

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY

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**‘Orchestration of Civil Society?’ Turkish-German Cooperation in
the Field of Classical Orchestral Music**

Serkan Topal

WORKING PAPER No: 17

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Preface

This paper, 'Orchestration of Civil Society? Turkish-German Cooperation in the Field of Classical Orchestral Music' by Serkan Topal, researcher at the DAAD-TÜBİTAK co-funded project 'Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations' from the University Duisburg-Essen, explores the cooperative nature of music. Focusing on Turkish-German orchestral collaborations, it examines how these partnerships serve as cultural and political bridges. Through an analysis of concert programs, media, and audience responses, the study highlights how orchestral music not only reflects but also fosters cross-cultural understanding and integration, positioning itself as a significant force within civil society. This is the second working paper in the series on the ongoing project supported by Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) under the Grant Number 221N423 and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) under the Grand Number 57628225. The series hosts working papers associated with the research project.

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DAAD-TÜBİTAK Project

‘Orchestration of Civil Society?’ Turkish-German Cooperation in the Field of Classical Orchestral Music



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About the DAAD-TÜBİTAK Project ‘Distant Neighbors: Exploring Political Narratives and Visual Culture in Turkish-German Relations’

The joint research project between the European Institute at Istanbul Bilgi University and the Centre for Global Cooperation Research, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK). The starting observation in the context of the project is that the relationship between Turkey and Germany has been mainly analyzed in social science research (e.g. foreign policy analysis) through a narrow focus on political elites and in the context of the EU or broader geopolitical concerns. These studies often claim that the relationship has transformed from a befriended to a rather pragmatic mode of cooperation and can be characterized as a form of ‘distant neighbors’ particularly in the ritualized meetings between German and Turkish political leaders (Merkel, Scholz, Erdoğan). Our project aims at challenging or at least supplementing this dominant narrative by broadening the empirical scope from political elites to the much larger variety of political and cultural actors (civil society movements, political activists, scientists, filmmakers, novelists, musicians, artists etc.) from both countries in their European and transnational context. Our main argument is that these actors, operating in often very loose transnational networks (e.g. environmental activism, film festivals), have developed and established practices and creative techniques in transnational cooperation and thereby overcome the nationalist-driven narratives of a distant relationship. In short, the state of affairs in German-Turkish relations is much more complex and, to some extent, much more promising than a focus on bilateral official relations would suggest.

For more information, please visit the project Website: <https://explorenarratives.com/>



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‘Orchestration of Civil Society?’ Turkish-German Cooperation in the Field of Classical Orchestral Music

Abstract

Musicological research has pointed to music-making as an act of joint effort and collective creation, stressing its highly cooperative nature. Surprisingly, however, research on the subject of ‘cooperation’ in the world of music has been quite limited thus far. Consequently, everyday cooperative practices and interactions in the context of music(-making) have not been studied sufficiently. This working paper takes this as a starting point for the exploration of Turkish-German cooperation in the context of music in general and joint music-making in the orchestra in particular. Like no other form of music, orchestral music is ascribed the quality of a communal voice, with which not only the music itself, but also representations of ideals and messages are made public. Using the example of Turkish-German cooperation in the field of orchestral music, this paper addresses the question how music as an art form is embedded in both the cultural and the political sphere and how it functions as a ‘bridge between cultures’. Based on a documentary analysis of concert programs, newspaper articles and reports from concertgoers, it shows that (transnational) orchestral cooperation can be understood as a form of cooperation embedded in civil society in both metaphorical/symbolic and factual terms.

Introduction

Research on ‘cooperation’ is first and foremost associated as gravitating towards global issues that involve (multiple) governments and institutions. However, this macro-level focus (naturally) tends to overlook how everyday political life is influenced by various cooperative practices that are constituted by individuals and their interactions with one another. Consequently, phenomena of human agency (Tomasello 2022) often go unnoticed, and are only seldomly contemplated upon. Although there are recent trends within the social sciences that aim to conceptualize cooperation more thoroughly as a social everyday practice and not just as a (by-)product of political decision-making on the macro level, there is still only limited research in this respect. This applies even more so to cooperation in music in particular, which there has also only been quite limited research (Makelberge 2012; Kniffin et al. 2017). This is all the more surprising, as musicological research has pointed to music-making as an act of joint effort and collective creation – thus, stressing its highly cooperative nature (Bright 1963; DeNora 2003; Peters et al. 2023). This working paper takes this as a starting point for the exploration of Turkish-German cooperation in the context of music in general and joint music-making in particular.

It is implicitly assumed that music as a form of art includes a public, i.e. that it always has a ‘public nature’ (Miyamoto 2013: 101). In a constructivist reading, art only begins to exist when it is read, seen or heard by individuals. In this sense, we can assume that there is a close connection between art and the public sphere. The question then inevitably arises as to what exactly this connection looks like? In other words: what kind of public sphere is constituted by art and its reception by the public? This article focuses on a specific form of art: classical orchestral music. The reasons for this focus are manifold, but can be broken down into the following factors: practically no musical event is as dependent on the audience and is made for an audience as much as orchestral concerts (Miyamoto 2013: 108). In addition, musicological research ascribes to orchestral works the quality of a ‘*communal voice*’ (Bonds 2006: 68) like no other form of music. This means that more than in any other type of musical performance, orchestral music evokes a ‘voice’ that

symbolises a community and (sometimes) also a message (on social, political, ecological, etc.) matters.

