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Middle Eastern Violin Method

A Method for Teaching and Transcribing Middle Eastern Music
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Preface

I have always wanted to be useful and resourceful to everyone around me from what I know and what I have learned in music. I want to shorten the long process it takes to learn Middle Eastern music violin styles by developing a method for violin playing in oriental music styles through this project. This project has been in my mind for many years. My wish is that it could help the new learner to go further and learn more in this field.

I would like to thank my parents for supporting me in all the steps of my life. I would like to thank everyone who helped me in this project and collaborated with me. Also, the teachers and the students from KMH – Folk Music Department, especially professor Sven Ahlbäck for supervising my master project and his big support for me.

Introduction

General topic

My project is first and foremost about developing a pedagogical method for teaching Middle Eastern folk and classical music on the violin. As a secondary goal, I want to know if my own playing could benefit from applying such a method and become more skilled in expressing myself artistically on my instrument. In order to achieve this, first, I have transcribed and notated music from different music styles of the Middle East, including Kurdish, Persian, Arabic and Turkish music and described the specific traits of these different styles. Then, I have created a method of how to represent different stylistically important elements in the music, e.g. the most popular ornaments used in this music, as well as finding new ways of representing them by new symbols. Finally, I have devised exercises for learning and perfecting these style elements, such as ornaments.

There is no well established method for teaching the Middle Eastern styles of violin playing (Eilenberg, 1993). This fact makes it challenging for students to learn and pass on the tradition. Unlike Western Classical music, Middle Eastern music involves using different modal systems, including scales with quarter tones. The modes and corresponding scales are called Maqam and there are a great many of them. (Todorov, 2018) A violinist playing this style of music, usually uses intricate ornamentations in playing on these scales when making an extemporization or improvisation on the maqam, called Taksim. Not having a method for this complicated music style, makes a new learner to rely solely on learning by ear and learn through imitation, which is today often performed by listening to recorded sources. In my personal experience, it took many years of careful listening and imitating to learn how to play Middle Eastern music on the violin.

As an accomplished violinist and teacher, now I want to establish and develop my method so students can take advantage of it and learn this music more thoroughly, faster and become more accomplished in expressing themselves within the style. My hope is that this method will help preserve the Middle Eastern style of violin playing and make it easier to pass on to the next generations. Furthermore, the method will also help an interested foreigner to understand and potentially learn Middle Eastern music on the violin.
Thus, my research interest is to investigate in what way I can describe, notate the pertinent stylistic elements of the music for to develop a ‘Method for oriental violin playing’, including notations, exercises and teaching process, that can make a musician understand the Middle Eastern music styles and learn to play them. The ultimate aim is to pass the tradition easier and faster, giving aspiring violinists possibility to develop their violin playing within this field. Hopefully, from notating and transcribing these styles the tradition can be preserved. A specific question is also to investigate the usefulness of the method for groups of violins. A secondary research interest is to investigate how this work might influence the development of my own playing, in terms of technique and expressing.

Summary of research questions:

- How can I describe and notate the Middle Eastern violin styles with details?
- What are the most important stylistic elements and techniques?
- How can I teach this music?
- How can I pass on the tradition faster and easier with the help of a method in a way that develops the field of Middle Eastern violin styles?
- Can I develop my own playing and artistic skills by applying exercises for stylistic features?

Previous work

There are a vast literature on Middle Eastern music, still some academic studies within the field of Middle eastern violin playing, but I have found only few studies related to teaching method. I have been searching for a long time period to find sources for methods how to learn to play this music. When researching for literature on the topic I have found some works, which are somewhat related to my research project:

   This master thesis project is about Radif ¹ and the way of improvising in Radif. The researcher has used and described some playing techniques which are similar to the technique I have used.

   This book contains 26 undetailed etudes for a classical violinist using some Kurdish folk melodies and transcribing a few Kurdish improvisations with some details. Some ornaments have been used in this book, which are related to the symbols of my method.

   This thesis is about bringing Persian music into Western classical music and playing Persian music on Western classical instruments. He presents some Persian techniques and the way of playing them, and instruments from this music style.

¹ See below, in Persian style.
This work is about transcribing Turkish style Taksim playing of Hayder Tatliyay and Nabur Tekyay with details of the playing and ornaments. The relevance of this project to my project is the transcriptions with details.

In this article, the author telling about the way of starting and learning the Middle Eastern ‘Arabic’ violin style playing, and about the problems of no well established method and the complexity of learning how to play the style. She has also used sheet music which has some details of playing with using some glissandos between the notes.

These are some single etudes with some details of the playing for Kamancha.

This is about the role of the violin in Arabic music and the GDGD tuning. He describes the maqams and the way of playing the scales.

