not only indexically (she first listened there), but also, due to the felt sense of distance, haptically. Having traveled a significant distance to listen and shaped her body accordingly, Canan hears the music, in its very live, atmospheric proximity, as distant and removed from the Istanbul everyday. This in turn produces a new mode of emplacement in the city in which the secular acoustic atmosphere is felt as radically different from the "toxic" city, and thus a cathartic approach to the "primitive present." Şadan Hanım resembles Canan in this sense, traveling from secular fortress to secular fortress to listen at Süreyya. For Hakan Bey, on the other hand, walking the short distance from his Yeldeğirmeni apartment to Süreyya Opera in Kadıköy reinforces positive emotions and a sense of comfortable emplacement inside the secular fortress of Kadıköy. Within the Tekfur and Süreyya atmospheres, proximity and the possibility of a maximally porous engagement with the music is in fact desirable—they want to sit on the front row and lose themselves—but only when held in tension with distance and control—maintaining control over the line outside and diligent focus and disciplined response to the music inside.

Crucially, it is not my claim simply that bodies must be prepared according to a certain discursive tradition in order to be resonant with the sonic movements of a particular atmosphere, though this is also the case as I argue in the previous section. Nor do I make here the tautological claim that atmospheres are marked by contrast from their surroundings. Rather, I argue that there is a much more dynamic and, indeed, "porous" interaction between the interior and exterior of atmospheres. One locus of this, I am suggesting, is the phenomenological felt-body insofar as its sensorial (haptic, visual, aural, etc.) apparati are shaped by the city located outside the secular acoustic atmosphere and then shape and are shaped by sonic movements within it. Canan's experience of passing across expanses of the "toxic" city produces a felt, somatic awareness of geographical and temporal separation and distance that interacts dynamically with and modulates secular sonic atmospheres in accordance with shifting geographies of belonging in the city and their (Ox)cidental referents. Likewise, the shaping of the body as it is drawn into a state of resonant becoming within the totality of the secular atmosphere trains bodies to want to board the bus, climb the hill, or just make the walk once more in search of cathartic encorporation in secular acoustic atmospheres of intra- and inter-corporeal suspension.

In analyzing the relationship between secular acoustic atmospheres and the city--"atmospheric emplacement"—it turns out that the city is always already implicated in the internal (non-linear) spatial relations that obtain in secular acoustic atmospheres. I demonstrate that moving through the city toward secular acoustic atmospheres conditions the body's emotional and sensorial attunements, producing a felt sense of spatial and temporal distance from the city that is in turn constitutive of secular acoustic atmospheres. The transformation of bodies taken up by atmospheric currents and the experiences of carefully controlled proximity that this fosters in turn draw listeners to return to secular acoustic atmospheres.

In conclusion: cathartic experiences of (distanced and separated) proximity in secular acoustic atmospheres in Istanbul become a kind of "booster shot" for maintaining a sense of belonging in an Istanbul felt to be increasingly contoured by forces of Islamic populism and related neoliberalism. Secular acoustic atmospheres that resonate with materially embedded histories linking Istanbul to the West produce an alternative secular acoustic chronotope with and in which secular bodies come to resonate through isomorphic resemblance. This becomes a way to think about the relationship between the atmospheres of particular situations—"secular acoustic atmospheres"—and broader (urban) contexts that I refer to as "atmospheric emplacement." Insofar as atmospheres produce collectivity in unity—internally diffuse meaningfulness (however marked by separation and distance in the case of secular acoustic atmospheres)—they become as bodies emplaced in the city in particular ways, even as they shape in particular ways the emplacement of (human) secular bodies and a secular contra-public in the city.

Chapter 3: Secular Acoustic Geographies: Listening to Istanbul, Hearing the West

> I say to myself: Are Turkish children who are born and grow up in neighborhoods like Şişli, Kadıköy, and Moda going to be able to receive a full portion of their nationality? The minarets in those neighborhoods are invisible, the ezans inaudible. The days of Ramadan and Kandil are imperceptible. How do the children see the childhood dream of Islam?[52]
>
> (Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, "Neighborhoods without Ezan" [Ezansız Semtler] 1922)

Perhaps no sound more clearly defines urban space than the Islamic Call to Prayer, or Ezan. Resolutely public, the ezan saturates in contexts where it is ubiquitous (Koymen 2017), it contests hegemonic soundscapes where it is not (Lee 1999; Tamimi Arab 2017; Weiner 2014). In contexts where the ezan is expected, though, its silence can also speak volumes, as the epigraph from Turkish poet and author Yahya Kemal Beyatlı indicates. For those living in certain Istanbul districts and neighborhoods, in Kemal's view, the risk posed by inaudible ezan is far greater than children simply failing to observe a prayer time. Rather, they are deprived of an entire "Muslim dream" of childhood (Müslüman rüyası), shaped by the sounds of "ezan read to their ears as they were born," the sight of old grandmothers doing namaz, the "sounds of the Koran being read [that they hear] … on the evenings of holy days," the smell "like rosewater" of the yellowed pages of the Koran, and the tekbir that they listen to in the mosque at dawn next to their fathers. In other words, for Kemal, it is an entire, multi-sensory atmosphere of piety that is missing in

[52] Kendi kendime diyorum ki: Şişli, Kadıköy, Moda gibi semtlerde doğan, büyüyen, oynayan Türk çocukları milliyetlerinden tam bir derecede nasip alabiliyorlar mı? O semtlerdeki minareler görülmez, ezanlar işitilmez, Ramazan ve Kandil günleri hissedilmez. Çocuklar Müslümanlığın çocukluk rüyasını nasıl görürler.

"neighborhoods without ezan."[53] In the essay, he describes his own experience of attending early morning namaz during sacred holidays at a small mosque on Istanbul's Princes Islands, despite this action being at cultural odds with the "Frenk" lifestyle there: "that morning, at dawn, in that little mosque on that Big Island so unfamiliar with Islam, we became a spiritual congregation of the same nation."[54] To those Istanbulers who have become so civilized and Westernized that they have abandoned Islam, he suggests, "let them go to the cities of the Balkan states," where they will see that "bell towers rise on all sides" and hear "bell sounds … on Sundays and holidays (Beyatlı 1983)."[55]

Yahya Kemal was writing in 1922 on the eve of Ottoman urban cosmopolitanism when he impugned the Islamic bonafides of neighborhoods like Moda, but this critique still circulates today, in 2022. Witness, in 2019, a list making the rounds on social media noting Moda's "highbrow neighborhood head and her candidates"—no doubt noting the Armenian opera singer, Jewish writer, and Greek engineer among the Moda Neighborhood Council's nine members (Önceler 2019). In this chapter, I examine what I refer to as a "secular acoustic geography" centered in precisely those districts of the city that Yahya Kemal identifies—particularly Kadıköy and its Moda neighborhood. If Kemal framed these districts negatively, defining them

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[53] Doğarken kulaklarına ezan okundu, evlerinin odalarında namaza durmuş ihtiyar nineler gördüler, mübârek günlerin akşamları bir minderin köşesinden okunan Kur'an'ın sesini işittiler; bir raf üzerinde duran Kitabullah'ı indirdiler, küçücük elleriyle açtılar, gülyağı gibi bir ruh olan sarı sahifelerini kokladılar. İlk ders olarak besmeleyi öğrendiler; kandil günlerinin kandilleri yanarken, Ramazan`ların, bayramların topları atılırken sevindiler. Bayram namazlarına babalarının yanında gittiler, camiler içinde şafak sökerken tekbirleri dinlediler, dinin böyle bir merhalesinden geçtiler, hayata girdiler. Türk oldular.

[54] O sabah, o Müslümanlığa az âşinâ Büyükada'nın o küçücük camii içinde, şafakta aynı milletin ruhlu bir cemaati idik.

[55] Medenîleştikçe Müslümanlıktan çıktığımızı tabiî ve hoş gören eblehler uzağa değil, Balkan Devletlerinin şehirlerine kadar gitsinler. Görürler ki baştanbaşa yenileşen o şehirlerin her tarafında çan kuleleri yükselir. Pazar ve yortu günleri çan sesleri işitilir.

by what they lack, I ask which sensory and affective experiences fill them. If Kemal suggested that over-Westernized Istanbulers should leave these pale imitations of the West for the real thing, I examine the ways in which the West becomes sensorially palpable in these districts through sound—specifically, the sounds of Western art music and the sensory regimes it mobilizes. In short, though the sounds are different, I examine a geography of the city defined by a certain feel activated through sonic motion and multi-sensory atmosphere.

Many scholars have employed "soundscape" and other proximate concepts when discussing urban sound and the ways that it defines and contests space in the city (Hirschkind 2006; Papadapolous and Duru 2017; Plourde 2019). Here, I do not prefer this concept for several reasons. Not least, I am interested in discussing geographies of the city as these are shaped by and experienced through listening, whereas soundscape seems to imply a singular focus on sound (Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa, and Porcello 2010). Along these lines, I follow Tim Ingold's critique that the soundscape concept objectifies sound by carving up the sensible world into "scapes" (Ingold 2007). More than this, though, Stefan Helmreich has contended that the soundscape concept presupposes a listener "with an acoustemology that imagines persons as emplaced in space, possessed of interior subjectivities that process outside objectivities" (Helmreich 2010). This is precisely the sensory orientation whose shaping by practices of listening to Western art music in Istanbul I examine. The soundscape concept therefore becomes analytically tautological, and a concept that affords some more traction is called for.

Thus, rather than assume particular sensory ontologies or reify the separateness of sensory modalities, I analyze the ways that a geography of urban districts and neighborhoods in the city come to have a particular "feel" activated through practices of listening to Western art music resonating in particular spaces and materialities (Kenny 2014). Along these lines, Patrick

Eisenlohr has recently analyzed "atmospheric citizenship" produced by Twelver Shia processions in Mumbai. Specifically, he argues that the suggestions of sonic motion during Muharrem processions and performances produce sonic atmospheres, lending neighborhoods a Shia "feel" that fosters a sense of belonging in an urban context riven by sectarian conflict (Eisenlohr 2021). Unlike public sounds such as Muharram processions or Yahya Kemal's ezan, however, Western art music tends to sound in relatively circumscribed spaces—it rarely if ever fills a neighborhood with sound in Istanbul or anywhere else. Rather, in Istanbul it activates atmospheres in distinctive spaces in the city—an "alternative infrastructure" as I elaborate in this chapter.

For this reason, I suggest that Yael Navaro's concept of "affective geography" is useful. Navaro develops this concept to understand the affect projected by material objects left behind by Greek Cypriots—houses, objects, furniture—and the ways that these contour both an affectively-charged geography in Northern Cyprus and the "geography" of affective subjectivities in that polity (Navaro 2012). Combining Eisenlohr's and Navaro's theorizations of space, I suggest that the concept of "acoustic geography" accounts for the ways in which secular acoustic atmospheres embedding affect-projecting materialities shape patterns of movement and produce feelings of belonging to neighborhoods and districts in the city. In other words, where Eisenlohr discusses atmosphere at the level of the neighborhood, I suggest that secular acoustic atmospheres function as affective magnets, pulling bodies through the city and fostering feelings of belonging to particular geographies. I argue that a density of secular acoustic atmospheres in certain neighborhoods and districts produces affectively and sensorially-tuned acoustic geographies.

It is in the interaction of listening bodies and acoustics that these geographies become secular. Indeed, the acoustics of spaces making up the "alternative infrastructure" that I discuss were often praised by my interlocutors. I understand acoustics here, however, not as a decoupling of sound and space (Thompson 2002), nor simply as material and spatial qualities that enable clear perception of sound waves, but rather in terms of a broader conception of what one is able to perceive in a particular space. Specifically, I suggest that, in the spaces making up the "alternative infrastructure," it becomes possible to perceive the traces of a demotic cosmopolitan Istanbul past and its Occidental references at a remove from the city's contemporary transformation under Islamic populism. This perceptual affordance is both amplified in the urban geography that I discuss and itself a sensorial portal to Occidental urban geographic imaginaries. Insofar as they produce a sense of separation and distance from the present mediated by an Occidental imaginary, these spaces' acoustics are distinctively secular in the Istanbuler sense that I elaborate in this dissertation.

These geographies are not activated independently of global, regional, and local power dynamics, however. In an essay on "urban charisma," Hansen and Verkaaik provocatively propose that:

> Since the end of the 20th century, democratic processes generated by ethnic, religious, and populist politics have brought new social groups into the political arena, into the heart of political power and into erstwhile bourgeois urban spaces across the globe. The modernist utopia of 'washing' the masses to make them civilized subjects is quickly giving way to an elitist dystopia that combines a nostalgic longing for an imagined past of decreed order and civility of the colonial city, with a growing fear of the poor and the associated smells and noises. In his discussion on taste, Pierre Bourdieu (1984: 2) argued that the capacity to see (voir) is a function of knowledge (savoir). But what about the capacity to hear (entendre) and smell (sentir) (Hansen and Verkaaik 2009: 14)?

A better description of many of my interlocutors' perceptions of their situation in Istanbul would be hard to come by. In the above quote, Hansen and Verkaaik point to the global dynamics that

have produced a transformation of urban sensibilities around the turn of the twenty-first century, Elsewhere in the essay, they theorize “infra-power” as a kind of local power held by those able to draw on an ad-hoc rhizomatic network of connections and opportunities located in the popular neighborhoods of postcolonial cities. Following Hansen and Verkaaik’s lead, in this chapter I take up global, regional, and local geographical frames. In the first section, I examine factors that contributed to the rise of secular acoustic geographies in Istanbul. I focus specifically on the Istanbul Culture and Art Foundation’s mobilization of an “alternative infrastructure” of concert spaces to market Istanbul’s “cultural heritage” globally. In its second section, I examine a shift in secular belonging to the city from the Beyoğlu to the Kadıköy district prompted by secular acoustic atmospheres. Finally, in its third section, I take a newly-founded, Moda-centered Baroque group and its young founder as a case study to examine unexpected local “infra-power” facilitated by secular acoustic geographies. At various geopolitical scales, the secular acoustic geography that I examine is both shaped by structures of power and circulations of desire and capital and productive of them. The result is novel modes of secular belonging to the city that draw upon and produce Istanbul’s cosmopolitan past and an Occidental imaginary.

Global Desires, Local Memories

The past several decades in Turkey have witnessed dramatic transformations wrought by (neoliberal) social, cultural, and economic opening. Meltem Ahıska has recently suggested that one effect of these transformations has been an opening up of memory previously suppressed by Turkish ethno-nationalism (Ahıska 2019). These transformations have perhaps been felt nowhere more than in Istanbul**,** which has emerged as a “global city” integrated into transnational markets for cultural heritage and tourism even as its suppressed layers of cosmopolitan memory have

become increasingly perceptible (Keyder 1999; Mills 2010; Papadapolous and Duru 2017; Fisher, Pearce, and Keyman 2019). A significant, if underappreciated, modality of this transformation has been the opening up of formerly neglected spaces, such as churches, for performances of Western art music. Though often accounted for in terms of a lack of acoustically suitable, purpose-built concert halls, I suggest here that the emergence of this "alternative infrastructure" has been significantly driven by efforts to integrate Istanbul into global cultural markets by framing the city as a geography with unique cultural heritage. I draw here on an anthropological line of inquiry that understands infrastructure, in the broadest terms, as as sociomaterial assemblage that supports circulation (Elyachar 2010; Carse 2012; Mains 2012; Chalfin 2014; Björkman 2015; Burchardt 2016; Anand 2017). In this section I examine private institutional efforts to capitalize on an infrastructural network of spaces understood to embody Istanbul's "cultural heritage" and the local secular acoustic geography whose emergence it supports.

Since its inception in 1973, the private, foundation- and corporate-sponsored Istanbul Music Festival has been a consistent force for opening up new concert spaces in the city. I managed to snag an hour for conversation with Melih Fereli— former director of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı—İKSV), the Istanbul Music Festival's parent organization. Melih Bey now heads Istanbul's large, new, *Arter* contemporary art museum, funded by the private Koç Foundation. He explained to me that, just as he had done as director of IKSV, he sees it as his mission at Arter to raise the level of the public under conditions of populism by developing its sensory capacities. He proposes to do this, not least, by turning *Arter* into a center for new music—the Wigmore Hall of Istanbul, as he put it—as well as through exhibits of contemporary art focused on sound and the senses. When I was in Istanbul in

Summer and Fall 2021, for example, Arter featured a collaboration with the Donauschingen Festival, an exhibition of art with musical connections--"For Eyes that Listen" (Dinleyen Gözler İçin) intended to "encourage us to change our ways of listening and seeing, unveiling the fog that inhibits us from discovering the creative and imaginary powers embedded in our sensory system" (Fereli 2020)—as well as a large space devoted to David Tudor's immersive sound installation "Rainforest V." Arter might perhaps be considered the cutting edge of the Turkish secular discursive tradition that I elaborate in chapter 1.

In an airy upper lobby at *Arter,* Melih Bey explained to me that under his directorship during the 90s, the IKSV was in the vanguard of opening up a number of different concert spaces. When he took the reins of IKSV in 1993, he explained, there was still one single "İstanbul Festivali," encompassing classical music, jazz, art exhibitions, and other events. His goal, he explained, was to transform this from an import model to an export model, such that Istanbul would become known globally as an arts center. One measure that he spearheaded was to break up the single, comprehensive festival into a series of more focused festivals: Music (encompassing mostly Western art music), Jazz, Film, Theater, Design, and Biennale. Another measure, he explained, was to develop these festivals through outside partnerships and collaborations. An important factor here, he explained, was the variety of spaces that Istanbul offers—"mostly chapels," (çoğu mabet). In his view, these "alternative" (değişik) spaces became an "infrastructure" (altyapı) that Istanbul alone could offer to attract outside partners.

Current Istanbul Music Festival Director, Efruz Çakırkaya, likewise emphasized the importance of sacred spaces for the festival. Making a comparison to their widespread use for concerts in Europe, she suggested that in Turkey the use is more practical and particularly due to acoustic concerns:

> [Our use] really stems a bit more from lack. Istanbul really still lacks a concert hall with top notch acoustics ... When we bring a big orchestra, we don't have a true concert hall that we use. We use Lütfi Kırdar, but that is not a concert hall, it's a convention center. As its name would imply, Zorlu Performing Arts Center is a performing arts center, [but] it has no acoustics—inside the space, there aren't panels created for acoustics and classical music. As a result, it doesn't have suitable acoustics (interview, November 10, 2020).

However, even as Efruz Hanım couched the use of Istanbul's sacred spaces in terms of need, she immediately added: "both because of lack to some extent, and ... to create the richness of this place. We use those spaces to bring out Istanbul's cultural heritage (İstanbul'un kültür mirası).[56] As Eric Porter has argued in the case of jazz in New Orleans, under conditions of neoliberal governmentality, "culture" has emerged as a "natural resource" to be sustained and drawn upon for global branding (Yudice 2003; Porter 2009). On the global market, sacred spaces in Istanbul take part perhaps in the trope of the city as a "bridge between cultures," along the lines that Deborah Kapchan has discussed as the "festive sacred" (Kapchan 2008).

However, where Melih Bey had seen Istanbul's "alternative infrastructure" of sacred spaces as a resource for marketing the city globally, Efruz Hanım explained to me that these spaces are also useful for marketing the festival domestically. She described the "Müzik Rotası" (Music Routes) festival concert series as a way to attract listeners to performances by lesser-known musicians using the diversity of neighborhoods and spaces that Istanbul offers:

> We choose a place in central Istanbul. We choose an area where churches, synagogues, and historical buildings like this are in walking distance and a guide who points out that area's cultural and historical past accompanies the concertgoers. They explain the

[56] Bizimki biraz yokluktan da aslında. İstanbul'da gerçekten çok iyi bir akustiği olan bir konser salonu halen yok. İnşallah AKM' nin salonu böyle bir yer olacaktır. Büyük bir orkestra getirdiğimiz zaman gerçek anlamda bir konser salonu yok kullandığımız. Lütfi Kırdar'ı kullanıyoruz ki orası bir konser salonu değil, kongre merkezi. Zorlu performans sanatı merkezi adı üstünde, orası da performans sanat merkezi. Bir akustik yok, mekân içerisinde akustik, klasik müzik için oluşturulmuş paneller vs. Yok. Dolayısıyla uygun bir akustik de yok. Hem biraz yokluktan hem biraz dediğim gibi buradaki o zenginliği yaratmak. İstanbul'un kültür mirasını ortaya çıkarmak için o mekânları kullanıyoruz.

> minorities who lived in that area and they give information on the history of the churches or synagogues ... where we have concerts (interview, November 10, 2020).[57]

Attending several concerts on foot in historical venues in an afternoon like this is "a very attractive thing for the concertgoer, a very charming content" she said. For the Summer 2022 festival, The Istanbul Music Festival website announces that the Music Routes program will take Kadıköy as its site. Featuring performances at the Yeldeğirmeni Arts Center, the Hemdat Israel Synagogue, the Hagia Triada Greek Orthodox Church, and the Moda L'Eglise Notre dame de L'Assomption, the program "sets to explore one of the multicultural centres of Istanbul: Kadıköy. The district where Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews have lived together to this day..." (Music Route @ Kadıköy (iksv.org)).

By opening up spaces in this way, I suggest, global dynamics of neoliberal circulation have reshaped patterns of belonging to the city. Listening in sacred spaces becomes a modality through which acoustic geographies of the city are constituted and perceived.[58] But what work, exactly, does this "alternative infrastructure" of sacred spaces do? Though it was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the Opus Amadeus festival promised a program of concerts in venues such as Yeldeğirmeni Arts and the Hemdat Israel Synagogue in Kadıköy that an article in the March 5, 2020, issue of the *Kadıköy Gazete* advertised as "Chamber Music in Historic Spaces (Tarihi Mekanlarda Oda Müziği). When I attended the March 11, 2020, festival concert at Yeldeğirmeni Arts, my attention was immediately grabbed by two young men behind me talking about the space before the concert began. One was telling the other to look up at the

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[57] İstanbul merkezinde bir yer seçiyoruz. Yürüme mesafesinde bu tarz kilise, sinagog ve tarihi mekânların olduğu bir bölgeyi seçiyoruz ve o bölgenin aslında kültürel ve tarihi geçmişine de dikkat çekerek bir rehber izleyicilere eşlik ediyor. O bölgede yaşamış olan azınlıklar, diğer tarihi binalar içinde konser yaptığımız kilise ya da sinagog tarihi gibi bilgileri de izleyicilere anlatıyor.
[58] Bu formatta o mekânlara gitmek izleyici için çok cazip bir şey, çekici bir içerik.

decorations on the ceiling. When the house lights were turned down, one of them said "it looks much more beautiful" and took a photo of the space (çok daha güzel görünüyor). During the pause, I spoke with the rather posh-looking family attending with their young son next to me—the mother with Louis Vuitton bag, the father with gray Burberry scarf over gray sweater and Apple watch. The woman described Yeldeğirmeni as "magnificent" (ihtişamlı) and said that, though they live on the Asian side, they are here for the first time—that anyway, she thinks this church phenomenon is new. Her husband jumped in, saying that all of these spaces are new, or being newly rediscovered. I asked them about the previous festival concert at the Istanbul Sea Museum. They attended and it was good, they said, "but the acoustics here are better" (ama buranın akustiği daha iyi). When I spoke with the festival organizer, he named several factors for venue selection. One of them, he said, was acoustics: citing the lack of acoustically superior halls in Istanbul, he said that "[the spaces] echo the acoustics in Europe, Budapest, Vienna and make the musicians happy, and of course the concertgoers automatically become happy (Burası benim Avrupa'daki Budapeşte'deki, Viyana'daki akustiği yansıtan ve müzisyenleri de mutlu eden ve seyirci de otomatikman mutlu oluyor tabi ki). Of Yeldeğirmeni, he noted that "it has stained glass: people are automatically impressed when you do it in a place like a church or synagogue. Those high ceilings …" and that "people really like being in Istanbul history in union with music in this way."[59]

While it is agreed upon by all parties that the church acoustics are superior, the justification for this view is not obviously connected to material qualities of the space that enable clearer perception of sound. Rather, the acoustics are considered "good" insofar as they enable

[59] Vitrayları var. Siz bir kilisede, sinagogda ya da böyle bir yerde yaparsanız insanlar otomatik olarak etkileniyorlar. O yüksek tavalardan… İstanbul tarihi içinde olması ve bu şekilde müzikle de birleşmeleri insanlara çok güzel geldi.

the multi-sensory perception of Occidental geographies filtered through the multi-sensory lens of cosmopolitan Istanbul history. Activated by sonic movement, a secular cosmopolitan Istanbul becomes somatically knowable—felt—producing a secular acoustic geography at the nexus of Istanbul neighborhoods, listening bodies, and Occidental imaginaries. In this way, the global economy of desire that renders sacred spaces in Istanbul lucrative as part of an imaginary of interfaith dialogue is reversed—the same spaces enable Istanbullers to participate in an Occidental imaginary that produces a novel secular acoustic geography. In the next section, I turn to that geography.

II: Crossing the Bridge, Again

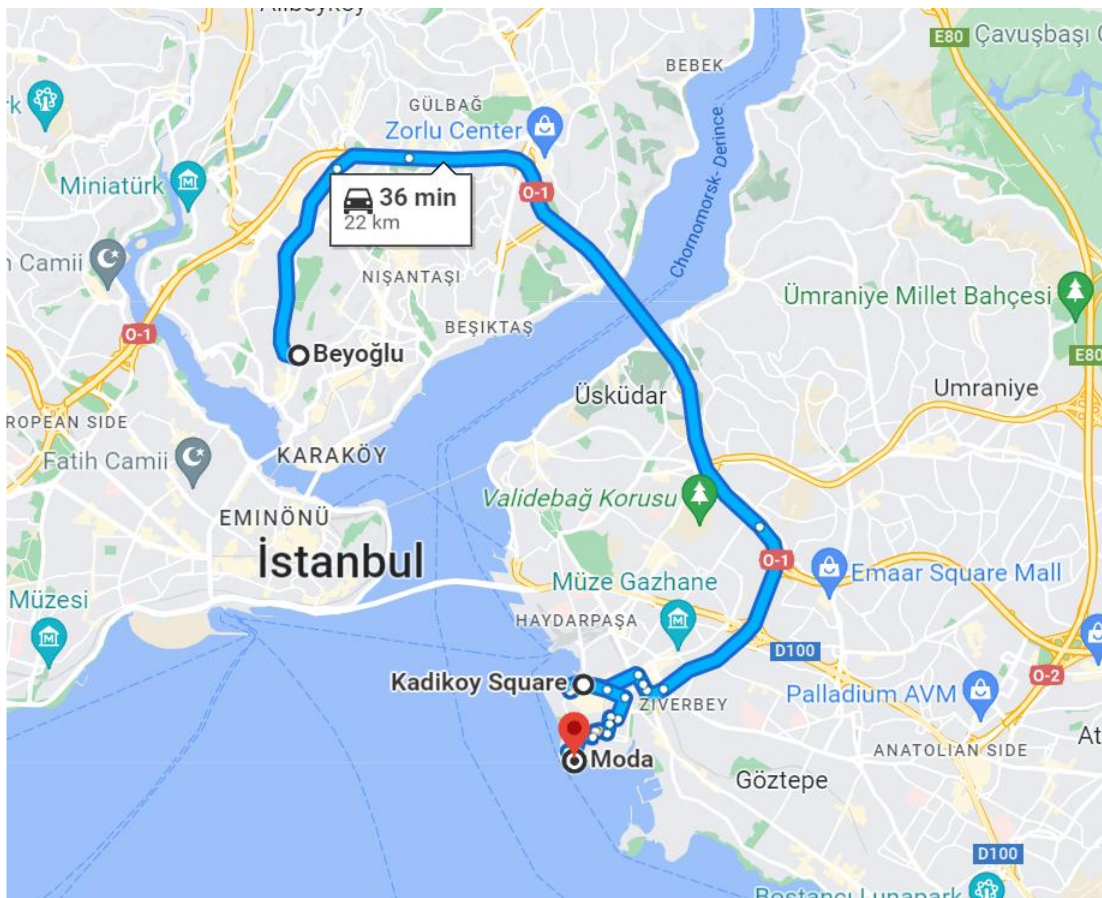

Figure 17: crossing the bridge from Beyoğlu to Moda.

On the afternoon of February 1, 2020, I attended a piano recital at All Saints Moda Anglican Church as part of the Istanbul Philharmonic Society's annual concert series. The society had formerly held its concerts in a small hall on an upper floor of the Avrupa Pasajı in Istanbul's central Beyoğlu district. Citing empty seats in Beyoğlu and strong demand from Kadıköy, however, the society had taken the decision this year to hold all concerts at the neo-gothic, All Saints Moda. All Saints Moda, the then Philharmonic Society president told me, fulfilled the requirements of location, price, and piano, plus it's a "pretty church," he said (interview, November 23, 2020). This February 1 concert at All Saints was, as usual, jam-packed with a blazered, Burberry-scarved, and even cravated crowd facing the church's altar, with its cross displayed. Toward the front, I noted members of the older, secularist elite who live in Kadıköy. Next to me in the pew, though, was an attendee about my age, looking around at the church and tapping along with the pianist on his knee during the first movement of Debussy's "Pour le Piano." He said that he was a lawyer preparing to move to Spain for a job, but he also plays piano, hence his interest in the recital. I asked him if he lived in the neighborhood. No, he said, he lives on the European side, in Çukurcuma in the Beyoğlu district. It is chaotic over there, he says, so he loves to come over here—"the quality of life on this side is higher, when I come here, I can breathe a bit," he said. After the concert had finished, I took my leave of him to mingle with interlocutors. Making my way up to the front of the church, I noticed an older woman slowly passing by, looking at the large brass plaques on the wall bearing the names of members of the English Whittall and LaFontaine family members who had formerly worshipped here. "They were English, French, Dutch, all mixed," she said to her companion (bunlar İngiliz, Fransız, Hollandalı, karışık hepsi).

Figure 18: All Saints Moda interior. Photo by author.

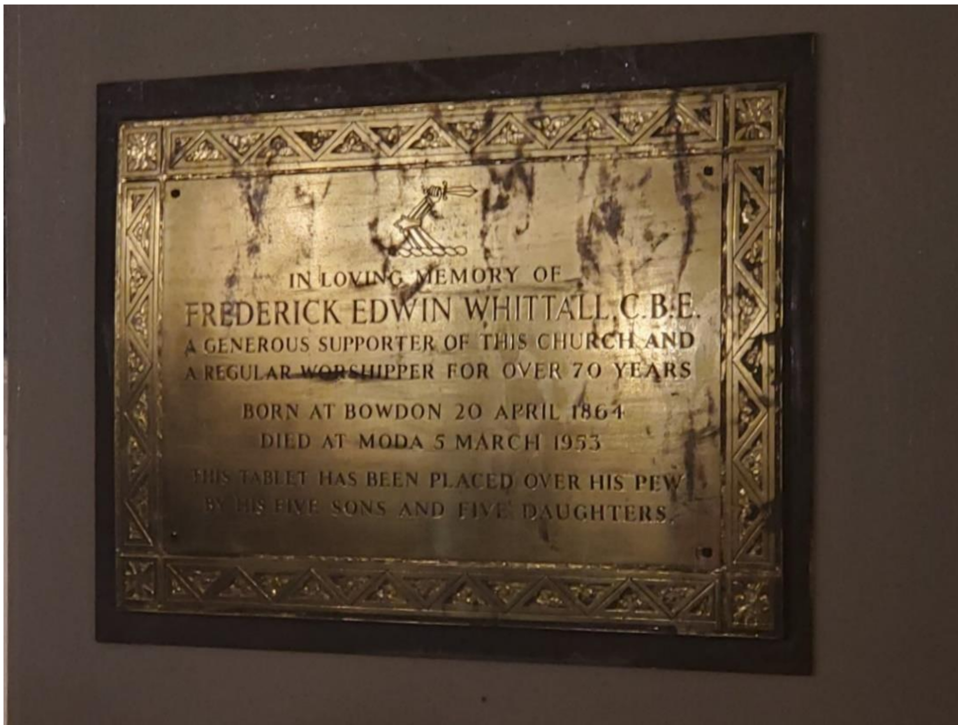

Figure 19: plaque in memory of Frederick Edwin Whittall (1864-1953) in All Saints Moda. Photo by author.