While until the 19th century it was still folk representations (Bonds 2006: 66) that were evoked by orchestral works¹, the 'voices' or '*representations*' (Habermas 1992[1962]: 252) brought forth by orchestral works are far more diverse today. The case of Turkish composer and pianist Fazil Say can be cited here in a fruitful way: moved by major protests against the planned clearing of large tracts of forest and the installation of a gold mine in the Ida Mountains in the summer of 2019 (Gottschlich 2019), Say composed the piece *Mount Ida*, which is divided into the three movements *Destruction of Nature*, *Injured Bird* and *A Ritual of Hope*. The name of the last movement alludes to the fact that the protests actually bore fruit, meaning that the deforestation was stopped after a long struggle. This success was attributed to the wide reach of the protests, to whose resonance Say's well-attended live concerts in the Ida Mountains contributed. In an interview recorded in Switzerland in 2023, Fazil Say describes himself as follows: 'Of course I'm also an activist and I get involved. For nature conservation, social justice - and because I have to, also for political things' (Krähenbühl 2023; own translation). As a composer of numerous works with explicitly political content, Fazil Say personifies an interweaving of musical oeuvre and civil-political commitment, which resonates with society at large, well beyond national borders. As a result, parts of the German population are involved in the 'concerns' of Turkish society through the attention that Say's musical work and his accompanying political activism attracts. Works by Fazil Say were recorded in 2023 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic by the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, which included works by the pioneering generation of Turkish composers in its program for the purpose of intercultural cooperation (Deutschlandfunk Kultur 2023).

On occasions such as these, cultural institutions such as the orchestra reveal 'artistic aspects of engaged citizenship practices and an arts-based potential

¹ And here comes to mind the division into, for example, German and Italian music, which 'united' the German or Italian people (Miyamoto 2013: 110) and which was still common at the time.

for social mobilisation around issues of contemporary political concern' (Ramnarine 2011: 328). In combination, two characteristics of the orchestra come to the surface particularly clearly here: on the one hand, it is a matter of self-interested endeavours, i.e. the development of new audiences and thus an attempt at preservation in the modern music market, in which 'communities' (e.g. the Turkish community in Germany) are 'audiences', and on the other hand, there are altruistic tendencies to become involved in social projects as an institution in the public eye at the level of society as a whole (Ramnarine 2011: 329). As far as the orchestra is concerned, the musicians are brought together through their interaction in a community that could be called 'civil society', because: 'Within this corporation, the musicians negotiate a common ground based on their new relationships and a negotiated narrative informing a common social identity' (Riiser 2010: 25).

This working paper examines the social and political agency that the orchestra as a musical collective can possess. It also raises the question of whether the orchestra can be regarded as an institution of civil society, as a body that addresses issues such as community, diversity, cosmopolitanism, belonging, poverty, education, ecology and sustainability. In other words, can art build a bridge between cultures that transcends intercultural and political tensions? To address these questions, the article is organised as follows: section two outlines music as a specific form of culture and socialisation, looking at how it is positioned within the civil sphere. Section three sets out the basic characteristics of the orchestra and describes how cooperation between musicians in the orchestra is organised. Section four traces the extent to which (inter-)orchestral cooperation can be interpreted as a 'mode of civil collaboration'. Section five sets out the theoretical framework, in which, following Habermas, the concept of 'representative publicness' is used. After a brief description of the underlying methodological approach, section six will deal with the specific case of Turkish-German orchestral (and, thus, in a broader sense, civil) cooperation. Central findings are summarised in the conclusion.

Music as a Form of Culture and Socialisation

At its core, culture is 'about providing publicly available modes of doing and being, modes which are shared, which come to be evaluated, imported, exported, cultural materials do often come to be associated with regularities of response' (DeNora 2003: 149). Associations of culture as a pattern of collective action and behaviour are therefore obvious (ibid.). In music as a specific form of culture and cultural experience, this collective character comes to the surface particularly clearly: as a 'bridge between cultures', music enables cross-border communication and cooperation by 'providing a shared sense of collective identity articulated by a symbolic sense of community' (Bennett 2004: 4). Joint music making is a typical situation of cooperation, as it thrives first and foremost from the fact that all participating musicians listen to each other and 'in fact, through listening (well), they become more cooperative creatures' (Sennett 2012: 14) in order to work together towards a 'particular moment of collective sound' (Peters et al. 2023: 263). In this sense, music has 'dialogical potential' (Barenboim 2009: 59). Of course, the audience is also involved in this collective process of listening, whereby the individual listener 'has to get outside him- or herself' (Sennett 2012: 21) and whereby music becomes the shared responsibility of the musicians and the audience alike (Peters et al. 2023: 268). A musical 'performance' thus arises from the encounter and interaction of all participants, both actors and spectators, i.e. musicians and audience. The dialogical aspect of music is also said to have transformative potential: music has a 'proven capacity to contribute to specific political causes' (Adlington and Buch 2020); 'it is a popular belief that music has a constructive social impact on those involved as practitioners or as audience' (Herman 2019: 143). As John Dewey states, art can and should eliminate prejudices (Dewey 2005[1934]: 370). With art, coexistence and community can be expressed aesthetically (Dewey 2005[1934]: 378). Music in general is 'cultural, affective and performative' (Drott 2018: 3) Music cannot be considered in isolation from the conditions under which it is performed, in fact, 'it can only exist in its relations to the lifeworld' (Peters et al. 2023: 258). Precisely because music is part of the social order, effects on body and mind are achieved in and through its appropriation, so that ultimately it can be stated that 'music in the social place is

