

SCORE MODIFICATION OF FAZIL SAY PIANO PERFORMANCE: *ALLA TURCA JAZZ OP.5B*

Siti Nur Hajarul Aswad Shakeeb Arsalaan Bajunid
Rizal Ezuan Zulkify Tony

*Faculty of Music, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
UiTM Main Campus, 40450 Shah Alam Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia*
hajarulbajunid@uitm.edu.my; rizaltony@uitm.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

The *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b* for piano solo is creative research in music performance. This study aims to examine unwritten Fazil Say's embellishments of ornamentation, melodic and rhythmic phrases. The unwritten notations have developed since the seventeenth century of performance practice among keyboardists. However, the performance practice continuously occurs in the twenty-first-century performance although it is a complete notation. The *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b* was written and performed by Fazil Say throughout his performances globally with a dissimilar interpretation of embellishments. His unwritten embellishments contribute to the modification of the scores in contemporary piano works.

Keywords: Score modification, embellishments, contemporary piano work.

INTRODUCTION

Performer of the 21st centuries have their style in interpreting composer's works. It is their personal interpretation in making the work sounds different than the other performers. It is a challenge to most performers to achieve the differences of sound and make the compositional works sound interesting during the performance. Therefore, there is a possibility that the performers modify the written score to provide an impact on the overall performance. In general, the practice of score modification includes phrasings, articulations, dynamics, and pedalling. It is common among the performers to apply the practice of modification in Western classical composers' masterpieces such as Mozart, Schumann, Beethoven, and Chopin. Nevertheless, little study on modification practice in contemporary works.

Since the 19th century, the practice of score modification is common among pianists. The facet musician, Liszt is among the leading virtuosos, where he performed his works and other composers' masterpieces. Liszt's pianistic style includes improvisation as part of his performance. His virtuosity through improvisation, paraphrasing, or transcription of the written score reflects his identity as a pianist-composer and improviser of the *Golden Age*. Among the others are Hans von Bülow, Emil von Sauer and Ferruccio Busoni.

The practice of modifying scores continues to the 21st century and Fazil Say is one of the leading pianists among others such as Gabriela Montero, Leif Ove Andsnes, Stephen Hough and Marc-André Hamelin with the criteria. His repertoire selection is wider that including Western classical composers, Turkish and his own compositions. Little has known that studies on his contemporary piano works are still limited. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the performance practice of contemporary work through a musical analysis of the modifying score. The objective of this study is to examine Fazil Say's score modification in his *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b*. focuses on the melodic and rhythm modification that includes embellishments.

LITERATURE REVIEW/ARTISTIC REVIEW

Musical Background of Fazil Say

Turkish born Fazil Say studied music both in Turkey and Germany at his early age. He has explored both music aesthetics in his performance, and compositions. In his early years, he studied with prominent Turkish pianist, Mithat Fenmen, Kamuran Gündemir, and Ertugrul Oğuz Efirat. Later years, he studied with David Levine in Düsseldorf, Germany (Otten, 2011). Say had performed internationally and still performing and composing at the writing of this study.

Fazil Say's compositions and music arrangements are correlated of Turkish folklore, Western classical, and jazz culture. One of his musical arrangements is the *Alla Turca Jazz, op.5*. It is a paraphrase of Mozart's *Rondo from Sonata in A Major K 331*. His musical arrangement combines Mozart's original structure of the Western classical and jazz elements. His "integration of the Eastern and Western musical elements reflects his personality as a Turkish pianist-composer through his musical activities of the twenty-first century" (Aswad, 2022).

The Context of Score Modification

In general, a description of modification is changing or altering the original. Similar to Hellaby (2009) that the alteration of the notations is “more or less to the original”. This explains that the original structure of the work is mostly remain its framework with several modification in music scores that includes, dynamics, tempo, pedalling, and phrasing. What about modifying the notations? The scholars and researchers argue on changing or modifying the notations are not relevant as it changes the composers’ work. However, in contrast, the practice of modifying score is require by the performers to enhance their identity of personal interpretation towards the compositional works. A recorded interview of the legendary pianist Claudio Arrau, he rigidly argues on pertaining the written notations to remain the originality of the composers’ works. (‘Claudio Arrau’, 2014). On the contrary, pianist Vladimir Horowitz argues that the modification was “to improve the imperfect writing or to convey the composer’s intentions” through performer’s interpretation (Dubal, 1993, as cited in Weng, 2020). In author’s opinion, both are relevant for performance practice with reasonable and necessary grounds.

