

WHY A NEW COURSE WAS NEEDED TO BE ADDED TO THE CURRICULUMS OF TURKISH CONSERVATORIES: BENEFITS OF ORCHESTRAL REPERTORY CLASS

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ABSTRACT

Western classical music is relatively a new era in Turkey when compared with many well-developed European countries. The first music school was officially established in 1924. Since then, the curriculum has been changed for many times for many reasons. After years of changing the content of the curriculum, it came to its final state in approximately 1980s. Recently conservatory students have needed a new course to make their education more complete. Therefore, Orchestral Repertory class was added to the curriculum. Orchestra Repertory lets students study and practice parts from standard orchestral repertory. The main aim of the course is to help students to get a job by winning an orchestral audition. The purpose of this study is to find out why the educators needed to add this new course to the curriculum. Related information is indicated such as the quantity of the conservatories that already added the course to their curriculum and also the benefits of the course is given.

Key words: Western classical music, Turkey, European countries.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey encountered Western Music in 1826 by *Mızıka-i Humayun*, a Royal Band formed for Sultan Mahmud the Second. Following this fundamental step, Guissepe Donizetti was invited to Turkey to lead the band. In 1924, this band was transferred from Istanbul to Ankara, with the order of the first president of Turkey, Ataturk, to elevate the cultural perspective of the people after the Independence War. Furthermore, for the same reason the School of Music Teachers, established in 1924, united not only the music education but also the Royal Band.-The school was the base of the Conservatory founded in 1936 under the direction of the famous composer Paul Hindemith.

Now, Turkey has 29 Conservatories, 21 music education departments, 54 Fine Arts High Schools, and many symphony orchestras.

The education in conservatories came a long way since 1924 in Turkey. The curriculum has been based on the other conservatories around the world and the needs of students. Approximately 1980s, the curriculum was shaped and came to its final state.

The curriculum hasn't changed until recent years. The administration of some state conservatories added a new course, Orchestra Repertory Class, to the curriculum. Orchestra Repertory class allows students to learn orchestral parts. The main aim of the course is to help students to win competitive auditions for symphony orchestras, which is vital for majority of graduates.

This paper will examine a brief overview which conservatories added this new course to the curriculum and for what purpose. Further information will be given whether taking this course enables students to be more efficient and complete in their education or not.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology will be based on the curriculums of the conservatories in Turkey, which provide education for at least five years for the purpose of stability of the research. The curriculum of the mentioned schools will be observed by searching the schools' websites and contacting with the office of student affairs.

Further information will be gathered from a questionnaire survey, which includes expectancy of the students who have taken the class for at least 4 semesters or still enrolled. These groups will be assembled from Anadolu University State Conservatory students and alumni's. The questionnaire survey will provide the answers of following substances:

- What is the percentage of the students who find the course helpful?
- What is the percentage of the students who had orchestra auditions that include excerpts from the class?
- What is the percentage of the students who won an orchestra audition due to the benefits of this course?

The Reasons To Add The Orchestra Repertory Class To Curriculum Of The Conservatories

Until the 1980's, the main material of the ten yearlong instrument education of the conservatories was based on solo repertoire. The graduates were able to find jobs such as mainly being a member of a symphony orchestra soon after graduating or even before graduation, minority of them were able to go abroad to study or become a teacher at a conservatory. The job openings were enough for the number of graduates.

When the symphony orchestras need a new member, they open an audition. Until the year of 2000's candidates were judged on their solo playing. The audition list included a solo virtuoso piece, a concerto, which usually is three movements, a sonata which usually is four movements and some sight-reading of orchestral excerpts (Table 1).

Table 1: List of Required Pieces for Presidential Symphony Orchestra Audition for String Instruments

A virtuoso piece	One etude or caprice from standard repertory
A sonata	Four Movement Sonata with Piano
A concerto	Three Movement Concerto with Piano
Sight reading of orchestral excerpts	One or two orchestral excerpts decided by the jury at the time of the audition.

With the increase of the quality and the quantity of players, the auditions became more competitive each year and the auditions requirements began to change. After the year of 2000, candidates were judged on their orchestral playing equally or more on their solo playing. The list of repertoire changed dramatically. Candidates were asked specific orchestral excerpts besides some solo repertoires. They had to prepare some predetermined orchestral excerpts for the auditions and the pieces from solo repertory were less, comparing to the former lists (Table 2 and 3).