[...] an aesthetic-political matter' (DeNora 2001: 175). Music is embedded in socio-cultural contexts and, as a place of interaction, offers space for 'performance politics' (Ramnarine 2018). In this sense, musical performance is to be understood as 'storytelling', i.e. music writes 'stories about the world we live in' (Sargent 2009: 3). Musical relationships are conceptualised as changing political relationships (Spitzer and Zaslav 2004: 514). That is, 'emphasising the capacity of musical performance to tell stories, including political ones' (Ramnarine 2014: 85). In the sense of an 'imaginative leap' (Ramnarine 2014: 86), the conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim drew the comparison between a musical score and a constitution respectively between the musical-artistic and political sphere:

A nation's constitution could be compared to a score and the politicians to its interpreters, who must constantly act and react according to the principles outlined within it. In a democracy this constitution can be challenged and adapted to changing times by the people, becoming a kind of collectively composed symphony [...] just as a performer must be constantly vigilant and curious enough to re-examine formerly conceived notions of interpretation and performance, a politician must be aware of his nation's actions (Barenboim 2009: 55).

The democratic constitution of society is thus reflected in 'the political imaginary of potentials for group action' around music' (Dietz and Steingo 2016: 47). Music is thus ultimately a contextualising instrument that frames the social world – 'to speak of such framing is to say that music becomes [...] an anchoring device' (DeNora 2003: 127). Musical cooperation projects demonstrate how musicians seek to transform and potentially politicise the socialities of musical performance and practice (Born 2020: 181).

The Orchestra as the Microcosm of Society?

Questions about the relationship between individualism and collectivism or, in other words, questions about the internal contexts of the orchestra have already been extensively investigated in ethnographic studies (see Allmendinger et al. 1996; Cottrell 2003; Peters et al. 2023). With reference to topics such as plurality and conflict, the orchestra as an institution is ascribed the potential to promote

peace, social harmony and political vision (Ramnarine 2011: 332). In this respect, the orchestra is described as an 'agent of positive socio-political change [...] [with] the capacity to influence society' (ibid.) and is thus (to a certain extent) understood as an area of advocacy in which practices, aesthetic encounters and moral discourses of public benefit circulate (Ramnarine 2011: 328). As such, the orchestra is an 'effectual voice in society and a widely accessible forum for reflective contemplation and judgment on matters that affect the community in the broadest sense' (Herman 2019: 140). Decisions within the orchestra are made on the basis of the reciprocal relationship with an audience in the broadest sense, namely with society as such.

In this sense, the orchestra is also understood as a 'microcosm of society' (Cheah 2009: 1) and as an 'exemplary model of collective action' (Faulkner 1973: 156). At the same time, the orchestra is a 'tool of community mobilisation [...] and promoting an understanding of social cohesion' (Ramnarine 2011: 330), whereby this (inner) coherence of the orchestra still leaves room for diversity. At first glance, both the orchestra and the audience seem to be monolithic structures in their own right (Peters et al. 2023), but they gain specificity through their individual elements, i.e. the individual musicians. It can be particularly relevant to look at the composition of orchestras. For example: the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, initiated by conductor and pianist Daniel Barenboim together with philosopher and literary critic Edward Said, is made up of Israeli and Palestinian musicians and aims to contribute to an improvement of transnational cooperation in general and to a better understanding between the two people in particular (Cheah 2009). Barenboim states about the Divan Orchestra that it is a humanitarian project, 'that may not change the world but that offers a step forward [...], a project to find common ground between estranged people' (Barenboim 2009: 66; 181).

Orchestras such as the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra can be made up of people from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds and yet (or perhaps precisely for this reason) symbolise an idea, a value, an ideal, e.g. the ideal of transnational cooperation in the case of the Divan Orchestra. Barenboim has argued that the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has created understanding and

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cooperation among its musicians: 'In this sense, we may well read the orchestra as a project aiming at conflict transformation; it certainly aims at the social transformation of its musicians, and through this transformation encourages reconciliation and mutual understanding on a larger scale' (Riiser 2010: 20). However unfortunately, with the violent conflicts in the West Bank and Gaza strip that began in October 2023, it has to be stated that advances in transnational cooperation, such as those initiated by the Divan Orchestra, are fragile and can be reverted back, if not maintained or if disrupted by conflicts. Even still and despite this sobering reality, the utopian vision of the orchestra as a 'bridge-builder' remains to be at the forefront (Riiser 2010: 21). The capacity and potential of the orchestra for diplomatic rapprochement or even peace-making cannot be taken for granted (Ramnarine 2020: 32), but must be actively negotiated by all actors involved - i.e. in the case of orchestral music: by composers (if still alive), conductors, musicians and audiences.