Figure 20: plaque in memory of Linda La Fontaine (?-1920) in All Saints Moda. Photo by author.

That the Istanbul Philharmonic Society struggled to sell tickets to concerts in Beyoğlu, where it had long based its activities, might seem to indicate the decline of that district. However, Beyoğlu's central Istiklal Avenue was always surging with tourists whenever I went there, and not two weeks earlier, on January 18, 2020, the Turkish Minister for Culture and Tourism had announced in the state Anadolu Ajans news service a major new project to knit together the cultural and historical sites of Beyoğlu into the "Beyoğlu Culture Road" (Beyoğlu Kültür Yolu) beginning from the massive new, waterfront Galataport development, which has commandeered the shoreline of the historic Karaköy neighborhood. The project's flavor is perhaps effectively conveyed by the corporate speak of the "About us" blurb on the Galataport website:

> A USD 1.7 billion investment, Galataport Istanbul is regarded as a major destination project globally with a cruise liner port on the 1.2-kilometer coastline. Galataport Istanbul

> is an ecosystem in the heart of the city that offers the essential digital features and latest technologies that make life easier (About Galataport İstanbul Project, Galataport Project)

From the then under construction Galataport, the cruise passenger (or the local, whom Galataport, the announcement promised, would likewise benefit) would be invited to pass through my All Saints seatmate's Çukurcuma neighborhood on their way to a number of new and newly renovated historical sites, including the Galata Tower, cultural centers, cinemas, museums, and the new Takism Mosque leading up to and along Istiklal Avenue. Its final destination would be the newly reconstructed Atatürk Cultural Center on Taksim Square (Alcan, Uştuk, and Türkyılmaz 2020).

If the Galataport and Beyoğlu Culture Road projects aimed to capitalize on Istanbul's unique cultural heritage to further open the flow of international tourist dollars, for the young lawyer *cum* pianist, what stood out about his journey across the Bosphorus to Kadıköy and the concert at All Saints was atmospheric almost in a literal sense. His comment indicates a sense of entering an environ with cleaner, more breathable air. In Kadıköy and Moda, it seems, he experienced the surprising feeling of vitality brought about by exiting a stuffy, oppressive room. The older woman's comment, on the other hand, indicates the traces of the demotic cosmopolitan past that become perceptible in resonance with Western art music. All Saints Moda Church, built in the late-nineteenth century by the Levantine Whittall family, is one of the last remaining traces of the English Levantine colony that had once dominated Moda—and certainly the most obviously English.

In his memoire, *Constantinople to Kensington*, Geoffrey Whittall describes the (luxurious) isolation of the English Levantine colony in Moda, with its large houses, expansive gardens, local servants, private social clubs, country excursions to go "shooting," and Sunday

services with organ and choir at All Saints (Whittall, 2012).[60] As elsewhere in certain districts of Istanbul (not least Beyoğlu), traces of Istanbul's multi-ethnic and multi-confessional past are relatively abundant in Kadıköy in the form of prominent Greek and Armenian Orthodox churches or, say, restaurants with non-Turkish histories (Viktor Levi Wine House or Koço Tavern), but traces of the Levantine, and especially the English Levantine, colony that my Armenian interlocutor Anais Hanım suggested had "brought civilization to Moda" were harder to come by—limited almost entirely to their churches and a few houses. For the woman observing the commemorative brass plaques on its walls, attending the concert seemed to provide some privileged access to this otherwise obscure Istanbul past.

[60] Tracking down the traces of the Whittall family proved to be a major hobby of mine while in the field. In an interview with the pastor of the Presbyterian church that now uses All Saints, I learned that an Irene Whittall was still a Moda resident and keeper of the church key in the 1990s (interview, September 7, 2020). Alas, no Whittalls remain to my knowledge. I also believe that all but one of their residences has been demolished as part of a broader pattern of Istanbul urban transformation. The one remaining house is accross the street from All Saints, and enjoys a second life as house museum of Turkish popular musician Barış Manço. Otherwise, the former site of the Whittall "big house" is now host to multiple apartment blocks, though it is distinguishable by its rather lush vegetation—formerly, there was apparently a "Vitol Alley", but it seems that this name is no longer in use. The Moda Sea Club (Moda Deniz Kulübü) is also a link to the English colony, which is credited with having brought tennis and soccer to Turkey. This was refounded in 1935, however, following Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's proclamation that "entering the sea is a sign of civilization" (Denize inmek medeniyetin şiarıdır) (Öndeş, Osman. *Modalı Vitol Ailesi.* İstanbul : Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2015). There is a small pump organ housed in the Crimean Anglican Church in Beyoğlu—I have it on good authority that this is the organ that was used in All Saints.

Figure 21: All Saints Moda. Photo by author.

Figure 22: advertisement for a tour of Levantine Kadıköy and Moda, Summer 2020. Advertisement for Ergican Acarbaş tour.

Though the Istanbul Music Festival opened up a new “alternative infrastructure” spread across the city, there has increasingly been a shift in secular center from the Beyoğlu District on Istanbul’s European side to the Asian side Kadıköy district. A few weeks after my arrival in the field, sitting in a cafe across Bahariye Avenue from Süreyya Opera, I was somewhat taken aback by an article in the Cumhuriyet Newspaper in which the Kadıköy Municipal Social and Cultural Director (Kadıköy Belediyesi Sosyal Kültür Müdürü) characterized Kadıköy as a “battle arena,” claiming that Kadıköy is an exception in Turkey with its orientation toward Europe and has become the cradle of Turkish democracy (“Kadıköy bir Mücadele Alanı,” *Cumhuriyet*, October 14, 2019). Sitting a few weeks later in front of an impressionistic painting of Atatürk in her office in the Kadıköy municipal building for an interview, she described Kadıköy as the city district with the highest educational level, but qualified that Kadıköylüler are nevertheless “not rich ... middle class” (“zengin değil ... orta sınıftan,”) and prefer to spend their money on cultural activities. By attending these cultural activities, she suggested, Kadıköylüler “show resistance” (“direnç gösteriyorlar”). Listing signifiers of secularism, she says that Kadıköy is a place where couples can hold hands, where you can drink your beer, and where a woman can still go out alone and return home at 2 am and be fine, though at the last point, she knocks on wood, saying “it’s still that way” (hala öyle). I ask her to compare to other districts of Istanbul, and she says that now “there is one center [which is Kadıköy]” (tek bir merkez)—she says that Kadıköy became an “artistic attraction center,” replacing Beyoğlu (sanatın cazibe merkezi oldu). I raise the issue of “resistance” once more, asking her to expand. She replies that “yes, in a way they resist” (evet, bir şekilde direniyor), adding that she thinks it is “subconscious” (galiba bilinç altında). Saying that jazz is “anyway a music of resistance” (zaten bir direnç müziği), she says that classical music is somewhat different, given its links to “Atatürk’s revolutions” (Atatürk

devrimleriyle), the goal being not copy-paste but an "opening to the West (batı'ya açılma). I mention being surprised at times by the number of attendees at events. She says that she has faced assumptions that municipal events such as concerts and mythology lessons will be empty, but she know Kadıköy because she grew up there—"they listen," she says (dinlerler) (interview, October 22, 2019).

Indeed, listening was key to the shaping of Kadıköy as a secular acoustic geography—listening to music, as well as perceiving a particular Occidental urban imaginary through listening. However, the alternative infrastructure of spaces opened up by the Istanbul Music Festival is spread across several districts in Istanbul—not least, Beyoğlu. When I asked the manager and staff at Süreyya why they thought that Beyoğlu and now Kadıköy are artistic and cultural centers in Istanbul, they replied that Beyoğlu "was the neighborhood where non-muslims lived" (gayrimüslimlerin oturduğu yer). I asked them why they think that former non-muslim neighborhoods like Beyoğlu and Kadıköy always seem to be preferred. A staff member, Cem Şenler, who is also a longtime Istanbul Opera Chorus member, suggested that "the architecture there is different" (oradaki mimari bir kere farklı). Another staff member suggested that "it is because it was always the case that there was less conservatism [there]" (eskiden beri muhafazakarlık daha az olduğu için) and they were "more open to art" (sanata daha açıktı). Having read accounts of how Süreyya Paşa had Süreyya Opera built during the 1920s after access to performance spaces was denied to Muslim Turks by Kadıköy's non-muslim communities, I pointed out that, nevertheless, Süreyya Paşa was a Muslim Turk, rather than Christian or Jewish. They nodded in assent, but note that he was a pasha—in other words, he had a military background—noting that "the views of soldiers are a bit more advanced" (askerlerin bakış açışı biraz daha ileride) because it is "an institution not penetrated by religion" (dinin

girmediği bir kurum). To this, another staff member responded, "it used to be that way," with a rueful smile. Together, these comments draw a line from the past presence of non-Muslim communities to the distinctive urban fabric of certain districts. This distinctiveness has a certain durability in the form of buildings and, perhaps more interestingly, a kind of openness that is woven into that fabric.

Nevertheless, from nearly every single person I spoke with, I heard some variation on the claim that Beyoğlu has now been taken over by the ruling Turkish regime and transformed from a formerly chic, artsy district into a crass tourist destination for wealthy but "uncouth" (görgüsüz) tourists from the Muslim world. The Süreyya staff described Beyoğlu's transition over the last decade as "terrible" (korkunç). They were not naive, and were aware that, as a prestigious district in Istanbul's modern center, Beyoğlu had often changed character in the past. One staff member described that, two generations ago, for example, it was a very chic neighborhood with elegant shops where men circulated in suits and ties and women with hats. In their youth, she said, until about 10 years ago, it was "where young people went" (gençlerin gittiği yer) and "the place for theaters and cinemas" (tiyatroların, sinemaların olduğu yer). However, this time in their view, its transformation could be clearly tied to the ruling Islamist regime: it has changed, there aren't sidewalk cafes, the theaters and everything have closed. In short, she said, it has been transformed into a form "that appeals to Arabs" (Araplara hitap eden) (interview, November 22, 2019).

In an interview that we conducted on the terrace of the Moda Sea Club, longtime Moda resident Nükhet Hanım described the pleasure of attending concerts in her own neighorhood. Saying that Beyoğlu used to be the center for concerts and exhibitions, she no longer goes because "the district of Kadıköy is seen as a district with a more intense level of intellectual

synergy" (Kadıköy ilçe olarak İstanbul'da daha yoğun entelektüel seviye birlikteliği olan bir semt olarak görülüyor). She added that:

> [All Saints] is a place that belongs to a neighborhood—the neighborhood where I live. Rather than my leaving here and going to İstinye and being in a concert hall there, there being music environments in my own neighborhood, the friendships that brings, people's being able to take advantage of that ... it produces an intimacy. Süreyya, for example ... Süreyya Cinema's being given for use as a concert salon and used in that way ... there being such a place in my own neighborhood makes me very happy (interview, March 13, 2020).[61]

This sense of neighborhood intimacy is rooted in a particular history of cosmopolitanism in Kadıköy and Moda whose traces spaces like All Saints and Süreyya carry. Nükhet Hanım, for example, pointed to cosmopolitan traces of the past still resonant in contemporary Moda: "Throughout history, Moda was really where intellectuals, art lovers, and the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks in Turkey [lived], they were accustomed to the culture of non-Muslims. The Turks and Muslims who lived here also know that culture more than those living in other places."[62] As a former summer resort area of the city (İstanbul'un sayfiye yeriydi buralar), Moda was where "close neighborliness" was experienced with these communities, she suggested (çok iyi komşuluklar yaşanmıştır). Fazilet Hanım—likewise a Moda resident and Moda Sea Club member—had joined us by this point, and she added several other such sites to this geography of cosmopolitanism: the (Princes') Islands, Nişantaşı [in the Şişli District]. The geography she

[61] Üstelik kendi oturduğum bir semte ait, bir mahalleye ait bir yerdir orası. Benim buradan kalkıp İstinye'ye gidip bir konser salonunda olmamdansa, benim kendi mahallemde müzik ortamları olabilmesi, onun getirdiği dostluklar, insanların faydalanabilmesi… Yakınlaşma oluyor. Süreyya mesela, onu söylüyordum tam Fazilet geldiğinde. Yani Süreyya sinemasının bir konser salonuna verilmesi ve bu şekilde kullanılması ... Kendi mahallemde böyle bir yer olması beni çok sevindiriyor.

[62] Moda, gerçekten tarihten bu tarafa entelektüellerin, sanatseverlerin ve Türkiye'de yaşayan Musevi ve Ermeniler, Rumların- gayrimüslimlerin kültürüne alışkındırlar. Burada yaşayan Türkler ve Müslümanlar da bu kültürü diğer yerlerden daha fazla bilir.

described is one and the same as that maligned by Yahya Kemal for being “ezansız” and “Frenk” (without ezan).

The transition to a Kadıköy-centered secular acoustic geography is well illustrated by the case of the Istanbul European Choir and a pair of concerts that we gave in January, 2020. The first of these concerts was given at the large municipal Fulya Arts Center in the Beşiktaş District on the European side; the second in the Assomption Catholic Church in Moda. The contrast between them demonstrates the activation of layers of memory embedded in materialities of non-Muslim spaces in Istanbul through the sonic motion of Western art music and the ways in which the resulting atmospheres open a sensorial portal to Occidental urban geographic imaginaries and solidify a secular acoustic geography in Istanbul.

Multiple members explained to me how the Istanbul European Choir was founded in the 1960s as a choir for Europeans in Istanbul. One long-time member summarized its history well:

> When I first entered [in 1995] choristers from foreign countries were in the majority. It was exactly where I wanted to be and we were singing precisely the pieces that I wanted to sing. My high school dream had finally come true. They were the loveliest years of my life. Germans living in Turkey had founded the choir, and subsequently French, Italians, English, and Turks had joined. The year that I joined, there was a French conductor. Subsequently, people from various countries served as conductor. We sang big choral works, oratorios, masses. The foreigners went back to their countries and the name “European Choir” remained but it continued as a Turkish choir (email communication, December 7, 2021).[63]

[63] İlk girdiğimde yabancı ülkelerden koristler çoğunluktaydı. Tam olmak istediğim yerdeydim ve tam söylemek istediğim eserleri söylüyorduk. Lisedeki hayalim nihayet gerçek olmuştu. Hayatımın en güzel yıllarıydı. Türkiye'de yaşayan Almanların kurduğu koroya daha sonra Fransızlar, İtalyanlar, İngilizler ve Türkler katılmıştı. Benim katıldığım yıl Fransız şef vardı. Daha sonraki yıllarda çeşitli ülkelerden gelen kişiler şeflik yaptı. Büyük koro eserleri , oratoryolar, mess'ler söyledik. Yabancılar ülkelerine döndüler ve ismi Avrupa Korosu kaldı ama Türk korosu olarak devam etti.

When I joined in 2019, there was an Italian director, a few English, and a handful of Armenian and Jewish members—indeed, the choir was the only setting in which I was ever aware of encountering a member of Istanbul's five-hundred year Seferad community. Otherwise, though, the membership of the large choir was mostly Turkophone and of Muslim background.

A few years prior, the choir had lost another tie with its Occidental background in the form of its Beyoğlu rehearsal space. Having rehearsed for decades in various spaces in and around Beyoğlu's central Istiklal Avenue (former Grande Rue du Pera)—most notably, the German High School (*Alman Lisesi*)—the choir had been pushed out by security concerns in the wake of the terrorist attacks that struck central Istanbul during the mid-2010s. They had ended up rehearsing in the alumni house of Işık University in the northern Maslak neighborhood. On the ferry back to Kadıköy after a Saturday, January 11, 2020 preview performance in Nişantaşı a few days prior to our official concerts, my interlocutor Fazilet Hanım and several other choir friends mentioned that, when the choir used to rehearse in Beyoğlu, they would always come back like this. "That was more of an environment that nourished art," one of them said, adding that Maslak doesn't contribute anything (orası daha sanat besleyen bir ortamdı).

Having lost much, the choir maintained a tradition of giving concerts in Istanbul's churches on both the European and Asian sides. However, on this front, as well, Beyoğlu had become a sore point. Sitting in the alumni house cafeteria before a rehearsal on Saturday, October 19, 2020, I witnessed a minor dispute in the choir leadership about concert venues. The then president of the choir was advocating for a concert at the Saint Antuan Church, a large and very pretty neo-gothic Catholic basilica situated on Beyoğlu's central spine, Istiklal Avenue. The co-president replied in dismay that they would no longer serve as co-president due to the decision to hold the concert at Saint Antuan. The choir won't be able to fill the space and, more

importantly, Saint Antuan is no longer suitable for a concert due to the transformation of Beyoğlu—"it's full of Arabs!" they said (Arap dolu!).

The Beyoğlu issue was ultimately resolved by scrapping it altogether. Having worked for more than three months on a repertoire of Leopold Mozart Mass and Te Deums from Haydn and Charpentier, by January, 2020, the choir had twin concerts planned: one at the Beşiktaş Municipality's Fulya Arts Center on Istanbul's European side; the other at the Assomption Catholic Church in the Moda neighborhood. But still, members were skeptical. During the return trip to Kadıköy from the January 11 Işık performance, Fazilet Hanım said that she thought the Fulya Arts concert would be empty, whereas the Moda concert at Assomption Church would be full. Her friends are coming, she said—it will definitely be full.

She spoke from experience. A longtime Moda resident and a seventh-generation Istanbullu, who had sung in the polyphonic choir at the *Kadıköy Kız Lisesi* (Kadıköy Girls Lycee) when it was still housed in the crumbling but still splendid Mahmut Muhtar Paşa "Marble Mansion" (Mermer Konak) near Moda Avenue, Fazilet Hanım explained to me in an interview that she had decided to join the Istanbul European Choir after attending a concert at Assomption during the 1990s. Another choir member, Melike, likewise explained to me that Assomption Church had played an important role in her decision to join the choir. A friend of hers singing tenor in the choir invited her, she said: "It was the Spring concert, and I went. I watched their performance. The church atmosphere is obvious, it was as if I were mesmerized. I really liked it."[64] Melike and her fellow chorister, Zeynep, agreed that, as the choir often sings sacred choral music, "its place is there [in the church], that atmosphere" (onun da yeri orası, o atmosfer). They

[64] Arkadaşım gel diyordu devamlı. Çok sesli koro yapıyoruz. Konserine davet et dedim, olduğu zaman haber ver bana. Bahar konseriydi hatta gittim. Performanslarını izledim. Büyülendim adeta, kilisenin ambiyansı da malum. Çok hoşuma gitti.

noted that the choir has performed in many spaces in Istanbul and elsewhere, “but the church atmosphere is very different” (ama kilisenin atmosferi çok farklı) (interview, October 20, 2019).

Figure 23: Mahmut Muhtar Paşa Mansion in Moda. Photo by author.

As it turns out, Fazilet Hanım is right about the concerts. Our concert at Fulya Arts on January 15, 2020 passes with a bland and institutional affect befitting the space. Integrated into a

shopping center with institutional, glass and concrete architecture, Fulya Arts is typical of municipal cultural centers across Istanbul. During our performance, the vast hall is far from full and it is difficult to make much of any connection with either the space or the audience. Adding insult to injury, the hired tenor soloist has a meltdown during the Charpentier. Both audience and performers seem to be (not) caught up in the uninspiring atmosphere: at the end of the concert, the applause quickly fades, so that the conductor and soloists have to return awkwardly to the stage in silence, prompting a meek second round of applause. Afterward, as if to confirm the uninspired atmosphere, the talk in the men's dressing room centers not around our performance but rather the remote location. Bora, a rather boisterous tenor, is trying to figure out where to go for beer with his friends. Understanding that there is really nothing in the vicinity, he sighs "got it, we need a car" (anlaşıldı, araba almak lazım).

Our concert the following evening at the Assomption Church in Moda is a completely different story, though. Built in the 1860s for the growing community of Catholic Levantines in Moda under the leadership of the Lorando family, the church and adjoining facilities are now shared between the Catholic and Syrian Orthodox churches (Atılgan 2018). Set back from the street, its front facade obscured by the large clergy house, it is nevertheless an imposing structure in Moda with its neo-baroque twin bell towers and central dome. Living in Moda, I occassionally saw a habited nun duck out onto Cem Street, and I heeded the call of the bells on a Sunday in November, 2021. I celebrated mass in French with African and European officiants and around twenty-five fellow worshipers to the accompaniment of a small organ and recorded music emanating from the upper balcony. The majority of the worshipers, I was told by the priest, were indeed Levantines. Afterward, I tried to speak with an older man who described himself as Levantine, but he did not seem eager to share information on his background.

Figure 24: Assomption Church front façade. Photo by author.

The day of the Istanbul European Choir concert at Assomption, I am asked to arrive two hours before the 8:30 concert time to help move pews and seats and set up the electric piano. By 7 pm, audience members are already starting to arrive, and a half hour later the church is nearly full. I see Hakan Bey of front row fame in the audience, looking up and around the soaring space. He is sitting about halfway back—when I go to speak with him, he seems surprised,

saying “I entered for the first time, despite being from Kadıköy ... and even though I follow [concerts] so closely” (ilk defa giriyorum, Kadıköylü olmama rağmen ... hem de o kadar yakın takip ediyorum. I then see my friend Orkun, a programmer around my age who is a fellow student at Piano House Moda. He asks for a program and is full of questions: Is this Mozart’s father? Will there be an orchestra? I give him a brief tour of the church campus, showing him the robe room where the tenors and basses are changing, with its old, dark wood vestiment cabinets, and the banquet hall, where photographs of both Assyrian patriarchs and the pope are displayed.

By now it is standing room only as the concert start time approaches. As I pass by the entrance, I hear some American accents turning away at the sight of the packed church, saying “I’m starving let’s go eat.” A short while later, the choir takes the stage set up in front of the altar. Crowded together, the standing-room only audience in the columned and (faux) marbled nave before us, the soaring dome painted with angels on clouds above us, the sound of the music resounding in the space took us up into sonic atmosphere. We were “moved,” brought into a state of mutual becoming. Here, I reproduce my field-note scribbled down afterward:

> The place is jammed full
> People standing in the back
> I notice, for example, Hakan Bey periodically looking up and around at the church
> Like many of my interlocutors, I too notice the different atmosphere of the church
> Whereas during the previous evening I felt like I was just sort of delivering the music
> During this evening I felt like there was an atmosphere
> The place being full
> Pretty barok-style church
> I got more out of the experience myself (fieldnote, January 16, 2020)

“John,” a longtime Armenian baritone, summed up the difference with two muttered comments. Standing on the risers after the Fulya concert, he had noted that the hall was perhaps barely thirty-five percent full. During the extended applause following the Moda Assomption concert, though, I heard him say “it’s like black and white” compared to the previous evening’s concert

(siyah beyaz gibi)—even the tenor managed to pull off his part. Where the previous evening's applause dissipated early, this evening applause continues long after the encore. Unlike the previous concert, moreover, spirits are high afterward as choristers and listeners mingle in the church's front court. I end up in a circle with Fazilet Hanım and Tamer, a tenor who works as a translator, and his husband, whom he introduces. "The acoustics were good," Tamer says (akustik iyiydi), to which Fazilet adds, "the audience members were good" (seyirciler iyiydi).

The audience had been mostly *Modalı,* and thus, in Fazilet Hanım's view, well-prepared for the concert. The superior acoustics of Assomption, on the other hand, had been emphasized several times in the days leading up to the concert. As we rehearsed before the January 16, 2020 concert, our conductor, Paolo, contrasted the acoustics of Assomption with those at Fulya Arts: "Fulya is very big, there are no acoustics," he said in his accented Turkish (Fulya çok büyük, akustik yok). "No acoustics," repeated a fellow bass, softly (akustik yok). After the rehearsal, I ran into Meriç Hanım, a soprano who comes from a musical family and is herself a conservatory graduate in voice. As we stood in front of the main facade, she observed that "it's a very beautiful church" (çok güzel bir kilise). I ask if they had ever given a concert here before (daha önce burada konser verdiniz mi?). "Yes, three times, we sang Mozart and stuff," she said (evet, üç kere—Mozart falan söyledik). She adds, "it's an English church—it's acoustics are very good" (İngiliz kilise—akustiği çok güzel).

Of course, Assomption is not an English church—that would be All Saints Moda about two blocks away. More to the point, though, I claim that the frequent invocation of the church's "good" acoustics was as much about atmosphere as it was about the material resonance of the spaces. During our interview several months prior, Fazilet Hanım had mentioned the Assomption funerals of an archaologist and his French mother for which the choir had sung Mozart's "Ave

Verum Corpus" and "Lacrimosa" in the recent past. These funerals subsequently came up several times in interviews and conversations. Before our rehearsal in the church on Sunday, January 12, for example, I fell into a conversation with Nuri Bey, a filmmaker and tenor with a Balkan migrant background who had also studied in London. We started chatting as he was looking at a painting of a saint with silver decoration on the heart and hand displayed on the church's left side altar. He said that he had previously only seen this kind of thing in Greek Orthodox churches. I asked him if the choir had previously sung in the church. He replied that they did about two years ago for the funeral of a choir member. This was, "a total Istanbul story," he said, smiling (tam bir İstanbul hikayesi). The deceased's mother was Catholic, his father a Bektashi Sheik. The deceased himself had been an archaeologist, he explained. Later, I asked a fellow bass, Kadir Bey, if he had sung previously at Assomption. He, too, mentioned the archaeologist's funeral, explaining that when his mother passed away, they sang a short piece that she requested. The mother was French, he added.

As Nuri Bey put it, the archaeologists' multi-confessional and multi-ethnic background was understood to be particularly *Istanbullu*. My point is that the church space did not evoke specific, formal histories of Istanbul and its Levantines, but was rather a space in which more diffuse resonances of a cosmopolitan past, activated through singing Mozart, came into perception. Or, put differently: thinking in terms of atmosphere is another way of thinking about acoustics. Attributions of "good" acoustics referred ostensibly to the ability to hear sound clearly and vibrantly in the spaces, but perhaps more they indicated the ability to hear resonances of other times and spaces linked to Istanbul's cosmopolitan past and an Occidentalist imaginary more generally. More broadly, I argue that, though a skeptical attitude toward Islam may be a key driver in the turn to Kadıköy and its churches, this does not mean that secular bodies and

geographies are legible and defined only through self-differentiation from religion. Though no less constructed according to discursive tradition, to be sure, secular pasts, imaginaries, and geographies resound with Western art music. Even as secularists feel cut off from Beyoğlu, the acoustics of Assomption beckon to Kadıköy and Moda, where they can hear Occidental resonances that produce feelings of belonging anchored spatially, affectively, and sensorially by secular acoustic atmospheres in a secular acoustic geography .

Figure 25: Istanbul European Choir rehearsal in Assomption Church. Photo by author.

Figure 26: Istanbul European Choir performance in Assomption Church. Photo by concert attendee.

The effects of this atmosphere lingered. Two days later, on the morning of Saturday, January 18, I ran into my fellow chorister, Fazilet Hanım, and her friend Nükhet Hanım attending one of the ultra-posh Saturday morning concerts at the Pera Palas Hotel in Beyoğlu. The Pera Palace was built in the late-nineteenth century as a destination hotel by the Wagon-Lits company of Orient Express fame. With its decor of dark wood, exquisite carpets, and mother of pearl inlay under Moorish arches and a lighted domed ceiling, the hotel still has much to offer Orientalist thrill-seekers. On Saturday mornings throughout the concert season, however, it attracts Istanbul's helmet hair and cashmere set for chamber music concerts by the finest local performers. Today's concert is a kind of "narrated" (anlatımlı) harp recital, featuring baroque works from Bach and Scarlatti, as well as a piece from Albeniz, which the harpist suggests might enable us to take a trip together to Cordoba.

After the concert, Fazilet Hanım invites me to join her and her friend, Nükhet Hanım, for a coffee. Drinking *sade* (plain) Turkish coffees (accompanied by a *lokum* and a small water) in high-backed, maroon velvet chairs in the dark-wood panelled hotel bar, we break down the concerts. Of the harp recital we have just heard, Fazilet remarks "it's a very different atmosphere, isn't it?" (çok farklı bir atmosfer, değil mi?). She then reads an analysis of our choir concert that her friend had sent from her phone. Noting that Nükhet Hanım also attended our choir concert, she says, playfully "you know we are *Modalı*" (biz modalıyız ya). I ask Nükhet Hanım her impressions, and she says that it was very nice, particularly in the church atmosphere. Fazilet agrees, saying that Fulya had no atmosphere.

Baroque Infra-power

Alongside Ekrem İmamoğlu's election and his appointment of Cem Mansur to the directorship of the Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall, one of the novel developments that coincided which the start of my fieldwork in Fall 2019 was the emergence of a new baroque music ensemble on the scene: Otto Barok. Together with its young, dynamic founder, Orhan Avcı, the ensemble created considerable buzz—at least in certain, rarefied circles. This particular brand of buzz was evident when I attended one of OTTO Barok's first performances at All Saints Moda on the evening of Wednesday, November 28, 2019. Making the walk over to the church early, I go have a tea in the small café across shady Yusuf Kamil Paşa Street. Snippets of conversation from the tables around me drift to my ear: a woman explaining that a hotel in which she had stayed on Gökçeada—a former Greek island in the Aegean turned posh vacation spot—was "quite comfortable" (gayet konforlu), while her friend describes her "atelier" (bizim atölye). I then make my way back out into the street, where a small crowd has started to gather in front of the church's as-yet-unopened front gate. A bow-tied, hatted man walks up to a woman's playful greeting of "mösyö" (monsieur). Waiting in line to enter, the woman in front of me exclaims "İmamoğlu came, too?!," referring to a recent concert at which the new mayor had been in attendance.

Finally, the gate is opened, and we enter. Music writer Selçuk Tütüncüoğlu gestures for me to join him on the church's front pew when I walk in. Before the concert, a group of women are talking excitedly. It turns out that they are from the same yoga group. One of them—a retired literature professor—had grown up in the neighborhood. She recalls the beaches and churches of old Moda, her friendship with her fellow *Modalı* pianist, Ayşegül Sarıca, and her own studies with the famous, Austrian-born piano pedagogue, Ferdi Statzer.

