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Importance of Mode Tetrachords in The Tonal and Modal Music Education

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Abstract

The concepts of modality and tonality which are often confused with each other have indubitable importance in music education. Unlike the concept of tonality which indicates the pitch of the sounds, modality is used in different cultures' music as well as in western music culture. In case, Tetrachords systems which constitute the basis of modes also constitute the major stones of tonality. Opposing to hard and strict rules of Western music, makam Tetrachords in eastern music do not remain in the same place, and further show differences as descending and ascending scales. Apart from that tonic (durak) and dominant (guclu) called maye istinat in Azerbaijan has always come to the fore. Therefore, all compared scales on the base of these important pitches are handled music differently in every culture. In this study, firstly, tonal music modes and their combination methods are examined, and secondly it is aimed to compare the modal music of Azerbaijan and Turkey according to their scales, but also this study examines their importance in the music education system. This study is important to light the way for students in their educational process and also provide the opportunities to compare the examples of folk music with western music.

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1. Introduction

Mode (from Latin *modus*: manner, way, method) is a form of scale which consists of a set of sounds and is combined according to some certain numerical proportion. The most important element which forms this scale is the interval between the sounds. Some sounds forming mode are "unmovable" while some others are "moving" sounds. These sounds may vary depending on their usage in the composition, as well as being determined by the proportion

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of the intervals. The tones determined based on interval proportions create a tetrachord. Tetrachords (from Greek) are descending series of four tones in Ancient Greek civilization. The term stems from the Greek words- tetra meaning “four” and chord "wire" (Say, 2005).

A tonic note in the scale (karar, or eksen) can establish a tonic for various sounds in the same scale within different cultures and approaches. Although this time is built within the same scale, various ethnic music samples appear in different karar degrees and their course around these degrees. In this study, it has been aimed to compare the tetrachords of tonal music modes and methods of their combination with the modal scales of Azerbaijan and Turkey, and it has also been investigated to reveal to what extent they are important in their music education system.

Tetrachord, an Ancient Greek mode, was widely used not only in Europe but also in the music theory system of the Eastern communities according to its content and structure. Musicologists who handled the modal music of the Eastern communities according to the tempered system formed makam scales based on the tetrachords (Elhankızı, 2012).

1.1. Tetrachords in the Azerbaijani makam system

Azerbaijani modes which are the indispensable part of the Eastern mode system have passed a long way of evolution up to the moment. Like the scholars of the Middle Ages, Uzeyir Hajibeyli, the founder of Azerbaijani music, also benefited from the formation features of medieval modes while creating theory in Azerbaijan mode (Babayev, 1998). Hajibeyli formed the theory of the Azerbaijani makam mode according to the tempered system. In this respect, he got exposed to criticism by those who opposed his ideas in his period.

Azerbaijan modes consist of the combination of 2 and 3 tetrachords. Therefore, in Azerbaijan modes scales may form out of 8 notes and more. Hajibeyli used the following tetrachords to create Azerbaijan modes:

- $1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2}$ main tetrachord - (the same with the first tetrachord of Ionia mode)
- $1 + \frac{1}{2} + 1$ auxiliary tetrachord - (the same with the first tetrachord of Dorian mode)
- $\frac{1}{2} + 1 + 1$ auxiliary tetrachord - (the same with the first tetrachord of Phrygian mode)
- $\frac{1}{2} + 1 + \frac{1}{2}$ diminished tetrachord
- $\frac{1}{2} + 1 \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ with an increased second tetrachord

All above five tetrachords may be combined by all four ways of combination; however, not all the 20 scales obtained as a result of these combinations would be suitable to form Azerbaijan modes. Azerbaijan modes can be combined as in the following ways:

- Chain combination- which is a combination where the last tone of the lower tetrachord coincides with the first tone of the upper tetrachord.
- Mixed combination- which is a combination where the last tone of the lower and the first tone of the upper tetrachords form an interval of tone.
- Combination by intermediate semitone- which is a combination where an interval of the minor third ($1 \frac{1}{2}$ tone) is formed between the last tone of the lower and the first tone of the upper tetrachords.
- Combination by intermediate tone- which is a combination where an interval of the major third (2 tones) is formed between the last tone of the lower and the first tone of the upper tetrachords.

As mentioned above, Hajibeyli who makes use of 4 ways of combination to combine 5 tetrachords in accordance with rules and principles of Azerbaijani music has proposed 7 main and 3 auxiliary modes for Azerbaijani music system; main modes- rast, shur, segah, shushtar, chargah, bayati–shiraz, humayun, and auxiliary modes- shahnaz, chargah of the second type, and saranj (Hacibeyov, 1985).

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