Despite the cooperative nature of the orchestra, however, it should not be forgotten that the orchestra is a hierarchical institution (Fisher 2013). At the top are the composer and the conductor, who are both largely responsible for the creative decision-making process. Next in the hierarchy are the sectional leaders of the individual instrumental groups, who mediate decisions and coordinate with the individual musicians. This top-down model of the orchestra is viewed ambivalently: cooperation and hierarchy are not exclusive, for example, but rather a 'hyperpluralist modus operandi' prevails (Ramnarine 2011: 331). The consensus in the orchestra, which is necessary for the orchestra to function, raises questions about leadership, teamwork, interpretative freedom and ultimately about the social relationships within this organisation, which are negotiated as democratic by the orchestra members themselves: 'Orchestral practitioners themselves sometimes present musical cooperation as a model for the political world, in the sense that their processes of arriving at a consensus can be considered within the frames of democratic politics' (ibid.).

Although the orchestra is led by a conductor, who undoubtedly has greater authority and decision-making leeway than the individual orchestra members, a

democratic aesthetic can still be found in the orchestra (Ramnarine 2011: 331), because orchestral music is always the result of cooperation. If the conductor vehemently attempts to seize absolute control over the group of musicians and thus creates a one-sided authoritarian climate rather than a reciprocal, cooperative one, the result will likely not be of high quality. In this sense, the orchestra should be seen as a 'model of [...] optimal human cooperation [...], it resembles a miniature society with different parts of the orchestra collaborating, creating harmony together' (Tydén 2009). This means that the orchestra is not just a metaphorical actor in civil society: 'orchestras move away from serving only as metaphors of society to being socially-aware participants in orchestrations of civil society, [...] [inhibiting] more active roles as socio-political bodies' (Ramnarine 2011: 348).

Orchestral Cooperation as a Mode of Civil Collaboration

Transnational musical cooperation in orchestras is essentially based on the narrative of being able to reach a common denominator in 'meaning-making', i.e. directly in the music, despite different 'upbringings' and different external circumstances and cultural values. To illustrate this, we will return to the example of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra mentioned in the previous section. In works such as *Out of Place: A Memoir* (Said 2000a), *Reflections on Exile* (Said 2000b) and *A Life in Music* (Barenboim 2002[1991]), both Barenboim and Said, the initiators of the orchestra, have contributed to the discussion on the formation of (national) identity in (inter-)cultural exchange. Both authors present a rather postmodern understanding of identity, in which traditional identity markers such as nationality are replaced by individual markers such as musical practice and social relations. In talking about the first workshop of the orchestra in Weimar, the two founders of the Divan Orchestra observe:

One set of identities was superseded by another set. There was an Israeli group, and a Russian group, and a Syrian group, a Lebanese group, and a group of Palestinian Israelis. All of them suddenly became cellists and violinists playing the same piece in the same orchestra under the same conductor (Barenboim and Said 2002: 9-10).

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What is observed here is evidently not only the breaking down of national stereotypes, but ultimately also the breaking down of nationality as such: 'Subsequently, the orchestra itself, and the music played in the orchestra, are both seen to hold a formative role in creating a new social identity' (Riiser 2010: 27). However still: ethnicity and nationalism nonetheless serve as an essential identity marker for the musicians (Riiser 2010: 28) - thus, a dialectic approach to and perspective on identity and identity-formation within the orchestra seems to be the most appropriate. This formation of identity is not only of metaphorical nature, but is reflected concretely in how, for example, the Divan musicians - namely Israelis and Palestinians - live together: as if they were both part of one and the same 'alternative' society (Riiser 2010: 23). Music plays a role in the 'narrativisation of place' (Bennett 2004: 2) and, by that, in the creation of a group (Riiser 2010: 25). In this respect, it can be stated that the Divan musicians form a new, shared narrative through making music and living together, from which the legitimisation of a new concept of social identity and community created in the process of making music together can be derived. This theorisation of identity formation in the orchestra is based on findings from studies of postcolonial theory, which emphasise and acknowledge the essential role of music in the construction and negotiation of socio-cultural identity (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000: 31):

Through playing the same piece of music, everyone participates in and negotiates the creation of a more complex and nuanced narrative they can have in common, and having done that, the orchestra may have set the stage for conflict transformation amongst themselves (Riiser 2010: 24/25).