It is now time (twenty minutes past time, in fact) to get rolling with the concert. First, three women who have helped to coordinate the evening's concert join Orhan at the front of the church, saying "you have added color to our lives" (hayatımızı renkleştirdiniz) and "you give value to our lives" (sen bizim hayatımıza değer veriyorsun). Orhan, in turn, mentions OTTO Barok's growing list of followers and the "very great need" (çok büyük bir ihtiyaç) whose fulfilment "can't be prevented despite everything" (engellenemiyor her şeye rağmen). Pivoting toward the concert, Orhan mentions that, because they are performing on instruments "close to original instruments" (orijinal enstrümanlara yakın), tuning might be difficult. The first half features Handel and Vivaldi, and helpful explanations about the music are interspersed—for example, an explanation about the European origins of the *blokflüt* (recorder).

During the break, I return to conversation with Selçuk Bey and the women sitting in the row behind us. They are excited, saying that they really liked the concert so far—especially the flute. One of them recalls the concert of a friend's children's choir in the church two weeks prior, saying "acoustically, this space is very good" (burası çok güzel akustik olarak). Her friend jumps in, agreeing that the acoustics are very good. At this, Selçuk Bey enters the conversation, explaining authoritatively that the walls are stone, sending the sound up where it reverberates against the wood ceiling. To me, though, he notes that people use the churches in Istanbul as concert venues because they are cheap, and that All Saints has bad acoustics and heating issues that cause problems for tuning. He further observes that "these people have nothing to do with classical music" (bu insanların klasik müziğiyle hiç alakası yok) and they are just here to appear as if they like it.

While some interlocutors expressed similar doubts to Selçuk Bey regarding the symbolic significance of the church venue, OTTO Barok's founder, Orhan Avcı, was clear about the

importance of the space to his new ensemble. Avcı, I suggest, was able cannily to grasp the resonances of the atmosphere of All Saints Moda and, ultimately, other churches, and "work" it to create buzz around OTTO Barok. In the sense that Avcı is a "charismatic [figure who emerged] on the basis of [his] capacity to interpret, manage and master the opacity of the city," he exhibits infra-power (Hansen and Verkaaik 2010: 5). However, where Hansen and Verkaaik locate infra-power primarily in the popular neighborhoods of postcolonial cities, Orhan Avcı presents a case in which infra-power manifests in a quite different urban milieu. In this way, I demonstrate that secular acoustic atmospheres and the secular acoustic geography they produce are not only emergent from Istanbul's integration into global networks of power as a "global city," but also that they open up novel local forms of power that in turn shape an atmospheric geography of secularity in the city.

In our interview, Avcı couched the founding of OTTO Barok in a broader shift among listeners away from what he described as "sectoral" values and aesthetics. Speaking in clairvoyant tones, he made a comparison between the large Lütfi Kırdar Center and church venues:

> [Lütfü Kırdar] is an exhibition center; it's not a concert hall. It was turned into a concert hall with some efforts and reorganization. That is a place for an eighty-member orchestra, but a piano recital can't be given there. That's why listeners started to break off from sectoral music and sectoral environments and move toward Baroque. Artists are the same way. That's why there is a turn toward the church and smaller places like Yeldeğirmeni Arts. They are not turning toward places like [the massive performing arts center] Zorlu; because of its extreme gaudiness, giant stages, and because it is seen as being sectoral, people don't enjoy [Zorlu]. There should be musicals and those types of productions there. It is not the place for musics that have a more social dimension and in which the spiritual dimension has a stronger influence. That place is the church. Actually, it doesn't have to do with Christianity, there are Muslims as well. There were also a number of headscarved [women]. [The church] was only preferred because it is a place with a good

> atmosphere. There's nothing like 'don't come, we're Christians, we're making foreign music.' I mean, it wasn't selected for that purpose (December 5, 2019, interview).[65]

Here, while noting the importance, and indeed the agency, of the church atmosphere in shaping practice of listening (and performing), Orhan is careful to emphasize that the desirability of the church atmosphere has nothing to do with Christianity. Indeed, he emphasized the secularity of his goals over a post-interview meal at a Yeldeğirmeni restaurant. Avcı was discussing rising crime and murder rates, the need to intervene by developing people's imaginations (hayal gücü), and the power of music, as an abstract (soyut) art, to make this intervention. The topic of Masonry came up, and Orhan mentioned that he believes that he receives significant support from Masons. They try to improve society by planting seeds with the hope that they will spread, he said. I had just recently been discussing with a fellow PhD student the resemblance between Masonry and Alevism in terms of a commitment to individual and social improvement through cultural activity. To make conversation, I mention this comparison. Avcı replies that the comparison is apt, but notes that the drive for self and societal improvement needs to not be carried out through religion but rather through a more modern means: in his case, music.

Orhan gave no indication that he saw a contradiction between his lack of interest in religion and his enthusiasm for church atmospheres. On Friday, December 27, 2019, for

[65] Orası bir kongre ve sergi sarayı. Konser salonu değil. Birkaç denemeyle, düzenlemeyle konser salonu haline getirilmiş. Orası 80 kişilik orkestrayla konser yapacağımız bir yer ama bir piyano resital yapılamaz. Sektörel müzikten, sektörel ortamdan vs kopup bu yüzden Barok'a doğru gitmeye başladılar dinleyiciler. Sanatçılar da aynı şekilde. O yüzden kiliseye, daha küçük yerlere, yel değirmeni sanat gibi yerlere yönelme var. Zorlu gibi yerlere ondan yönelmiyorlar; aşırı derece şatafat, kocaman sahneler, sektörel olarak bakıldığı için insanlar orada keyif almıyor. Orada müzikaller, o tarz prodüksiyonlar olmalı. İşin daha sosyal boyutunda olan, daha ruhani yanı ağır basan müziklerin yeri orası değil. Orası kilise. Hristiyanlığa dayanmıyor aslında, Müslümanlar da var aslında. Bir sürü türbanlı da vardı. Sadece orası atmosferi güzel bir yer olduğu için tercih edildi. Yoksa biz Hristiyan'ız, yabancı müzik yapıyoruz gelmeyin gibi bir durum yok. Böyle seçilmedi yani. Aslında bir kritik sonrası karar verildi ve gayet iyi oldu.

example, we met at the Hoş Atölye in the Yeldeğirmeni neighborhood to discuss OTTO Barok's most recent concert. Avcı was discussing the various reasons that people might attend his concerts: the soloists, other performers, interest driven by the name. He then noted that half of the attendees come for the church (kilise için). He described that for the first concert, OTTO Barok had initially wanted to complement the All-Saints performance with a European-side performance in a Taksim Square area ballroom. However, he said, his supporters rejected this idea—some thirty people wrote to him, saying no to Taksim and requesting the church. He added that, from now on, he thinks that they will hold all of their concerts in churches. On January 3, 2020, I ran into Avcı on the Kadıköy-Beşiktaş ferry. I was heading to an interview; he had a rehearsal—we decided to get a tea from the ferry café and chat as we crossed the Bosphorus. OTTO Barok was working with a gamba player from Izmir, and our conversation turned to concert life in Izmir and Ankara. Talking about the possibility of a concert in Izmir, Orhan lamented "there are no churches there—only two or so" (orada kilise yok—sadece iki tane falan var). Our conversation turned to All Saints and its décor. Orhan noted that, because it is a Protestant rather than a Catholic church, the décor is plain. He recalled that, because they don't emphasize this kind of thing, the church minders had removed All Saints' cross for cleaning before the last concert. Laughing, he said that he brought the cross back out so that the space would look like a church. Discussing other potential venues, Orhan noted that there are a lot of beautiful churches in Istanbul. A bit later, though, he said, "but it has to be in Kadıköy" (ama mutlaka Kadıköy'de olması lazım) because it is "comfortable" (rahat) for the audience.

Indeed, a few weeks later, on January 21, 2020, Orhan emphasized once more the importance of Kadıköy churches to audience comfort. At one of the weekly classical music seminars at the Yeldeğirmeni Arts venue, I run into Orhan, his friend Emre, my friend Orkun,

and Fazilet Hanım, who, in addition to being a Moda resident and Istanbul European Choir member, is an OTTO Barok and Orhan Avcı afficionado. After the seminar, we all gradually make our way on foot from Yeldeğirmeni toward the Moda Peninsula. Fazilet and Orhan discuss OTTO Barok's future programs and Orhan's childhood on the Georgian border, Orkun discusses his interest in gaining a new perspective on classical music by singing in the European Choir, a rarity "in a society like Turkey," he notes (Türkiye gibi bir toplumda). As Fazilet Hanım parts ways, she notes how nice it is to discuss these topics (ne kadar güzel, böyle konuşmak) and how nice it is in Moda to be able to attend these concerts—"it's like going to the corner market," Orhan adds (bakkal'a gitmek gibi).

Having taken leave of Orkun and Fazilet Hanım, Orhan, Emre, and I then head to a bar near Kadıköy's famous "Street of Bars" (Barlar Sokak) to have a beer. Over Tuborgs and a bucket of popcorn, we start talking about classical music, Turkey, and OTTO Barok. Orhan says that Turkey could be very productive, but instead "we have nothing at all" (hiç bir şeyimiz yok). Orhan and Emre agree that this can be attributed to "Arabesk culture"—this they characterize as a culture of taking pleasure from pain. We then turn to OTTO Barok, and Orhan starts talking about venues. He says that he is searching for an additional venue, but it has to be a church—"after all, most people come for the church," he says matter-of-factly, and repeats the story about bringing the cross back out (zaten çoğu insan kilise için geliyor). He says that he is looking for a space on the European side, and Emre suggests the Pera Palace Hotel. A bit later, though, Orhan exclaims: "Anyway, I don't want anywhere other than Kadıköy" (ben zaten Kadıköy'den başka bir yer istemiyorum). After talking about obtaining proper period instruments and sold-out tickets, I suggest that Orhan is trying to create a sense of "ayırıcılık," or selectivity, around

OTTO Barok, and he doesn't object. I add that if this is his goal, then All Saints is great, insofar as it is small and toward the Moda peninsula—they both agree.

More recently, in early December 2021, I was walking the back streets of Istanbul's central Beyoğlu district, when I noticed the open gates to one of my favorite hidden Istanbul corners: the neo-gothic Crimean Anglican Church. As I entered, I noted to my pleasant surprise a poster announcing an upcoming OTTO Barok concert on the door. Later, I brought this up with Emre, who told me that, in addition to this concert, OTTO Barok was planning concerts in Protestant and Catholic churches on the Princes' Islands and in Izmir. He added that not only were ticket prices set at 200 lira, but tickets for the Crimean Church concert were sold out (he managed to acquire tickets to the island and Izmir concerts). Together, Emre and I marveled at Orhan's ability to sell so many tickets at such a high price during a pandemic and period of severe economic crisis in Turkey. This is "infra-power"—Orhan didn't thematize Istanbul's Levantine history during OTTO Barok concerts—perhaps he didn't know it. Rather, I suggest that he has a feel for the resources of the city (in this case, English Levantine history embedded in church materialities) and knows how to "work" these resources to appeal to a specific public. Activating this history through the sonic motion of Western art music in the proper acoustic environments to produce an imaginary of Occidental urban geographies, he makes his audiences feel "comfortable" in a novel, secular acoustic geography in the city.

As I suggest above, in invoking infra-power as a concept, I wish to destabilize Hansen and Verkaaik's reliance on an entrenched, ideologically driven popular-elite scholarly hierarchy. Nevertheless, the comparison to marginal districts of the city is perhaps still apt. On a Tuesday evening in late February 2020 (February 25, 2020), I walk out of the Yeldeğirmeni Arts seminar, once more with Orhan, Emre, and Orkun—we have attended one of Serhan Bali's seminars,

during which he introduced Orhan Avcı as a "misyoner" for music. We decide to get a beer at a nearby pub on Yeldeğirmeni's main drag, Karakolhane Avenue. As we take a seat on the back patio, Orhan immediately slaps down a copy of Lully's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," noting that OTTO Barok is currently working on it. This prompts me to recall a crazy trip the previous December (involving under-Bosporus metro, tramway, and taxi) out to the Mall of Istanbul on Istanbul's Northwestern fringe to see a production of Moliere's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* starring the famous Turkish actor, Haldun Dormen. Emre jumps in, saying that for him, too, this is like traveling to another country. He says that he goes to the theater a lot—sometimes, every night—and it is always full in Kadıköy and nearby Üsküdar. But when he looks for tickets in, say, Alibeyköy (a working-class district on the northern side of European Istanbul), there are always seats available—sometimes, if he really wants to see the play, he goes. I counter that I also once went out to Sultangazi—another far-northern, working-class neighborhood—for one of Cem Mansur's concerts. Emre replies that this doesn't work both ways—if someone comes from Sultangazi to Süreyya Opera, he says, they will be shocked. Orkun jumps in, saying "yes, Kadıköy is really kind of a ghetto, isn't it?" (evet, Kadıköy aslında biraz bir ghetto gibi, değil mi?). Süreyya might fill up, he says, but this is nothing compared to the rest of Turkey. As we speculate on why performances are so concentrated in Kadıköy, Orhan, who has been silent up to this point, offers a simple analysis: "there are no spaces there" (orada hiç mekan yok).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored a secular acoustic geography in Istanbul dense with sensory experience, desire, and belonging precisely where Yahya Kemal found only lack, the absence of Islam. Yahya Kemal's saturated and saturating Islamic sensorium can be interpreted

as enchantment itself, a permeating of the warp and weft of social life with value that becomes interrupted and confined to a small mosque as Westernization and its concomitant secularization progress. In the ethnographic present, however, the situation is rather reversed: if it is not possible to say that the world is once more saturated with value, it is considered by secularists that the Turkish public sphere takes on an increasingly Islamic feel. Secularity is increasingly felt in spaces that are separated and distant from this Islamic public sphere in which—*pace* Yahya Kemal—distinct sensorial and emotional practices and dispositions can be observed.

Not just *pace* Yahya Kemal, actually. As I argue in this dissertation, secular bodies have been theorized primarily in terms of practices of "self-differentiation" from religion (Hirschkind 2011)—in other words, by a kind of absence. The absence and emptiness of the secular acoustic geography that Yahya Kemal implies has surfaced in other ways, as well: perhaps most notably, in a recent literature on discourses of liberal tolerance and different ways of "facing the past" (tarihi ile yüzleşme) and reckoning with difference through (re)imaginings of urban space in neoliberal Istanbul (Mills 2010; Walton 2017; Fisher, Pearce, and Keyman 2019; Papadapolous and Duru 2017). Taking up neighborhoods and districts across the city, this literature studiously avoids Kadıköy and Moda, as if Yahya Kemal were right, and those are districts empty of sense and affect. Whereas, on the contrary, a cottage industry of books in Turkish has sprung up, making much of the cosmopolitan traces embedded materially in the spaces, bodies, and lifeworlds of Kadıköy and especially Moda (Atılgan 2019; Bilen 2019; Giz 2022; Kütükçü, 2014; Öndeş, 2015; Rozental, 2016). Anais Martin, for example, a longtime Istanbul Opera Chorus member of Armenian background, describes Moda as a cosmopolitan neighborhood in which the sounds of piano and violin could be heard from the window of nearly every house and apartment (Martin, 2010).

In this chapter, I, too, have aimed to demonstrate that what had been thought empty is in fact full—a geography defined by secular acoustic atmospheres. Islam is often a negative referent in the above accounts, but this does not mean that the secular and secular bodies have no content. Rather, atmospheres in churches activated by Western art music provide access to and construct an Istanbul cosmopolitan history through which an Occidental urban geographic imaginary is felt. Here, churches are not characterized by the "privilege of being banal" through which elitism is sustained under cover of French secularism as Elayne Oliphant has recently argued with regard to churches repurposed as cultural spaces in Paris (Oliphant 2021). Churches used as concert spaces in Istanbul are far from banal—they are extraordinary, the object of much interest both globally and locally. In the particular context of Istanbul under Islamic populism, they take on a new significance as atmospheric anchors of an increasingly secular acoustic geography increasingly concentrated in Kadıköy and Moda.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most striking example of secular acoustic geography that I have encountered was not confined to Kadıköy, For the 2020 Istanbul Music Festival, forced online by the pandemic, the festival organizers put together a virtual route of chamber music in three venues: the St. Esprit Cathedral of the Catholic vicariate of Istanbul and the Surp Hovhan Vosgeperan Armenian Catholic Church, both near İstanbul's central Taksim Square, as well as the so-called Schubert Church in Vienna. In the videos, the camera mimics the experience of entering the space and then traveling, like an eye, around its interior in loose time with the music. After the first "stop" in St. Esprit, the camera shows a brief clip of the antique trolley on Istiklal Avenue before entering the second stop, the Armenian Catholic Church. The next route of the tour, however, is more ambitious: after a longer pause, the camera leads to the Schubert Church in Vienna. In an interview, the festival director noted to me that "the material offered needs to

overlap with the space it is placed in; both acoustically and in terms of content it needs to be harmonious" (sunulan işin konulduğu mekânla da örtüşmesi de gerekiyor; hem akustik olarak, hem içerik olarak da uyumlu olması lazım).

Perhaps this hybrid, physical-virtual geography produced by secular acoustic atmospheres can be interpreted as the secular acoustic geography that has been desired all along. As I have argued in this chapter, with "good" acoustics, Western art music in Istanbul situates listeners in an Occidental geographic imaginary through the lens of Istanbul's cosmopolitan past, even as it produces a particular geography of belonging in Istanbul. This was perhaps a geography impossible on the ground, but quite familiar to those who feel most comfortable listening to Western art music in Istanbul's churches.

Chapter 4: Settling the Flesh: Applause and the Boundaries of Secularity

> I can produce for you as many pianists as you want. Can you produce the people who will listen to them?[66]
>
> -attributed to İdil Biret, pianist

On the evening of Monday, October 19, 2020, my fellow concertgoers and I are very happy to be back at the Süreyya Opera in the Moda neighborhood—albeit masked, physically distanced, and in reduced numbers. Throughout my fieldwork during Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, I could set my watch by chamber music at Süreyya on Monday evenings and, as for many of my interlocutors, the short walk over from my apartment became routine. Now we are back mingling in Süreyya's ornate lobby, where I note the Burberry pattern familiar from concertgoers' attire in a novel face mask form while chatting with Halil Bey—a lawyer, devoted classical music listener, and Monday evening fixture. He tells me matter-of-factly about his bout of COVID, giving me a shock before I make my way into the hall for the concert. As I get situated in my red velvet seat, I note the new, post-pandemic practice of projecting the evening's program onto the back of the stage, encouraging even those who don't read the program to digest it a bit before the concert. This evening, we are in for a lovely concert by the İzmir Barok group: "European and Ottoman Palace Musics" (*Avrupa ve Osmanlı Saray Müzikleri*): a mix of orientalist works from composers such as Lully, Rameau, and Fux on the one hand, and Ottoman-era works from Ali Ufki Bey and Tanburi Mustafa Çavuş, on the other.

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[66] Ben size istediğiniz kadar yeni piyanistler yetiştirebilirim. Siz bana onları dinleyecek dinleyicileri yetiştirebilir misiniz?

A few moments after I’ve taken my seat, several announcements are made just before the concert is set to begin. I convey them here verbatim, with translation in brackets:

> Değerli izleyecilerimiz, konser sırasında, flaşlı veya flaşsiz fotoğrafın çekilmemesi, ses ve video kaydın yapılmaması, cep telefonlarının ve çağrı cihazların kapalı tutulması, önemle rica olunur. Teşekkür ederiz ... Ladies and gentlemen, you are kindly reminded that the taking of photographs and video or audio recordings during the performance is strictly forbidden. Please make sure that your pagers and your cellular phones are switched off. Thank you ... Değerli Konuklarımız, parçaların bölüm aralarında alkışlanmaması rica eder, iyi dinletiler dileriz [Dear Guests, we request that you refrain from applauding between the movements of works and wish you a good concert] ... (field recording, October 19, 2020).

Though intended to ensure a smooth concert, on this Monday evening the applause announcement itself prompts an incident. After İzmir Barok finishes performing the first piece on the program—Lully’s “Chaconne des Scaramouches”—there are some fifteen seconds of silence in the hall before the gamba player stands up to wish everyone welcome and discuss a bit how the group is using baroque tuning, instruments, and style.

The second piece, however, “Der makam-ı mahur usuleş düyek” from the sixteenth-century Ottoman composer Gazi Giray Han, is likewise greeted by a seven-second silence. At this, the gamba player intervenes, saying “by the way, you can applaud” (bu arada alkışlayabilirsiniz). At the syllable “kış”—before the gamba player can finish his sentence—an audience member toward the front of the hall begins clapping vigorously, prompting a brief flurry of applause. I hear scattered laughs as the collective relaxation in the hall becomes palpable. The gamba player goes on in a light-hearted vein, explaining that he was “wondering whether they aren’t applauding because of the pandemic?” (acaba pandemiden dolayı mı alkışlamıyorlar?), prompting a middle-aged man sitting in the stage left box to call out “no, an announcement was made, we can’t applaud!” (hayır, anons verildi, alkışlayamıyoruz!). The exchange between audience member and gamba player continues—the gamba player makes a

few more remarks, concluding with “please applaud!” (alkışlayın!), which prompts another round of applause. The soprano adds jokingly “I was getting upset” (üzüldüm) and the cellist says, “We were sitting here about to cry … we said, I wonder if there’s no applause because of corona” (ağlayacak otururken … acaba corona’dan mı alkışlanmıyor dedik). Once more, a single vigorous applauder almost immediately prompts a third round of applause, and a bravo is audible from somewhere in the audience just before the next piece starts (field recording, October 19, 2020).

This evening, in Moda, it is the audience’s tremendous restraint that is exceptional, its commitment to heeding the opening directive not to applaud in error. Uncertainty about applause practices and efforts to control them were routine throughout my fieldwork—normally, however, conflict centered not around failure to applaud, but on ostensibly over-eager applause. In particular, applause between the movements of multi-section works prompted efforts, such as the Monday opening announcement, to establish more disciplined listening and applause practices. In this chapter, I examine these struggles over listening and applause practices in Istanbul in light of longstanding dynamics of Islamist populism and secularist elitism in Turkey and Istanbul. Responding to the global flourishing of populist movements, William Mazzarella theorizes populism as “an intensified insistence of collective forces that are no longer adequately organized by formerly hegemonic social forms: a mattering-forth of the collective flesh” (Mazzarella 2019: 45). The formerly hegemonic social form in the Turkish case is what I refer to here as the “secular settlement,” adapting Mazzarella’s conception of “settlement,” by which he means to suggest “the tension between the appearance of a negotiated, reasonable compromise and the violence of the settler whose stability of residence depends on the dis-placement and disavowal of the one that his presence silences” (Mazzarella 2017: 10). I place Mazzarella in

dialogue with Scheer, Fadil, and Schepelern Johansen's conception of the secular as being less "a 'thing' than a formation which operates through the selective marking of practices, habits, and life-forms as neutral, universal, and real" (Scheer, Fadil, and Schepelern Johansen 2019: 3). In these terms, the secular settlement becomes a set of ostensibly universal claims and practices that exclude all manner of flesh that falls outside the lines of the rational and emotionally disciplined secular sovereign subject. Taking decidedly "fleshy" applause practices as an object, I examine the dynamics through which applause continually threatens to "matter forth the collective flesh," in Mazzarella's terms, and exceed the boundaries of the secular body, as well as the strategies and tactics through which disciplining of listening and applause practices and the maintenance of social boundaries are sought. Drawing upon Meltem Ahıska's analysis of Occidentalism and Turkish elite subjectivity, I argue that applause in Istanbul is a core site at which the boundaries of secular bodies and a secular contra-public are worked out. In this way, applause becomes a particularly granular site at which to examine secular bodies and the secular contra-public. In other words, applause becomes a practice through which secular bodies defined by boundaries of emotional and sensory restraint are shaped, made manifest, and contested.

Though applause has only recently begun to attract interest from music and sound scholars, it opens rich possibilities for interdisciplinary study of an elemental social activity. One particularly noteworthy study for my purposes is Turkish systematic musicologist Gülay Karşıcı's 2019 article "Etiquette at Western Classical Music Events: A Study of the Applause Rule" ("Batı Klasik Müzik Etkinliklerinde Görgü Kuralları: Alkışlama Kuralı üzerine bir Çalışması") (Karşıcı 2019). Here, Karşıcı draws on extensive and nuanced ethnographic research to explore "etiquette rules" that attend applause practices at classical concerts in Turkey. Another noteworthy publication is a 2018 review essay from German musicologist Jutta Toelle, in which

she emphasizes both the social contagiousness of applause and the impulse to discipline and control that it inspires (Toelle 2018).

Indeed, the idea that applause is in some sense a particularly fundamental form of social interaction constitutes a thread through the remaining literature, which I heuristically group in terms of social scientific, humanistic, and natural scientific orientations. The social scientific literature is dominated by studies of rhetoric and applause dynamics at political speeches and rallies (Atkinson 1984; Heritage and Greatbatch 1986; Clayman 1993). Clayman, for example, identifies applause as an "elementary form of social action" not fully explainable in terms of meaning (Clayman 1993: 110). Humanistic studies examine applause in performance settings to open broader questions about its social and aesthetic functions (Gilbert 2001; Heister 1984). Most dramatically, in Heister's Marxian structural analysis, applause emerges as a holdover from a kind of ur-ritual—a fundamental mode of participation in an archaic, emotionally and sensorially saturated "mimetic ceremony." Finally, natural scientific studies employ quantitative analysis to situate human applause dynamics alongside other natural phenomena, such as virus circulation or firefly synchronization (Mann et al. 2013; Neda et al. 2000). Mann et alia, for instance, develop what they call a "social contagion model" of applause.

Together, these existing studies exhibit both possibilities and limitations. The social scientific studies bring sophisticated methodology and useful analytic acuity to their specific data sets but tend not to develop sensitive contextual understanding. Humanistic studies open broader questions about the social and aesthetic functions of applause but do not employ rigorous methodological or analytical approaches and tend to approach the topic from a Western (and implicitly universal) perspective. Natural scientific studies bring rigorous methodology and open fascinating post-humanist questions, but, perhaps unsurprisingly, operate with a somewhat thin

conception of social mediation. Karşıcı's study is promising, but she only begins to develop an argument about the sacralization of classical music and bourgeois hegemony in Turkey toward the end of the article, and her analysis tends to privilege discourse about applause over the careful analysis of applause practices.

I draw these threads together, borrowing analytical models from social scientific studies to open broader questions that are nonetheless analyzable within a specific ethnographic setting. The ways in which the body itself becomes potential site of collective processes that bypass conscious structures of meaning in this chapter resonate not only with the account of emotional and sensory bodily attunements undergirding the secular that I develop in this dissertation, but also with the post-humanist implications of natural scientific studies. Building upon these threads, I ask: What is at stake in struggles over applause practices during performances of Western art music in Istanbul? What is the relationship between embodied emotional and sensory dispositions and applause? Which social and extra-social dynamics does applause catalyze? What animates efforts to discipline and control listening and applause?

Drawing primarily on participant observation as a concert goer, as well as formal and informal interviews, in this chapter I analyze the uncertainties, tensions, and disciplinary efforts that attend applause practices in Istanbul. In its first part, I draw on social scientific models to analyze the structures of applause initiation, suggesting that initial applause tends to take on a dynamic of its own, begetting further applause. In the second part, I turn my attention toward the Turkish concept of *görgü* as the impulse for disciplining listening and applause practices in Istanbul, suggesting that applause is a site at which the *görgü* of secular bodies is exhibited. In the third part, I turn toward a broader theorization of applause and Islamic populism, drawing in Meltem Ahıska's conception of Turkish Occidentalism and elite subjectivity and Ernesto

Laclau's formalist analysis of populist dynamics. Finally, I put Laclau in dialogue with William Mazzarella's "fleshier" understanding of populism, as well as Hanns-Werner Heister's conception of applause as emotionally and sensorially saturated mimetic response. Suggesting that applause is a practice in which the body threatens always to exceed the boundaries of secularity shaped by practices of listening authorized by discursive tradition, I argue that applause in Istanbul is a core site at which secular bodies and contra-public are shaped and contested.

The unruly flesh staggers in ...

I had the opportunity on several occasions to elicit explicit theorizations from interlocutors on the applause issue. This was not difficult, for mishaps such as the one in the opening vignette made applause a not infrequent topic of conversation. Some interlocutors attributed a clear intention to (too) eagerly applauding audience members. Efe, A lawyer in his twenties and aspiring concert pianist who generally took a disparaging view of his fellow citizens and their capacity to appreciate classical music, contended that Turkish audiences' frequent applause between movements is an attempt to insert themselves into the context—to show that *they* have appreciated the music more than those around them. Another, Hakan Bey, who in his retirement from a foreign company has made a second career of front-row attendance at classical and jazz concerts across the city, lamented that when people applaud between movements, it breaks the concentration of the performer. Sensing an opportunity, I showed him a video I had taken the previous weekend at an Istanbul State Symphony concert at which applause had broken out in certain sections of the audience before the end of the final movement of the Tchaikovsky Serenade for Strings. He smiled ruefully and said that there are some people in Turkey who try to

“show” themselves by clapping, saying “I’m here and I know this music,” and then others follow them.

Both of these responses point to a primary challenge of applause: when, how, and by whom it should be initiated. In his study of booing, sociologist Steven Clayman calls this the “response initiation problem,” and identifies two models for understanding applause initiation: “independent decision making” and “mutual monitoring” (Clayman 1993). According to the first model, the rhetorical arc of a performance or presentation is such that certain of its features are liable to draw forth a “burst” of applause. According to the second model, “mutual monitoring,” would-be applauders monitor each other for cues to applaud—primarily, the aural cue of applause. This results in a “staggered” onset as initial applause prompts others to join in.

Clayman contends that both scenarios can act in tandem, but I found mutual monitoring to predominate—for example, at a pair of post-lockdown chamber music concerts featuring string quartet and clarinet put on by the Istanbul State Opera on July 17 and 18, 2020. The first was held at a new, post-pandemic venue: Büyükyalı Fişekhane. Situated on Istanbul’s European side at the Marmara coast, Büyükyalı requires that I make an epic journey from Asian-side Moda with the metro, the under-Bosphorus Marmaray train, and a taxi ride through the endless neighborhoods that begin after the ancient city. I feel like I am in a different world once I finally arrive at an incongruously posh-looking mixed-use development with apartments and chic restaurants. These are gathered around a kind of promenade oriented to the Fişekhane, an old stone military barracks repurposed as cultural center—I notice that a performance of Hedda Gabler is being advertised. A small stage has been set up for the concert outside in the square in front of the Fişekhane, where the socially distanced seating is fairly full. I buy a glass of wine for 30 lira at a small bar set up to one side and take my seat. A family of ostentatiously-dressed

Russian speakers sitting behind me but circulating for copious photographs lend a vaguely threatening, one-percentish vibe.

Figure 27: Büyükyalı Fişekhane concert setup. Photo by author.