Hellaby (2009) explains the type of score modifications of the transcription, variation, paraphrasing and realisation. The practice of score modification prevailed from the 19th to the 20th century. His categorisation of formal and informal modification is applicable to the performer’s practice. A formal published written score that involved editorial work is categorised as formal modification (Hellaby, 2009). Furthermore, the written score consists of the performer’s modification and aims to perform by other performers possibly enhancing “further modification” (Hellaby, 2009). In this study, *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b* is an example of formal modification. Fazil Say paraphrases Mozart’s original score and he modifies his own written score during performances. Moreover, the researcher creates her own personal modifications from Say’s published score in performance.

Informal modification is the spontaneous action of modification during the performance that has no interest to share or expand the performer’s creativity directly with other performers. Listeners can only experience the artistry value of a performer during the performance. In this study, Fazil Say applies formal and informal modifications.

CREATIVE PROCESS

The creative process of this study investigates Fazil Say's piano performance and work of *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b*. It is to extract the notations of modification performed by Say. This study focuses on melodic embellishments of ornamentation. In this creative research, the analysis of three Fazil Say's live-recorded performances is gathered from a different years and venues. There are in Tokyo, Japan (2006), Bucharest, Rome (2015) and Paris, France (2019). The researchers divide the methods into five stages (Aswad, 2022); (1) selection of recordings (2) upload recording links to a software (3) score reading and listening (4) identify the embellishment of modification (5) music software Sibelius notation.

The first process is the selection of three live-recorded -performance good quality audio and video from YouTube links. The tempo of the *Alla Turca op.5b* is fast and there is a limitation of listening to the modified notation clearly. Therefore, researchers use a software known as Tune Transcriber to decrease the tempo without interrupting the pitch. Secondly, the selected videos link is uploaded to Tune Transcriber separately. The third process is, we listened to the recordings while reading to the written score. The written score is published by Schott Music in 2007. Next, is to notate the embellishments performed by Say. The fifth process was to transfer the notation into Sibelius software for comparison between the published written score and added embellishments. The processes are effective and impactful to researchers' understanding in Say's interpretation, articulations and embellishments on score modification (Aswad, 2022).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Alla Turca Jazz op.5b was written in 1993 by Fazil Say in his twenties. He performed regularly during his encore and widely known globally. The tempo is fast and in a swinging style.

The three Live Recorded Performances of *Alla Turca Op. 5a* for the Musical Analysis:

1. Published on YouTube 2006
Kioi Hall, Tokyo (Japan)
https://youtu.be/X6dlzo_g1kk2

2. Published on YouTube 4th September 2015 George Enescu Festival Bucharest, Ateneul (Rome) <https://youtu.be/Fr2dnR8wtRk>
3. Published on YouTube 12th January 2019 Foundation Louis Vuitton, Paris (France) https://youtu.be/T6rFBN6j_Bc

The musical analysis shows sample of excerpts of Say's embellishments. He added a mordent at bar 14. It is on a dominant chord. Figure 1 shows the added mordent on bar 14 in comparison with the published score.



Figure 1 Added mordent in bar 8 in comparison with the published score

Fazil Say performed swingly each of his performance. The tremolo and added syncopation note was added to highlight the blues or ragtime musical style. It provides the jazz mood and changes the musicality of Mozartian style. Figure 2 and 3 shows the added tremolo in bar 25 and syncopation note in bar 8.



Figure 2 Added tremolo in bar 25



Figure 3 Added a syncopation note in bar 14

There are two added embellishments by Fazil Say in his performances; (1) ornamentations and (2) rhythmic extension. Say applies mordent ornamentation. According to the book *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* by Carl Phillip Emmanuel Bach, a mordent role is connecting from a note to another. It is added to “fill the sustained tones”. Too many of mordent will destruct composer’s work (Bach, 1974). The tremolo effects are to produce a highlighted tone. As in jazz music, it is commonly used in most of piano works. An octave of C note is added as rhythmic extension to emphasis the syncopated effects.

The findings of this study suggest that, the score modification occurs in contemporary work with added embellishments and rhythmic extension. It is relevant to modify the written score and not limited to the phrases, pedalling, dynamics, and other articulations. However, the limitation of the study is the quality of the live recorded performances by Fazil Say that may provide information of the other type of embellishments. Although Say applies minor modification in *Alla Turca Jazz op.5b*, in our perspective, he provides the unexpected element of surprises during his performance with several embellishments yet it is an impactful to the listeners. Further research might explore the other contemporary works performed by other pianists to retrieve the other type of embellishments.

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