This project is to guide classical violinist to play Arabic violin technique. It includes an overview of the Arabic music style and demonstrating the Maqam scales, GDGD tuning and notating, small exercises for the techniques, introducing some instruments in Arabic music such as ‘Oud, Kanun, Riqq and Darbuka’ and some new compositions. The relevant similarities between this work and my method are the exercises. He has written four different kind of small exercises to make the Arabic music playing more understandable. The exercises are finger exercising to find the quartetontones, small glissando in the beginning of a music phrase, turn on the quartetontones and mentioning Acciaccatura.

These exercises are might be enough as a guide for a classical violinist, but in my opinion is not for a method to teach the techniques and the style more clearly. I have written more and longer exercises from easy lever to advanced and could be helpful for the students to learn.
Background

The violin was introduced in middle eastern music during the 19th century, to some extent substituting earlier bowed string instrument, like the Kamanja or the Rebab, which actually were predecessors of the violin. (Boyden, 1965)

Since the early 20th century the violin has been one of the most popular instruments in the middle east, in classical, popular and folk music. The popularity and adaptation of the violin in middle eastern music traditions might partly be related to the non-fretted fingerboard of the violin which makes it possible to perform the micro-interval alterations, quarter tones, that are key elements of tonal systems in middle eastern music traditions. Many of these traditions, such as Arab, Turkish, Persian, Azerian and Kurdish music share many features, such as a tonal system related to the maqam system, and will henceforth be termed Oriental music traditions. (Todorov, 2018)

Although the violin has a rather short history within oriental music in comparison with some other instruments, there has emerged different styles of playing the violin within oriental music, which are clearly distinguishable from styles of playing the instrument in e.g. Western

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2 (Juma, 2002)
classical music, Western folk music or Indian music, traditions where the violin also has a prominent position.

However, there is very few studies of styles of violin playing in oriental music, not to mention violin method works for oriental music. (Juma, 2002) The method used for teaching the instrument is mostly borrowed from western classical music, which means that a player has to learn the specific style of playing by listening to recordings, meeting with teachers, imitating etc.

I grew up in Sulaimaniyah, a town in the Northern part of Iraq, known as Kurdistan. This part of Iraq is habituated by the Kurds. The Kurds have their own language, culture, and customs, which set them apart from Arabs in the Southern part of Iraq. The population of the Kurds in Iraq is approximately 6 million. Geographically speaking, the Kurds share boarders with Turkey, Iran, Syrian, and Iraq. Being surrounded by many different cultures, the Kurds have been greatly influenced by these neighboring countries. This is certainly the case in the field of music. Kurdish music shares many characteristics with Turkish, Persian, and Arabic music, but at the same time, still has its own unique characteristics. For instances, all these Middle Eastern countries use the same modal system in their music. This system is called the “Maqam system”. (Todorov, 2018; Kamil, 2013) Furthermore, the ornaments used in interpreting these “Maqams” are quite similar between these countries. That said, each culture has its own unique way of interpreting these scales. Meaning, if you hear the same “Maqam” in Turkey, and in Kurdistan, they would sound quite different.

When I first began playing the violin in Kurdistan, I started out by listening to Kurdish songs and trying to play them on the violin. After doing this for a while, I realized that this method has limitations and for me to go further in learning the violin, I had to learn how to read music. There were many Kurdish, Turkish, Persian, and Arabic songs available in sheet music form, but I could not read them. For this reason, I started learning the traditional Western classical scales and etudes. This helped me develop my violin technique and gave me the ability to read music. After doing this for a few years, I began to notice a significant improvement in the way I was playing Kurdish music. Around this time, I also began taking private lessons from "Diler Hussein" who is a well-known teacher in my city. I wanted him to help me further develop my abilities in playing Kurdish music. My teacher, however, told me that a formal method for teaching Kurdish music is non-existent. Diler said, he himself learned only through listening and imitation. I remained with him for a few years. During this time, he helped me with Classical music and Kurdish music as well.

Having the ability to read music, I began looking for sheet music in oriental styles. What shocked me, however, was that the sheet music for these songs only contained the main notes but didn’t make any indication to the ornaments used in them. My next challenge was then to learn these intricate and detailed ornaments. The only method at hand was again by listening and imitating. I faced great difficulty in this process because the ornaments used in these styles are difficult to understand by just listening to them. I then began using a computer software called Cool Edit (https://cool-edit-pro.soft32.com/). This software gave me the ability to slow down the music and repeat it over and over again. Through this procedure, I began learning and understating the ornaments.

