

Recent representations of the music of the Mevlevi Order of Sufism

Yaprak Melike Uyar¹ and Ş. Şehvar Beşiroğlu²

¹ Turkish Music State Conservatory, Istanbul Technical University

² Center for Advanced Studies in Music, Istanbul Technical University

Background in ethnomusicology. The Mevlevi Order of Sufism, founded in Konya (Turkey) by the followers of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, cherishes music in their rituals as do many other Sufi Sects. Whirling Dervish Rituals may be described as a form of worship, and music is one of the main elements of the ritual. The commodification of cultural and spiritual traditions into products and the representation of rituals in the form of public performances has also influence the appreciation of Mevlevi music. World music market can be mentioned as one of the industries highly influenced by this process, especially in the cases of ritual concept strongly affiliated with the accompanying music. The rising interest in Mevlevi culture, together with the popularity of demonstrations of Whirling Dervish ceremonies as tourist or cultural attractions, have also influenced the recent representations of Mevlevi music, usually with the title ‘Sufi music’ in the music industry.

Background in music theory. The music of the Mevlevi Order is strongly affiliated with the Turkish makam music tradition. The music accompanying the Whirling rituals is a form in Ottoman Turkish makam music, called *Ayin-i Şerif*, composed according to a specific set of theoretical rules in tonality, rhythmic structure and melodic contour. This article summarizes those rules to make comparisons with recent music works including ‘Mevlevi music’ in their title.

Aims. This paper concentrates on how the performance and reception of ‘Mevlevi music’ has changed with the influence of the commodification process.

Main contribution. With the promotion of traditional Turkish makam music as ‘Mevlevi’ music, spiritual attributions of Sufi music become a marketing tool, that is to say, non-musical aspects of Mevlevi music become a tool for the promotion of both secular and religious Turkish makam music in the of New Age music market.

Implications. Mimesis of the Whirling Dervish Ceremonies, that imitates the main rules of the ritual, with the process of commodification turns into a show. In the case of Turkish makam music or the fusion of ney and electronic sampling promoted as Mevlevi music, the spiritual values of Mevlevi culture becomes a base for meanings attributed to the music positioned in the world music market with spiritual content. In touristic performances, it is observed that instead of performing the whole *Ayin-i Şerif* which is approximately one hour long, the sections of it have combined to accompany the whirling show. In such performances, usually *Mevlevi Ayini* in *Nihavend*, *Buselik*, *Rast* and *Segah* makams have been performing, because those create proximity with European art music tonal system.

Keywords: Mevlevi music, Sufism, whirling dervish, Turkish, makam

• *Correspondence:* Yaprak Melike Uyar, ITU Turkish Music State Conservatory, 34357, Macka, Besiktas; tel: 90 212 248 9087, 90 212 240 2750, e-mail: yuyar@itu.edu.tr

• *Received:* 24 May 2013; *Revised:* 03 June 2013; *Accepted:* 10 February 2014

• *Available online:* 10 March 2014

• doi: 10.4407/jims.2014.02.002

Introduction

Music has always resonated with the magical, the sacred, the spiritual and the mysterious essence of things. Although music constitutes a huge part of most of the ritualistic traditions of the world's religions or spiritual systems, music, other than the chanting of the Adhan and Quran, has no place in the rituals of Islam. However, music plays a significant role in Sufi worship, the mystical branch or esoteric aspect of Islam. Various Sufi sects have different attitudes to music: for instance, while the Hanefi order strictly forbids music and dance, the Mevlevi Order has a rooted tradition of music within the whirling ceremony.

A very large number of dervish orders and sub-orders were established by the Sufis of the Ottoman Empire. One of the most influential of these monastic sects, known as the *tarikati*ⁱ (sect), was the Mevlevi Order, which came to be known in the west as "The Whirling Dervishes" due to the whirling ritual they perform as part of their ceremonies. The Mevlevi Order was codified, based on the writings of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, by his son, Sultan Veled, in the late thirteenth century. The ritualistic rules for the ceremony were written down by sheikh Pir Adil Çelebi during the fifteenth century.

The Mevlevi Order of Sufism, founded in Konya (Turkey) cherishes music in their rituals as do many other Sufi sects. Their whirling ceremony is a kind of *dhikr* in their worship. This Arabic term means invocation and remembrance and it may be understood as an Islamic practice that focuses on the remembrance of God. *Dhikr* includes chanting the names of God, praying, meditation, the singing of mystical poetry, Quranic recitation, praise and music. Through the medium of *dhikr*, a Whirling Dervish Ceremony represents a journey from the material to the spiritual. At the end of the Ottoman Empire (1923), there were 114 *tekkes*ⁱⁱ and it has been estimated that there were about a hundred thousand Mevlevi throughout the Empire (Gamard, 2009).