The venue may be new and the pandemic may seem to have upended everything, but some aspects of the concert are familiar: I have seen the clarinetist perform previously on a Monday evening concert at Süreyya—she was good; the state opera director is turned out as usual in catalogue style wearing a white linen blazer (though I miss the white Audi convertible with red leather interior that he usually manages to park conspicuously); and, of course, applause mishaps. After several short pieces and a ninety second pause early in the concert to wait out the ezan, the string quartet takes up Béla Bartók's Romanian Folk Dances. Immediately after the

first movement concludes, a young man in a black t-shirt sitting in front of me begins applauding vigorously. The first violinist quickly cuts him off at the pass, though, holding up his hand to indicate silence and saying, “there’s just a little pause ...” (ufak bir mola var ...). The second movement then concludes without incident. Again, though, after the third movement of the Bartók, a young woman on the front row begins to applaud moderately, prompting the black t-shirted man and one other audience member quickly to join in before another hand from the first violinist silences them. Finally, after the fourth movement concludes the piece, a more robust applause initiated to my left takes root and spreads through the audience.

A similar event unfolds at the concert repeat the next day. This time, the territory is more familiar—the atmospheric garden of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum on the ancient peninsula. Given the pandemic, I am surprised upon arrival to find the audience and musicians crowded onto the front terrace of the fifteenth-century Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk), social distancing be damned. I understand the decision better when I note how the musicians are aurally and visually amplified by the pavilion’s splendid, blue-tiled entrance vestibule. There is no ezan pause today, but, once more during the Bartók, applause starts to break out after the third movement. Once more, the first violinist’s raised hand stops it. It is again only after the fourth movement that applause takes hold and spreads, initiated by a small, Birkenstocked “Republic Auntie” (Cumhuriyet Teyzesi) seated immediately to the left of the musicians. Seconds later, my interlocutor Hakan Bey from Yeldeğirmeni—seated, as always, close to the stage—is smiling and calling out “bravo.”

Figure 28: façade of Tiled Pavilion re-imagined as performance space. Photo by author.

Independent decision making appeared to play some role insofar as certain movements drew applause where others didn't. In other words, certain rhetorical features of the music seemed to prompt applause. However, mutual monitoring predominated. This is evidenced by the staggered applause onsets that occurred in each case, including after the end of the four-movement piece, when various sonic and visual cues from the musicians presumably indicated closure. Moreover, though I don't share my interlocutors' intent to criticize ostensibly egotistical applauders, the fact that individual applauders seemed to play an outsized role in initiating rounds of applause indicates monitoring—others were waiting for someone else to make the first move.

Why were they waiting? Where Efe and Hakan Bey attributed egotistical motives to their eagerly applauding fellow concertgoers, other interlocutors were more sympathetic. Ülker Hanım, a graduate of Ankara University's elite Mülkiye faculty of political science whose husband had been a foreign diplomat (and who, incidentally, is a childhood friend of my aunt), was quick to defend her fellow concertgoers. When she saw me writing notes at a symphonic concert at the municipal Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon where there had been inter-movement applause, she told me to "write that a lady says that they applaud between movements because this is not our music [bizim müziğimiz değil]" (fieldnote, October 26, 2019). She said that they don't learn music in school in Turkey, so most people simply don't "know" how to listen and when to applaud. In other words, she identified a structural dynamic that creates general uncertainty. I cited to her the conversation I'd had with Hakan Bey in which he had strongly castigated those who applaud between movements, saying that it breaks the performer's concentration. Ülker Hanım responded disapprovingly, saying that people shouldn't act like this and that she believes this kind of criticism to be counter-productive.

As a participating listener, I took an ambivalent position on applause. Though the method of participant observation might have led me to applaud when those around me did, I had a vague sense that doing so would be disingenuous, condescending even. Frankly, there were also times when I agreed with my more critical interlocutors in performing a disciplined distinction: do they *really* think that applauding between *every* song in *Winterreise* is the way to go? Really?! However, there were occasions when I, too, was uncertain as a participating listener, and these also point to mutual monitoring. Early on in my fieldwork, on the evening of October 19, 2020, I attended a recital given by the cello professor and his studio from the nearby Istanbul State Conservatory at Yeldeğirmeni Arts. As was not uncommon for the more local and informal

classical concerts offered at Yeldeğirmeni, the recital was free, and the printed program gave relatively sparse information. Early on, a practice of applauding indiscriminately at each substantial pause had prevailed, but toward the end of the recital the audience had abandoned it, perhaps sensing that something was amiss. Thus, it came to pass that a piece by the relatively obscure composer Pavel Chesnokov passed without applause. Given the sparseness of the program, the unfamiliarity of the piece, and the absence of spoken announcements, I too was uncertain. After a period of silence, the group began to perform an arrangement of "Deep River." My familiarity with this tune indicated to me that we, the audience, had indeed shirked our responsibility by not applauding. By the same token, I was now certain that I could applaud after "Deep River." This I did, confidently, prompting others to stagger in.

A similar situation occurred at a March 1, 2020, piano recital at All-Saints Moda organized by my interlocutor, Fahriye Hanım, for a student whose education in Germany she sponsors. This concert had nearly been canceled—due not so much to the looming pandemic as the deaths of thirty-three Turkish military personnel in Idlib, Syria, and the pianist made a statement that they "thought the concert would be fortifying" amidst rising uncertainty (dayandırıcı olabileceğini düşündük). Having rushed over to Moda from tea with my interlocutors Aydın and Asuman Büke, I took a seat in the back, noting the august local elites grouped toward the front of the church, where cross, open Bible, and lit candles contributed to the distinctive atmosphere. Toward the end of the program, after Mozart and Schubert, there was silence after a piece by Chaminade. The woman seated next to me in the pew moved to applaud but hesitated. Her companion looked at her quizzically, prompting her to gesture to the program as if to say "well, yes, the piece is over." She and I then exchanged a smile and started tentatively

clapping, prompting a brief round of audience applause before the Poulenc that closed out the program.

To be sure, there were concerts that passed without "incident," at which applause prompted no apparent uncertainty—I heard nary an errant clap from the carefully selected attendees at the concert series organized by the Soylu family in their penthouse, for example. At many concerts, though, the kind of "mutual monitoring" and staggered initiation that I have discussed was the norm, and it points to the complex social interaction and the high degree of social uncertainty that can attend applause at classical concerts in Istanbul. In particular, the relationship between individual and group comes to the fore. The risk to early or errant applauders can be great lest they disclose their body aurally through an overeager clap, becoming the object of criticism. On the other hand, anyone can attempt to perform knowledge by taking a risk and initiating applause, as I did at Yeldeğirmeni. In either case, individuals play a profound role in (per)forming the group, though their constitutive role is not always evident due to the aural, rather than visual, medium of cueing, and at any rate is quickly effaced as the group forms. Nevertheless, absent efforts at control, applause is likely to beget more applause as others stagger in. As Toelle notes, "applause is socially contagious: the likelihood that an individual will begin to clap increases with the number of already clapping members of the public …" (Toelle 2018: 178).[67]. Applause can thus be tentatively understood as an ephemeral but particularly exposed and unstable site of public formation. Before proceeding further with analysis of the formal dynamics of applause, however, I turn in the next section to those in Istanbul who would regulate and control them.

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[67] Zudem ist Applaus sozial ansteckend: Die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass ein Individuum zu klatschen beginnt, steigt mit der Zahl der bereits klatschenden Publikumsmitglieder.

The couth strike back

It is perhaps not surprising that this exposed site of public formation should become a site of contestation and boundary negotiation. Applause is a tool that anybody might potentially take in hand to forge a group. For this reason, it is potentially destabilizing, and attracts efforts to perform and conserve power by would-be arbiters of convention. In other words, applause becomes a site at which distinction and the boundaries of the secular body and secular contra-public can be produced and maintained. In her study of applause practices in Turkey, Gülay Karşıcı identifies applause as object of one of the primary "etiquette rules" or "görgü kuralları" of classical concert attendance in Turkey. Though Karşıcı uses the term "görgü" in a neutral sense and I heuristically translate it here as "etiquette," it struck me over the course of fieldwork that "görgü" carried quite a bit of baggage. The entry in the Tureng Turkish-English Dictionary for görgü includes, in addition to etiquette, words like "breeding" and "cultivation." Its absence, "görgüsüz" in adjective form, translates most closely as "uncouth;" "görgüsüzlük," the noun form, might be understood as "gaucheness" or "unmannerliness." As I discuss in Chapter 1, görgü and related discourse can be analyzed as part of a secular discursive tradition authorizing practices of listening through which bodies are emotionally and sensorially tuned. Görgü thus becomes a means of designating the degree to which bodies are subject to secular sovereign control. For many of my secularist elite interlocutors, everything seemed to come down to görgü and the rooting out of görgüsüzlük.

One interlocutor, Melih Ziya Bey, a *very* longtime resident of Moda, pharmacist, poet, and devoted classical music fan, saw *görgüsüzlük* at the root of the decline of Moda and Istanbul that he perceived to have occurred over his lifetime. Sitting in his antique pharmacy permeated

with old-fashioned medicinal smells on busy Moda Avenue, his extensive classical CD collection downstairs, he explained his views:

> As many people know, I have been in Moda since 1937 ... I remember in those days, say, 1947, 1950, the roads were narrow, two cars had difficulty passing. When a taxi went by everyone went outside, looking to see what had happened. A lot of people thought that those who lived in Moda were rich, but really there were only three wealthy families. They didn't like to show off ... They were all middle-class people who took care of their business. The fishmonger was a gentlemen and so was the greengrocer. There were wonderful, well-mannered people. That started to change after the 1950s—it started to be corrupted. There was immigration, then the teardowns started [of houses, to be replaced by apartment blocks], and so on. People who had just packed their bags two days ago came here—the doormen came [to work in the apartment blocks]. Then they brought their families and who knows what else ... After all, they send migrants to overthrow humanity. When migrants come, the guy from Kars, from Ardahan, who has never seen the sea, never seen Istanbul ... then they went to Germany. They came here not to learn and absorb Istanbul culture, but rather used it to go from here to Germany. Of course, the whole thing is *görgü,* I think. Where does *görgü* start? In the family (interview, August 25, 2020).[68]

For Melih Bey, the rise of *görgüsüzlük* indexed the arrival of outsiders in Moda and Istanbul over the second half of the twentieth century. Though both the fishmongers and the greengrocers in contemporary Moda were more than sufficiently gentlemanly for my purposes, this kind of decline narrative of a formerly elite, cosmopolitan, and intimate Istanbul subsequently corrupted by uncouth, or *görgüsüz,* Anatolian migrants and beyond the pale *Alamanca* Turkish Germans was widespread amongst my interlocuters.

[68] Çok kimsenin tanıdığı olarak 1937'den beri Moda'dayım. Eskiden gaz lambaları vardı hatırlıyorum … Mesela hatırlıyorum o yıllarda hatta 1947-1950lerde yollar dardı, iki araba zor geçerdi. Taksi geçtiği vakit herkes dışarı çıkar, ne oldu acaba bir şey mi var diye bakardı. Çok kimse zengin zannederlerdi Moda'da oturanları ama üç zengin aile vardı hâlbuki. Gösterişi sevmezlerdi. Aşırı varlıklı aile yoktu, herkes hesabını kitabını bilen orta sınıf insanlardı. Balıkçısı da efendi insandı, sebzecisi de efendi idi. Güzel terbiyeli, güzel insanlar vardı. 1950lerden sonra bu değişti, bozulmaya başladı. Göç aldı, yıkımlar başladı falan. İki gün önce heybesini alan buraya geldi, kapıcı girdi apartmana. Sülalesini getirdi sonrasını bilmem ne… Zaten insanlığı çökertmek için göç gönderirler. Göç gelince; Kars'tan, Ardahan'dan deniz görmemiş adam, İstanbul'u görmemiş adamlar buradan Almanya'ya gitti. Buradan İstanbul kültürü almak değil, özümsemek için değil, oraya gitmek için kullandılar. Tabi bütün işin şeyi bence görgüdür. Görgü nerede başlar, ailede başlar.

Figure 29: Yeni Moda Pharmacy on Moda Avenue. Photo by author.

Figure 30: Melih Ziya Sezer in his antique, Moda Avenue pharmacy. He proposed that I photograph him while gazing at a photograph of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Photo by author.

At a concert that I attended at Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon on the evening of November 20, 2019, for example, my interlocutor Suzan Hanım went on something of a *görgü* rampage. During the pause, I chat with her and two other women—one a doctor, the other a columnist for the secularist *Cumhuriyet* newspaper frequently identifiable by her Burberry attire. A cell phone had gone off during the first half, prompting a symphony of tongue-clicking around

me. This leads to the topic of applause, and Suzan Hanım says that she wonders if it is young people who applaud out of place. Some of them do it "intentionally" (mahsus), she says icily. A moment later, a child passes by whom Suzan Hanım seems to know. She calls her over and tells her to go backstage after the concert and meet the performers. As the child runs off, Suzan explains that there are so many children in Turkey, and they try to point them in the right direction. This leads her to touch upon the familiar topic of Syrian migrants, with whom, she alleges, Turkey is now overrun. It's gotten to the point that the lives of Turkish citizens are being negatively affected, she says. She says that she thinks the Syrians are here to stay.

During the second half, another phone goes off, and Suzan Hanım, expressing her exasperation, whispers to me "and they also crumple their water like this," making a gesture of crumpling a plastic water bottle in her hand ("bir de su böyle sıkışıyorlar"). After the concert ends with a Tchaikovsky encore to which she sways back and forth with pleasure, Suzan Hanım sets her eyes on a late-middle-aged man with a crushed water bottle in his hand. I heard you crushing that bottle during the concert, she tells him accusatorily. He politely denies the accusation and she moves on, setting her sights on a pair of young men in suits with phones in hand standing near the stage. Approaching them, she says that they were taking photos during the concert and the flash came into her eye, distracting her. They don't seem to speak Turkish, prompting her to continue her accusations in English. One of them addresses me, confrontationally showing me that there are no photos on his phone, but no agreement can be reached and Suzan Hanım exits the hall, calling them "brazen" (pişkin) and saying that she thinks they are Germans.

Certainly, there are many critiques that could be made of Suzan Hanım's behavior, mostly to the effect that it is elitist and potentially racist. Made too hastily, though, such critiques

could slide into a kind of ahistorical, non-sociological (American) imperialism. What I find most relevant is the perception of threat from all sides that her behavior evinces. From Syrians brought by the Islamist government to radicalize the country, to undesirable *Alamanca* Turkish-Germans who come to Turkey to throw their Euros around, to inveterate bottle-squashers, to, most ominously, individuals who intentionally applaud at the wrong moments as part of an elaborate program of general sabotage—all threaten to undermine carefully cultivated *görgü*. This fear-saturated environment is one that I am well familiar with from numerous relatives' lectures on the "great satan" (*"büyük şeytan"*) America's plan to destabilize and conquer so as to maintain control over Middle Eastern oil. Perhaps the errant applauders were Americans.

I witnessed another, somewhat more subdued *görgü* patrol at an October 23, 2019, concert featuring the European Amatis Trio in Boğaziçi University's nineteenth-century, American missionary-built Albert Long Hall. The concert was marked by inter-movement applause, and at the end the trio's English cellist made a smiling statement: "thank you for this lovely tradition of clapping between movements—it used to be that way, and it's nice of you to support us between movements." Perhaps the cellist was sincerely expressing his thanks, but I suspect that his statement took on a different meaning in translation. During the pause, I go to speak with a former professor of mine at Boğaziçi and her colleague from the psychology department. I ask them how they are liking the concert. They say that they are enjoying it but that there has been an explosion of noisemaking. Hearing my cue, I mention the applause between the movements of the Haydn trio performed on the first half. My professor rolls her eyes and lets out an exasperated "tövbe tövbe" (something like "give me a break!"). She says that the person next to her had started applauding at one point and she had grabbed their hand to stop them. Seeking to play devil's advocate, I suggest that the prohibition on applause between movements

is really just a convention (sadece bir gelenek). My professor will have none of it, though, expressing with shock "of course it's bad, it breaks the performer's concentration!" (tabii ki kötü, sanatçının dikkatini dağıtıyor!). They say that it didn't used to be like this—there are a lot of new young people here. But the friend is hopeful: "they will learn … *yavaş yavaş* (slowly) they will learn," she says. In the meantime, though, my professor shares a story. A friend of hers circulates an email chain related to classical music three times per week, she says. In the most recent one, a performer had said that the best audience they ever had was made up of donkeys— "because they just listen," she says.

Given the attributions of guilt to young people, it might seem that there is also generational conflict at play in these dynamics. Certainly, there was often a significant proportion of older listeners at events that I attended. Depending on the venue, however, there was frequently just as significant a proportion of younger listeners. Among them was often my interlocutor Emre, in his early thirties and with a modest background in the Turkish provinces, but a prestigious education and lucrative profession in Istanbul. Emre faithfully attended concerts and seminars not only in Istanbul, but in Europe as well. Italy was a particular favorite, and Emre observed clear differences in listening practices:

> You know there's this talk about applauding between movements? That type of thing doesn't happen there [in Italy] at all. Even though the crowd at Süreyya Opera is stable—let's say eighty percent stable, twenty percent newcomers—they invariably applaud between movements. There [in Italy] they wait with pure attention. There you cough and drink water when the piece finishes. Here they drink water while the piece is still going on. I mean, I come to a concert and this concert has a certain seriousness. There is an atmosphere there like I am giving this concert its due. Here, on the other hand, I mean, you only see it at concerts with expensive tickets where there's a certain kind of crowd … that's the kind of difference I see with Italy: They listen very carefully, and you understand that they like it from their eyes. It's not like that in Turkey: you don't even understand that people's emotions have changed … (interview, March 12, 2020).[69]

[69] Şarkı- parça aralarında alkışlama muhabbeti vardır ya, orada böyle bir şey hiç olmuyor. Süreyya operasında k gelenler sabit olmasına rağmen, %80 sabit gelenler, %20 yeni gelenler

Where Melih Bey charted a decline over the long span of his life brought about by the incursion of outsiders, Emre mapped this decline onto geography, seeing in Italy the disciplined listening habits to which certain segments of Turkish society have long aspired. As for Suzan Hanım, for Emre applause seemed to be part of a package of a general blasé attitude and lack of discipline that contrasts with the disciplined sensory and emotional dispositions of Italian listeners.

Istanbullers like Suzan Hanım, my Turkish professor, and Emre reduced to tactics of hand-grabbing and post-concert controls or gazing wistfully toward perceived European discipline received a major boost from the summer 2018 election of secularist Republican People's Party mayoral candidate, Ekrem Imamoğlu, who emerged as a powerful ally in their struggle to buffer the listening habits of their fellow concertgoers. As I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation, just as I arrived in Istanbul in fall 2019, the major news for Istanbul's classical music community was İmamoğlu's appointment of conductor Cem Mansur as director of the municipal Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon and its consequent return to the secular path of "enlightenment."

As it turned out, Cemal Reşit Rey was but one component of the Imamoğlu administration's package of cultural political strategies. Mobilizing control won over municipal public spaces, the Imamoğlu regime began heavily advertising classical concerts at Cemal Reşit Rey and other newly opened venues on billboards and public transportation around the city as

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dersek eğer, mutlaka parça aralarında alkışlıyorlar. Orada pür dikkat bekliyorlar. Orada parça biter öksürürsün, su içersin. Burada parça devam ederken su içiyorlar. Yani ben konsere geliyorum ve bu konserin bir ciddiyeti var. Ben de onun hakkını veriyorum havası var orada. Burada ise sadece şeyde görebiliyoruz; pahalı biletleri olan, kitlesi belli olan konserlerde. Onun dışında aktivite olsun, klasik müzik konseri varmış diye gidenler senede iki defa gidenler. Onlar çok umursamıyor. Öyle bir fark görüyorum İtalya ile arasında. Çok dikkatli dinliyorlar ve beğenilerini gözlerinden anlıyorsun. Bizde öyle değil, hissiyat değişikliğini bile anlayamıyorsun insanlarda …

well as over social media, and Western art music in Istanbul became a regular feature in rather thick, *Istanbul Bulletin* (*İstanbul Bülteni*) magazines distributed gratis in public spaces like ferry terminals. In the January 2020 edition of the magazine, alongside an extended interview with Cem Mansur, the magazine featured a full-page article titled "It's Nice to Applaud; but at the Right Time" ("*Alkış Güzel; Ama Zamanında*") with the subheading: "You have gone to a classical music concert for the first time. The concert has started; everything is great. The music stopped; you are about to applaud; what's that? Other than you and one or two other people, nobody is applauding. What are you going to do now?" (Teltik 2020: 53).[70] The article proposes to "give you a few hints related to how you need to behave at a classical music concert" (Teltik 2020: 53).[71] Starting from the beginning, it recommends arriving a half hour early, remembering to take a program, silencing or turning off your phone, and being in your seat at least ten minutes before the concert is set to begin. It also doesn't neglect to suggest that if you need to pass in front of people to get to your seat, you should politely ask for permission ("*kibarca müsaade isteyiniz"*) and show those in front of whom you are passing your face rather than your backside.

Then the article turns to the topic of applause, treating it in considerable detail, which I quote at length:

> Look through the program that you took at the entrance. Concertos usually have three movements. It is not appropriate to applaud between those three movements. You may applaud at the end of the third movement when the piece is finished. The same rule is also generally applicable to symphonies made up of four movements. This means that in that case there will be three pauses along the way. However, sometimes the conductor may combine the movements.
> When the lights go down, the orchestra takes the stage led by the head violinist. You may applaud when you see the head violinist. When they sit down, cease your applause and

[70] İlk kez bir klasik müzik konserine gittiniz. Konser Başladı; Her şey çok güzel. Müzik durdu, tam alkışlıyorsunuz; o da ne? Sizin gibi bir iki kişi haricinde kimse alkışlamıyor. Şimdi ne yapacaksınız?

[71] Bir klasik müzik konserinde nasıl davranmanız gerektiğine dair verdiğimiz ufak ipuçları, bu konuda size fazlasıyla yardımcı olacaktır.

> silently allow the orchestra to complete its final preparations. There will be applause once more when the conductor takes the stage. If the concert has a soloist, you should definitely applaud for them as well.
> When the lights are cut off completely the concert is starting. While the concert is proceeding quite pleasurably, it's very important what you do when the music and orchestra stop. If you are not a good judge of the topic, don't be the first one to applaud; also, don't applaud immediately because a few others did. Instead, follow the actions of people whom you've previously seen and judged to be experienced. The most important person you can follow here is the conductor. The moment when the conductor turns to the audience and folds their hands in front of them is the most proper time to applaud.
> And at the end of the concert … don't forget that artists are fed with applause. That's why, even if the conductor or soloist waves a greeting and leaves the stage, continue applauding and invite them to the stage. It is disrespectful both to the art and the artist to try to leave the salon the instant the music finishes[72] (Teltik 2020: 53).

Here, listeners are specifically instructed to dismiss their initial responses—to resist the contagiousness of applause. First time concertgoers should objectivize their bodies in order to pay attention to every aspect of their comportment at concerts—manipulating and disciplining their flesh in such a way that it is as restrained and controlled as possible while also showing proper respect to the performers and their art. In other words, I suggest, they should separate and codify their emotional and sensory attunements in accordance with secular discursive tradition. It

[72] İkinci olarak girişte aldığınız program kitapçığını kontrol ediniz. Konçertolar genelde üç bölümden oluşur. O üç bölüm arasında alkışlamanız uygun değildir. Üçüncü bölüm sonunda, eser bittiğinde alkışlayabilirsiniz. Aynı kural genellikle dört bölümden oluşan senfoniler için de geçerlidir. Bu kez arada üç kez duraklama olacak demektir. Ancak bazen şef bölümleri birleştirebilir.
Işıklar kısıldığında, orkestra başkemancı önderliğinde sahneye çıkar. Başkemancıyı gördüğünüz zaman alkışa başlayabilirsiniz. Yerine oturduğunda alkışı bitirip, sessizce orkestranın son hazırlıklarını yapmasına müsaade ediniz. Şefin sahneye çıkışı yine alkışlı olacaktır. Eğer konserin bir de soliste varsa onu da kesinlikle alkışlamalısınız.
Işıklar tamamen karardığında konser başlar. Konser gayet keyifli bir şekilde devam ederken müzik ve orkestra durduğunda ne yapacağınız çok önemlidir. Konuya çok hakim değilseniz ilk alkışlayan siz olmayın; birileri alkışladı diye siz de hemen alkışlamayın. Daha önce gözünüze kestirdiğiniz ve tecrübeli olduğunu düşündüğünüz kişilerin ne yaptıklarını göz ucuyla takip ediniz. Burada takip edebileceğiniz asıl önemli kişi şeftir. Şefin yüzünü seyirciye dönüp ellerini önünde birleştirdiği an, alkış için en doğru zamandır.
Ve konser sonu ... santçıların alkışla beslendiğini unutmayınız. O yüzden şef veya solist selam verip sahneden ayrılsa bile alkışlamaya devam edip ikinci kez sahneye davet ediniz. Müzik biter bitmez salonu terk etmeye çalışmak hem sanata hem de sanatçıya saygısızlık olacaktır.

is particularly noteworthy the extent to which the article attempts to gain control over and mobilize dynamics of applause initiation through a strategy of mimesis. Inexperienced audience members should look around and imitate others, it advises—they should imitate those who clearly exhibit through their comportment that they have subjected their bodies to secular sovereignty. In other words, they should practice mutual monitoring, nipping in the bud the kind of spontaneous applause misfires that I describe above, and transforming them into a site at which disciplined interiority can be (not) displayed. Following this course, new listeners, too, might have a hope of becoming görgülü. In this way, the article can be understood as a strategy of the İmamoğlu administration to put distinction won through disciplined listening on display in order to tame the collective listening flesh. In the next section, I situate these practices in terms of Meltem Ahıska's postcolonial theory of Occidentalism, before turning back to close analysis of applause dynamics in dialog with Ernesto Laclau's formalist account of populism.

Gazes from above, demands from below …

In this section, I begin to situate these on the ground dynamics that I have thus far analyzed in terms of contagious applause initiation practices and applause control animated by the will to *görgü* in a broader theoretical landscape of populist and elitist dynamics. To begin to unpack the agonistics of applause, I turn first to Meltem Ahıska's theory of Turkish Occidentalism, a major theoretical thread of this dissertation. Ahıska provides a powerful postcolonial framework for analyzing Turkish secular nationalism and—more importantly for my purposes—the subjectivities of its secularist promulgators forged at the nexus of Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the imagined Occidentalist gaze. For Ahıska, the Occidentalist gaze manifests as a projection of the ego-ideal—the imagined gaze of the West through which Turkish

elites see and evaluate themselves, producing a kind of du Boisian “double consciousness.” At the same time, though the gaze is projected, Ahıska contends that the West historically constituted not merely a model of modernity that might be emulated or varied, but rather a palpable, imperialist threat to early elites, to which efforts to discipline and control the nascent nation and “catch up” were a dialogic response. Thus, in Ahıska’s view, Occidentalism became “Westernism and anti-Westernism at the same time”: elites held up the fantasy of the West as a model for the backward people, while wielding the national people as a defense against the excesses of the modern West. Moving along this discursive bridge, elites performed hegemonic power in the national space.

The sense of threat evidenced by Suzan Hanım as she rampaged across the concert hall can be read in terms of response to this constitutive dialogic sense of outside threat. Her efforts and the others discussed above can thus be understood in terms of a desire to control the backward people and resist outside threat by performing secular modernity for the Western ego-ideal. The presence of this gaze in relation to applause became evident at various points: for example, at the weekly Monday afternoon meeting of a classical music seminar that I participated in throughout my fieldwork (first in person, then over zoom). This seminar has been running for several decades in an art gallery in the Kadıköy district’s tony Erenköy neighborhood and attended for most of that period by the same group of affluent women (during my time there, there was one older man—a retired Armenian doctor—who also attended regularly). For a session on “Mozart’s Trip to Paris” (“Mozart’ın Paris Yolculuğu”), the seminar leader, Aydın Bey, had prepared a hand-out for distribution in which he described Mozart’s trips and quoted extensively from primary sources. A discussion of applause came up as Aydın Bey was reading from a letter in which Mozart describes a concert to his father:

> **Aydın** (quoting Mozart): “In the middle of the first allegro there was a passage. I had suspected while I was composing it that the listeners would like it. A big applause broke out there.”
> **Seminar attendee**: It also happened there …
> **Aydın**: Now, look, this thing, now they say don’t applaud in the pauses … (chuckling in the group) … look how [recent] the calls not to applaud during the pauses are … in that time there were really explosions of applause during the pauses at concerts … this was a very common thing. We had talked about it previously, that this was something that Mahler had started … it existed before that, of course. No matter how much Mahler told people not to applaud in the pauses, for concerts in that period … but here, the funny thing is, they are not applauding between movements, they are applauding like with jazz solos … they like it and applaud …
> **Seminar attendee**: In other words, if we do such a thing, we’re not doing anything wrong …”[73] (fieldnote, January 27, 2020).

Here, the gaze manifested in a Westernist mode, as if to say, “if Mozart did it; it turns out that we have been Western all along!” An anti-Western meeting of the gaze can be interpreted from a comment made at the baroque music “platform,” OTTOBarok’s inaugural concert at the All-Saints Church in Moda on November 27, 2019. While explaining a piece on the program—Georg Telemann’s “Les Nations”—the group’s young founder, Orhan Avcı, noted that “there is also a Turkish movement in there” (aralarına Türk bölümü de var) (fieldnote, November 27, 2019). This prompted him to observe that “by the way, there is a rule saying that it is not applauded between the movements in classical music—I can’t understand that, sometimes there are movements that call for applause: they can be applauded” (fieldnote, November 27, 2019).[74]

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[73] Aydın: İlk allegronun ortasında bir yer vardı. Bestelerken seyircinin hoşuna gideceğini tahmin etmiştim. Orada büyük bir alkış koptu
X: Orada da kaldı
Aydın: Şimdi bakın bu şey, şimdi bölüm aralarda alkışlamayın diye … (chuckling)… aralarda alkışlamayalım ifadelerini aslında ne kadar ?, o zaman gerçek konserlerde arada alkış kıyamet koptu … çok şey olan bir şey, çok yaygın olan bir şey, hem daha evvel konuşmuştuk, bu, bize Mahler’in falan koyduğu bir şey … daha evvel de var tabii, Mahler ne kadar herkese alkışlama değil ama aralarda alkışlama, o dönem konser için … Burada, işin garibi konser bölüm arasında değil, yani çalarken, cazlardaki solo gibi … beğenip alkışlıyorlar …
Y: “Yani biz de böyle bir şey yaparsak yanlış bir şey yapmıyoruz”
[74] “bu arada klasik müzikte bölümler arasında alkışlanmaz diye bir kural var—ben onu anlayamıyorum, bazen alkışlanabilir bölümler var, onlar alkışlanabilir.”

This statement itself prompted a round of applause. Perhaps aiming to put his money where his mouth was, Orhan did elect to "break the rules" and announce to the audience between movements: "ladies and gentlemen, we have come to the Turkish movement!" ("geldik türk bölümüne efendim!") (fieldnote, November 27, 2019). This time, Orhan sounded a note of anti-Westernist defiance—"Whatever the 'rules' may be, *we* Turks know when we should applaud!" Both incidents, though, evince an attempt to justify perceived failures of discipline and control in the eyes of the imagined Western gaze. The British cellist's polite attempt to address inter-movement applause at Boğaziçi may, in turn, have been a case in which this imagined gaze took on embodied form before the very eyes of secularist elites. His comment, while no doubt well-intended, may have produced something of a nightmare scenario for those like my Turkish professor attending the concert—the superior, condescending smile of the West in response to intractable but harmless Oriental disarray.