In addition to my personal efforts in learning the violin, I also began my formal studies in violin performance at the Institute of fine Arts in Sulaimaniyah. This program consisted of five years of studying music. The curriculum in the institute focused mostly on learning
Western classical music. During those 5 years of study, I was able to learn advance pieces and different styles. For my graduation recital, I played the Viotti violin concerto in A minor, which I considered as a great accomplishment giving the limited ability of the instructors at the institute. After graduating I began teaching the violin privately. Most of my students were interested in learning western classical violin. However, I had some other students who wanted to learn the oriental music and be able to improvise on the violin. During this time, I realized how hard it would be to teach them this style without a proper method. My only advice for them was to do exactly what I had done, which was listening and imitating different recordings and artists. In addition to my teaching job, I also worked in different recording studios as a studio musician and was taking part in the production of numerous commercial songs. These songs were usually composed to include a string section, consisting of violin, viola, cello, and Bass. In addition to the strings, some other traditional instruments were used in these songs. We usually would have three or four different violinists in the studio and would record the different voices together. The challenge was we had to discuss what kind of ornaments we wanted to use and how we wanted to do it. This process was a painstaking one and took a long time.

Finally, after facing challenges in teaching oriental music and improvisation on the violin, and having difficulty while trying to record a song with other violinists, I saw the need for a proper method for teaching Middle Eastern music on the violin. I realized that I can make the process of learning the violin a lot quicker. This will hopefully allow a greater number of people to learn the violin, and help to preserve and pass along this stylistic tradition.

Inspiration

Throughout my musical career, I have been inspired by many different musicians and violinists. My love to these artist’s styles and playing has motivated me to spend a long time analysing their works and solos. These artists include people from many different Middle Eastern countries such as Kurdsitan, Turkey, Iran, and different parts of the Arabic speaking nations.

Mojtaba Mirzadeh (1945-2005)

Mirzadeh was born in the Kurdish part of Iran and studied music in Teheran. He was a great instrumentalist and composer. The instruments he played included the Violin, Kamancha, and Setar. He composed and recorded many songs for some of the most famous Kurdish and Persian artists of the 20th century. These artists include Hassan Zirak, Mazhari Xalqi, Haydeh, Moein, Gulpa and many others. He was also a very successful film composer and wrote music for a large number of Iranian movies. Mirzadeh had his own unique style of playing which set him apart from everyone else. His style is a mixture of Kurdish and Persian music. His violin solos had great impact on me and truly shaped the way I play the violin. I spent countless hours listening to his solos and tried to learn and mimic everything he ever played. (Wikipedia contributors, 2019)

3 (Tootoonchian, 2016)
4 (Nassehpoor)
One of the pieces which truly inspired me was his Persian variations for violin and piano on the “Swan Lake” theme from the ballet music by Tchaikovsky. This variation piece was originally composed for an Iranian comedy show from the 1970s called the Kaaf. In the show, this piece has been used in a dance scene which is acted by two well known Iranian actors: Mary Apick, and Parvis Sayeed. At first, Mirzadeh plays the first two phrases of the “Swan Lake” in the original western classical style. Then when the main theme repeats, he alters the meter of the music from 4/4 to 6/8. The 6/8 meter is a common dance meter in Persian music. By changing the meter to this dance meter, the atmosphere of the music changes immediately. We now have the main theme from the “Swan Lake” but with an Iranian dance meter. Mirzadeh then adds ornaments and variations to the original theme. He also modulates the key from D minor to “Rast” Maqam on D, and then later modulates back to the original key of D minor. The way Mirzadeh mixes these two worlds of Western Classical music and Persian music is astonishing. In my research, I have notated this piece and have notated all the interacting ornaments used by Mirzadeh. (IMDb)

Dilshad Said (1958-)

Dilshad is a well known Kurdish violinist, composer and conductor. He was born in Duhok: A Kurdish city in the Northern part of Iraq. Dilshad finished the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 1979. He then immigrated to Europe where he obtained his Bachelor’s and Master’s degree from the University of Composition in Wales-UK. Dilshad is considered as one of the most influential Kurdish violinist. He was the first violinist/composer to take Kurdish folk tunes and transcribes them for violin and piano. What makes Dilshad’s transcriptions unique is his use of Western Classical violin techniques. He did this as to make it easier for the Western listener to understand and access the Kurdish tunes. His efforts have been a great inspiration for me because he has managed to present these Kurdish folk tunes in an entirely fresh and modern way. (Said, Variations on Kurdish Melodies, 2004)

Goran Kamil (1971-)

Born in 1971 in Sulaimaniyah, he is a popular musician, composer, and music teacher. Goran plays many different instruments including Violin, Cello, Double Bass, Oud, Jambush, and Kamancha. He is also a very successful composer and has produced albums for many famous singers in Kurdistan. Goran understands the different Middle Eastern styles quite well and is one of the few people in Kurdistan who knows all the Middle Eastern Maqams. I was fortunate enough to grow up in the same house hold as he did. He directly and indirectly taught me a lot about the violin and music in general.