Like the Divan Orchestra, these intra-orchestral dynamics can also be observed in a lot of other cases: Kristian Järvi, for example, a US conductor of Estonian origin, said about the Baltic Youth Philharmonic: 'Youth orchestras are able to play as all orchestras should: without borders, boundaries and judgement'. This statement was circulated in 2013 via the brochure 'music without borders' (Hummel and Warnig 2013: 4), once again emphasising the 'dialogical potential' (Barenboim 2009: 59) of music. The goals pursued with the founding of the Baltic Youth Philharmonic were the musical education and further training for young musicians and political integration of the Baltic states into the European Union. The latter

concern in particular was emphasised in the plan to found the youth orchestra. The project was commented on as follows:

A politics of unification fosters common cultural understandings in musical projects rather than national preoccupations and interests, and it diminishes an emphasis on histories of empires, occupation and regional conflict (Ramnarine 2014: 90).

The 'radical democratic potential' (Born 2020: 199) of music is emphasised here, which apparently seems to be capable of forming a unity out of individual orchestra members. The community of orchestra members owes the communal character of its existence precisely to the commonality of music-making within the framework of democratic organisation (Barber 2003[1998]: 249). With 'affective links and mediating structures' (ibid.), orchestral collaboration provides two tools that are essential for a strong democratic order (Ramnarine 2020: 34). Orchestras are therefore essential to the creation of a 'continuum of activity that stretches from the neighbourhood to the nation' (Barber 2003[1998]: 252).

Theoretical Approach – The Representative Publicness of Orchestral Performance

Jürgen Habermas has dealt extensively with the 'position' that art inhabits within society and the reception of art in the public sphere. According to Habermas, the commercialisation of art is an essential precondition for it to enter the public sphere. While art was almost exclusively reserved for the aristocracy and the church until the 18th century, it gradually became accessible to ever wider social circles. Barriers to entry became less and less exclusive: admission costs (which are partially state-subsidised and therefore relatively affordable in a lot of cases) replaced status characteristics that kept the general public away from music, e.g. also from orchestral concerts. A concomitant of these developments is the fact that music no longer fulfils the function of social (status) representation but becomes an object of free choice and thus gains in prevalence. Habermas argues that before commercialisation and the accompanying democratisation, i.e. the opening of art to broad sections of the population, there was no real 'public' in the cultural sphere:

'The shift which produced not merely a change in the composition of the public but amounted to the very generation of the 'public' as such' (Habermas 1992[1962]: 39).

Habermas (1984: 20) distinguishes between the cultural and the political sphere, whereby the former, in contrast to the latter, has no claim to universality, but harbours 'candidates for interpretation'. However - and this point is crucial, as will be shown in the further course of this paper - these two spheres are by no means sealed off from each other, but diffuse into each other. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, one only needs to look at works by composers such as Fazil Say, who utilise and interpret explicitly politically relevant themes in their music. Thus, the public sphere of art is not only a place of performance, but also of discussion and debate with others. Like politics, art is above all an 'intervention in the visible and sayable' (Rancière 2010: 35). According to Rancière, art and politics are most likely in a relationship of analogy and overlap: 'art and politics each define a form of dissensus, a dissensual re-configuration of the common experience of the sensible distributions of space and the weaving of fabrics of perception' (Rancière 2010: 140). The coherence of art and politics should therefore not be located as external to society, i.e. as a separate sphere, but rather the concept of 'society' must be understood as something that takes place in music (or art in general) itself: 'through music, we see society, and define our relationship to it' (Riiser 2010: 32).

In the first section of this article, it was suggested that orchestral works in the 19th century were interpreted as 'national voices', meaning that there was German, Italian, French, etc. music, each of which dealt with different, distinct musical and social motifs. At the same time, one and the same work was appropriated by different groups in different ways. For example, the Ninth Symphony, probably Beethoven's most famous orchestral work, was ascribed different, sometimes even contradictory meanings and was 'used' for different goals by different national and cultural groups:

German nationalists admired the music's heroic power, and nineteenth-century French republicans found in it an expression of 1789's three-word motto, *Liberté, Égalité,*

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Fraternité. The communists hear in it the gospel of a classless world, Catholics hear the gospel itself, democrats hear it as the voice of democracy. Hitler celebrated his birthdays with the *Ode to Joy*, and yet the same music was used to oppose him, even in his concentration camps. The *Ode to Joy* resounds periodically at the Olympic Games, and it was also heard not long ago in Sarajevo. It was the anthem of the racist Republic of Rhodesia, and it is today the anthem of the European Union (Buch 2003: 4-5).

Beethoven's symphony was thus appropriated in different ways and for different occasions, each with different underlying ideologies (Miyamoto 2013: 110). This example illustrates that music can be appropriated for the articulation of political interests in different ways. It also shows that the politicisation of music can be carried out in different ways. Born (2020) fruitfully differentiates between politicisation through (A) music as a vehicle for communicating political texts, (B) the direct involvement of music and musicians in social and/or political movements, (C) the musical material itself² and (D) social relationships between musical performance and practice (Born 2020: 183).

Since the 19th century and ever since music ceased to be merely 'amusement' for the aristocracy, it has been the norm for the audience in the concert hall to remain absolutely silent and to pay tribute to the performers through their applause at the end of a piece of music, but even more so to the absent³ composer who is symbolically represented through the performance of his music. The concert hall is not only an expression of art and a (democratic) community (Miyamoto 2013: 114), but it also inhibits a rituality that is fed by the behaviour of the performers and the audience. This rituality corresponds to a social order in which the orchestra represents the composer. The concert hall as a space can be seen as a sphere of 'representative publicness': something that is invisible is made visible to the audience (Habermas 1992: 13). The precondition for this representation is the absence of (large) parts of the public (Miyamoto 2013: 113).