Table 2: List of Required Pieces for Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra Audition for Violins

First Movement of a Concerto	The whole movement is not required. The first 2-3 pages will be asked.
W.A. Mozart Concerto	First and Second Movement of a Mozart Concerto Cadenza is included.
W.A. Mozart: 39. Senfoni	Forth Movement, up to the beginning of the bar number 41
S. Prokofyev Classical Symphony	Final Movement from beginning until the double bar.
R. Strauss: Don Juan	From the beginning until bar number 40

Table 3: List of Required Pieces for Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra Cellos

First Movement of a Concerto	The whole movement is not required. The first 2-3 pages will be asked. Cadenza is included.
One movement of a solo J.S. Bach suite	Only one movement of candidate's choice.
L. van Beethoven: 5th Symphony	Third Movement. Bar numbers: 1-18, 49 -59 and 98-106
Tchikovski: 6th Symphony	Second Movement.
R. Strauss: Don Juan	From the beginning until bar number 7 and From Letter C until bar number 17.

Students who were practicing only solo repertory during their education were struggling with the orchestral repertory after their graduation. Educators rather than becoming more specified in solo repertory in their educational offerings, they have developed new strategies for specialized training in career-specific directions.

Actually orchestra repertory class was offered in the US and European schools for many years. The reason why the course was offered in the first place was somewhat the same: Orchestra auditions changed their requirements to recruit the employers.

In Turkey, after realizing the need of the students to be able to win the orchestra auditions and observing the curriculums of the some major conservatories in the world, educators decided to make some changes in conservatory education.

Tunca (2006), former director of Anadolu University State Conservatory String Department, offered the orchestra repertory classes in Anadolu University in 2006 said "We had no doubts. There was definitely going to be a change in the conservatory education. We came to the agreement that the Conservatory has to add to the existing curriculum a new course which trains our students for orchestra auditions and offer orchestra repertory classes. We came to the agreement that to the existing curriculum, a new course, which trains our students for orchestra auditions, need to be added and offer orchestra repertory classes in the Conservatory. The key to keep in mind is that what we do here has to be relevant to the work that's out there."

An instrument professor said "Most string players interested in one ambition: to be a soloist. Years of working on the solo repertoire with their teachers strengthen that goal. Then reality sets in: Very few people can make a living as a soloist, and the disappointed young musician finds him or herself preparing for orchestra auditions"

"The whole school is supposed to be geared around the orchestra jobs" said one of the former students.

The educators needed a new course that would help the students to succeed in auditions. Students get help to be able to convince the jury of the auditions and get an orchestra job. Hence, a new course has been added to curriculums of most of the conservatories' undergraduate level.

Orchestra Repertory Course

The orchestra repertory course is required or selected for each instrument students excluding piano students and offered for eight semesters long. Usually the instructor is an experienced orchestra player. The orchestral excerpts are the material of the class. Each student prepares an excerpt to play in each class. When performing the excerpts, the student should be able to pay attention to articulation, voice quality, intonation, style, rhythm, sound quality, tonality, technical and, musical aspects. After the performance, the instructor gives commands about how to practice and perform the piece in front of the classmates. It is like a master-class in a way. Occasionally, these classes may also be supplemented by mock auditions, where the process of auditioning may be practiced. At the end of

the semester, the student should be able to play and sight-read selected orchestral works from different periods.

The Observation Of The Curriculums Of The Conservatories In Turkey

In Turkey, there are 29 conservatories including state, private and Classical Turkish Music. 16 of them are established in more than 5 years and educating in Western Classical Music. The curriculum research was being held among these 16 conservatories. The curriculums of the mentioned schools were observed and whether the Orchestra Repertory course is offered or not was gathered (Tablo 4).

Table 4: List of The Conservatories

Offering The Orchestra Repertory Class		Not Offering The Orchestra Repertory Class	
1	<u>Anadolu University State Conservatory</u>	1	<u>Afyonkarahisar Kocatepe University State Conservatory</u>
2	<u>Başkent University</u>	2	<u>Akdeniz University Antalya State Conservatory</u>
3	<u>Bilkent University</u>	3	<u>Cukurova University State Conservatory</u>
4	<u>Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory</u>	4	<u>Dokuz Eylul University State Conservatory</u>
5	<u>Istanbul University State Conservatory</u>	5	<u>Istanbul Bilgi University</u>
6	<u>Istanbul Turkish Music State Conservatory</u>	6	<u>Uludag University State Conservatory</u>
7	<u>Kafkas University State Conservatory</u>		
8	<u>Mersin University State Conservatory</u>		
9	<u>Mimar Sinan University State Conservatory</u>		
10	<u>Trakya University State Conservatory</u>		

The Survey

A questionnaire survey “The Opinion of The Orchestra Repertory Students” was undertaken in May 2011 aimed to determine the followings:

How many percentages of the students find the course helpful?