Ahıska develops her theory of Occidentalism as part of a study of early Republican radio, which she analyzes as a technological medium through which secularist elites projected their fantasy of the modern nation onto a (in their view, at least) passive listening public. In Ahıska's analysis, it was the elites who could cross the bridge and perform power—who could speak, in other words. Ahıska maintains that, even as other voices began to assert themselves over the course of the twentieth century—those of Islamists, suppressed minorities—secular Occidentalism remained hegemonic. As I suggest in this dissertation, however, this is no longer self-evidently the case. Measured in terms of political control and orientation, media, and official postures toward Republican symbols, secularism appears increasingly embattled under a hegemonic Islamic populist regime. Perhaps more to the point, the sense that something has changed was palpable as a structure of feeling from my interlocutors—as Yakup Kadri

Karaosmanoğlu pithily puts it in his 1922 novel *Kiralık Konak,* set at the dawn of the modern, secular Turkish Republic: "the times are not the old times anymore" (zamanlar artık eski zamanlar değil).

The shift can be understood in terms of populist dynamics of constructing the Turkish "people" in opposition to secularist elites. In other words, the exterior threats that constituted secularist elite subjectivity in Ahıska's account of the early Republic have become increasingly interiorized as the hegemony of the secular settlement has been eroded by Islamic populism. This becomes evident, for example, in Melih Bey's discussion of Moda and *görgü*—his refined Istanbul has been overrun by uncouth migrants from the provinces. Notably, these have "been sent to break down humanity" (*zaten insanlığı çökertmek için göç gönderirler*)—an enigmatic reference to threatening outside forces that are at the same time internal. Indeed, the current Turkish regime can be interpreted as a textbook populist case in its eschewing of the mediations of bureaucratic structures, reliance on direct referendums to discern the "national will" (milli irade) and, most significantly for my purposes, its use of anti-establishment appeals against secularist elites. As new Cemal Reşit Rey director Cem Mansur mentioned in an interview, "when he [the Turkish president] starts talking about elites, I start to get scared" (interview, January 2, 2020).[75]

Moving in similar poststructuralist theoretical territory to Ahıska, Ernesto Laclau presents a formally codified theory of "populist reason," which, it turns out, bears a close formal resemblance to the applause dynamics I discuss above (Laclau 2005). Contending that objectivity is constructed by discourse, in which a slippery relationship between signifier and signified means that meaning emerges only out of difference, Laclau argues that politics is

[75] O bir şeye elitler diye işaret ettiği zaman ben korkmaya başlıyorum.

fundamentally populist, insofar as it involves struggle over the definition of the group out of difference. The fundamental unit of Laclau's political analysis is the demand. In a society in which a perfect liberal consensus reigned, each individual demand could be responded to appropriately with the smooth, mediating functionality of bureaucracy, and there would be no politics. When demands overwhelm existing channels, however, they become linked in chains of equivalence represented by one demand that arbitrarily emerges as empty signifier such that a split occurs between the popular class represented by the empty signifier and an elite understood to be unresponsive and out of touch with the people. Laclau argues that the empty signifier as name is performative rather than conceptual insofar as it is not a logical reduction from ontic content, but rather produces that content as a totality defined by lack—the ontological produces the ontic (to borrow Laclau's formulation). In other words, out of a social field articulated only by difference, the name renders a split that performs the people as fundamental totality. In this way, the universal (the popular identity) is located in the particular (the particular sign) and the particular is located in the universal.

As I.M. Bergem suggests, Laclau is rigorously post-structuralist: there is no langue—any totality is product of enchainment behind an empty signifier whose particularity is incidental (Bergem 2018). But what could be an emptier signifier than clapping? Understood formalistically, applause as sign might be understood necessarily to signify approval in some sense, but it is completely empty with regard to approval of *what* or from *whom,* just as the particularity of Laclau's demand and its demander are incidental. Examining the above vignettes in formal terms reveals further dynamics with a strong resemblance to Laclau's account of populist reason. First, it must be pointed out that the mere existence of applause indicates that the group must be defined. In a state of total liberal consensus, there would be no applause because

no surplus—that the performance was pleasurable would already be known to all. Second, applause is initiated by a single individual, prompting others to "stagger"/"enchain" behind them, potentially producing a totality. The initial applauder's identity or intent are arbitrary—any other applauder could have initiated the chain that performs the group. By the same token, though, the initial applauder is key to performing the group and likely to be followed. In other words, in the act of applauding the universal is always already latent in the particular, while the particular is likewise located in the universal.

As noted above, Laclau contends that, insofar as it deals with the struggle to define the group, politics is fundamentally populist. In a similar fashion, studies of applause have consistently suggested that applause is somehow fundamentally social, an *ur* mode of group interaction. Does it follow that applause is fundamentally populist? I do not make this strong claim. Rather, borrowing Mazzarella's phraseology, I suggest that applause always threatens to "matter forth collective flesh," and therefore poses a threat to listening contexts that aim toward a secular contrapuntal tension between interiority and exteriority—all the more so as the secular settlement is eroded. Turkey and contemporary Istanbul, I suggest, become particularly good contexts at which to examine this dynamic, for they are sites in which the secular and secularism have been consistent points of contention. To make this argument, however, I put applause back in dialogue with Ahıska and Laclau.

What does the flesh want?

One striking aspect of Laclau's theory of populist reason is how *non*-fleshy it is. Demands are issued, popular classes are discursively produced, and nobody even breaks a nail. While I do not necessarily reject his account or the post-structuralist logic that undergirds it, I do

suggest that there might be room to critique Laclau's decidedly "non-fleshy" account of populist reason from the perspectives of the "collective flesh," to borrow Mazzarella's term. We might understand applause in formal, discursive terms as a signifier, but this would be largely to ignore the body and its responses indexed by applause. How might applause—a fleshy, fundamentally social activity—pose a productive challenge to Laclau? And how do these larger questions relate to the ethnographic context of secular listening bodies and applause in Istanbul?

A line of thinking coming out of Talal Asad's work that is at the theoretical core of this dissertation has established that ethical and political deliberation are not purely "rational," but rather undergirded by bodily and affective practices (Asad 2003; Mahmood 2005; Hirsckind 2006). Likewise, the idea that the world is not simply "socially constructed" discursively, but rather the product of a variety of agencies both human and non-human has been well-established by the so-called "new materialism." In his book, *The Mana of Mass Society,* William Mazzarella develops what can be understood as an embodied and new materialist, post-culture concept for understanding repeating, patterned social dynamics: the "mimetic archive." Mazzarella's overall project in the book is to revisit the magical substance of *mana* in order to explore its potential for understanding the contours of sovereignty in twenty-first century brand-saturated mass society. In order to trace the movements of mana, Mazzarella understands the mimetic archive to embed "latent histories of encounter … not only in the explicitly articulated forms commonly recognized as cultural discourses but also in built environments and material forms, in the concrete history of the senses, and in the habits of our shared embodiment" (Mazzarella 2017: 8). These histories can remain latent but, in a kind of Benjaminian "flash," resurface in moments of mimetic or "constitutive resonance" that emerge between past archived encounters and novel present stimuli:

> I argue that constitutive resonance can usefully be understood in terms of a dialectical play between eros (resonance, love) and nomos (order, law) and sketch the outlines of a theory of addressability—not only a theory of interpellation (how do we become the selves that we are in moments of encounter such that we experience that becoming as "fated") but also a theory of the vital co-constitution of inner and outer worlds, and of the inseparability of self-understanding and object-resonance (Mazzarella 2017: 28).

For Mazzarella, such moments are contingent relations of mutual becoming, not the product of causal determination, and are the product of a kind of mimetic participation rather than representational rationalism (Mazzarella 2017: 5).

The uses of Mazzarella's mimetic archive concept are not limited to mass branding, however. For example, it is useful for understanding traces embedded in the built environment that resonate anew with Western art music for a group such as secularist elites and their "predictable patterns of addressability" more broadly in Istanbul, without recourse to the ossifying and static connotations of the culture concept—more on that in a moment. First, though, Mazzarella's talk of "mimesis," "archives," and "resonance" happens to locate us in an interesting theoretical neighborhood in relation to applause. In his rather magisterial meditation on (classical) concert applause, German musicologist Hans-Werner Heister identifies concert applause as, among other things, a holdover from what he refers to as the "mimetic ceremony" (*mimetische Zeremonie*), a concept that he develops following Austrian/East German musicologist Georg Knepler. By "mimetische Zeremonie," I understand Heister to refer to a kind of elemental, participatory gathering of all members of a group, out of which diverse forms of art and communication subsequently developed: a "syncretic event that unites aesthetic and practical elements and in which all participants actively take part" (Heister 1984: 91).[76]. Heister contends

[76] Archaischer Ausgangspunkt dieser Kollektivität, der auch in modernen und aktuellen rezenten Kulturformen überlebt und anwesend bleibt, ist die "mimetische Zeremonie," eine synkretische Veranstaltung, die praktische wie ästhetische Elemente noch unmittelbar vereint und bei der alle Teilnehmer auch aktiv mitwirken.

that the mimetic ceremony is "sensuous-aesthetic" (*sinnlich-ästhetisch*), incorporating all of the senses in an aesthetic configuration that distances the ceremony from the everyday. This aesthetically-contoured sensory saturation is realized in the mode of the "imaginary-real" (*imaginaer-Real*)—imaginary because aesthetic and not oriented toward the practical everyday; real because eminently sensuously present and real, producing a "State of Otherness" (*Andere Zustand*) differentiated from a "State of Normalcy" (*Normalzustand*) defined by work and material production. The result of this state of affairs is "freedom from individual, particular purposes and interests," producing a state in which "it ultimately becomes possible that here, at least rudimentarily, psychic problems are dissolved, contradictions sublated in the sensuousness of the general interest, and, in the aesthetically-mediated superstructure, the social as well as the sociability of the individual is activated and confirmed"[77] (Heister and Singer 2013: 214-15).

It is out of this mimetic conglomeration, Heister suggests, that separate branches of individual sensory refinement developed—more traditionally known as "the arts." In this way, in addition to strongly resembling the theorizations of multisensorial atmospheres of becoming discussed above, Heister's conception of the mimetic ceremony is somewhat like a Mazzarrelian "mimetic archive" for the various arts. And like Mazzarella, Heister sees contemporary resonances. Applause at modern concerts, Heister suggests, is "a specific residual form of the ultimately natural reflex of the public" that "restores ... something of the originally intended harmonious community" in a capitalist "Situationszusammenhang" configured according to a division of performing producers and listening consumers—and I might add, a secular

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[77] Gerade durch diese Distanzierung, die auch Freiheit von einzelnen, partikularen Zwecken und Interessen heißt, wird es schließlich möglich, dass hier mindestens ansatzweise psychische Probleme gelöst, im Sinne eines Allgemein-Interesses soziale Widersprüche aufgehoben und in der ästhetisch vermittelten Überwölbung das Gemeinschaftliche sowie die eigene Gesellschaftlichkeit betätigt und bestätigt wird.

configuration of the body that emphasizes rationality and emotional restraint (Heister 1984: 91-92).[78] In other words, concert applause is like a deeply deposited residue of the earlier, all-participatory mimetic ceremony: we applauding listeners are not signifying—not, say, issuing demands or indicating approval—but drawing on an *ur* mimetic archive located in our bodies to sensuously, fleshily, participate.

At first blush, Heister's analysis of the archaic underpinnings of modern applause might raise some hackles. His talk of what amount to holdovers from archaic ritual could perhaps be heard to smack of the worst excesses of European colonial temporality. At the same time, however, his account of the channeling and controlling of social impulses by the structures of (secular) capitalist modernity resonates with critiques of that modernity. Specifically, it resembles the critique that, under the ostensible universalism of secularism, many ways of being in the world have been suppressed—not least those deemed in various ways irrational, excessive, too loud, unable to fall in line. Situatable among these critiques is, of course, Mazzarella's conception of populism as the "mattering forth of collective flesh" formerly controlled or excluded under the secular settlement. In this sense, Heister's account of the mimetic ceremony and applause can be understood as an analysis of the channeling of that flesh in modernity that is never quite successful, a secular settlement that is never quite settled.

For Heister, in other words, it is the diktat not to applaud between movements that is "unnatural," not the impulse to applaud. Indeed, he might suggest that applause is a rather tepid and repressed mode of mimetic participation. Though I do not wish to legislate on the "natural," I myself had an encounter—indeed, a resonant one—with something of a "mimetic ceremony"

[78] ‚Spezifische Residualform von letztlich natürlicher Eigenaktivität des Publikums,' das ‚restituiert ... etwas von der ursprünglichen wie wieder intendierten harmonischen Gemeinschaft.'

while in the field, that grants me some insight into Heister's conception of applause as well as secularist Istanbul elites' anxieties about it. This encounter occurred early on in my fieldwork when I attended a concert at the newly "regained" Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Salon. The concert commemorated October 29, Republic Day, a national holiday of the highest symbolic order commemorating Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's founding of the Turkish Republic. On the program was *Kuva-i Milliye Destanı,* or *National Forces Saga,* an oratorio of sorts with famous, eponymous text written by towering communist poet, Nazım Hikmet Ran. Nazım Hikmet was, not incidentally, a longtime Moda resident: the Nazım Hikmet Cultural Center in Moda was one of my regular haunts for its great biergarten vibe and accompanying Marxist bookshop, and some of his verses are set in the sidewalk along a main Moda walking route. Set to music composed by Muammer Sun, the text chronicles the Turkish War of Independence and the struggle and ultimate victory of Turkish resistance forces led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk over the threat presented by the European-backed Greek army.

Figure 31: Nazım Hikmet verse in Moda. Photo by author.

At the time of the concert, I was still thinking that my primary research focus would be on Turkish nationalism, so I attended more out of a sense of duty than anything else, expecting a somewhat schlocky performance and not realizing the Nazım Hikmet connection. After chatting with Suzan Hanım and Çağdaş Bey in Cemal Reşit Rey's spacious lobby, I head in and take my seat toward the front of the hall. As the orchestra, choir, and four speakers are taking the stage, I note from the red flag graphic projected onto the stage that the evening promises something more than just a concert: truly good schlock, with all the requisite nationalist symbolism deployed, but unlikely to be any kind of peak experience.

As the program begins and the speakers begin to dramatically recite the text, though, I realize that I know it. I have heard these lines before:

> Ateşi ve ihaneti gördük
> ve yanan gözlerimizle durduk
> bu dünyanın üzerinde.
> İstanbul 918 Teşrinlerinde,
> İzmir 919 Mayısında
> ve Manisa, Menemen, Aydın, Akhisar:
> Mayıs ortalarından
> Haziran ortalarına kadar ...

But where? It wells up from my own archive. Ah yes! That YouTube video of musician and writer Zülfü Livaneli reciting a few of its verses and then singing the plodding, plaintive folk song "Look at Ankara's Stone, Look at the Tears in my Eyes" ("Ankara'nın taşına bak, gözlerimin yaşına bak") to a background of paintings from the *Anıtkabir* Atatürk mausoleum in Ankara. I remember watching this video with my father in silence, aware that it had affected him deeply. How had I run across that song? I remember: Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu mentions it in his early Republican novel, *Ankara*—when the main character, Selma, first arrives from Istanbul, I think. Ever since first entering my grandmother's old, book-filled apartment as a child, Ankara had held a strange fascination for me ...

I return to the performance. The text of *Kuvayi Milliye* could be considered clunky in its step-by-step unfolding of the revolutionary clash between Europe-backed Greek forces and the nascent Turkish nationalist resistance, but as the four speakers proceed, spot lit before the orchestra bathed in red light and the choir dimly lit at the back of the stage, I begin to take a Jakobsonian poetic pleasure in their dramatic Turkish delivery: “Ya istiklal, ya öl*üm*!” Slogans pass back and forth: “Ateş*ii* ve ihanet*ii* gördük!” “Ateşi ve ihaneti *gördük.*” “A*teş*i, ve iha*net*i gördük!” Their speech becomes sensuous. Its percussive melodies seem to blend into the marshal, percussive melody the orchestra takes up (fieldnote, October 27, 2019).[79]

Like at many concerts that I attended in Istanbul, the audience applauds between movements. As I noted above, I generally did not join in when this happened. Tonight, though, I notice an impulse to join the crowd, to applaud when the flesh says applaud. This impulse crescendos with a soprano solo at the climax of the oratorio. At the nadir of the Turkish national resistance as recounted by Nazım Hikmet, when “fifteen provinces and districts, and nine big cities are in enemy hands” (onbeş vilayet ve sancak, ve dokuz büyükşehir düşman elindedir) (fieldnote, October 27, 2019), one of the reciters tells us, a young soprano, dressed in a long red dress, takes the stage between orchestra and choir; a spotlight is directed upon her. Over a simple, guitar-like orchestral accompaniment, she intones a flowing, wordless, Dorian-mode melody, beginning in the middle of her range. Something about her voice, the folk-like melody, resonating in the packed concert hall, grabs my attention. Have I heard this melody before? This voice? They seem familiar ... I am frozen in my seat. I switch my focus back and forth between the soprano and the dramatic speakers, who remain visible while she sings, perched on high stools at the front of the stage and wearing dramatic expressions. Does the speaker directly in

[79] Either independence, or death!; We saw fire and betrayal!

front of me, a dour middle-aged man, have tears in his eyes? Somehow, I become consumed with this question. Why? As the wordless solo progresses, the melody repeats, but the tessitura moves up and up, heightening the drama. It climaxes with a kind of suspension on the high D6—her technique is effortless, but still the strain of the high pitch is palpable; it seems to transcend the boundaries of her body. Chills run down my spine. Do I have tears in my eyes? As the movement finishes, I must participate somehow. I do the only thing I can: vigorously bang the flesh of my hands together, paying heed neither to convention nor those around me, but I imagine they all did the same. Perhaps even Suzan Hanım—it had to be participated.

I am disappointed that they don't perform Cemal Reşit Rey's "Tenth-Year March" at the end—one of my favorites for its driving rhythm and interesting harmonies. They select the more popular "Izmir March" instead. But still, I float out of the hall with my fellow concertgoers and into the Istanbul night; my return trip across the Bosphorus to Kadıköy passes in a flash. The next day, transcribing field notes, I reflect upon my experience, concluding the entry with:

> Afterward, I wonder whether this feeling of belonging and "chills" is something that liberalism can't really provide, but that is a basic need?
> Hence the current rise of sort of fascism?
> Or whether this is just sort of how they (the nationalists) get you (fieldnote, October 27, 2019).

The feeling of belonging, the chills—this was constitutive resonance. It felt right. It resonated with *me,* with *my* archive, even as it resonated with those around me. Beyond this, it resonated with a deeper archive—indeed, the deepest one—the residue of the archaic mimetic ceremony, which the performance called up with its blurring of sensory and bodily boundaries. It was "extimate"—both in me and outside.

Certainly, the deconstructive analysis would not be difficult to conduct: the national founding narrative of victory over outside threat, the folk melodies souped-up with "western

techniques" to perform the modern-national, the wordless female body, draped in national red, symbolizing the timeless, vulnerable national essence to be defended at any cost, and the dangerously over-stimulated, feverishly applauding Turkish nationalists. But that would be a different (and well-trod) analytical path. That evening, my fellow concertgoers and I didn't want to deconstruct—we wanted to participate in the ceremony, lose ourselves in a collectively swelling pride at victory over the heinous Western enemy. National symbols became mediated by and activated in individual, embodied, archives of memory. Sensory apparati were addressed in tandem—the visuality of performance was bathed in colorful light, the poetics of music and language melted into one another. Resemblances proliferated across sense, body, and memory—the tear in the narrator's eye in "Ankara'nın Taşına bak" resembled the tear in the on-stage narrator's eye resembled the tear in my own eye. Our bodies in the audience resonated haptically with the strain of the soprano's voice. We wanted to *participate* in our collective flesh, and, given the conventions of concert listening, there was only one way to do so. The secular dies hard, but so does the flesh.

Does this mean that I was interpellated, "hailed," in Althusserian terms (Althusser 2008)? Were my fellow concertgoers? Sort of, perhaps. I had heard the call and responded, but my response was situated and fleeting, my participation mimetic and one with the group. Perhaps *because* of this contingency, though, the experience was all the more powerful. Am I a Turkish nationalist? Well, no, certainly not right now, but maybe that evening I was, if only for a few moments. And this is perhaps what my secularist elite interlocutors find so threatening about applause even as they wield it to display distinction: in the wrong hands—or, more precisely, in any hands under the wrong circumstances—it can override the internal and external emotional and sensorial boundaries of secularity, entangling the body in unexpected resonances.

Conclusion

I have suggested that applause is a mimetic holdover mediated by archives embedded in the body, places, and objects, which has the potential to destabilize the boundaries and contours of the secular body and contra-public. For precisely this reason, applause is a site at which secular bodies are made known through exteriorization of their emotionally and sensorially codified interiority. At the same time, with its powerful capacity for contagion, applause is an ever-present threat to secular sovereign subjectivity. In this sense, I argue that applause practices constitute a key site of boundary formation between secular emotional and sensorial bodily attunements and the ostensibly irrational excesses of the flesh. It thus becomes a core site at which secularist elites struggle to channel and control the people's collective flesh and perform power—all the more during a moment in which Islamist populism has rendered the secular settlement precarious. As secularist elites feel more embattled, this struggle can take on a more defensive cast—tactics deployed in the struggle to maintain boundaries such as grabbing hands and accosting concertgoers. As they gain a bit of an advantage, though, as they did with Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu's recent election victory, Occidentalist elites can develop strategies to try to discipline the collective flesh by interrupting the dynamics of mimesis as Heister describes them in favor of mimetic practice that foregrounds secular distinction. As my own experience demonstrates, the call of the flesh comes from inside the house, and they who manage not to answer it exhibit practices of buffered listening as distinctive as they are restrained.

Chapter 5: House Concerts, Ritualization, and Secular Sainthood

In the previous chapter, I examined struggles over establishing secular boundaries as manifest in efforts to control and channel applause. In this chapter, I turn to a context in which social boundaries are much more clearly defined. My focus here is on a series of concerts organized by Murat and Sedef Soylu in their penthouse apartment located in the affluent Erenköy neighborhood of the Kadıköy district. Held more or less bi-monthly until the start of the pandemic and again, if with less frequency, after its initial phase, the concerts were organized in memory of the Soylus' daughter, Meriç. In the middle of a sterling tenure as director of one of Istanbul's (then) most prestigious concert halls, *İşSanat,* funded by a large bank, Meriç lost her life tragically on the eve of her fortieth birthday.

My focus is on processes of ritualization through which a privileged distinction is established between a sacralized secular contra-public and a profane Islamic populist exterior. Specifically, I argue that Meriç is both venerated and constructed as a secular listening saint through processes of ritualization with practices of listening at their core. As an ideal listener who shared her cultivated interiority with the public through an exemplary career bringing world-famous classical musicians to Istanbul, Meriç embodies a tension between cultivated interiority and its public rendering that becomes a model for imitation by those who venerate her, not least through their own practices of ritual listening. I ultimately argue that it is her status as a saint both cultivated and venerated through listening that renders Meriç Soylu a particularly secular saintly body—a saint who directs and channels, rather than embodies, charisma.

In the chapter's first section, I examine processes of ritualization at the Soylus' house concerts, arguing that these processes of ritualization elaborate a central tension between

interiority and exteriority, private and public, that produces ritualized bodies who make up a secular contra-public. In its second section, I elaborate on Meriç's construction as a saint by examining practices of pilgrimage and hagiography through which Meriç is constructed as a listening saint embodying a tension between cultivated interiority and publicity. In the chapter's third section, I examine Meriç's situation in a pantheon of Turkish secular saints and in relation to sainthood more broadly. I conclude the chapter by participating myself in the veneration of Meriç through a mini-hagiography. Thus, this chapter, too, can be read as a way of venerating Meriç.

Extraordinary Encounters with a Secular Contra-public

I had already been hearing about the Soylus' house concerts for some time before finally securing an invitation. While having tea one day with my interlocutors Aydın Büke and Asuman Kafaoğlu Büke, both longtime friends of the Soylus and inveterate house concert attendees, we had joked at one point that, more than a scholarly project, my research activities might begin to resemble those of a social climber. No doubt, whether from the perspective of a researcher interested in the various avatars of classical music in Istanbul or the socially ambitious intent on gaining access to increasingly exclusive milieux, the Soylus' house concerts stood out. Nevertheless, I was at a loss as to how I might cause myself to be invited.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the invitation fell into my lap while I was attending another house concert of sorts. My interlocutor Şehrazat Hanım had been organizing a series of classical concerts in her historic water-front Bosphorus *Yalı* for some years before it was struck and severely damaged by a ship in 2018. The *Yalı*'s repairs ongoing, Şehrazat Hanım had landed like many others at All Saints Moda as a venue for her concerts and accompanying *kokteyl*-s, not

least in light of the fact that many attendees (including Şehrazat Hanım herself) already live in Kadıköy. Standing in the door to the church before a January 19, 2020, *Yalı* concert, my friend Çağdaş Bey introduced me to a woman whose daughter, he said, was a child piano prodigy supported by Turkey's elusive twin piano virtuosi, the Pekinel sisters. We exchanged pleasantries and I moved on to greet several other familiar faces, only to find that the woman, Ayşe Hanıım, was my seat companion. We chatted a bit more and I explained to her that I was doing research on classical music in Istanbul, prompting her to volunteer that she helped to organize a series of house concerts in Erenköy and invite me on the spot.

So it comes to pass that one week later, I set out on the relatively short, Asian-side journey from my Moda Airbnb to the Soylus' apartment in Erenköy. Over the course of the intervening week, I had carefully prepared by consulting with Ayşe Hanım about appropriate dress—you won't stick out if you wear a suit, she had counseled (*göze batmazsın*)—getting a haircut and purchasing an orchid as hostess gift. At the small İşSanat bookshop near the Kadıköy ferry pier, I also purchased a copy of the book *Meriç Soylu: Sanat Dolu bir Yaşam* (*Meriç Soylu: a Life Filled with Art*), collecting letters, photos, accounts of Meriç, and other such materials, and carefully read the reflections on Meriç's life gathered therein. It had been agreed that I should arrive one hour before the official *kokteyl* start time so that I might become acquainted with the Soylus and the quartet of young conservatory cellists set to perform on that evening's program. Entering the newish high-rise building, I take the elevator up to the twelfth floor. When I step out, I am greeted in the lobby by a wall of what appear to be framed programs from previous Meriç Soylu House Concerts. I ring the doorbell and am ushered by the Soylus' housekeeper into the salon to wait as they finish their tea at Sedef Hanım's father's apartment next door.

This interval gives me a chance to take in the rather eye-catching surroundings. Insofar as the salon encompasses several different seating areas and a dining area, it is similar to others I've known in Turkey. The Soylus' salon, though, is a good deal richer and more elaborate than most. Upon entering, to the left I find a French-style marquetry furniture set grouped around a fireplace, on top of which sits a collection of Imari porcelain. In front of me as I walk in is another spacious seating group composed of two pale green sofas and several chairs grouped around a large coffee table, a television artfully concealed in the corner behind it. To the right is the dining area with a dark wood table, a china cabinet, and several buffets upon which are gathered collections of porcelain and silver. The pale khaki green walls are decorated with various oil and watercolor paintings, the floors with multiple handmade carpets. The space is also peppered with a parade of small side and occasional tables rather elaborately decorated with lamps and accessories of crystal, porcelain, and silver. Perhaps most arrestingly, the Marmara Sea and two of the Princes' Islands are visible out of the windows over the tops of intervening apartment buildings.

Within a few moments, the Soylus and the evening's performers cross the hall from Sedef's father's apartment, and we all gather rather formally in the salon's main seating area to introduce ourselves. Sedef immediately begins explaining about their family's musical background—that her parents were avid classical music listeners, and her grandmother and great-grandmother were pianists, and that they all used to go every Saturday with Meriç to concerts at the Atatürk Cultural Center before it was closed. Murat Bey then explains their initial plans to name a concert series at İşSanat after Meriç, how they ultimately ended up sponsoring a competition and prizes for young musicians—Shining Stars (Parlayan Yıldızlar)—and how they

got the idea and purchased an appropriate piano for the house concert series, likewise conceived to support young, student musicians and, of course, to remember Meriç.

Figure 32: sitting in the Soylus' salon pre-performance. Photo by the Soylus' housekeeper

It is then time for me and the four conservatory cellists to introduce ourselves. Feeling the strain of inserting polite responses at appropriate intervals in this rather formal interaction, I am somewhat relieved when several more guests begin to arrive. First, Ali and Nuray Gümüş: they are Austrian- and German-trained longtime Istanbul State Symphony cellists and close friends of the Soylus. Moreover, Ali Bey comes from a musical family: his great-grandfather, he told me in an interview, was Ali Rıfat Çağatay, composer of the first (alaturka) Turkish national anthem. Together, as a room full of cellists (however amateurish my own cello-playing might be in this

company), we discuss various works in the cello repertoire, naming Shostakovich, Prokofiev—"There are also the Rococo Variations," Nuray Hanım adds (Rococo Çeşitlemeleri de var). A few moments later, a middle-aged man wearing a turtleneck arrives whom Sedef Hanım introduces as a belletrist (*edebiyatçı*). As Sedef is walking out of the salon after introducing him, she says excitedly, "It's going to be an extraordinary evening!" (Olağanüstü bir akşam olacak!).

On Murat Bey's suggestion, I take the elevator upstairs together with the Gümüş's and the belletrist, Fuat Bey, for a quick tour of the Soylus' new rooftop winter garden, where we note possibilities for outdoor concerts and the even more unobstructed view of the Princes' Islands it affords. Back downstairs, a crowd has started to gather for the *kokteyl.* I begin making the rounds, first exchanging greetings with Aydın and Asuman Kafaoğlu-Büke—he an Austrian-trained, retired Istanbul State Symphony flutist turned music writer; she a Swiss and American-educated philosopher and literary critic. Cem Mansur, orchestral conductor and newly-appointed director of the Cemal Reşit Rey Concert Hall, is here, as is Mutlu Hanım, an art collector in whose eponymous gallery Aydın Bey leads the weekly classical music lessons attended by Sedef and other interlocutors. I am introduced to Sedef's father, who, I am told, at over one hundred years old is the oldest living graduate of Istanbul's prestigious, fifteenth-century Galatasaray High School (*Galatasaray Lisesi*). As we chat, other guests come up to greet him reverently. Meanwhile, members of the household staff circulate with finger sandwiches and wine on trays. Continuing myself to circulate, I land in a conversation with Ali Gümüş, who starts explaining how dramatically Istanbul has changed during his lifetime. He says that when he was a child his family lived in a large wooden house on the nearby Feneryolu (Lighthouse Road) together with nine other such family houses. Whereas all of the neighbors knew each other back then, he says,

now there are twenty-nine apartments in his building alone, and none of the neighbors know each other. It is becoming like America, he says.