² Jimi Hendrix's performance at Woodstock in 1969 comes to mind here: Hendrix, in his performance of the *Star Spangled Banner*, (deliberately) made certain sections of the piece sound like a bomb with his electric guitar and, in that, condemned the Vietnam War - in a political speech without words.

³ Usually, composers are not physically present at the performance of their works (Kanno 2012: 171).

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Orchestral interaction is inevitably dependent on a 'mode of civil collaboration' (Ramnarine 2011: 327), because music in the orchestra will only be 'complete' if the individuals, i.e. the musicians in the orchestra, work together and thus form a 'social union' (Ramnarine 2011: 331) through 'active cooperation'. As Daniel Barenboim aptly describes, music is the art of simultaneous playing and listening (Barenboim 2009: 65). Especially in the orchestra, in which sometimes well over 50 people play at the same time, it is crucial that the individual musicians do not play detached from each other, but listen to each other and harmonise - this is the only way that music-making in the orchestra can work. As a generalised 'extension' of this, civil society, similar to the orchestra, can also be defined as a 'union of individuals uniting around social causes with political agency' (Ramnarine 2011: 331) and thus as a conglomerate of ideals, 'people power' and behaviours by means of which the individual members of society pursue (common) interests (Ibrahim and Hulme 2010).

'The Turkish-German Case' of Cooperation in Music

The following remarks are the result of an analysis of approximately 70 documents in which Turkish-German cooperation in the cultural sector is discussed. After an initial exploration of the breadth of the field, a focus was placed on orchestral cooperation for the reasons already mentioned at the very beginning of this article. Ultimately, a (remaining and selective) total of 40 documents were analysed for their explicit and implicit meaning. All of these selected documents, in some way or another, directly deal with issues revolving around orchestral cooperation. The material examined covers a broad spectrum of documents, ranging from reports on concertgoers' experiences to newspaper articles and concert programmes.

To understand the process of the emergence of a Turkish-German 'orchestral life' (Ramnarine 2020: 26), it is necessary to first look at the political environment in which Turkish-German cooperation in the cultural sector is embedded. The bilateral cultural agreement concluded between the Federal Republic of Germany and Turkey on May 8th 1957 formed the contractual basis

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for Turkish-German cultural relations. In 2006, the then Foreign Ministers of Germany and Turkey, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Abdullah Gül, launched the Ernst Reuter Initiative (ERI) to promote Turkish-German cooperation in art and culture, politics, media, business, education and science. In addition to university cooperation, such as between the Humboldt University in Berlin and the Middle Eastern Technical University in Ankara, the initiative has also encouraged cultural exchange, particularly in the area of youth orchestras. Student exchanges and concert programmes featuring both German and Turkish composers were to become more frequent from then on.

In addition to several Turkish-German schools and universities, the Tarabya Cultural Academy, which was established by the German Bundestag and is run by the German Embassy in Ankara and curated by the Goethe-Institute in Istanbul, is a key project in the context of Turkish-German cultural relations. The Tarabya Cultural Academy awards annual residencies to artists from different disciplines for four to eight-month stays in Istanbul as part of an open call procedure. The Academy was inaugurated on October 13th 2011 in the presence of the then German and Turkish foreign ministers, Guido Westerwelle and Ahmet Davutoğlu. The keynote speakers, Cornelia Pieper (Minister of State in the Foreign Office) and Kemal Fahir Genç (Deputy State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture), expressed their hope that the academy 'would contribute to the positive development of cultural relations between Turkey and Germany [...]; the aim is to make a contribution to the Turkish-German cultural exchange' (Tarabya Cultural Academy 2021).

From the politically institutionalised institutions and initiatives mentioned here, it is now appropriate to focus on forms of cooperation that are more so the result of 'grassroots' movements and only received support (for example in the form of patronage) from political actors in the course of their development. The German-Turkish Music Academy, for example, has existed since 1998 and sees itself 'as a place where different cultures meet' (Kulturhaus Schönberg 2019). The academy is a non-profit organisation that was founded under the patronage of the governing mayor of Berlin in collaboration with the Izmir State Conservatory. Its

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work focuses on the fields of music (especially instrumental lessons), dance, theatre and cinema, 'always with a view to mediating between cultures, promoting transnational cooperation and emphasising the common roots of music and culture - in the spirit of Goethe's "West-Eastern Divan" (ibid.)'. In addition, since 2014 there has been a Turkish-German Young Philharmonic Orchestra, which sees itself as a collaborative orchestra project and is called "jungenc" and which was honoured as part of the Ernst Reuter Initiative of the Federal Foreign Office (KulturPartner 2014). In addition, the German-Turkish Society Bonn co-organised a friendship concert at the University of Cologne on 24 March 2017 to promote Turkish-German relations, at which a total of 120 students from the Saygin Fine Arts High School in Izmir (Turkey) and students from the partner school Aloisiuskolleg in Bad Godesberg (Germany) performed pieces by Turkish composers together (DTG Bonn 2014). These and many other similar initiatives of musical cooperation provoke social discourse on cultural diversity and policies of encounter (Ramnarine 2011: 335) and illustrate that music can indeed serve as a (cultural) bridge (Tydén 2009). When the music of Turkish composers is played in a German concert hall, then this is not only a way of attracting new audiences and/or potentially opening up new or regionally diverse markets for music, but it is also an endeavour that aims at inclusion and bringing different people closer together – it is thus a fusion of different local practices.