Sufi thought suggests that man is not only God's creation, but also God's reflection. There is no duality in the universe; on the contrary there is a unity. The person who loves God and dedicates his/her life to the search for ultimate truth is in the path of the enlightenment. The Sufi search for God has three stages: purification, enlightenment, and union. According to Sufism one must abandon all physical appetites, guide oneself to the elevation that love makes possible, and finally merge one's soul into the reality of God (Halman and And, 1983, p. 24). For the dervishes living in *tekkes*, music-making had the highest priority among other art-related activities such as calligraphy or miniature painting. The Whirling Dervish Ritual was the main ceremony of worship for the dervishes who spent their lives in Mevlevi *tekkes*. The ritual has strict rules concerning both the music accompanying the ritual and the specific set of actions carried out, each of which is symbolically significant. However, the whirling activity as a means of meditation is not unique to the Mevlevi Order. Another Sufi sect, the Qawwali Order in Pakistan also has a whirling ritual, which is quite different from the rituals of the Mevlevi. In addition, the Alevi and Bektaşî Orders whirl in their ritual, which is called *semah*ⁱⁱⁱ. Other Sufi sects such as

the Rukai, Kadiri, Halveti, Bayrami, Gülşeni and Uşşaki practice the *devr*, which means rotation, in which the dancers make a circle while holding each other.

Although the Mevlevi Dervishes who spend their lives in *tekkes* might compose in various religious, secular, instrumental or vocal forms, the music accompanying a Mevlevi ritual is specifically called *Mevlevi Ayini* and it is the longest form in Ottoman / Turkish makam music. *Mevlevi Ayini* is a major contribution to the development of Ottoman / Turkish musical composition. During the nineteenth century, as the Mevlevis came to dominate the transmission of the entire Ottoman repertoire, many secular musicians began to learn the Mevlevi repertoire as part of their musical education (Feldman, 1996, p. 98).

Common Concepts in Various Sufi Music Traditions

Sufism is the term given to the spiritual practices that developed beyond the normal obligatory duties of Islam, both within and outside organized Sufi orders. Various Sufi orders are found throughout the Muslim world, from South and Central Asia through Turkey, Iran and northern, eastern and western Africa. Since each Sufi order has its own traditions, Sufi music also refers to various musical traditions and practices that differ from region to region. However, what is common among Sufis across various regions is an underlying philosophy. There are three concepts common to all Sufi sects in the appreciation of music regardless of the variety of music traditions.

First, *dhikr* refers to remembrance and recollection in Arabic. Habib Tauma states that *dhikr* is a kind of Sufi ceremony that often includes music, and it may include recitation, singing, instrumental music, dance, costumes, incense, meditation, ecstasy, and trance (Tauma, 1996, p.162). The *dhikr* tradition, then, is a method of meditation on past verities and on the transcendent being of God, a base upon which Sufism built a structure for probing higher consciousness, engaging with spiritual forces, and ultimately coming into a personal encounter with God (Waugh, 2004, p.180). Walter Feldman identifies three main types of *dhikr* postures and his list includes standing, whirling, and sitting or kneeling as the primary positions for worship (Feldman, 1992, p.196-97).

Second, *wajd* is explained as the state that the spirit manifests while in ecstasy (Khan, 1991, p.57). *Wajd* enables the Sufi to become unconscious of his own acts and to see God's acts and bounties toward him.

Third, *sema* is a crucial concept in Sufi philosophy in order to understand the symbolic meaning in music. It means listening, hearing and audition in Arabic. In Sufism, *sema* refers to listening to music, singing, and chanting a measured recitation designed to bring about religious emotion and ecstasy. *Sema* also refers to non-musical phenomena such as spiritual knowledge, divine wisdom, and silence (Yondemli, 2007, p.342). In the Sufi tradition, religious ecstasy attained through music is believed to enable the soul to communicate directly with God. In Turkish, *sema* means sky and the whirling activity of dervishes. In Turkish, *sema* also represents

union with God, in the belief that when one dies, one's soul will reach to God, to *sema*/the sky.

Sema connotes a hearing with the 'ear of the heart', an attitude of reverently listening to music and/or the singing of mystical poetry with the intent of increasing an awareness and an understanding of the Divine; it is a type of meditation focusing on melody through the use of instruments, mystical songs or a combination of both (During, 1988, p.13). Jean During also states that the true Sufi may interpret the most mundane of melodies as 'music of the spheres', hearing in it the Divine summons to heed the primordial covenant, and he proclaims that the musical form is only secondary to the actual performance.