Figure 33: Meriç Soylu House Concerts photo wall. Photo by author.

After a little while, Murat Bey starts to announce that it is time for the concert portion of the evening to begin. This takes place not in the Soylus' own apartment, but rather in the salon of Sedef Hanım's father, whose apartment occupies the other half of the penthouse level. Gradually,

I begin to make my way across along with the twenty or so other attendees, passing along the way in front of the wall of photos of previous house concert performers. Once across the hall, we find that the salon has been prepared for a concert: a plush, velvet sofa and chairs, a gilded French settee set, and dining chairs have been shifted across the antique carpets to open up a small stage area in front of the upright piano. Over the piano hangs a large painting of Sedef's mother, while several items are gathered on top of it: on one side sits a photograph of Meriç in front of a lit candle; on the other, a copy of the book *Meriç Soylu: An Art Filled Life* leans against a vase of fresh flowers.

Figure 34: audience for Meriç Soylu House Concert. Photo by concert attendee.

Figure 35: Meriç Soylu House Concert. Photo by author.

As the concert is about to begin, Murat Bey stands up to welcome everyone, thank his father-in-law for hosting the concert in his home, and remind us of the concerts' *raison d'etre*: remembering Meriç. He then hands attention over to the four young cellists, whose leader likewise makes several dedications: the first piece, she says, is dedicated to the victims of an earthquake that had occurred in Elazığ a few days prior, while the piece "Oblivion" from Astor Piazzolla, she says, is dedicated to the memory of Meriç. Finally, she mentions that she has arranged several of the pieces on the evening's program for cello quartet, including Albinoni's famous *Adagio*. They then begin the program, which the assembled audience follows attentively. After the opening *taksim*-like section of their arrangement of the *türkü* "Sabahın seherinde" (In

the Early Morning Dawn) I hear an attendee behind me whisper "*very* beautiful" (çok *güzel*). When the lead cellist's arrangement of the Albinoni finishes, someone sitting to my left pronounces "we truly heard the polyphony" (*çoksesliliği duyduk resmen*).

After the concert there is a rush to the stage area for congratulations and photographs with the musicians. Murat Bey calls up all of the musicians in the audience for a photo, saying "it's not easy to be a musician" (*müzisyen olmak kolay bir şey değil*). I, too, go up to congratulate the performers, meting out special praise to the lead cellist for her arrangement of the Albinoni. Together with the other guests, I then make my way back across the hallway to the Soylus' apartment where the household staff have been busy laying out a sumptuous buffet of dolma, barbunya, pilav, tandır lamb, and various salads on the expansive dining table, to be consumed with silver cutlery off Wedgwood porcelain dishes and accompanied by more wine. As the assembled crowd begins to fill their plates and take seats around the large salon, I gluttonously do the same and re-commence mingling. I first speak briefly with Cem Mansur about his plans for upcoming concerts at Cemal Reşit Rey and in cultural centers spread across the far reaches of the city. I then fall into conversation with the belletrist translator of Joyce. "So, you are in literature?" I ask, trying to make polite conversation (yani, siz edebiyatçısınız?). Yes, he replies modestly, but several guests sitting across from us intervene, saying that he has recently made an (international) splash with his translations into Turkish of James Joyce—most recently, *Finnegan's Wake.* To my shame, I must admit that I have only ever read *Dubliners.* Upon learning what I am doing, he asks me very politely how classical music in Turkey looks from the outside. Unsure how best to navigate a reply, I stutter out that one thing I have been impressed by is how the scene seems actually to have grown in recent years—that the concerts I am attending are nearly always full, and with many younger as well as older people. He replies that

it is like this in literature, too—that young people are really reading, and this gives him hope for the future.

Politely taking my leave of him, I make my way from the sofa where I am perched back over to the dining table to take portions of the dessert spread of several cakes, cheesecake, baklava, and semolina cookies onto a small plate. Returning from the table, I am introduced to a woman who I am told is an architectural historian with German father and Turkish mother. She is also a classical music follower, and we fall into a conversation about venues. She mentions the musicologist Emre Aracı—something of a *bon vivant* darling in these circles, it seems—and his work on nineteenth-century Istanbul opera venues, noting that it is impressive that there were opera performances at that time. Turning to the contemporary scene, she notes that the massive Zorlu Performing Arts Center is a disappointment: the acoustics are bad. At first, you couldn't hear the orchestra in the balcony, so they added microphones, she says. Then you could hear too much, she says—musicians coughing, for example. She strongly recommends that I attend the Istanbul State Symphony concerts at the nearby Caddebostan Cultural Center (*Caddebostan Kültür Merkezi—CKM*). The former Atatürk Cultural Center audience now attends there—they are old and well-informed, she says. At Süreyya, she says, the tickets are cheaper and the people who attend younger, so they don't know classical music as well and do things like applaud between movements, whereas with the CKM crowd there is nothing of the sort.

Around nine in the evening, I note that other guests start to take their leave. Not wanting to overstay my invitation, I signal that I will do the same and Murat Bey goes to fetch my coat from the front closet. Donning my most flowery politesse, I make one final trip around the room with handshakes and a smiling "very nice to meet you!" (çok memnun oldum!), making especially sure to take proper leave of Sedef Hanım's father. I thank the Soylus profusely and

board the elevator. During the *dolmuş* ride back to Moda along the (at this hour, mercifully, traffic-free) Baghdad Avenue, I reflect that, indeed, as Sedef Hanım had predicted, it really had been an extraordinary evening.

Extraordinary Evenings

Over the next months, I had several more opportunities to join these "extraordinary evenings" before the pandemic put them (temporarily) on hold, and I was able to observe several patterns. Not least, the buffet spreads only grew more enticing as Sedef Hanım and the household staff prepared novel additions each week in a cosmopolitan, Istanbuler culinary mode that I began to emulate in my own cooking: potatoes au gratin, çiğ köfte, elegant *pilav*-s with currants, pine nuts, and spices. Likewise, while there was a strong core group of attendees—most of them longtime attendees at Aydın Bey's lessons—at each evening, there were also new, distinguished guests to whom I was introduced. One Ahmet Bey, for example, completed a doctorate in Indiana and then taught literature at Istanbul University. After his retirement, it seemed, the Princes' Island home that the gourmand Ahmet Bey shared with his sculptor partner, Gökhan Bey, had become a center of sophisticated gatherings—he didn't neglect to mention a dinner at which Orhan Pamuk had also been in attendance. To take another example: Aydın Bey took care to introduce me to Peri Hanım who, following a degree from Cambridge and a career in finance, had taken a master's in musicology from Istanbul Technical University and was now teaching music history at Boğaziçi University—at the time that we spoke, a course on Orientalism in Music.

These subsequent concerts also gave me the opportunity to get to know the twin salons better. The Soylus' salon, for example, held various collections—of miniature Limoges boxes

and porcelain birds, for example. In a corner between the Imari-topped mantelpiece and the marquetry chaise lounge, a small desk was set up with a collection of photos of Meriç. Perhaps most interesting among them was a silver-framed collection of small photos. Sedef explained to me that Meriç had put together this collection of photos of Meriç, Sedef, Sedef's mother, and Sedef's grandmother.

For each concert, along with the other twenty-five guests or so, I made the migration over to Sedef's father's salon and back. Once everyone was comfortably seated there, Murat Bey always made introductory remarks, thanking his father-in-law, and foregrounding the point that: "we are remembering our Meriç" (Meriç'imizi anıyoruz). For each concert, a small, slightly varied display was set up in her memory: For the March 8, 2020, concert, for example, two copies of the book, *Meriç Soylu: An Art Filled Life,* were displayed on a music stand placed near the salon entrance. Next to these, on a small, *ormolu* table, a photo of Meriç and two lit candles had been gathered. The performers, likewise, recalled Meriç without fail: the young pianist in from his German conservatory for the March 8 house concert said before playing a Chopin piece: "I want to dedicate [this] to Meriç Soylu," it being known that Meriç was partial to Chopin (Meriç Soylu'ya ithaf etmek istiyorum).

As with the taksim-like passage that elicited a positive response at the January 26 concert, each performance likewise made a gesture toward the relationship between Turkey and "the West." At the March 8 concert, for example, the performer included one of his own compositions on the program in which he included "Turkish" *aksak* additive meters. He prefaced the performance by elucidating his goal of creating a "synthesis" (sentez yaratmak) out of the aksak rhythms of Turkey and other "Eastern countries" and Western forms. This composition received a particularly strong response from the audience, eliciting a number of bravos. Coming at the end

of the program, it was followed by the question of an encore, prompting Asuman Hanım, who had filmed the performance of the "synthesis" composition on her phone, to call out enthusiastically "we can listen [to that] again!" ([bunu] bir daha dinleyebiliriz!). Amidst the general chorus of admiration and thanks that usually emerged from the audience after each performance, short statements from Murat Bey and others after the encore also became a site at which the relationship between "East and West" could be reflected upon. At the March 8 concert, after the pianist's (alas, Rachmaninov) encore Murat Bey stood up and proclaimed, "the youth are truly the enlightened face of Turkey" (gençler gerçekten Türkiye'nin aydın yüzü). The pianist's father added "I wish that those in Turkey with greater resources would make bigger things happen, but alas …" (Keşke Türkiye'de daha büyük imkanları olanlar daha büyük şeyler yapabilseler ama …"

After we had crossed back over to the Soylus' salon, conversations over the ensuing feast likewise took on a somewhat consistent form. Mirroring to some extent his earlier comments on Istanbul, after the February eighth house concert Ali Gümüş couched his reflections in a narrative of decline when I asked him about his time in Vienna. He recalled that he used to hang out at Vienna's Café Central and that there was no one he didn't see when it came to classical music (görmediğim yok). Compared to his time, though, he said that Europe had gotten much worse since the fall of the wall. Referencing right-wing Central European leaders like Viktor Orban and Sebastian Kurz, Ali Bey drew a parallel, saying that "we" [in Turkey] have "fundamentalism" (fundamentalizm) and "they" [in Europe] have "racism" (ırkçılık). Recalling that he still has many friends from Vienna, he noted that he even has one who is a "right-winger" (sağcı). This friend occasionally makes derogatory comments about "foreigners" (usually code for Turks), Ali Bey explained, but qualifies—following the best practices of *Wiener Charme*—

that Ali Bey is not one of them. Following a similar narrative of decline, over dinner after the March 8 concert, I joined a conversation with Fahriye Hanım: alluding to religious debates about the permissibility of music, she was saying that "he" [who must not be named—the Turkish president] was soon going to silence all music in Turkey. An inveterate follower of the Istanbul State Symphony, she noted that at the recent "International Women's Day" concert at Cemal Reşit Rey, there were only around fifty musicians in the orchestra, whereas there used to be around ninety. "They" don't open up seats in the orchestras ("kadro açmıyorlar"), she said, whereas art brings people together and we need *more* of it, not less.

At the end of each evening, I was always a bit surprised to find that guests spontaneously started to leave at about nine pm—just about three hours after the three-part evening had started. Each time, I took polite leave of all with whom I had spoken and thanked the Soylus profusely. Afterward, always feeling subtly transformed, I walked the few blocks from their street to the broad, pleasant Baghdad Avenue. Sometimes I strolled a bit, looking at shops, and other times headed straight back to Moda with a dolmuş—fieldnotes could wait until the next morning.

Ritualization

The Soylus' extraordinary house concerts were a site at which distinction from the ordinary was regularly cultivated in the name of remembering their daughter, Meriç. In this way, the evenings can productively be understood as sites of ritualization. Studies of ritual and sound situated in the geographies in and around Istanbul have tended to focus on Islamic and other religious practices of listening—in particular, practices of "sacred audition" that can be broadly grouped under the heading of sama'a (During 1997; Markoff 2011; Gill 2018). Recent studies of music and ritual more broadly, on the other hand, have tended to focus on voice and singing

(Harkness 2013; Engelhardt 2014; Phelan 2017). Several older studies read performances of Western art music through a ritual lens: Christopher Small published a relatively prominent early study of music and ritual with specific reference to classical symphonic concerts (Small 1986). However, Small's analysis takes "ritual" as category rather than process, and his deconstructivist goals are to some extent at odds with my own interpretive and decolonial goals here. Philip Bohlman's essay, "Of Yekkes and Chamber Music in Israel: Ethnomusicological Meaning in Western Art Music," is an important study both for its use of ritual to study Western art music performance in a non-Western context and for the remarkable similarities between the ritual structure of Ashkenazi Jewish house chamber music concerts in Jerusalem and those that I discuss here.

Travis Jackson makes a particularly important contribution to studies of ritual and music by proposing *ritualization* as articulated by Catherine Bell as a framework for analyzing performance. Jackson contends that thinking in terms of ritualization addresses the problem of trying to impose a static ritual frame onto different contexts, enabling instead a focus on "what sets performances apart from other activities, musical or otherwise, and the means through which participants in performance events both become habituated to them—as performers and listeners—and see them as related to and capable of modifying schemas operating outside a given event or set of events" (Jackson 2012: 143).[80] Broadly speaking, Bell understands ritualization in terms of processes that establish "privileged differentiation" from the everyday through which a "ritualized body" and ultimately "consensus on values, symbols, and behavior" within a group are produced (110). Bell suggests that practices of ritualization that establish sites

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[80] See also Uğur 2019 for an adoption of this framework with reference to religion and secularity in Turkey.

of privileged differentiation from the profane are marked by a series of hierarchical oppositions that signify each other in a circular semantic loop. Just as ritualization establishes a "privileged opposition" between its practices and others as an apparently natural response to tensions experienced "outside" in the world, it also establishes a series of internal oppositions that re-code these external tensions. In Bell's account, ritual's meaning is never "achieved," but rather, in Derridean fashion, continuously deferred through semantic sliding among different levels of opposition. Continually sliding semantically into one another in an endless Derridean deferral, ritualized settings thus "translate immediate concerns into the dominant terms of the ritual" in such a way that an apparently coherent whole emerges that shapes and is shaped by its participants' ritualized bodies (106). I examine processes of ritualization through which a privileged distinction is established between a sacralized secular contra-public and a profane Islamic populist exterior.

By focusing on practices of *listening* through which *secular* bodies are formed in Istanbul, I build upon these studies in several ways. Where many studies of music, ritual, and ritualization address listening, they do not take listening as a primary analytical focus as I do here. Those that do, interestingly, address sacred Islamic audition. Moreover, where Bell and Jackson emphasize that "ritualized bodies," in a Bourdieuian sense, are invested with a "sense" of ritual that is not self-conscious, I draw upon Saba Mahmood's critique of Bourdieuian habitus. Against a Bourdieuian conception of habitus as an embodied marker of class and structural position, Mahmood contrasts an Aristotelian conception of habitus as capacities and dispositions of the body through which subjectivity is formed. Though I acknowledge that the dispositions of ritualized bodies produced at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts are markers of class and structural position, I also wish to emphasize the ways in which they were shaped through conscious,

deliberate practices—particularly of listening. In part two, I examine more deeply the ways in which these practices of veneration were oriented mimetically toward Meriç as a secular listening saint. In this section, I argue, contra Bell, that it is not simply a privileged opposition between sacralized interior and profane exterior that is established at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts through processes of ritualization. Rather, having established this opposition, processes of ritualization bring back into ritual focus precisely this opposition to foreground a tension between interior and exterior, private and public. This tension, I argue, becomes most evident at the ritual core of listening and contours the ritualized bodies produced thereby, and is thus constitutive of a secular contra-public.

The primary tension to which processes of ritualization at the Soylus' house concerts responded was the tragic loss of their daughter and the need to maintain the memory of her as an exemplary person. As with their other projects like the "Parlayan Yıldızlar" (Shining Stars) youth music performance competition, the Soylus intend that Meriç and her exemplary character shall not be forgotten. In addition, I suggest that this tension between immanence and transcendence is paralleled by and to some extent overlaps semantically with other perceived outside tensions that become legible at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts and in my fieldwork more broadly. For example, Cem Bey's comments comparing the Turkish and European right wing and Fahriye Hanım's comment about the Turkish president's will to silence all music gave voice to a tension between secularism and religious fundamentalism couched in a nostalgic narrative of decline. A tension between elite and popular along the lines discussed in the previous chapter is legible from the architectural historian's comments on the superiority of CKM audiences. Finally, performances and comments upon them indicate a tension between

constructions of East and West that maps onto Meltem Ahıska's analysis of the complex orientations of desire that shape Turkish Occidentalism.

If these tensions can be understood in some sense to be perceived by and to animate the actions of those who organize and participate in the house concerts, the concerts themselves can be analyzed in terms of practices of ritualization through which they come to emerge as separate and distinct from an outside world defined by those tensions. An initial such practice can be analyzed in the Soylus' coordination and maintenance of their striking Erenköy home as something of a shrine complex. The space and its décor shape patterns of movement and perception distinct from those on the "outside." The food and drink and the set pattern according to which they are consumed, likewise, constitute another set of practices through which an interior ritual chronotope came to be defined: though I can attest that the Soylus' lunch, dinner, and tea tables were always refined, the hors-de oeuvres and dishes prepared for consumption before and after the concerts were distinctive. Of course, perhaps the most obvious way that ritual time and space were defined was through the "house concert" frame itself and the practices of performing and listening that it entailed. In this way, the space was not only marked as distinct from public concerts and the outside world more generally, but also from the everyday use of the Soylus' spaces for living rather than concertizing, and from other homes in which no such concerts are held. Through the selection of performers and guests defined by various marks of distinction, too, a social formation understood to be distinct from the larger population outside emerged and was further defined. Indeed, in an interview, Sedef shared with me a sense of disillusionment with the outside world:

> I don't go out in public very much. When I do, the conversations seem very superficial. It's a waste of my time, I wish that I had stayed at home and done something else, read a book. Housework is even much more restful to me than those superficial conversations outside. This morning, for example, I got up early and took my book. It was cool outside.

> Right now, I am reading Shakespeare—it's very interesting (interview, September 3, 2020).[81]

With their habitus shaped by distinctive background as belletrists, scholars, and artists, guests at the house concerts could be expected to embrace the sense of differentiation from the everyday through dress, conversation, and politesse. Together, these practices can be understood in terms of ritualization insofar as they tended to establish a privileged opposition between inside and outside that structured practices in time and space.

These practices shaped ritualized bodies that would, in turn, shape an environment of formalized interaction in which it is perched not lounged, nibbled not gobbled, spoken measuredly not brusquely, and, not least, listened attentively not fleshily. These practices themselves, moreover, can be analyzed in terms of a series of internal oppositions. This opposition established between the interior space of the concerts and the outside world, for example, can itself be broken down into a hierarchical opposition between the Soylus' salon and Sedef's father's salon, between which a clearly marked passage was necessary. This opposition was heightened by the presence of what might be termed "instruments of ritualization." Most obvious among these is the piano, but also photographs of Meriç with lit candles and displayed copies of the book *Meriç Soylu: An Art Filled Life.* These objects, placed in the vicinity of the piano, can be understood to be a kind of high altar at the core of the ritual.

Both of these spaces, moreover, are marked by concomitant bodily practices of transition between exterior and interior that map an opposition between oral and aural internalization: in the Soylus' salon, the oral taking in of food and drink; in Sedef father's salon, the aural taking in

[81] Toplum içine fazla girmiyorum. Girdiğim zaman da sohbetler bana çok geyik geliyor, vaktime yazık, keşke evde olsam farklı bir şey yapardım, kitap okurdum. Ev işleri ile uğraşmak bile oradaki geyik sohbetlerden çok daha beni rahatlatıyor. Bu sabah mesela erkenden kalktım, kitabımı aldım. Dışarısı da serindi. Shakespeare okuyorum şimdi, çok enteresan.

of sound. Both practices of consumption distinguish the interior of the ritualized community from the exterior world: eating, drinking, and listening had to be carefully controlled to avoid missteps such as gluttony, drunkenness, or errant applause. A joke about a guest who "vacuumed" off the rest of the buffet, or a muttered comment about another guest's large gut, pointed subtly to the stakes here. Moreover, between practices of oral and aural intake, too, a hierarchy can be observed: though appropriate responses to the gustatory offerings were welcome, they were crucial to the practice of listening. Avoiding inappropriate applause was insufficient: performances were met with active indication of musical comprehension signified by effusive and informed praise and commentary, indicating an active, judgment-forming subjective interiority itself cultivated by processes of ritualization. I too felt pressure to make sure and formulate some insightful comments on the musical qualities of the performance so as to be able to engage intelligently in conversation afterward.

The privileging of listening over eating and drinking slides, in turn, into an opposition distinguishing the distinguished attendees from each other into listeners and performers. This was established in several ways: in addition to the obvious sense in which one group played an instrument while others listened, the performers were invariably of student age in keeping with the Soylus' stated goal of supporting young musicians, whereas the majority (though not all) of attendees were considerably older. Moreover, the musicians changed with each house concert, whereas the contingent of listeners, being mostly longtime friends of the Soylus, tended to remain relatively stable.

In sum, in the oppositions discussed above, relatively clear hierarchies emerge between spaces, between listening and eating, and between performing and listening. The splendid yet tasteful interior space of the Soylus' penthouse apartment was privileged over what was widely

characterized as the chaos and ugliness of neoliberal Istanbul. Sedef father's salon was a privileged interior within an interior as site of performance, the *raison d'etre* of the house concert evenings, and as location of privileged ritual objects.

However, even as hierarchical oppositions between interior and exterior were established through processes of ritualization, this hierarchy was upset at key points. For example, the passage between the two ritual salons was itself mediated by an opposition to the demolished Atatürk Cultural Center invoked metonymically by the photo wall. Sedef Hanım shared with me in an interview that she had been inspired by the wall of photos of State Artists that had been displayed on the wall next to the main staircase in the Atatürk Cultural Center. An obvious opposition between the large public concert hall of the past and the private home is suggested. However, by metonymically signifying the public Atatürk Cultural Center at the moment of passage into ritual interior, the photo wall renders that interior once more public and exterior. In so doing, the wall places a tension between interior and exterior, private and public, at the ritual core of the Meriç Soylu House Concerts.

This tension between interior and exterior occurs at several other points. For example, while interiority is generally privileged at the Meriç Soylu House concerts and through processes of ritualization writ large, it is manifestly the case that performers were foregrounded at the house concerts. There thus emerges within the practices of ritualization at the house concerts a tension between performance and listening that, I suggest, is nothing other than a translation of the central ritual distinction between interior and exterior. Perhaps most notably, though, practices of listening at the house concerts can be analyzed in terms of a dynamic tension between interior and exterior, private and public, an active interiorized practice of listening and appropriate exterior response structured by this interiority. The performances were sites at which

disciplined listening dependent upon a carefully cultivated interiority were required. At the same time, it was crucial that this interiority be exteriorized and made public through appropriate response to and comment upon the performance. Insofar as these dynamics of bodily interiority and exteriority, private and public are brought to the fore and held in tension by processes of ritualization at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts, I suggest that the house concerts are a site at which a secular contra-public is produced.

Ritualization Reversed; or, Secular Sainthood

This tension between interior and exterior, private and public is, I suggest, embodied by Meriç Soylu, the object of veneration at the Soylus' house concerts who was simultaneously constructed as a saint through processes of ritualization. In a recent essay on secular sainthood in Turkey, Daniella Kuzmanovic writes that:

> Sainthood is a set of relations, a condensation consisting in an interlocking between historical formations establishing the autonomous, agentic individual as the desirable kind of subjectivity in modernity, social contexts, communities, and personal features. Through this interlocking a person is produced as extraordinary and collectives of followers … emerge (Kuzmanovic 2013: 188).

I suggest that the "interlocking" that Kuzmanovic describes is achieved in the case of Meriç through the dynamics of ritualization that I outline above. Gathering regularly to remember Meriç by listening, this community comes to be made up of ritualized bodies for whom Meriç is venerated and constructed as an ideal listener and extraordinary person—indeed, a secular saint.

To illustrate this claim, I turn toward a two-part event commemorating Meriç's birthday—a date of high importance on the ritual calendar. The commemoration's two parts on Monday, November 2 and Tuesday, November 3, 2020, embraced both digital and in-person modes of interaction, including a virtual meeting of Aydın Büke's classical music seminar and

an in-person concert and reception in the Soylus' penthouse compound. Though the digital mediation of the seminar was novel, the Soylus had begun organizing a concert commemorating Meriç's birthday several years prior as part of the house concert series. Despite the pandemic that had otherwise forced the Soylus to pause their regular house concerts, Sedef was adamant that this concert should continue in person, albeit with requisite measures of reduced attendance, face masks, and less extended pre- and post-concert socializing than would otherwise have occurred.

Though the location is virtual rather than in Mutlu Hanım's Erenköy art gallery, the first part of the commemoration takes place during the regular Monday afternoon time slot of Aydın Büke's classical music seminar. For today's session, though, the group includes some special guests in addition to the usual contingent of seminar participants, and even more than usual the first few minutes of the zoom session are taken up with warm greetings. First, the participants are very excited that Mutlu Hanım of the eponymous Mutlu Art Gallery has joined with technological aid from a younger relative: "I can join like this, otherwise I can't do anything" (ben böylesini yaparım, başka bir şey yapamam) she says. "Now we are complete" (şimdi tam olduk), one of the regular participants says. Other special guests include close family friend Ali Gümüş and Sedef's brother Ahmetnur, an engineer and amateur historian.

After around five minutes of greeting, Aydın Bey moves to officially start the program, greeting Meriç's family members by name and shutting off our zoom microphones before announcing "we are celebrating the birthday of dear Meriç" (sevgili Meriç'in doğum gününü kutluyoruz). He lays out the day's program: we will listen to some examples of artists whom Meriç had programmed during her prominent tenure as director of the concert hall attached to Turkey's large İş Bank; these will be accompanied by a PowerPoint with photos of Meriç that he has prepared. We will also reference the book that Murat Bey prepared in memory of Meriç,

Meriç Soylu: an Art-filled Life, Aydın Bey says, holding it up to the screen and noting that most participants also have a copy. Acknowledging that "most of you have known her for some time" (pek çoğunuz Merici çok eskiden beri tanıyorsunuz), Aydın Bey then concludes this opening gambit with some background. He mentions their friendship emerging out of Meriç's lengthy tenure as his only flute student, Meriç's educational achievements at Moda Koleji and Boğaziçi University in Turkey and at Boston University, and her career at Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts and the İşSanat Concert Hall. Of the latter, he notes that during her tenure "she turned İşSanat into the most prestigious ... venue" and "the best concert hall" in Istanbul (İşSanatı en prestijli, en çok ... mekan haline getirdi ... en iyi konser salonu haline getirmişti).

Aydın Bey then turns to the commemorative book and its opening item: a photocopy of a seven-page hand-written letter that Meriç had written to her parents from Boston at the end of October 1996, just before her birthday. Following Aydın Bey's cue, I take my own copy of *Meriç Soylu* in hand and open to the letter. The main thread through the letter is made up of Meriç's reflections on two performances that she had attended: a concert by the Vienna Philharmonic and an open rehearsal by the Boston Symphony. For his presentation, Aydın Bey contextualizes the letter by emphasizing Meriç's diligence as a listener:

> We all know it but still, let me say it again as a reminder: Meriç was someone who followed all of the concerts in Istanbul, in addition to films, books and theaters as well, from her childhood, and was really very interested. By following concerts, following truly all of the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra's concerts without exception—really and truly *all* of the concerts—all of the weekend concerts, all of the festival concerts—she began this as a *listener.*[82]

[82] Hepimiz biliyoruz ama yine, hatırlatmak için bir daha söyleyim: Meriç, hakikaten çocukluğundan beri İstanbul'daki bütün konserlere hemen hemen izleyen, filimlere, kitaplara izleyen ve sinemaya filme, de, özellikle çok meraklı biriydi. Ama konser izlemekte de hakikaten İstanbul Devlet Senfoni Orkestrası'nın bütün konserlerini istisnasız—hakikaten bütün konserlerini—bütün hafta sonu konserlerini, festivallerdeki bütün konserler önce dinleyici olarak başlamıştı.

Aydın Bey then goes on to quote from her reflections on the concert in the letter, which Meriç had written during the intermission:

> 'The concert is splendid, magnificent. The program is delicious: Mozart *Serenata Notturna,* Beethoven Third Piano Concerto, and Beethoven Seventh Symphony. The first half was fantastic, most likely the second half will be as well. They played the Mozart very well; the Piano Concerto was unbelievable.' Here [Aydın speaks in his own voice] she gives the information: Vienna Symphony [sic], pianist is Rudolph Buchbinder. 'Everyone gave a standing ovation; they keep saying to each other "What a wonderful performance we have seen." Mother, you listen, too, to the same program at home. Just like you don't eat bread and rice, or beef and chicken don't go together, sometimes the pieces on a program don't have anything to do with each other. I recommend this [program] like a splendid, three course feast.' Here, of course, [says Aydın in his own voice], there's probably no need to say where Meriç got this sophisticated palate and the feast thing. These feasts ... from a child who grew up with Sedef's flawless meals, it probably couldn't have been expected that a child would be any other way or have any other kind of palate.[83]

We then proceed to listen to this feast ourselves. Aydın Bey announces "now, let's also have a bit of a taste of the program ... that Meriç listened to that day ... that splendid three-course feast,"[84] before playing a recording of the first movement of the Mozart *Serenata Notturna* from the Berlin Philharmonic that he had selected. Our zoom microphones turned off; we listen together in silence to about two minutes of the Serenade before Aydın Bey breaks in.

We then turn to the second piece from Meriç's program: Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto. Aydın Bey has taken care to select a recording from the same pianist and orchestra

[83] 'Konser muhteşem muhteşem. Program nefis: Mozart Serenata Notturna, Beethoven Üçüncü Piyano Konçertosu, ve Beethoven Yedinci Senfoni. İlk yarı harikaydı, herhalde ikinci yarı da öyle olacak. Mozart'ı çok iyi çaldılar, Piyano Konçertosu inanılmazdı.' Burada işte bilgi vermiş: Viyana Senfoni Orkestrası, piyanist Rudolph Buchbinder. 'Herkes ayakta alkışladı, birbirlerine "What a performance we have seen" deyip duruyorlar. Anneciğim aynı sırayla sende evde dinle. Nasıl ki pilav ve ekmek yemezsin, etle tavuk aynı anda olmaz, bazen programlardaki eserler birbirleriyle kel alaka oluyor. Bu üç course muhteşem bir ziyafet gibi tavsiye ederim.' Burada tabii bu ağız tadını ve ziyafet şeyini de kimden aldığını herhalde söylemeye gerek yok Meriç'in. Bu ziyafetlerin Sedef'in kusursuz sofralarıyla büyüyen bir kızın, bir çocuğun başka türlü olması, başka türlü bir ağız tadı olması beklenemezdi.