How many percentages of the students had orchestra auditions that included orchestral excerpts from the class?

- How many percentages of the students won an orchestra audition due to the benefits of this course?

Major Findings

The study was based on the responses of the students who were enrolled in orchestra repertory class at least for 4 semesters at the State Conservatory in Anadolu University.

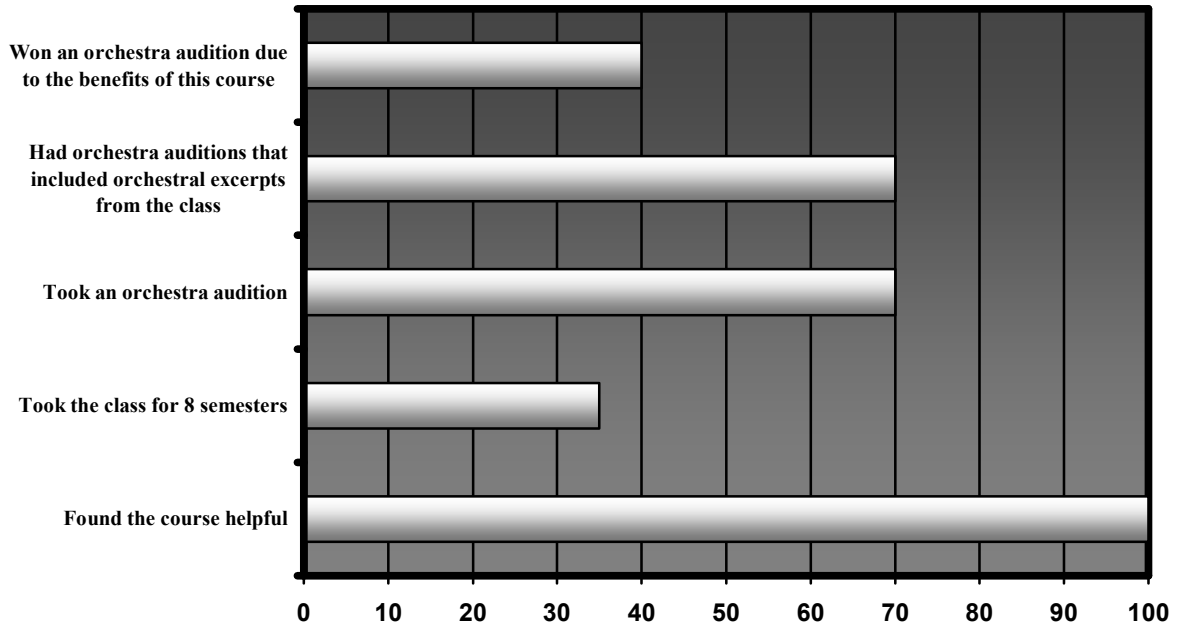
100 percentages of the students found the course helpful.

35 percentages of the students took the class for 8 semesters.

70 percentages of the students took an orchestra audition.

70 percentages of the students had orchestra auditions that included orchestral excerpts from the class.

- 40 percentages of the students won an orchestra audition due to the benefits of this course.



In order to understand the benefits of the orchestra repertory class, students were asked various questions about course's syllabus, effectiveness on their success to be able to win an orchestra auditions and whether their expectances were gained in the course. Most of the students believed that the class contributed on the improvement of their orchestra audition skills and helped them to feel confident to win an audition.

The students were asked to answer if the course was helpful or not. All of the students found the course helpful. The responses were all positive. They indicated, knowing the orchestral excerpts gave them confidence in their playing.

40 percentages of the students took an audition and were successful. They were asked during the auditions to play some of the orchestral excerpts and they already new the pieces from the course. Therefore, they were able to play the pieces better than the majority of the other candidates who have not taken the orchestra repertory class and not known the required orchestral excerpts.

CONCLUSION

The increase of the conservatory graduates the symphony orchestras in Turkey changed their requirements for orchestra openings. They started to judge the candidates with orchestral abilities as well as solo playing abilities. The educators realized the change in the audition process and decided to add a new course to the existing curriculum. With the new class called, orchestral repertory, the students were able to get ready for the auditions more confidently and furthermore the success of the graduates was greater than before.

The survey revealed the positive effects and the benefits of the class and proved that the class' purpose was achieved.

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