Sema as a whole symbolizes a human soul on a spiritual journey, just as the dervish turns towards the truth by abandoning his ego. Whirling as worship symbolizes a searching for God everywhere; ceasing to be attached to the material aspects of this world. While whirling, the palm of a dervish's right hand is held upwards while the palm of his left hand is turned towards the ground. This symbolizes that what comes from God, Allah, is meant to be given to other people for the sake of the universe. Each time a dervish puts his foot on the ground, he repeats the name of God, Allah, to enhance his meditation in the process of whirling.

The Ottoman Sufi writer Al-Uskudari distinguishes between two kinds of *sema*, the artificial and the authentic, subdividing the latter into two categories: natural and spiritual. The natural is connected with beautiful voices and pleasant melodies whereas the spiritual relates to the perception of inner meanings, a kind of absolute *sema* reached by the Sufi leaders and those who have attained the highest mystical degree; beyond the 'natural' and therefore the musical aspects of *sema* (Al-Uskudari, 1628, as cited by Shiloah, 1995, p.41). Mevlana's view of *sema* is expressed as an adornment of the soul which enables it to discover love, to feel the shudder of the encounter, to take off the veils, and to be in the presence of God (Halman and And, 1983, p.636).

Thus, the role of music in a Sufi ritual is directly related to the function of music in communicating spiritual meaning and its power to lead one to move beyond the music itself into an 'absolute' *sema*. There are no common musical characteristics in what is called 'Sufi Music': each tradition is to be analyzed on its own terms within its own community. However, although the musical traditions differ among various Sufi sects such as the Qawwali Order in Pakistan or Mevlevi Order in Turkey, three concepts that do relate to the spirituality of music and ritual are *dhikr*, *wajd* and *sema*.

Music of the Mevlevi Order of Sufism and the Whirling Dervish Ritual

The music of the Mevlevi Order is strongly affiliated with the Ottoman Music tradition. *Tekkes* were similar to education centres for musicians. During the Ottoman Era, the Mevlevi Order was highly respected within the Turkish Government and most of the famous composers of Ottoman art music were from the Mevlevi Order.

Ottoman music may be classified as sacred and secular. Although Mevlevi dervishes, who spent their lives in *tekkes*, may have composed in varieties of religious, secular, instrumental or vocal forms, the music accompanying a Mevlevi ritual is specifically called *Mevlevi Ayini* and it is the longest form in Turkish / Ottoman makam music. The Whirling Dervish Ritual represents a human journey from the material to the spiritual. The ritual has strict rules with regard to both the music and the symbolic actions made throughout the ceremony.

During the Ottoman Era, the Mevlevi order produced a number of notable poets and musicians such as Sheikh Ghalib, Ismail Rusuhi Dede from Ankara, Esrar Dede, Halet Efendi and Gavsı Dede. They are all buried at the *Galata Mevlevihanesi*^{iv} in Istanbul. Furthermore, *Mevlevihanes* became the most important institutions for the transmission of the classical repertoire outside the palace. Sources for Mevlevi theology, ritual and music are found in the many writings, speeches, and sermons of the Mevlana that were codified by his followers and his son, Sultan Veled. The lyrics of the *Ayin-i Şerif* are invariably selected from the writings of Mevlana: rarely are they based on the poetry of other Sufi writers.

The two most important instruments in Mevlevi music are the *ney* and *kudüm*. The *ney* is an end-blown flute that represents a human soul emerging from the spiritual world, just as the *ney* is removed from the reed bed. A *kudüm* is a small double drum used in Mevlevi music, played with special small sticks.



Figure 1. Ney and Kudüm

Even though whirling to invoke *dhikr* was initiated by Mevlana in a natural, spontaneous way, after his death in 1272, it began to take on ceremonial form through his son, Sultan Veled and his followers. According to Ekrem Işın, the practice of whirling was developing into a structured Whirling Dervish Ritual based on musical compositions in the fifteenth century under the direction of Pir Adil Çelebi (1421-1460) (Işın, 1994, p.423). Pir Adil Çelebi is accepted as the second ‘founder’ of the Mevlevi Order due to the many branches of the order which were emerging during his lifetime. The first *Mevlevi Ayini* composed are in *Pençgah*, *Dügah*, and *Hüseyni* makams, but their composers are unknown. These compositions are called *Beste-i Kadim*^v. The first known composer of a *Mevlevi Ayini* is Derviş Mustafa, who composed a *Mevlevi Ayini* in *Bayati* makam in the seventeenth century. The second is Buhurizade Mustafa İtri whose *Mevlevi Ayini* is in *Segah* makam. The first known record of a ceremony is written by Jean Antoine Du Loir (1654, p. 188) in the seventeenth century:

Twice a week, one of the Mevlevi dervishes gives a sermon. He also reads some parts from Quran. Afterwards, while the musicians [are] singing the hymns, ney players accompany them and the ritual start[s] with the beats of kudum. In the first part of the hymn, dervishes sit down on their knees and wait. The sheikh sits on [sic] the direction of Mecca on a pelt. In the 2nd section dervishes stand up and salute the sheikh one by one then start to whirl. Each dervish follows that. After the whirling continues about 7-8 minutes, they stop suddenly. Then they repeat the same set of actions for about 4-5 times. The ceremony is approximately one hour. Dervishes wear long loose skirts as women in France wear.

According to that description it can be said that the ceremony has come down to our day with few changes. With respect to the changes in the music of the *Mevlevi Ayini*, a substantial change occurred in the late seventeenth century. The *naat*, which was composed by Itri in *Rast* makam and set to a text from Rumi's book, *Divan-i Kebir*, was added to the beginning of the ceremony. *Naat* is a non-rhythmic, vocal improvisation of texts about the Prophet Muhammed. According to the travel books by Du Loir, Pietro della Valle and Paul Rycaut, the ceremony began with a section from *Mesnevi*^{vi} followed by an improvisation on the *ney*. The earliest notable source for the ritual, written by Divane Mehmet Çelebi in the sixteenth century, contains no reference to a *Naat*.

The four parts of the musical form, *Mevlevi Ayini*, are performed in the following order:

1. *Naat-ı Şerif*, which opens the ceremony and honours the Prophet Muhammad
2. *Ney taksim*, an improvisation on the *ney*
3. *Peşrev*, an instrumental form in Turkish art music
4. *Ayin-i Şerif* (= noble ceremony), the main section of the entire composition which accompanies the whirling: it should be composed by a single composer in a specific makam
5. The ceremony closes with a reading from the Quran.

Composers in the Ottoman/Turkish makam tradition are skilled in the use of traditional rules for organising pitch material, melodic progression, modulations to other makams, and melodic cells characteristic of particular makams. As Mevlevi music and other religious music of the region belong within this Ottoman tradition, Mevlevi composers are also trained and work within the same musical system.

Sections of Mevlevi Ayini and their Symbolic Meanings^{vii}

1. **Naat** is a vocal improvisation form sung by a naathan. The *Naat-ı Şerif* composed by Buhurizade Mustafa Itri in *Rast* makam and set to a poem by Rumi in praise of the Prophet Mohammad opens the ceremonies. Then the beating of the *kudüm* (small kettle drum) begins symbolizing God's command to create the universe.

2. **Ney taksim:** Taksim is a form for instrumental improvisation played on the *ney* in an appropriate makam for the ceremony.
3. **Devr-i Veled:** In the form of *peşrev*. *Peşrev* is an instrumental form composed with a long metric structure. It is like a prelude and demonstrates all the characteristics of the particular makam used. In this section the dervishes and the sheikh walk in a circle for three complete rounds which the dervishes try to follow in the footsteps of the sheikh. This following in the sheikh's path represents their membership of the Mevlevi Order.
4. **First Salutation:** This is the first lyric part of the Mevlevi *Ayin-i Şerif* which is usually set to a poem by Rumi. It may be composed using the following *usûl*, the fourteen-beat *Devr-i Revan*. Dervishes are to experience both the spiritual and material worlds while they whirl in the first salutation of the *Mevlevi Ayini*. The first salutation symbolizes the *Şeriat*, the religious laws of Islam. In this section, dervishes are viewing the entire universe as a way to reach the majesty of God.
5. **Second Salutation:** The second lyric part of the *Ayin-i Şerif* : all four salutations are usually set to a poem by Rumi. This section may be composed in the following *usûl*: the ten-beat *Ağır Evfer*. This second cycle represents one's whole existence to be dissolved inside of 'the Divine Unity'. In the second salutation, where the tempo decreases, an emphasis rests on an aspect of Sufi philosophy: that by contemplating the universe, one may experience an awareness of God.
6. **Third Salutation:** The third lyric part may be composed in the following *usûls*: a twenty-eight-beat *Devr-i Kebir*, a ten-beat *Ağırsemâi* and a six-beat *Yürüksemâi*. The *Yürüksemâi* six-beat parts and the fixed melody part of the *Ayin*, date from a fifteenth-century composition. The third cycle represents dervishes to cleanse themselves of their sins and attain spiritual perfection. In this third salutation, as the tempo becomes faster, it symbolizes the divine reality, the desire to reach God and dissolve in his love.
7. **Fourth Salutation:** In the second cycle the dervishes' entire existence is dissolved within the Divine Unity. In the fourth cycle they arrive at the junction of non-existence within Divine Existence. The sheikh, who stood at the post for the first three salutations, during which the musicians played and the chorus chanted, now joins the whirling in this fourth salutation. Here he represents the center, the sun, and the dervishes represent the planets orbiting around it and concurrently around themselves, as it were, in the solar system of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi.
8. **Last peşrev and Yürüksemâi:** The *usûl* in the last *peşrev* is the eight-beat *Ağır Düyek* and the *Yürük Semâi* in the six-beat *Yürüksemâi* *usûl*.
9. **Last taksim:** This improvised section is performed on any instrument.
10. A reading of a passage from the Quran