[84] Şimdi, bu ... programdan, Meriç'in o gün dinlediği programdan ... yani, bu üç courseluk muhteşem ziyafetten biraz biz de tadalım.

that Meriç had heard at the 1996 Boston concert—Rudolph Buchbinder and the Vienna Philharmonic. Once more, we listen in silence on zoom, most participants adopting contemplative attitudes in front of book-filled shelves and oil paintings (participating from my bare bones basement Airbnb apartment in Moda, I had often felt mildly self-conscious about the lack of any comparable background that I might share with my fellow seminar participants). This time, we listen to the concerto's third movement for about three-and-a-half minutes before Aydın Bey cuts it off with a note of anxiety about audibility, asking "Is there a problem with the sound? I think not, right? You hear the sound, right?"[85]

Aydın Bey then prefaces the concert's second half by turning again to Meriç's reflections in her letter, emphasizing once more her career as a listener:

> Now ... in the concert's ... second half, they played Beethoven's A Major Symphony. Again, Meriç began writing this long letter during the concert intermission, and then when she left the concert to go home, she wrote again while waiting at the tram stop, 'the concert was lovely, it was an early birthday present to me,' and she says that the next day she will go to the Boston Symphony's open rehearsal ... There, she says that she will listen to Simon Rattle and Christian Zimmerman. Later, after listening to that [concert] I found it once more very interesting: she says, 'I saw a conductor rehearsing an orchestra for the first time.' Of course, later while working at İKSV (Istanbul Arts and Culture Foundation) and İşSanat she was witness to many orchestra rehearsals ....[86]

[85] Sesle bir sorun var mı? Yok galiba değil mi? Geliyor ses, değil mi?
[86] Şimdi, ikinci, konserin sonunda, ikinci yarıda, Beethoven'in La majör senfonisi seslendirmiş. Ayrıca, bu mektubu Meriç uzun uzun dediğim gibi şeyde başlamış, konserin arasında yazmaya başlamış, daha sonra konserde eve çıkınca, giderken, tramvay beklerken, yine durakta 'çok güzeldi, bana erken bir doğum günü hediyesi oldu' diye yazmış ve daha sonra ertesi günü işte Boston Senfoninin bir açık provasına, halka açık provasına, gideceğini söylemiş. Ki orada da Simon Rattle ve Christian Zimmerman'ı dinleyeceğini söylemiş. Sonra, onu da dinledikten sonra yine bana çok ilginç geldi, 'ilk defa bir orkestra şefi çalıştırırken gördüm' diye söylemiş, ki tabii daha sonra kendisi İKSV'de ve İşSanat'ta çalışırken tabii çok defa orkestraların çalışmasına tanık olmuştur ama o zaman yirmi üç yaşındayken Boston'da ilk gördüğü bu halka açık çalışma bana çok ilginç gelmiş.

Aydın Bey then plays around three minutes from the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to round out Meriç's symphonic feast, taking care once more to select a recording from the Vienna Philharmonic. On the PowerPoint he has shared images familiar from the book *Meriç Soylu: an Art-filled Life,* whose originals had been shared with him by Murat Bey. About thirty seconds into the Beethoven, Aydın Bey speaks over the recording to remind us that "the images here are from Meric's graduation ceremonies: high school, Boğaziçi [University], and the ceremony in Boston."[87]

This first part of Aydın Bey's presentation, I suggest, was a pilgrimage to her saintly body. The presentation opened possibilities for mimesis by tracing Meriç's own personal development as a person of exemplary character and, above all, an exemplary listener. By citing her diligent listening habits in Istanbul, focusing on a formative early listening experience, reading her listening impressions from the letter, and noting her early experience of listening to an orchestra rehearse, Aydın Bey's presentation enabled us to approach Meriç's self-fashioning as an ideal listener. Moreover, her bodily presence was made manifest indexically through her handwriting photocopied in the book.

This pilgrimage effect was distinctively mediated by Zoom. In a recent essay, "Digital Devotion: Musical Multimedia in Online Ritual and Religious Practice," Monique Ingalls explores the novel intermedial ritual possibilities that digital multimedia technologies introduce, suggesting that "in the online worship space images, sacred texts, and music are coming together to form a new and potent experiential whole" (Ingalls 2019: 164). In the manner of a pilgrimage, we, the participants, were invited to listen along to and with Meriç's development through the

[87] Buradaki görseller de Meriç'in mezuniyetleri: lise, Boğaziçi, ve Boston'daki mezuniyet törenleri.

same pieces, from the same programs, and the same performers, that she herself had heard and later programmed. Aydın Bey's zoom presentation, moreover, juxtaposed this aural account of her intellectual and characterological development with images of her handwriting and from the ritual domains of graduations from prestigious high school, college, and graduate school. At this ritual, then, perhaps more powerfully than ever before, Meriç was established as a person of superior individual character and, above all, as an ideal listener. Silenced as we were over zoom, we were left with little alternative but to participate mimetically in Meriç's ritualized body. In this way, the zoom presentation's first part reversed the dynamics of ritualization discussed above. Qualities of disciplined and informed listening, gustatory sophistication, and social distinction earlier identified as dynamics of ritualization are reversed and emerge as individual characterological qualities of Meriç, herself, to which the zoom presentation as pilgrimage invited us to approach.

An Exemplary Listener

In the next part of Aydın Bey's presentation, we turn from Meriç's early reflections on the Boston concert to recordings from various artists whom she had brought to Istanbul during her tenure as director of İşSanat. Aydın Bey prefaces this section by reflecting that:

> Let's listen to examples of soloists whom Meriç, in her position as art director at İşSanat introduced to us and had us listen to, or whom perhaps we knew but couldn't listen to in Istanbul. After all, truly very famous names came quite frequently to the İşSanat concerts at different points throughout the concert seasons that Meriç put together, both because they were close friends with Meriç and because they liked the Istanbul concert goers, because there was a demand here. In her period there was really an increasing number of concert goers, they always played to full salons, those kinds of concerts happened.[88]

[88] Meriç'in bize İşSanat sanat yönetmeni olarak tanıttığı dinlettiği yahut da bildiğimiz ama çok İstanbul'da dinlemediğimiz solistlerden örnekler dinleyelim ki ... zaten hakikaten bu İşSanat'taki konserlerde çok ünlü isimler bu konser sezonları boyunca Meriç'in yaptığı ... hakikaten değişik defalar sıklıkla geldiler, hem Meriç'le yakın dost oldukları için hem İstanbul konser izleyicisini

For most of the rest of the program, Aydın Bey plays several recordings from classical performers whom Meriç had successfully brought to İşSanat during her tenure as director. Though not all are known to me, Aydın Bey lists the names—Renauld and Gautier Capucon, Alina İbragimova, Andreas Scholl, Emmanuel Pahud, Phillipe Jarousky—in a way that indicates they are to be regarded as the creme de la creme of contemporary classical music. And in each case, Aydın takes care to connect them specifically to Meriç. Of Ibragimova's recording of the minuet from Mozart's E Minor Violin Sonata, Aydın Bey notes that he believes it was the first concert that Meriç put together at İşSanat. To accompany the Andreas Scholl recording of the Purcell aria "One Charming Night," Aydın Bey shares an image—familiar from *Meriç Soylu*—of the autographed photo Scholl had given Meriç. He draws several connections with Meriç's own flute playing, including a recording of Meriç's "close friend" Emmanuel Pahud, principal flutist of the Berlin Philharmonic, accompanied by a signed photograph, and a work sung by Philippe Jaroussky, "Viens, une flûte invisible soupire" accompanied by a photograph of Meriç practicing flute. Noting before another recording what a coup for Istanbul it was that Meriç had brought the pianist Dani Trifonov to Istanbul just after he had won the Tchaikovsky competition, Aydın Bey noted that this was but one more indication of Meriç's *marifet*—her skill and ingenuity.

We then turn to one final performer—"one of the most famous names of our age,"[89] Aydın Bey notes—Yo Yo Ma. Aydın notes that Ma performed several times at İşSanat during Meriç's tenure and was likewise a close friend not only of her but also the Soylu family. In an interview, Murat Bey had explained to me how Yo Yo Ma had surpised Meriç by asking her

beğendikleri için, burada bir talep olduğu için, ve onun dönemde de gerçekten giderek artarak seyirci sayısı hep dolu salonlara çalınıyordu öyle konserler yapılıyordu.

[89] çağımızın en ünlü isimlerinden biri

about Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. When she explained to him that Atatürk was her grandfather's classmate, his interest grew, and he requested to have dinner with the Soylu family at the Four Seasons Hotel where he was staying in Istanbul. At the dinner, Murat Bey explained, Yo Yo Ma asked further questions about Mustafa Kemal. Murat Bey explained that he tried to answer that for him, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk is the reason for the existence of Turkey, and a true, forward-looking leader, revolutionary, and statesman, to whom he will be grateful until his death.

To frame the Yo Yo Ma recording that he will play, Aydın Bey turns once more to the text and a reflection written by one of Meriç's close friends, a trained musicologist who has risen through the ranks of Istanbul classical music management to the upper echelons of the Istanbul Arts and Culture Foundation:

> In the long contribution that she wrote, [Meriç's friend] indicates sort of a tableau that caught my attention as I was reading once more: ... 'Whenever I think of you, Tchaikovsky's music comes to my mind—you are just like Tchaikovsky's music' she says ... I found it interesting, her drawing parallels between Meriç's character and Tchaikovsky's music ... or with some of Tchaikovsky's pieces. Now ... in light of that, Yo Yo Ma and Katherine Stott are performing Tchaikovsky's opus 51 called 'Valse Sentimentale'—'*Duygulu Valsı*.' Here, the visual that will accompany us is a photograph taken of the soloists that we will listen to now, Yo Yo Ma and Katherine Stott, together with the Soylu family together at a meal. After his friendship with Meriç, Yo Yo Ma also wanted to meet her family and all together after a concert ... they had dinner together and from that dinner this lovely memory remains. This visual will accompany us ... as we listen to this piece.[90]

[90] [O]'nun burada yazdığı uzun yazıda şöyle bir saptama var: onu şimdi bu defa okurken dikkatimi çekti. 'Sen de'—Meriç'e hitaben yazdığı bir yazı o, kalem aldığı bir yazı—'Hep seni düşündüğüm zaman Çaykovski müziği aklıma geliyor, tıpkı Çaykovski'nin müziği gibisin sen de' demiş ... Meriç'len Çaykovski müziğinin, Çaykovski'nin müziğinde, veya bazı parçalarında Meriç'in karakteriylen paralellikler kurmuş olması da ilginç geldi bana. Şimdi ... onun için Yo Yo Ma ve Katherine Stott Çaykovski'nin opus 51 Numara aldı 'Valse Sentimentale'ni—'Duygulu Valsı'ni—seslendiriyorlar. Burada, bizi eşlik edecek görselde, Yo Yo Ma ve Katherine Stott'un, burada dinleyeceğimiz solistlerin, Soylu ailesiyle birlikte, yemekte çekilen bir fotoğrafları. Meriç'le olan dostluğunun ardından Yo Yo Ma ailesiyle de tanışmak istiyor ve hep birlikte bir konser sonrasında, zannederim, yemek birlikte yiyorlar ve o yemekten çok güzel bir anı kalmış. Bu parçayı dinlerken ... bu görsel bizi eşlik edecek.

By way of closing his presentation, Aydın Bey makes some explicit comments on the text, *Meriç Soylu: An Art Filled Life,* from which he gathered the materials for his presentation:

> As I said, I gathered all of these things, all of these photographs, this information, from the book that all of you have called *Meriç Soylu: a Life Filled with Art.* Let me show it again—in all likelihood most of you have it. As I was leafing through this book again—of course, when it first came out I had read it carefully like all of us; subsequently, from time to time I leafed through it, but now while preparing [this presentation] and looking through the writings in it once more, I saw really that it was compiled very beautifully, that it is exceedingly touching, and, to myself, I congratulated Murat Bey once more for preparing the whole layout and editing. Because both from the family members there are very lovely—I mean, of course, from the family members, their memories, their remarks on Meriç, their views of her are something else—but very good things have also been gathered from friends and from very different and unexpected sources ... to present a view of Meriç in a very well-coordinated way.[91]

This book, I suggest, belongs to the genre of hagiography. As a text bringing together various accounts and materials to present an idealizing account of a deceased individual, *Meriç Soylu* is readily understood as hagiographic in a metaphorical sense. However, insofar as I argue that Meriç is a saint, I suggest that it is a literal example of hagiography. On this point, Catherine Bell discusses textualization in connection to ritualization in terms of a "freezing" of ritual practice and a shuffling of ritual authority from a reliance on "traditional authority" to other kinds of ritual authority that become available to those who can access and interpret the text. In this case, the text *Meriç Soylu: An Art Filled Life* opens up a modicum of ritual authority to those outside

[91] Bu, dediğim gibi, bu şeylerin, fotoğrafların hepsini, bu bilgileri, şeyleri, hepimizde olan bir kitaptan aldım, derledim, bu Meriç Soylu: Sanat Dolu bir Yaşam diye. Tekrar bu ? bir daha göstereyim, hepinizde bir ihtimalle vardır pek çoğunuzda, bu kitap. Bu kitaba da tekrar karıştırırken, tabii ki ilk çıktığı zaman etraflıca detaylı okumuştum hepimiz gibi, daha sonra da zaman zaman karıştırdım, ama şimdi böyle bir şey hazırlarken tekrar yazılanları orada karıştırınca aslında çok da güzel derlendiğini, son derece yerinde değinmeler olduğunu gördüm, ve bu Murat Bey de, bir kere daha kendi kendime takdir ettim gerçekten bu bütün mizanpajını ve kurgusunu hazırladığı için, çünkü hem aile üyelerinden çok güzel, tabii ki, yani, aile üyelerinin hatıraları, Meriç'i görüşleri, Meriç'e görmeleri bakışları filan, çok farklı, ama arkadaşlarından da çok iyi şeyler toparlanmış ve çok değişik, farklı kesimlerden Meriç'e bir bakış bir arada derli toplu sunulmuş.

the immediate Soylu family with less traditional authority. Aydın Bey, having started as Meriç's flute teacher when she was a teenager, took care to remind the group that, outside the Soylu family, he had known Meriç longer than anyone else present. In this way, he established himself as someone authorized to engage with the ritual text.

In sum, I argue that Aydın Bey's presentation frames Meriç as a a ritualized body *par excellence*, a listening body of exemplary character who uplifted the people of Istanbul with her exemplary listening ability. I am informed here by Amanda Anderson's discussion of the dynamic interaction of depictions of individual character and sociological dynamics in the narrative framing of realist novels as part of her explication of "bleak liberalism." Noting that liberalism's presumed focus on individual character is often indicted by critics as evidence of its mystificatory embrace of the autonomous individual and its fundamentally obfuscatory relationship to ideology and (unequal) power structures, Anderson wishes to push back on what she sees as this thin critique by elucidating the literary ways in which secular liberalism has been defined by a much more complex dynamic between individual character and sociological constraint on the one hand and a concern for the lived texture of ideology on the other. I find a parallel between Anderson's discussion and Meriç's narrative framing here as a figure constantly invested in personal development yet oriented toward society. As Murat Bey told me in an interview, it was Meric's "constant reading, researching, knowing what was happening where" that enabled her to keep a sense of the pulse of Istanbul music lovers' wishes and make the most of her position at İşSanat (sürekli okuması, araştırması, nerede ne olur bilmesi). Interrogating to some extent her own sense of privilege, Meriç's mother, Sedef, noted that Meriç always had a sense of responsibility beyond the family's own circles:

> **Sedef:** Now, my circles are very different. Don't see me as a gauge. My friends and I, we are in the minority. Very few people like us remain. We are a different group. We are

> neither of Turkey, nor are we foreign. Unfortunately, it's gotten to be like that. Let me say this: you are speaking with a rare person to encounter in Turkey.
> **Erol**: Did you always feel that way?
> **Sedef**: Of course, I felt that way. Meriç would say, 'mom, I wish you hadn't raised me like this. You are always among your friends.' [Meriç] would get angry, saying 'If you would just walk along Istiklal Avenue or get on some bus, you would understand what a different life it is.'[92]

Through practices of diligent listening, Meriç is understood to have cultivated an extraordinary, saintly body defined by a distinctive interiority—an exemplary character. Prior to her untimely death, her primary saintly activity was to share this distinctive interior character through her "marifet"—her skill and ingenuity, making it public by bringing international Western art music performers to the city in her capacity as director of the İşBank concert hall. Together, these define her as a secular saint. The tension noted earlier in dynamics of ritualization between interior from exterior is here likewise encountered insofar as Meriç is seen and heard to share her aural distinction with the people of Istanbul. Her making public of her excellent taste is here dependent on her having cultivated a distinctive interiority through diligent listening.

Circling back to my earlier discussion of processes of ritualization at the house concerts, I map this dynamic that Anderson elucidates onto Catherine Bell's suggestion that the ultimate goal of ritualization is to cultivate ritual mastery. In her position at İşSanat, Meriç exhibited ritual mastery, "[deploying] schemes of ritualization in order to ... shift or nuance ... other, non-ritualized situations to render them more coherent with the values of the ritualizing schemes"

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[92] Sedef: Şimdi benim çevrem farklı bir çevre. Beni kıstas olarak görme. Ben arkadaşlarım, bizler azınlıktayız. Bizle gibi kaç kişi kaldı. Biz farklı bir kesimiz. Ne Türkiyeliyiz, ne yabancıyız. Öyle oldu maalesef. Şunu diyeyim, Türkiye'de ender rastlanacak kişilerden birisi ile konuşuyorsun.
Erol: Onu söylemiştin. Hep öyle mi hissettin kendini?
Sedef: Tabi ki öyle hissettim. Meriç de derdi, "Anne, keşke beni böyle yetiştirmeseydiniz." Hep arkadaşlarının arasındasın. Bir İstiklal caddesinde yürüsen, bilmem otobüse binsen ne kadar farklı bir yaşantı olduğunu anlarsın diye kızardı.

(Bell 1992 108; quoted in Jackon 2012: 140). The practices of eating, socializing, and especially listening at the Soylus' house concerts were practices through which Meriç could be venerated through cultivation of a privileged interiority. They were also, simultaneously, a site at which bodies could be cultivated mimetically to mold their interiorities to be more like Meriç. While ritualized bodies were produced at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts, they were primarily oriented toward the veneration of Meriç Soylu, who was constructed through the concerts and associated events as an ideal listener worthy of emulation by the gathered community. In other words, she was the molder of secular bodies in Istanbul that all of my interlocutors would ideally be. There is a dynamic interaction between dynamics of ritualization through which (saintly) interiority is fashioned through listening and saintly rendering public of interiority that in turn invites mimesis from group members. In this sense, I argue, she can be understood as a saint, and Catherine Bell's conception of ritualization in terms of the production of ritualized bodies and ritual mastery lends itself toward an integration with saint veneration.

Participating in the Secular Pantheon: a Listening Saint?

The day after Aydın Bey's presentation, November 3, 2020, I set out once more for a house concert at the Soylus' apartment after a COVID hiatus. Given the pandemic, the Soylus had agonized over whether to hold a concert to mark Meriç's birthday as they had done in the past. Ultimately, as a date of greater significance, they had elected to go ahead with a reduced contingent of attendees and a somewhat abridged buffet spread. In anticipation, I begin preparing myself a few days ahead of time by selecting clothing for the ritual: blue suit, pink shirt, and tartan bow tie. Running late, I end up boarding a taxi at the Moda station. Nevertheless, by the time we arrive at Baghdad Avenue, I note that I have relatively little time to finish preparing my

own ritualized body. I feel that I need to sharpen myself up a bit, so I make my way to the Divan Patisserie to have an espresso—I quickly drink my coffee with the little biscotti that they give and set off to find a place to buy flowers. Searching, I find what looks like a nice florist. I mention that I am going to an event for someone who has passed away and need to be careful about flower symbolism. "Is this for Miss Sedef?" he asks: "she was already here this morning!" (Bu Sedef Abla için? O zaten bu sabah buradaydı!) I tell him please to make a bouquet using flowers that would go with what she has already bought and commence waiting on pins and needles. He quickly gets it prepared for 100 TL and I dash off, arriving about ten minutes early and encountering Fazilet Hanım in the apartment lobby.

Upon entering the Soylus' apartment, I hand over the flowers and my coat to be hung up. They are already making the announcement to move over to the concert space, so I pass directly to that side. Here, the seating is arranged in the usual way around the room, with a bit more distancing. Today, the piano is pulled out a bit from the wall with the portrait of Sedef's mother. On a gilded coffee table nearby, a small portrait of Meriç is set up with a single votive candle in front of it. Polite conversation begins to blossom with Fazilet Hanım and Murat Bey about recent concerts at Süreyya and the Sabancı Museum. I note that Orhan Avcı is planning an OTTO Barok concert at All Saints Moda on November 27, prompting Murat Bey to join in with some thoughts on the possibilities for social distancing there and the vagaries of risk with which we are all contending during the pandemic. While we are chatting, Murat Bey distributes paper programs and initiates the formal proceedings:

> Today is Meriç's birthday, and as we always do, we remember her together with beautiful music, together with those who love music and who love her. Aydın put together a lovely program yesterday—[from the audience: 'very, veeeeery']—it was really very lovely. I also called and personally thanked him ... So, he says thank you, that there were materials, and you gave them, and so on, but we also know of those who have materials and can't manage it. For that reason, I complimented him, thanks. He made us all

happy—[from the audience: 'veeeeery']—today, I'm certain that we will watch a concert that will make us happy again ... I now invite Ilgın ... let's applaud for Ilgın ...[93]

The musicians now come out to start the performance—a young violinist studying in Germany and a pianist familiar to me from previous concerts at Süreyya. After each of the first two pieces on the program—Bach Solo Violin Sonata No. 1 and Debussy Sonata for Violin and Piano—Murat Bey calls out softly "bravo!" and there is a brief applause. As at previous house concerts, the program then begins to orient toward Turkey, first by way of a Hindemith solo violin sonata (Hindemith having famously advised the early Republican Turkish regime on music reforms) and then with the "Turkish Five" composer Ahmed Adnan Saygun's "Demet" (Bouquet) Suite for Violin and Piano. Though they have certainly been listening attentively throughout the program thus far, several audience members react subtly to this piece. With its second movement, in particular—an adaptation of a Black Sea-region "Horon" dance with a percussive, mid-register piano accompaniment and chunky low register violin part in additive 7-beat meters—I note that Fazilet Hanım checks her program, while other listeners move subtly to the music. There are several calls of affirmation from the audience when it finishes. After this Turkish gesture, the violinist fulfills the other standard House Concerts criterion with the last piece, a Chopin Nocturne, saying that she chose it because Chopin was one of Meriç's favorite composers.

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[93] Bugün Meriç'in doğum günü, onu her zaman olduğu gibi, beraber, birlikte güzel müzikle, müzik sevenlerle onu sevenlerle anıyoruz. Dün Aydın güzel bir program yaptı ... "çok, çooook" .... gerçekten çok güzeldi. Ben ayrıca arayıp teşekkür ettim. Şunu söyledim ona, söylerim sizlere katılacaksınız: bir şey düşünmek güzel bir şey, böyle bir şey yapmayı düşünmek, fakat onu çok güzel uygulayabilmek. Yani, düşünürseniz de yapmaya, iyi bir şey ortaya çıkaramayabilirsiniz. İşte ona sağolsun, malzeme vardı, onları siz verdiniz falan diye ama, malzemesi olup da yapamayanları da biliyoruz. Dolayısıyla o açıdan da kutladım, sağolsun. O da hepimizi mutlu etti ... "çooook" ... Bugün de, eminin, yine mutlu olacağımız bir konser izleyeceğiz. ... Ben şimdi, Ilgın'ı davet ediyorum ... Ilgın'ı alkışlayalım ...

Ever the practiced host, Murat Bey makes a few points in connection with the performance we have just heard after the applause dies down. He first compliments the musicians on their fine performance despite being masked and thus unable to follow each other's breathing. He then turns his attention to the composer, Saygun:

> As you all know, on Atatürk's wish, Saygun wrote an opera in his twenties. And it was unbelievable at that time—he wrote it in three weeks. After that, of course, he became a member of that group known as the "Turkish Five." So, it's good that they came together, good that there was Atatürk, because it's thanks to him that these young musicians presented us with this opportunity and this beautiful music.[94]

Turning to the musicians, he adds "we thank you very much" (çok teşekkür ediyoruz), prompting a round of applause from the audience. After this, Sedef introduces a visiting cellist, inviting her to play something as well. This offer she humbly accepts, and while she is setting up, a discussion opens out of Murat's point about Saygun and Atatürk:

> **Oya**: Saygun's piece was terrific. How wonderfully they conveyed its exuberance with their playing!
> **Murat**: The program was very lovely. Hindemith is atonal, right? I think it can be said within modern music? ... I really liked it, thank you ...
> **Oya**: He [Hindemith] was a guest, wasn't he?
> **Murat**: Yes, Hindemith came to Turkey while the conservatory was being set up.
> **Oya**: It's unbelievable, He [Atatürk] invited him by *listening*; I mean, he wasn't a musician, but he followed …
> **Murat**: Of course![95]

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[94] Bir de Adnan Saygun için bir şey söylemek istiyorum: Saygun yirmili yaşlarında biliyorsunuz bir opera yazdı, Atatürk'ün isteği üzerine, ve o zaman, yani inanılmaz bir şeydi, üç haftada yaptı onu. Ve ondan sonra—zaten o Türk Beşleri olarak bilinen grubunun üyesi. O yüzden, iyi ki onlar vardı, iyi ki Atatürk vardı, çünkü o sayede bugün bu gençler bize bu imkan, bu güzel müziği sundular ... çok teşekkür ediyoruz

[95] Oya: Saygun'un eseri müthiş. Nasıl çaldı, coşkusunu ne güzel vermiş.
Murat: Çok da güzel bir programdı. Hindemith de atonal, değil mi, denebilir mi bilmiyorum, modern müzik içinde? ... çok sevdim, teşekkürler ...
Oya: O misafirmiş, değil mi?
Murat: Evet, Hindemith, Türkiye'ye gelmiş, konservatuar hazırlanırken
Oya: İnanılmaz bir şey, dinleye dinleye çağırmış, müzisyen değil ama takip ediyor, yani
Murat: tabii tabii!

Here, Atatürk emerges as a visionary listener alongside Meriç. Meriç is thus placed implicitly in the most rarefied company in Turkish secularist circles—Mustafa Kemal—and a particular hierarchy of saints starts to come more clearly into view. Indeed, I might situate this chapter in a nascent literature on secular saints in Turkey. At the conclusion of her study of Turkish state secularism, Yael Navaro examines "the Cult of Atatürk" and his veneration through widely circulated images and statues. During the 1990s, she suggests, Atatürk's likeness became a site at which the secular state was encountered and personified. Likening elements of magic and ritual in these practices to the veneration of Sufi saints, Navaro suggests in a deconstructivist vein that in Turkey of the 1990s, secularism was defined not by restraint and rationality, but rather by excessive emotion oriented toward the Turkish state. In a study of media controversy surrounding the founder of the secularist women's NGO, the Association for the Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşam Destekleme Derneği), Türkan Saylan, Daniella Kuzmanovic argues that Saylan became a secular saint and, as such, an icon of a constellation of secular values in Turkey to which an excess of charisma and agency was attributed by both secularists and Islamists. She suggests that Navaro recognizes Atatürk's sanctification but fails to identify the rendering of persons as icons to be a primary mode through which politics is conducted in Turkey (Kuzmanovic 2013: 172).

I suggest that the case of Meriç Soylu presents a different example of secular sainthood. A key way in which Meriç is different is that she is a *listening* saint. More precisely, I suggest that she both achieves sainthood by being an exemplary listener and is most appropriately venerated through mimetic practices of careful listening. In these respects, her case is quite different from existing scholarly accounts of secular sainthood. In the cases of Mustafa Kemal and Türkan Saylan mentioned above, but also in numerous others, the importance of images in

saint veneration are emphasized (Bosca 2005; Passariello 2005). This is not to say that images play no role in the veneration of Meriç Soylu—they do—but listening is the primary modality through which her sainthood is both cultivated and venerated.

This difference has important implications for the ways in which Meriç can be understood as a secular saint. Perhaps the most important of these has to do with her relation to the mysterious substance variously understood as charisma, taboo, excess, that, according to Francoise Meltzer and Jas Elsner, is called "sainthood" when it "spills into everyday life, the world we inhabit" (Meltzer and Elsner 2009). If I may follow, for just a moment, a Weberian conception of secular modernity as a progressive disenchantment of the world, a progressive interruption of its permeation by magic, I suggest that Meriç is saintly in a particularly secular way in the sense that she lacks charisma, excess. Nowhere in the above accounts is it emphasized that Meriç was charismatic, that she held power over others. Rather, she is noted for her character and *marifet* (skill and ingenuity). Saints are supposed to be powerful; they are miracle workers, they are astounding. Meriç was none of these things.

It might be objected, then, that she is simply not a saint. Perhaps this is a case in which sexiness of would-be argument is a bit too much in the rhetorical driver's seat? And yet, I would point out that Meriç fulfills many familiar criteria of sainthood. As I have been arguing, Meriç's passing led to ritual, the publishing and communal reading of hagiography, and a digitally-mediated form of pilgrimage. Moreover, in the context of ostensible secular saints in Turkey, she does mediate in some sense a constellation of values held by a particular community, albeit mimetically rather than iconically. Meriç departed tragically young and, as Bosca and others point out, early passing is important to (popular) canonization (Bosca 2005: 69). Multiple scholars have also noted the importance of ascetism in saints' early lives (Bosca 2005; Wilson

1983), and accounts of Meric's life point consistently to her diligence and hard work. More rarely, they also note her concern for inequality and criticism of her mother's elitism. Several other common characteristics of saints that Stephen Wilson identifies in an influential early edited volume also resonate with Meriç's background: frequent associations between saints and patronage (in the sense of Meriç's position as director of the İşBank concert hall and her efforts to help young musicians), and general upper-class background of saints (clear in Meriç's case) (Wilson 1983). Admittedly, Wilson also points out that a significant majority of saints throughout history have been men. However, more recent cases such as Evita and Lady Diana indicate perhaps a shift on this front. At any rate, as I note above, there is a precedent for secularist sanctification of women in Turkey rooted in the secular modernist project.

I thus submit that an ample collection of factors indicates that Meriç Soylu can productively be considered a saint, but a curious, non-charismatic one. At this point, I concede that there is a sleight of hand in my argument that Meriç is a saint without charisma and excess. Technically, this is the case. However, her sainthood is not achieved in complete absence of charisma, either. Rather, it is precisely through her mediation of charismatic musicians and the sonic charisma they pour out as an exemplary *listener* that she manages to be in but not of, expert handler of charisma but not herself its bearer. In Aydın Bey's presentation, it was important to demonstrate Meriç's links with globally famous musicians—gifts, commonalities, friendships—but she did not in turn become one of them. Instead, through her diligent practices of listening and study, Meriç became an exemplary conduit of charisma, maintaining close proximity to its multiple modern exemplars and facilitating, channeling, their engagement with the people of Istanbul while remaining above the fray—separated and distant, as it were.