One musician who is particularly industrious in strengthening Turkish-German cooperation and whose work is primarily aimed at promoting orchestral cooperation between the two countries is the Turkish composer and pianist Fazil Say, who was mentioned at the very beginning of this text and whose musical (and political) endeavours will now be discussed in more detail. Fazil Say is a well-known, if not the best-known Turkish classical pianist, who is not only making the headlines for his music, but also for his political commitment both inside and outside Turkey. In 1985, Say was invited to Germany at a workshop held by the German pianist Aribert Reimann in Ankara to continue his piano studies with David Levine at the Robert Schumann Hochschule Düsseldorf - this was the beginning of what would later turn out to be his longstanding and close relationship with

Germany. He transferred to the Berlin University of the Arts in 1992 and studied there until 1995. As a composer, Say premiered his Concerto for Piano and Violin in 1991 with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. Say was 'Artist in Residence' at the Bremen Music Festival in 2005 and at the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg in 2009/2010 and was the exclusive artist of the Konzerthaus Dortmund for five years from 2006. In 2005, his life was portrayed in the film *Fazil Say - Alla Turca*, which was made in Germany. Among other things, the film shows how Say contributed to the popularisation of German composers such as Bach and Beethoven in his native Turkey. In addition to the above-mentioned positions at renowned German music festivals and concert halls, Say has had an exclusive contract with the German music publisher Schott Music, which publishes his works, since 2006. This means that from the very beginning of his career, he had a close connection to Germany, which he was to maintain later in his career - at the same time, his connection to his homeland, Turkey, is still also close. As a result, he continues to contribute to the public political discourse in Turkey.

In December 2007, for example, a fierce public debate broke out in Turkey and other countries, particularly in Germany, when Say criticised the political situation and the human rights situation in Turkey in an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and considered emigrating. His criticism of the Turkish government and his political views are not only reflected in his verbal or written statements, but also in his musical works, for which he receives harsh criticism on the one hand and great support on the other. In 2008, Say hit the headlines in Germany and Turkey because of a planned performance of his *Requiem for Metin Altıok* (2003) at the Bremen Music Festival Prize in Germany. Metin Altıok was a Turkish poet who was burnt to death along with 34 other artists in an attack on an Alevi festival in Sivas in 1993. In consultation with Prime Minister Erdoğan, Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued the statement 'We do not want to be remembered' - the play was performed, but the sentence in which Say had remembered the victims was shortened. Television images of the arson attack, which the artist wanted to integrate into the performance, were not allowed to be shown. A planned performance at the opening of the 2008 Frankfurt Book Fair was

cancelled following interventions by Erdoğan and the Turkish Ministry of Culture. Together with Paulo Coelho, among others, Say was appointed 'Ambassador of Intercultural Dialogue' by the EU for 2008 - some say as a (defiant) reaction to the interventions of the Turkish government. Another example of how political criticism is reflected in Say's musical work: in the works *Gezi Park 1,2 and 3*, Say deals with the violent suppression of the protests against a construction project planned by the government in Istanbul's Gezi Park in 2013/2014. Likewise, as previously mentioned, Say provided the musical accompaniment for protests in 2019 against the deforestation of large areas in the Ida Mountains (known in Turkey as the Kaz Mountains). At a highly acclaimed open-air concert in the forest, Say played a piece he had composed himself. In this piece, which he dubbed *Mount Ida*, greater use was made of onomatopoeia in order to process the events in a musical story: at the beginning of the piece, for example, the low register of the piano produces a deep, hammering sound intended to emulate approaching logging machines.

Fazil Say finds himself in a tense relationship, not only as a Turkish citizen, but also as a pianist and composer: he is a public figure who can build on the support of parts of the Turkish and German public, i.e. civil society, in his political messages and activism, but who faces a government (in his home country) that is critical of him because of his political activism. Despite his mixed relationship with the government, Say lives in Istanbul and continues to endeavour to, in his words, 'build a bridge' between Western music and Turkish rhythms, melodies and sounds. In 2016, he was honoured with the Bonn Beethoven Prize for his ongoing efforts to bring classical music to more remote parts of Turkey and at the same time bring compositions by Turkish musicians to an international audience. The reason for awarding the prize to Say was that his musical work constitutes a close Turkish-German relationship. At the award ceremony, Say said of himself: 'I am a bridge builder between cultures. When you see cultures as enemies, as our government often does, when you see other cultures not as dialogue but as enemies, that's when the culture war begins, the war of ideas. That's the worst thing' (Beethoven Academy 2016). The relationship between Fazil Say and the Bonn Symphony Orchestra is one of many years of cooperation, in the course of

which Say has repeatedly brought other Turkish artists into the German orchestra to create new musical cooperation in which both German and Turkish 'voices' are involved and participate.