Whirling Dervish Ceremonies as Cultural Attractions

On December 13, 1925, the Turkish Government, headed by Atatürk, officially banned all Sufi sects under Article 1 of Law 677 (Constitution of the Turkish Republic 1925). The Mevlevi Order, among others, was included in this ban in spite of the prestigious status in which they were held throughout the region throughout the Ottoman Empire. Like many other political, economic, social and cultural reforms made by Atatürk; the ban was also a reflection of the ideologies embraced by The Turkish Republic in order to establish a secular nation state. During that process, Ziya Gökalp, one of the most powerful Turkish nationalists, became a key figure in the new government's political approach to art and music. He thought of Western Europe as a cultural model for the new Turkish civilization. Gökalp accepted Turkish folk music as traditional Turkish music and considered that a synthesis of Western classical music with Turkish folk music would serve as a means of achieving his political aims. This plan excluded Turkish art music, as it represented Ottoman culture. In 1934, a ban was placed on broadcasting Turkish art music — classed as Ottoman in origin — for twenty-two months.

After Sufi sects were banned, all Mevlevi whirling costumes and musical instruments were put on display in museums as vestiges of Turkish cultural heritage. Before the ban, Whirling Ceremonies were performed only inside the *Semahane*^{viii}. However, after that, various Mevlevi groups continued their practices and traditions in secret. The first post-ban ceremony was organized in 1943 in Konya as part of an integrated conference featuring Prof. Dr. Nafiz Uzluk. Similar performances continued to take place in Konya, İstanbul and Ankara (Şimşekler, 2003, p.26). In 1953, Whirling Dervish Ceremonies became legal again, but only as public performances connected with Turkish cultural heritage under government control. On the 680th *Şeb-i Aruz* night, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism permitted a ceremony in Konya. This ceremony was intended to be part of a cultural celebration in honor of one of the great Turkish poets as well as an event that would attract tourists. Although it was permitted as a secular 'Turkish folk dance', a compromise was made and a recitation from the Quran was permitted at the end of the ceremony (Friedlander, 1975, p.112).

After all the *Mevlevihanes* had closed down, some were renovated and redecorated as museums. Just one year after the *tekkeler* were closed, the central *tekke* in Konya opened as a museum called *Konya Âsâr-i Âtîka Müzesi*. In 1954, this name was changed again to the Mevlana Museum. The *Galata Mevlevihanesi*, which was used as a Mevlevihane until the ban in 1925, was renovated between 1967 and 1972 and opened as a museum in 1975.

In October 2005, UNESCO added the Whirling Dervish Ceremony to its list entitled 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'. UNESCO once again sought to preserve and reinvigorate Mevlana culture by declaring the year 2007 another *Year of Rumi*, marking the eight hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Whirling Dervish Rituals as Tourist Attractions

Whirling Dervish Ceremonies are now being performed in restaurants, bars, at opening ceremonies, circumcision feasts, in hotel lobbies and in many tourist venues. Negative reactions to whirling performances in inappropriate places resulted in a law banning those ceremonies. The government declared that people and places that are not authorized to perform *Sema* will be punished according to law 5326 of the Constitution that compromises rules concerning ethical issues in society.



Figure 2. Whirling Dervish performance at a restaurant & bar (a photo by Uyar)

In the tradition of Mevlevi culture, the Whirling ceremony is an act of worship, and there is no function for the ritual outside worship. However, there used to be a custom to allow the participants to accept money, a custom called *Niyaz Ayini*. It is a section added after the Fourth Salutation of *Ayin-i Şerif*. During the performance of the *sema* the sheikh, a dervish, or a person from the audience may wish to extend the ritual because of the powerful feelings that it evokes. Then, according to the tradition, an amount of money will be given to the *semazenbaşı*, who then delivers it to the *kudümzen* by putting the money on the *kudüm*. So the section called *Niyaz Ayini* would be added before the last *peşrev* of the *Mevlevi Ayini*. This is the only legitimate way for the Mevlevi Order to accept money for their rituals.