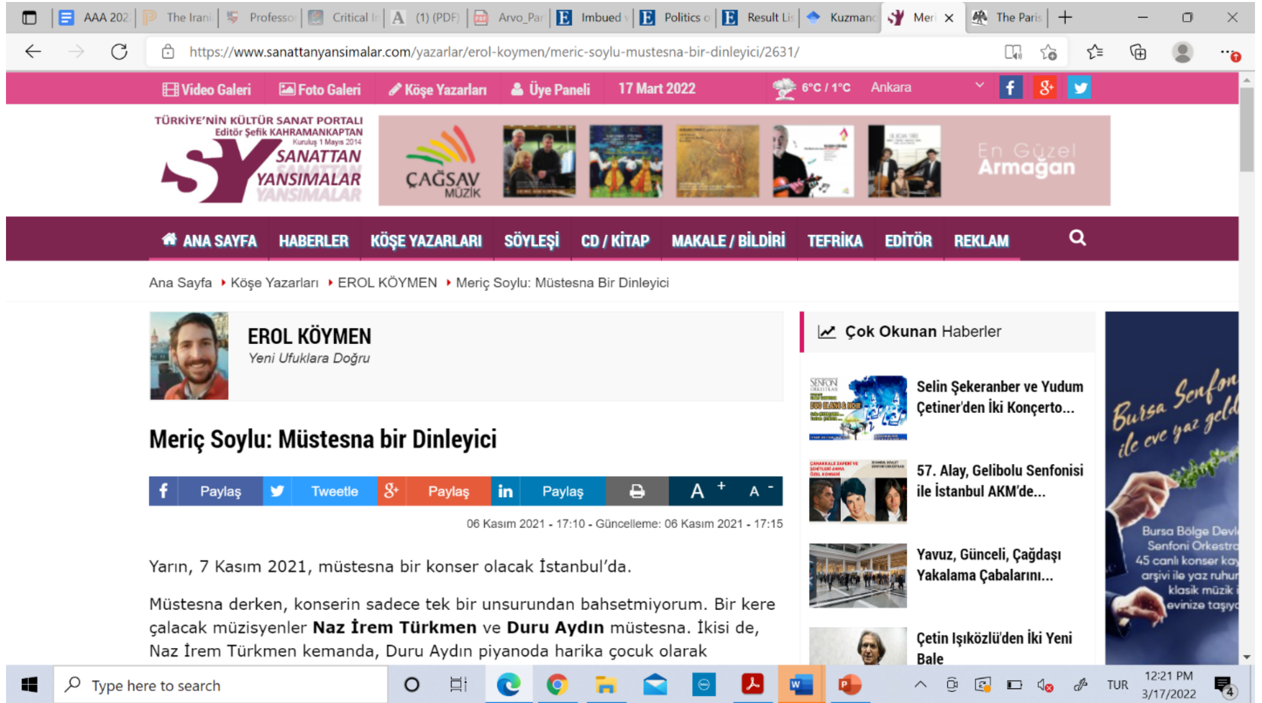
Jackson describes, for example, that Duke Ellington can be understood to have exhibited ritual mastery as a performer through his ability to "shape a sense of ritual mastery in other event participants" through "working through and re-presenting [the traces of the cultures that nurtured him] for the benefit of ritualized performers and listeners" (140). Meriç Soylu can be understood to have done this as well, but as a listener rather than performer. Like Ellington, she worked through and re-presented traces of cultures and practices that nurtured her for the benefit of others, but these were traces she had absorbed and embodied as a listener. The difference is that Ellington can be understood to have, himself, embodied charisma as a performer. This was not the case with Meriç Soylu. Through her virtuosic listening, she became expert at directing and channeling the charisma of *others*—namely, the internationally touring musicians whose Istanbul performances she organized at İşSanat. In other words, her engagement with charisma was defined by distance, separation, and careful control in a manner that, throughout this dissertation, I suggest can be understood as constitutive of a particular kind of Turkish/Istanbuler secular listening body. In this way, I suggest that Meriç as virtuosic listener is a disenchanted saint: her sainthood is grounded not in a mysterious source of magic power, but rather in a controlled and rational engagement with that power. Hers is a secular saintly body.

To be clear, I do not intend this claim to be a refutation of post-modern critiques of the secularization thesis. I am not suggesting that Meriç represents the culmination of some proper path of secular modernity from which Turkey has unfortunately deviated (the likely view of many of my interlocutors). My point is a theoretical and methodological one. Wilson observes that saints tend to reflect the structure of the societies which produce and honor them (37). When ethnographic examinations of secular sainthood are carried out through popular media representations of national figures, it ought perhaps not to be surprising that deviations from

rationality and order gain prominence. On the other hand, I have tried to demonstrate that, in an ethnographic setting such as the rarefied circle of the Soylus and Meriç, a more distinctly secular saintly body becomes analyzable.

Conclusion: Scholarly Hagiography

If Meriç doesn't have charisma, though, how is she an effective saint? How does she continue to exert a pull, an influence? She undoubtedly does, as I, myself, can attest. I conclude this chapter with what can only be described as a brief hagiography of Meriç, written by me for publication in the Turkish arts portal, *Reflections of Art (Sanattan Yansımalar)*, to coincide with a concert organized in honor of Meriç's birthday by the Soylus one year later on November 6, 2021, at Istanbul's new Arter Contemporary Art Museum. Just as my motivations for writing the piece in the first place were multiple, so do I have several goals in including it here. Several writers have expressed anxiety over the boundary between ethnography and hagiography—most proximately, Ian Pace attributes a problematic tendency toward non-analytical hagiography in the ethnomusicology of Western art music (Werbner 2016; Pace 2020). Ironically, here the collapsing into each other of analysis and hagiography becomes analytically productive: insofar as this piece can be read as hagiography, it itself becomes a piece of evidence for my argument that Meriç is a secular saint—one whom, moreover, I apparently venerate. Perhaps more strangely—uncannily, even—I find looking back that in this piece, I give a secular, musicological account of Meriç's effectiveness as a secular saint: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TÜRKİYE'NİN KÜLTÜR SANAT PORTALI
Editör Şefik KAHRAMANKAPTAN
SANATTAN YANSIMALAR

ANA SAYFA | HABERLER | KÖŞE YAZARLARI | SÖYLEŞİ | CD / KİTAP | MAKALE / BİLDİRİ | TEFRİKA | EDİTÖR | REKLAM

Ana Sayfa › Köşe Yazarları › EROL KÖYMEN › Meriç Soylu: Müstesna Bir Dinleyici

EROL KÖYMEN
Yeni Ufuklara Doğru

Meriç Soylu: Müstesna bir Dinleyici

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06 Kasım 2021 - 17:10 - Güncelleme: 06 Kasım 2021 - 17:15

Yarın, 7 Kasım 2021, müstesna bir konser olacak İstanbul'da.

Müstesna derken, konserin sadece tek bir unsurundan bahsetmiyorum. Bir kere çalacak müzisyenler **Naz İrem Türkmen** ve **Duru Aydın** müstesna. İkisi de, Naz İrem Türkmen kemanda, Duru Aydın piyanoda harika çocuk olarak

Çok Okunan Haberler

Selin Şekeranber ve Yudum Çetiner'den İki Konçerto...

57. Alay, Gelibolu Senfonisi ile İstanbul AKM'de...

Yavuz, Güncel, Çağdaşı Yakalama Çabalarını...

Çetin Işıközlü'den İki Yeni Bale

Figure 36: November 6 article commemorating Meriç Soylu's birthday concert at the Arter Museum. Screenshot by author.

Tomorrow, November 7, 2021, there will be an exceptional concert in Istanbul.

In saying exceptional, I am not just talking about one aspect of the concert. First off, the musicians who will perform on violin and piano are exceptional. Both of them are virtuosic young musicians at the level that they can be called prodigies. The concert's location is also exceptional: the Sevgi Gönül Auditorium situated in the basement of the Arter Museum. However, the real source of the concert's exceptionality is the person whose birthday we will remember: Meriç Soylu.

Often, in the world of classical music, two groups are emphasized: composers and performers. Music history lessons are narrated from composer to composer, concerts are attended or not attended according to the performer. There is anxiety whether sufficient space is given on concert programs to new music, or how young musicians are going to be supported. These are, of course, important questions. In fact, the *Shining Stars* concert series and prize, begun by Meriç Soylu and continued by her mother and father, gives answers to questions like these every year by supporting young performers.

However, there is another character in music just as important as composer and performer. That is the listener: Meriç Soylu was an exceptional listener. I first became acquainted with Meriç Soylu at the house concert series organized by her mother, Sedef Soylu, and her father, Murat Soylu. As a person interested in the sociocultural dimensions of the world of Western classical music in Turkey and Istanbul, I was immediately very interested when I heard about a regular series of house concerts. I wonder who attends? What kind of an atmosphere is there? What kind of music?

Thanks to the Soylu family, I had the opportunity to attend those concerts. Once more, I found myself in an exceptional environment. Not least, all of the young musicians whom I listened to at the Meriç Soylu House Concerts were excellent. I heard the most moving Beethoven "Waldstein" piano sonata of my life there, for example. With its tasteful decor and delicious foods, the atmosphere of the concerts was also quite elegant. But the most impressive element of the Meriç Soylu House Concerts was, once more, its community of listeners, who listen and give care to each note with total concentration. The person who lights that community's way is, of course, Meriç Soylu.

When I read the book that Murat Soylu prepared, *Meriç Soylu: A Life Full of Art*, which explains Meriç's background, I better understood the mark left by Meriç. For example, an exceptional aspect of the book is a photocopy of a letter sent by Meriç to her mother and father while completing her master's degree in Boston. In Meriç's letter, I found the opportunity to read her impressions and fine analyses of performances by the Boston Symphony and the Vienna Philharmonic in her own hand. At the same time, from that letter and from the memories from Meriç's mother, father, and friends transmitted in the Meriç Soylu book, I understood what a disciplined, sincere, and respectful listener Meriç was.

After Meriç returned from Boston to Istanbul, she had the opportunity to share her exceptional listening capabilities with Istanbul. While she was director of İşSanat from 2006 to 2012, almost all of the highest quality, most in-demand musicians in the world came to Istanbul thanks to Meriç. The countless letters and memories in the *Meriç Soylu* book demonstrate that Meriç left a lasting impression on both those musicians and a broad Istanbul public.

With musicology's "postmodern turn," the autonomous "work" concept, its "genius" composer, and its "virtuoso" performer began to be critiqued. In pursuit of new ways of thinking about music, new ontologies of music began to be explored. One of these is Nina Sun Eidsheim's book, *Sensing Sound: Singing & Listening As Vibrational Practice,* in which she argues that music is not defined by autonomous works, but rather intersubjective vibrations. According to Eidsheim, music is energy transferred through vibration. Thinking in this vein, Eidsheim suggests that people, too, are made up of sound in a relational sense.

If we follow Eidsheim, we can understand another dimension of Meriç's being as an exceptional listener. We can say that, with her virtuosic listening ability, Meriç carried the vibrations of all of the musicians and musics to whom she listened and whom she encountered and transferred them to Istanbul. What's more, while claiming that Meriç "left an impression," we can say that this is not just a metaphor, but rather, in a physical sense, she left an impression through sound waves and the vibrations they create. In that sense, she may even have transformed Istanbul.

Moreover, the Arter Museum, about which I've heard it claimed many times "such a space would have been unthinkable in Istanbul ten years ago," would not have been possible without Meriç. Meriç may have laid the infrastructure for the the Sevgi Gönül Auditorium in the museum's basement, opened with the goal of being a center for new music.

In sum, we can say that Meriç will be present at the Arter Museum and in Istanbul at tomorrow's concert. We can say that Meriç still lives in any person on whom she left

an impression—indeed, she still lives in whoever tries to listen with as exceptional a care as she did.[96]

[96] Yarın, 7 Kasım 2021, müstesna bir konser olacak İstanbul'da.
Müstesna derken, konserin sadece tek bir unsurundan bahsetmiyorum. Bir kere çalacak müzisyenler **…** müstesna. İkisi de, Naz İrem Türkmen kemanda, Duru Aydın piyanoda harika çocuk olarak adlandırılabilecek kadar virtüöz genç müzisyenler. Konserin yeri de müstesna; Arter Müzesi'nin bodrum katında bulunan Sevgi Gönül Oditoryumu'nda. Fakat, konserin müstesnalığının asıl kaynağı, doğum gününde anacağımız **Meriç Soylu**'dur.
Klasik müzik dünyasında, çoğu zaman, iki kitle üzerine duruluyor: besteciler ve icracılar. Müzik tarihinde dersler besteciden besteciye göre anlatılır, konserlere ise icracıya göre gidilir ya da gidilmez. Yeteri kadar yeni kompozisyon konser programlarına koyulur mu, genç müzisyenler nasıl desteklenecek diye endişeleniliyor. Bunlar tabii gerekli sorular. Hatta, Meriç Soylu'nun başlattığı, adına annesi babası tarafından devam ettirilen Parlayan Yıldızlar konser serisi ve ödülü, genç icracıları destekleyerek böyle sorulara her sene cevap veriyor.
Fakat, müzik konusuna besteci ve icracı kadar önemli bir karakter daha var. O da dinleyici. Meriç Soylu müstesna bir dinleyiciydi. Meriç Soylu ile ilk, annesi Sedef Soylu ve babası Murat Soylu tarafından organize edilen ev konseri serisinde tanıştım. Türkiye ve İstanbul'daki batı klasik müzik dünyasının sosyokültürel boyutlarıyla ilgilinen bir insan olarak, düzenli olarak verilen ev konserlerinden haber alır almaz çok merak ettim. Acaba kim gidiyor?
Nasıl bir ortam? Nasıl bir müzik?
Soylu ailesi sağ olsun, o konserlere katılma fırsatım oldu ve konserlerde kendimi yine müstesna bir ortamda buldum. Bir kere, Meriç Soylu Ev Konserleri'nde dinlediğim bütün genç müzisyenler mükemmeldi. Hayatımda en etkilendiğim Beethoven "Waldstein" piyano sonatını orada dinledim, mesela. Zevkli dekorasyonuyla ve lezzetli yemekleriyle, konserlerin ortamı da hayli zarifti. Fakat Meriç Soylu Ev Konserlerinin yine en etkileyici unsuru, çalınan her notayı tam konsatrasyonla dinleyen ve önemseyen dinleyici kitlesiydi. O kitlenin yolunu aydınlatan kişi de, tabii, Meriç Soylu.
Murat Soylu'nun hazırladığı, Meriç Soylu: Sanat Dolu bir Yaşam adlı, Meriç'in kendi geçmişini aydınlatan kitabını okuduğumda, Meriç'in bıraktığı izi daha iyi anladım. Örneğin, kitabın müstesna bir unsuru, Meriç'in Boston'da yüksek lisans yaparken, annesi ve babasına gönderdiği bir mektubun fotokopisidir. Meriç'in mektubunda, dinlediği Boston Senfoni'nin ve Viyana Filarmoni'nin performanslarından izlenimlerini, ince yorumlarını kendi yazısından okuma şansını buldum. O mektup ve Meriç Soylu kitabından annesi, babası ve arkadaşlarından aktarılan hatıralardan ise, Meriç'in ne kadar disiplinli, içten, ve saygılı bir dinleyici olduğunu anladım. Boston'dan İstanbul'a döndükten sonra, Meriç'in o müstesna dinleme kabiliyetini İstanbul ile paylaşma fırsatı olmuş. Meriç, İşSanat'ın 2006-2012 yıllar arası direktörüyken, dünyanın en kaliteli, en talep edilen müzisyenlerinin hemen hemen hepsi Meriç'in sayesinde İstanbul'a gelmiş. Meriç Soylu kitabında yer alan sayısız mektuplar ve hatıralar, Meriç'in hem o müzisyenlerde, hem de geniş bir İstanbul kitlesinde kalıcı bir iz bıraktığını gösteriyor.
Müzikoloji'nin "postmodern turn" ile sabit "eser" kavramı, onu besteleyen "dâhi" besteci ve icra eden "virtüöz" müzisyen figürler eleştirilmeye başlandı. Müzik hakkında nasıl farklı düşünebiliriz diye yeni müzik ontoloji teorileri kurulmaya başlandı. Nina Sun Eidsheim'in, müziğin sabit eserden değil, öznelerarası titreşimden ibaret olduğunu iddia eden Sensing Sound: Singing & Listening As Vibrational Practice adlı kitapta bunlardan biri var. Eidsheim'e göre,

müzik, titreşimle aktarılabilen bir enerjidir. Böyle düşünüldüğünde, insanların da ilişkisel anlamda sesten ibaret olduğunu ileri sürüyor Eidsheim.
Eidsheim'i takip edersek, Meriç Soylu'nun da müstesna bir dinleyici olmanın bir başka boyutunu kavrayabiliriz. Meriç'in, virtüöz dinleme kabiliyetiyle, bütün dinlediği, karşılaştığı, İstanbul'a getirdiği müzisyenlerin ve müziklerin titreşimlerini taşıdığını ve İstanbul'a aktardığını söyleyebiliriz. Hatta, Meriç'in kalıcı bir "iz bıraktığını" söylerken, sadece metafor değil, ses dalgalarıyla ve yarattıkları titreşimleriyle fiziki anlamda da iz bıraktığını söyleyebiliriz. O şekilde İstanbul'u da değiştirmiş olabilir.
Hatta, hakkında çok kez "on sene önce İstanbul'da böyle bir mekân düşünülemezdi" dendiğini duyduğum Arter Müzesi belki Meriç'siz gerçekten olamazdı. Müze'nin bodrum katında bulunan, yeni müzik merkezi olacak iddiasıyla açılan Sevgi Gönül Oditoryumu'nun altyapısını Meriç kurmuş olabilir.
Yani, yarınki konserde Meriç'in de Arter Müzesi'nde, İstanbul'da olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Meriç kime iz bıraktıysa, o insanda yaşıyor, hatta, kendisi kadar müstesna bir dikkatle dinlemeye çalışan herkeste hala yaşadığını söyleyebiliriz.

Conclusion

After a November 27, 2021, piano recital at All Saints Moda toward the end of my time in the field, I fell into conversation over wine and hors d'oeuvre with a middle-aged man in colorful tie and jacket on the church's small back patio. The conversation grew out of a familiar lamentation of the current state of the world and its leaders—about the current Turkish president, he said, forget a college diploma, he has good evidence that the president doesn't even have a high school diploma. He mentioned Trump and the bleach injection scandal, taking care to note that "America is the biggest terrorist" (en büyük terörist Amerika) and praising Qaddafi, who, he says, was helping his people until the US declared him a terrorist and slaughtered him. He then launched into a comparison of the mosque and the church. Gesturing toward All Saints, he said "here, there is music, there is civilization" (burada müzik var, medeniyet var). He said that he wished there could be concerts in the mosque like there are in the churches, but says when you go to the mosque, you're on the floor, there are no shoes, it smells, you lower your head toward the ass of the guy in front of you, it smells, the guy to his left has eaten garlic, and so on. Gesturing once more to the church, he proclaimed "here the religion is even civilized" (buranın dini bile medeni). "Here there is music, we don't even have music; if we had only had music," he said, imitating playing the piano with his hands (burada müzik var, bizde müzik bile yok, nolur bizde müzik olsaydı).

Much like the dialogue with which I opened this dissertation, this was a conversation whose blunt elucidation of the relationship between Western art music, Islamism in contemporary Turkey, and the West—metonymically present in the form of All Saints Moda as space of listening—left me a bit shocked. In this dissertation, I have examined how practices of listening to Western art music shape secular bodies in Istanbul under conditions of Islamic

populism. Situating practices of listening to Western art music in a Turkish secular discursive tradition that authorizes particular practices of listening (chapter 1), I examine the atmospheres and geographies of secular belonging in the city fostered by Western art music, the Occidental imaginaries that these foster (chapters 2 and 3), and the practices through which secular listening bodies are defined and exemplified (chapters 4 and 5). Taking up polyphony as a concept important to this discursive tradition, I argue that secular bodies are shaped through mimetic practices of emotional and sensorial separation and codification that produce a subject sovereign over its own body and a subject-object relationship with the world. Insofar as they are contoured by a contrapuntal tension between interiority and exteriority, I argue that secular bodies can be understood as polyphonic bodies belonging to a secular contra-public. At the same time, I demonstrate, this embodied subject is situated metaphorically as listener within the polyphonic orchestra, which becomes a model of solidarist social ontology labeled as democracy.

In this way, I approach secularity from the ground up, so to speak, demonstrating how modes of subjectivity long positioned as object of scholarly critique are actively forged throughout listening in a particular context. Along these lines, I show that there is no essential link between listening as a modality of sensory perception, religion, and particular bodily configurations—listening bodies might be inclined toward secular distance just as much as religious ecstasy. Moreover, I demonstrate that secular bodies and their publics are not defined solely in opposition to religion, but rather can be understood in terms of particular traditions, practices, emotional and sensory configurations, and modes of belonging. In the case of Turkey and Istanbul, I argue, these are significantly shaped by Western art music and its practices of listening.

In addition to these primary implications of the shaping of secular bodies and a secular contra-public through practices of listening, this dissertation also has several other broader implications. Participating broadly in a decolonial project of decentering Euro-America by framing Western art music as local music and sound, I make a specific conceptual intervention in postcolonial studies by reclaiming polyphony as a concept for cross-cultural comparison from those who would universalize it. Where scholars such as Edward Said and Mikhail Bakhtin invoke polyphony and counterpoint to denote an open field of difference, in the Turkish discursive context that I study, the term "polyphony"—"çok seslilik"—denotes a certain configuration of elements that effaces difference as much as it affords it.

In terms of Turkish secularism, whereas existing studies have focused primarily on the slippery boundary between secularity and Islamism and commodification of state secular identity, here I develop an understanding of secularity in terms of lived experience and embodied practices and attunements. Moreover, with regard to this literature's focus on neoliberalism, I suggest that the pluralization of sites of listening to Western art music in neoliberal Istanbul offers an alternative, if not more hopeful, neoliberal pathway than the present overwhelming focus on commodification of identity. To be sure, an argument could be made in a Bourdieuian vein that many listeners instrumentalize listening in Istanbul in order to accumulate symbolic capital--indeed, many of my interlocutors regularly critiqued their fellow concertgoers with versions of this argument. This is not the only story, though, and it is not the one I have chosen to emphasize here.

This dissertation also charts a different path from studies of memory and urban space in neoliberal Istanbul. I examine a sonic urban geography of cosmopolitanism and memory at some remove from yet intimately connected with the current Turkish regime's reshaping and re-

sounding of the city. This is the case, not least, in the obvious sense that the geographical center of gravity of this dissertation—the Kadıköy district and its Moda neighborhood—Western art music, as well as the primarily Levantine and non-Muslim pathways of memory that resonate at their intersection, fall outside of the parameters of the existing literature. Moreover, I also bring discussions of (affective) urban geography together with the study of sonic atmospheres, offering a dynamic account of urban belonging contoured by sound, affect, and emotion.

In many ways, the post All Saints conversation might seem effectively to support the arguments that I make in this dissertation. The man who so forcefully articulated his laments after the All Saints concert clearly took Islamic populism as an oppressive force in contemporary Turkey. He implicated music as a practice permissible in the rational and "civilized" environ of the church, and even demonstrated ways in which music might act upon and transform the body. Read differently, though, his account might also put pressure on the arguments that I pursue in ways that point to pathways for future research.

One of these is certainly race—specifically, whiteness. In the specific case of Turkey, the category of "White Turks" is often associated with consumption of Western art music (Ergin 2017; Yörükoğlu 2017). Hüseyin Sermet, one of Turkey's mid-century *harika çocuk* pianists (child prodigies), offered a particularly striking take on White Turkishness, having recently returned to Istanbul with an about-face critique of his own secularist compatriots after several decades in France. Noting that "the White Turk lives in certain Istanbul neighborhoods: Moda, Göztepe (in Kadıköy), Bağdat Caddesi (in Kadıköy), Nişantaşı, Şişli …,"[97] he said:

> You know there is this White Turk segment I know so well, when I was a kid, I heard this a lot in my circles: "if only Atatürk had made Turkey Christian." Why didn't he do it? I will say it quite bluntly: he couldn't have. The White Turk circles have nothing to do with

[97] Beyaz Türk İstanbul'un belli başlı semtlerinde oturan; Moda, Göztepe, Bağdat Caddesi, Nişantaşı, şişli, Maçka, boğazın çeşitli yerleri bunların çoğu

> religion …. [they] have a hostility against Muslims that stems from ignorance. They see the root of all evil in Islam (interview, January 10, 2020).[98]

I did not find the identity category of "White Turk" to be particularly well-received among my interlocutors, who tended to regard it more as an insulting category attributed to them by others. However, Hüseyin Bey's account indicates that further research could be conducted on the relationship between whiteness, music, and sound in Turkey by casting a different ethnographic net. More broadly, Anna Bull has recently argued that practices of performing Western art music in the UK produce white bodily and affective attunements. I suggest that the relationship between whiteness and secularity might prove to be a particularly fruitful line of future research and scholarly debate.

Hüseyin Bey's critique brings out another point that also resonates with the opening vignette: Christianity. Foundational social theorists have famously suggested that there are latent links between Christianity and ostensibly secular modern concepts such as capitalism and sovereignty (Weber 1945, Schmitt 2005). More recently, Webb Keane has argued for links between Protestantism and modern concepts and modes of personhood (Keane 2002). In this dissertation, I have maintained a skeptical stance toward such arguments out of a sense that they would tend necessarily to fly in the face of my interlocutors' accounts—for example, I have interpreted an interest in churches as concert spaces in terms of cosmopolitanism and Occidentalism that are themselves discursively interconnected with secularity. Nevertheless, might there be more to the story in Turkey, in a context in which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's

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[98] Benim çok çok iyi tanıdığım Beyaz Türk kesimi var ya, ben çocukken kendi çevremden bunu çok duydum. Atatürk bir de Türkiye'yi Hristiyan yapsın. Neden yapmadı? Çok argo söyleyeceğim; yapamazdı. Beyaz Türk çevresinin din ile hiçbir alakası yok. Hristiyan olsaydı Türkiye Avrupa ile daha da bütünleşirdi ve Beyaz Türk çevresinin cehaletten kaynaklanan bir Müslüman düşmanlığı vardır. Bütün kötülüklerin temelinde Müslümanlığı görürler.

reforms such as translating the Koran are often casually compared by secularists to Luther's translation of the Bible? Might it be that the connection between Christianity/Protestantism and secularity in Turkey is particularly exposed in the case of Western art music?

As in the case of race and whiteness, I suspect that answering these questions will require different methodological approaches than the primarily participant-observation ethnographic methods I employ in this project. Indeed, among the most important paths of future research will be more in-depth historical work: there remains considerable work left to be done as part of a global music history on the history of Western art music in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey. Due to various scholarly lacunae—emanating, for example, from the will to critique the secular state or the gaps produced by the geographical and methodological boundaries that have historically contoured the music disciplines—relatively little work of substance has been done on this topic. Future projects that might illuminate questions of race and Christianity might include a historical ethnography of music in early Republican Ankara or the ways in which Republican-era music reforms made their way into public education.

Finally, I suggest that the concept of Occidentalism might be due for more attention. It might perhaps seem ill-timed (or just plain clueless) to frame a research project in terms of Occidentalism in this scholarly moment of decolonization. Have avid listeners to Western art music in Istanbul not simply been colonized? How could foregrounding their experience possibly support the project of de-centering the West? Though they may or may not be "colonized," it is my claim that a scholarly program must look past its own self-critique to the lifeworlds of those apparently at odds with it. To do otherwise evinces a parochialism that begins to resemble the imperialist orientation it would critique: *we* know best, *we* understand the West's evils, *we* will decide who is and isn't worth hearing. Many of my interlocutors' critiques of Western

imperialism are sharper than those of most scholars. Yet, they continue to listen. By listening in turn to them, I carry out a decolonial project of provincializing the West *by* centering it conceptually. I suggest that future post-colonial and de-colonial studies might safely assume that critiques of Western imperialism are taken for granted by other scholars in order to focus more on the diverse forms that imaginaries of the West take across the globe.

Who Cares if they Listen?

In her study of affective geography in Northern Cyprus, Yael Navaro suggests that certain ethnographies become more or less possible according to the subject position of the ethnographer. I certainly found this to be the case: while doing research, I found myself almost involuntarily returning to certain deep-seated historical, social, cultural, and musical inclinations, the strength of which I hadn't consciously registered. Perfecting Turkish in the company of friends (to the extent that one ever "perfects" a language), developing a strong interest in Turkish cooking, learning the ins, outs, and back alleys of *one particular* Istanbul, getting a sense of the "feel" of the Mediterranean (if I may put it this way) and, not least, getting better acquainted with a lot of great music—these are among the many fruits of my time as a researcher. At the same time, I often had the sense that my subject position as a half-Turkish, American academic researcher engaged in the aforementioned activities awoke certain desires and imaginaries of my interlocutors. I won't speak for them, but I became more myself than I ever realized I could be through fieldwork.

It is worth noting that I was enabled, in part, to fulfill my interlocutors' and my own penchant for good living through concert and festival attendance, restaurant meals, appropriate dress, and other "luxuries" (to the extent that I did) by a much-weakened Turkish currency that enabled me truly to "extract the pleasure" (to adapt a common Turkish expression) of a splendid

city like Istanbul on research-grant funding. Needless to say, having navigated the privations of extended graduate study (even under the best of conditions), I would consider it ploddingly dull to deny that I enjoyed this thoroughly.

For me, in other words, the pleasures and rewards of researching and writing this dissertation were many. Likewise, beyond its specific scholarly implications, I might suggest that this project has a broader importance for several reasons. Not least, despite significant scholarly efforts, there still exists considerable ignorance about conditions of life in much of the Middle East. This is dismaying, not least, to millions of urban, secularist Turkish citizens, who are not necessarily interested in the West's self-critiques but are deeply concerned by the steady erosion of their lifeworld by an authoritarian populist regime. There is a widespread sense in secularist circles in Turkey that the whole world is against them—at times, I came to understand why they feel this way.

Perhaps more provocatively, I would suggest that the time may be nigh for a rethinking of now established critiques of secularism and secularity. Recent decades have witnessed the rise of global populisms rooted in (often cynical) manipulation of popular national, racial, and, not least, religious sentiment. Many of these populisms are oriented by appeals to emotional immediacy rather than reason and dialogue, as well as an orthogonal engagement with ostensibly incontrovertible facts. This dynamic has been driven, moreover, by rapacious new forms of media designed to override a sense of skeptical distance and erode inner realms of reflection in favor of constant, engrossing connectivity. While the social value of this connectivity may be debatable, that it is at the same time linked to modes of capitalist extraction that take the subject itself as their mine in a way that exacerbates social inequalities, providing yet more fodder for populist dissent, is less so.

Certainly, one can neither turn back the clock nor put the cat back into the bag. I do not mean to call for a rehabilitation of the secularization thesis in pursuit of some utopic, rational public sphere yet to be achieved. Nor do I wish to imply that scholars shouldn't "keep up with the times," by being attentive to new media and ways of being in the world. However, we should also direct fresh eyes toward lifeworlds and practices on the margins, including those once dismissed as outdated or oppressive, particularly if they foster spaces of alternative belonging and, most of all, practices of sensitive listening. With a commitment to studying difference, ethnomusicologists are particularly well-positioned to embrace such an affirmation of complexity. In the new global situation, nothing is certain, everything is on the table, and hostilities are high. In a sense, despite everything, the world is perhaps more secular than ever, the need for listening never greater.

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