As a composer, Fazil Say occupies a prominent, primary position in the orchestra, but he is nonetheless only one part of many parts of the community that is the orchestra and thus a part of what was previously described as a communal voice. In other words, as an eager initiator of Turkish-German musical cooperation, Say fits into the chain of voices and representations that are transported by orchestral music. As other examples, such as the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, have also demonstrated, orchestral cooperation can be understood metaphorically and symbolically as civil society cooperation. To name just one concrete example: Fazil Say composed his second violin concerto with specific dedication to the German violinist Friedemann Eichhorn, whom he holds in high esteem, and who recorded it a few years ago together with the Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin. As the composer and violinist later said themselves, the music explicitly concealed elements of both 'Western' and 'Eastern' music (Pizzicato 2020), which complemented each other and thus reinterpreted and broke through traditional patterns of purely German or Turkish music, as they had been (and, partially, still are) prevalent for so long. During the performance of the violin concerto, this music, which symbolised and 'embodied' the ideal of cultural rapprochement, was presented to the audience in the absence of the composer, which – as was posed in section three in reference to Habermas – can be described as a representative publicness. By making music together, the orchestra not only represented Fazil Say as a person in the sense of Habermas' double representation, but it also represented his endeavours and his striving for international understanding. Music-making thus becomes a representative 'speech act', which is not an end in itself, but is intended to be received as a politically, socially and culturally relevant object by the audience present in the concert hall, but also, in a broader sense, by the absent 'world audience', i.e. the general public.

On the other hand, orchestral cooperation can also be understood beyond the metaphorical and symbolic element as a de facto cooperation within civil

society. The East-Western Chamber Orchestra, for example, which is based in Bonn since 2015, (regularly) collaborates with Fazil Say and performs his orchestral works. The orchestra's explicitly stated message for transnational cooperation, peace and cultural exchange throughout Europe and beyond – displayed on its own website as 'We build Bridges' (EWCO 2024) – is aestheticised through music and is transported into the civil domain. Also, the deliberately selected, international composition of the orchestra is constituting a 'mode of civil collaboration', in the context of which the orchestra explicitly aims to set an example for cultural transnational cooperation.

What is demonstrated here is how musicians within projects of musical cooperation seek to transform and (potentially) politicise the socialities of musical performance and practice. It is thus appropriate, to once again emphasize the capacity of musical performance to tell stories – including stories that are inherently political, e.g. pleas for an improvement of international understanding/transnational cooperation. It is then also appropriate to describe the orchestra as an area of advocacy in which practices, aesthetic encounters and (moral) discourses of public interest and potential benefit circulate. The case examples described here are proof of the orchestras capacity to be a body (within the sphere of music/art) that significantly influences the political life in the everyday and that can function as a 'tool' to open (new) passageways for cooperation, e.g. between Turkish and German musicians/citizens.

Conclusion

This article examined the intertwining on a cultural and political level between Turkish and German civil society with a particular focus on orchestral cooperation. On the basis of an analysis of reports from concertgoers, newspaper articles and concert programmes, it was shown that orchestral cooperation can be understood as cooperation that is embedded in civil society in both metaphorical/symbolical and factual terms. It was argued, that the coherence of music and politics should not be located as external to society, i.e. as a separate sphere, but rather the concept of 'society' must be understood as something that takes place in the music

itself. In this perspective, the dialogical and democratic potential of music was emphasised, which was shown as being capable of forming a unity out of individual orchestra members. The community of orchestra members owes the communal character of its existence precisely to the commonality of music-making within the framework of democratic organisation. Against this backdrop, it was stated that musicians can form a new, shared narrative through making music together in a cooperation that transcends national borders. This narrative serves as a legitimisation of a new concept of social identity and community created in the process of joint music making. In this respect, the extent to which the orchestra as a community generates a communal voice that is nourished by the democratically negotiated and aestheticized consensus within the orchestra was discussed. However, it should not be forgotten that, like any other institution, orchestras and orchestral (transnational) cooperation are not only dependent on the individuals' agency and on the support of the audience, but also on external constraints and, in particular, on funding. If the political framework for major funding in the cultural sector is poor, then Turkish-German cooperation, for example, is primarily driven by grassroots, community and civil participatory activities, which, however, 'can only take the individual short of a point that has political efficacy' (Ramnarine 2020: 34).

And yet, the potential of the transformative power of music and especially of joint music making in the orchestra for musical and thus civil cooperation should not be downplayed but must be continuously cultivated. Therefore, further research on the subject of cooperation (in general and in the world of music in particular) should aim to elaborate a framework of analysis that incorporates perspectives on both creative (human) agency as well as institutional contexts and procedures. While institutions and their practices and sets of rules remain to be influential in fostering any given cooperative endeavour, they are not its sole determinants, as individual agency remains to be crucial, nevertheless.

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