Mevlevi Music as a Part of the New Age Movement

The rising interest in Whirling Dervish rituals and Mevlevi culture has also resulted in the performing and recording of actual *Ayin-i Şerif* music by professional Turkish art music ensembles. For example, the project sponsored by the İstanbul Municipality in 2007, to celebrate the eight hundredth birthday of Mevlana, included the performance of eight Mevlevi Ayini released as a set of eight CDs. Those Mevlevi Ayini which include settings of Mevlana's poems are composed by Dede Efendi, one of the most important composers of Turkish music, and performed by the renowned soloist, Mehmet Akça.

However, there are also albums with a 'Mevlevi' title, the music of which is neither in Mevlevi Ayini form, nor composed by Mevlevi composers. At the time of writing, four albums with 'Mevlevi music' appearing in the titles have been reviewed.

The first example is *Mevlevî-Sufî Relaxation II: Mental Journey* (2006). *Ney taksims* are combined with electronic sounds. ‘Modern’ elements are melted in the pot with the ‘spiritual’ *ney* instrument. It is produced in the Turkish music market with an English name and is published by the record company AJS. Examples of the titles of the pieces are ‘For Love’, ‘To Feel Better’, ‘Harmony’, etc.



Figure 3. The cover of the Mevlevî- Sufî Relaxation II Album

The first track, ‘For Love’, is of improvisations in *Saba* makam. The second, called ‘Drop’, is in the *Acem Kürdi* makam. The third, called ‘Water’, starts with sounds from nature and a melodic improvisation in *Hicaz* makam, played on the keyboard, and continues with improvisations in *Uşşak* makam and followed by *Saba* makam. Another album, which includes the name of Mevlevî without actually being Mevlevî music, is entitled *The Sound of Mevlevî Music: Mevlevî Mevlana* (2005). The publisher is once again AJS. The titles of the pieces include ‘Breath’, ‘Time’, ‘Ocean’, ‘Dervish’, and ‘Truth’. This CD features the *ney* with electronic ambient voices: the only common reference to Mevlevî music and culture is the use of the *ney*. In addition, there are albums, which have ‘Mevlevî’ in their titles but have no connection with Mevlevî music. Whirling dervishes feature on many CD covers of so-called ‘Sufî’ music recordings from Turkey. For example, the album by Osman Murat Tuğsuz, *Genç Sufî Akustik*^{ix}, published in 2009. This album includes *ilahis* and instrumental *taksims*.

Common characteristics among these recordings are the use of sounds from nature and solo improvisations on the *ney*. Rather than examples of Mevlevî music, the recordings seem to be targeted at New Age listeners promising so-called meditative universes. Spiritual values in Mevlevî culture become a source for meanings to be superimposed on music placed on the world music market as a product with spiritual content. *The ney* is specifically associated with Sufism, which a representation of God’s breath giving life into all creatures. It also symbolizes the human soul on earth, exiled from its authentic place of belonging.

Victor Vicente suggests that this music — aside from its national ‘Ottoman’ or ‘Turkish’ associations — relating to Mevlana, the *sema*, and traditional Mevlevi music, is most widely known in this context of popular New Age spirituality, with its focus on meditation and healing (Vicente, 2007, p. 243).

Concluding Remarks

To sum up, ‘Mevlevi music’ refers to either the music composed by a composer who is Mevlevi and educated within the *tekke*, or to the *Ayin-i Şerif* form that accompanies the Whirling Dervish Ritual. The meaning of Mevlevi music relates to the spiritual significance of the ceremony itself.

However, with the performance of Whirling Dervish Ceremonies as tourist and cultural attractions, the term ‘Mevlevi music’ has come to be used for the promotion of a New Age genre, which combines *ney* and electronics. *Ney* becomes a representative sound to remind one of Mevlevi culture. In the case of Turkish / Ottoman makam music promoted as ‘Mevlevi Music’, the spiritual values in Mevlevi culture also become a source for attributes to be superimposed as a marketing tool on Turkish art music. In Sultanahmet — one of the most historical places of Istanbul and a great tourist attraction — during *Ramazan*, many restaurants include the ‘*Semazen Show*’ among their small-scale concerts. In this context, the Whirling Dervishes seem to function as a feature for the promotion of secular Turkish makam music. In some cases a performance is an imitation of a real ceremony, in which even the *mutrib*^x play the *Ayin-i Şerif* form, but with some parts missing.

For a worshiper, Sufi music is received intentionally and contextually rather than formally. *Ayin-i Şerif*, the form in Turkish makam music that accompanies the whirling ritual, is sacred within the context of the ritual. However, with the promotion of traditional Turkish makam music as ‘Mevlevi’ music, those spiritual attributions become a marketing tool as evidenced by many examples around the world. That is to say, non-musical aspects of Mevlevi music become a tool for the promotion of both secular and religious Turkish / Ottoman makam as well as the examples of New Age music.

References

- Al-Uskudari, A.M.. (1628). *Kashf al-qina „an wadjh al-sama*.
 Aydemir, M. (2010). *Turkish Music Makam Guide*. Istanbul: Kültür Başkenti Yayinlari.
 Du Loir, J. A. (1654). *Les voyages du sieur Du Loir*. Paris.
 During, J. (1988). *Musique et extase: l'audition mystique dans la tradition soufie*. Paris: Albin Michel.
 Feldman, W. (1992). Musical Genres and Zikr of the Sunni Tarikats of Istanbul. In Raymond Lifchez, eds., *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art, and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*. (p.187-202). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
 ————— (1996). *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire*. Berlin: Verlag für Wissenschaft und Bildung.
 Friedlander, I.(1975). *The Whirling Dervishes*. New York: Macmillan.

- Gamard, I. (2009). The Popularity of Mawlânâ Rûmî and the Mawlawî Tradition. *Mawlana Rumi review* 1, 2010. *Can be found in* <http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/popularity-of-rumi.html>.
- Halman, T. S. and Metin A. (1983). *Mevlana Celeleddin Rumi and The Whirling Dervishes*. İstanbul: Dost Publications.
- Işin, E. (1994). Mevlevilik. *Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*. (p. 422-430). İstanbul: KB. ve Tarih Vakfı Ortak Yayını.
- Khan, Hazrat Inayat. (1991). *The Mysticism of Sound and Music*. Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc.
- Shiloah, Amnon. (1995). *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural Study*. Detroit: Wayne University Press.
- Signell, Karl, L. (2010). *Makam: Modal Practice in Turkish Art Music*. Michigan: Da Capo Press.
- Şimşekler, Nuri. (2003). Mevlâna, Mevlevilik Çalışmaları ve Mevlâna Kültür Merkezi. *Yeni İpekyolu*, 190, 24-30.
- Touma, Habib Hassan. (1996). *The Music of the Arabs*. Laurie Schwartz, Trans. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press.
- Vicente, Victor A. (2007). "The Aesthetics of Motion in Musics for the Mevlana Celeleddin Rumi." Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, Baltimore County. *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (accessed 1 March 2009).
- Waugh, Earle . (2004). Dhikr. In Richard C. Martin, ed., *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, Vol.2. (p. 179-180). New York: Macmillan.
- Yondemli, Fuat. (2007). *Mevlevilikte Sema ve Musiki*. İstanbul: Nuve Kültür Merkezi Yayinlari.

ⁱ In Arabic, *tariq* means 'the path', plural *tariqah*, which means 'paths' to knowledge of the ultimate truth and experience of God.

ⁱⁱ Dervish lodges, where the ceremonies and practices of the Sufi sects are performed. In the case of the Mevlevi Order, the dervishes live in the lodges, where they make music, conduct Whirling Dervish rituals, etc.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Turkey, *Alevi* and *Bektaşî* Orders are the most widespread Sufi-derived orders of Islam apart from the Mevlevi Order. Their whirling activity called *semah*, which is a free form of fast whirling with musical accompaniment, is special to Alevi and Bektaşî Orders. However, it differs from the *sema* of the Mevlevi order, which contains a specific set of actions and rules concerning the music.

^{iv} Mevlevihane is a synonym for Mevlevi tekkes (dervish lodges), where Mevlevi are accommodated and perform their rituals.

^v Ancient compositions

^{vi} A masterpiece by Mevlana Celeleddin Rumi.

^{vii} The symbolic meanings are written through interviews with three Mevlevi dervishes who don't prefer their names to be published.

^{viii} Young Sufi Acoustic

^{ix} Mevlevi music ensemble that plays during the Whirling Ritual

Appendix.

Glossary of terms:

Acem Kürdi: Makam in Ottoman / Turkish makam music.

Adhan: The call to prayer.

Alevi: A sect of Islam combining Anatolian folk Shiism with Sufi elements.

Allah: Arabic word for “God”.

Ayin: Ceremony, rite.

Ayin-i Şerif: A form in Ottoman-Turkish Makam music used for composing the music which accompanies the Whirling Dervish Ritual.

Bayati Ayini: Mevlevi Ayini in Bayati makam.

Bayrami: An Islamic Sufi order.

Bektaşî: An Islamic Sufi order.

Beste-i Kadim: Ancient Mevlevi ceremony compositions.

Devr: It has two meanings; first, it means turnover and rotation. Secondly, it means era, as in the example of *Devr-i Veled*, the era of Sultan Veled. (Son of Rumi)

Dhikr: Invocation and remembrance in Arabic.

Gülşeni: An Islamic Sufi order.

Halvetî: An Islamic Sufi order.

İlahî: Hymn.

Kadiri: An Islamic Sufi order.

Kudümzen: The performer of the kudüm.

Makam: Modes in Ottoman / Turkish makam music; a set of rules for composing concerning pitch material, melodic progression, modulations to other makams and stereotypical melodic cells.

Mesnevi: A masterpiece of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi.

Mevlevihane: Dervish lodges where Mevlevi are accommodated and perform their rituals, see also Tekke.

Mukabele-i Şerif: The ceremony of the whirling dervishes.

Mutrib: The musical ensemble which accompanies Mevlevi Rituals. It consists of *Neyzen*, *Kudümzen*, *Na'athan* and choir.

Naat: Non-rhythmic improvised singing of texts about the Prophet Mohammed.

Naathan: Person who sings the *naat*, chanter.

Niyaz Ayini: The section added after the fourth salutation of *Ayin-i Şerif*, in which the *Mevlevi* dervishes accept money as donations.

Peşrev: An instrumental form composed with a long metric structure.

Post: The animal skin which is painted red, on which the Mevlevi sheikh (spiritual master of an Islamic community) sits during the Whirling Dervish ceremony.

Ramazan: Ramadan, holy month in Islam.

Rast: In Turkish / Ottoman makam music system, it indicates the G note. Besides it is the name of the makam which has its center on *Rast* pitch.

Rufai: An Islamic Sufi order.

Segah: In Turkish makam music system, it indicates the pitch, which is one coma lower than the B note. Besides it is the name of the makam that has its center on *Segah* pitch.

Semah: A free form of whirling performed by the followers of the *Alevi* and *Bektaşî* Orders in Turkey.

Semahane: The hall in which whirling rituals are performed.

Semazen: Whirling dervish.

Semazenbaşı: Chief whirling dervish.

Şeriat: Islamic canonical rules.

Taksim: An instrumental form for improvisation.

Tarikat: Sect, order. In Arabic, it is called tariq and it means ‘the path’ and its plural is tariqah which means ‘paths’ to knowledge of the ultimate truth and experience of God.

Tekke: Dervish lodges where the ceremonies and practices of the Sufi sects take place. In the case of the Mevlevi Order, the dervishes live in the lodges where they make music, conduct Whirling Dervish rituals, etc.

Uşşak: A pitch and a makam in Ottoman / Turkish makam music.

Uşşaki: An Islamic Sufi order.

Usûl: The rhythmic cycles in Ottoman / Turkish makam music.

Wajd: It is the state that the spirit manifests while in ecstasy; it enables the Sufi to become unconscious of his own acts and to see God’s acts and bounties toward him.

Biographies

Ş. Şehvar Beşiroğlu is a professor of music, specialized in Ottoman-Turkish art music. She is a *Kanun* and *Çeng* (Turkish Harp) player. She conducted her BA studies in *Kanun* in ITU Turkish State Music Conservatory; MA and DMA degrees in Turkish Music program at ITU; Post-Doctoral studies in Ottoman History and Music at Harvard University. She performed in numerous projects such as Eurasia Ensemble, The Cantemir Ensemble, Hattusha Ensemble. Since 1986 she has been teaching *Kanun* Performance, Makam Theory, Systematic Musicology, Organology, Ethnomusicology, Ottoman-Turkish Music, Music in Turkey, Music and Gender, Music in Mediterranean Cultures at the ITU State Conservatory of Turkish Music and ITU MIAM.

Yaprak Melike Uyar is an ethnomusicologist, radio programmer and freelance music critic. She is a research assistant and lecturer at Istanbul Technical University Turkish Music State Conservatory’s Musicology Department; where she taught History of Popular Music, Jazz Appreciation and Introduction to Turkish Popular Music courses. She is a PhD candidate at the same institution with her doctoral dissertation called “Jazz in Turkey: Issues of Identity, Taste and Globalization”. She completed her master’s studies at Istanbul Technical University’s Advanced Studies in Music School at Ethnomusicology program with her thesis on the “Commodification of Whirling Dervish Ceremonies”.