Baki Kemanci (1968-)

Baki is a popular Turkish violinist and composer. He was born in 1968 in Turkey. He has been playing the violin from the age of 8 years old. Baki has composed and played for many known Turkish singers. He plays and conducts many music groups in Istanbul. He has opened (Baki Kemanci Art House) in Istanbul, which he teaches music theory and violin lessons. He plays typical Turkish style with using so much of expressions in his playing, which makes the listener couldn’t stop of listening. I have been inspired by his playing for many years, and learned most of the Turkish style details and ornaments. (Kemanci, Baki Kemanci, 2015)
Bijan Mortazavi (1957-)

Bijan is a well-known Iranian violinist, composer and singer. He was born in 1957 in Babol, and started playing the violin in the age of three years old with Masoud Namazian. He moved to United States in 1979, and has composed for many Iranian singers such as Moein, Haydeh and Sattar. He released his first album (Magic) of his music and songs in 1990, and this album became famous among Persian albums of that year. He received his (PhD) in Great Britain on development of contemporary Middle Eastern music in an academic form. His style is a mixture of Persian music in a classical form and pop style. He is one of my favorite violinist and I have inspired by him. I have played, performed and recorded many of his music, and I learned many Persian style’s ornaments and techniques from his playing. (Wikipedia contributors, 2019)

A mapping of the styles

Through my experiences in these styles I have used a mapping method (Ahlbäck, 1986) to distinguish and understand the differences between the styles of (Kurdish, Persian, Turkish and Arabic), and this can be a useful way to see differences for the musicians between these styles.

This is my understanding and analysis of the feature of these styles from the perspective of have been playing these different styles. I have been listening/playing these styles for many years and came up with the typical aspects through my experiences. This is also developed by what I have learned from my teachers in Middle Eastern music. I have learned very much about the styles from Goran Kamil and Diler Hussien, they can distinguish the styles very well, and I have been discussed with them about the differences and using them as personal references. (Kamil, Middle Eastern Music Styles ) (Hussien)

Kurdish Music Style

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<th>Expression</th>
<th>Musical Structures</th>
<th>Technical Qualities</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
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</table>
**Expression:**

1. **Melancholy:** Most of the music and songs are sad, and this is because of the maqam, that often have a sad expression connotation, similarly to Minor mode in Western music.

2. **Soul Touching:** In performing in maqam style, generally high level of expressivity is preferred, and usually are the listeners get lots of expressions and this touch the soul in a good way.

**Musical Structure:**

1. **Quarter Tones:** This is much used in the Middle Eastern music scales, including Kurdish music. But the intonation of the quarter tones is different in the different regional musical styles. In some styles the quarter tone is higher than regular or lower than regular range of the pitch. In Arabic music theory a quarter tone is exact between a natural and a sharp tone. For instance, if we take (B) and (D) we have C natural next to B and C sharp next to D, then the Arabic quarter tone is ideally precisely between C natural and C sharp.

   ![Quarter Tones Diagram]

   This is the regular range, and it used on keyboard settings. But in Kurdish music the quarter tone is often somewhat higher than what is preferred in Arabic music and more close to the sharp tone.

   ![Quarter Tones Diagram]

   If the musical intervals measured by cents in the Middle Eastern music styles, one interval equals to 200 cents such as western classical music. For this purpose, in the Kurdish style a sharp quarter tone is 153 cents and flat quartetone equals to 47 cents. In Arabic music this proportion is different, a flat quartetone is 150 cents and a sharp quarter tone equals to 50 cents. (Kamil, Middle Eastern Music Styles)

2. **Intervals:** In Kurdish music style there are many leaps between the intervals, which is not common in the other music styles in Middle East. This is an example:

   ![Intervals Example]

   This is a small melody, and as it shows there are five leaps between the notes. Most of them are thirds and fourths. This is a very common in music structure of the Kurdish style.
3. **Modes (Maqam):** Maqams (see above) is Middle Eastern musical modes and corresponding scales such as the Major and Minor modes and scales in Western music.

4. **Sequence:** In the Kurdish music style sequence is a very common technique in its music structure. In this technique there is a small melody in one or a few bars and the same melody repeats on one pitch lower. For instance, if the first one starts on C then the next one starts on B and so on.

   ![Sequence Example](example.png)

As we see in this example, the melody contains 4 bars and it starts with B then the fourth bars melody repeats on A.

5. **Bayat:** In the Kurdish style Bayat maqam is the most common scale which there are so many melodies on this scale. This is Bayat maqam:

   ![Bayat Example](example.png)

6. **Songs on three tones in (Hawrami):** Hawrami music style is from Hawraman, and Hawraman is an area in the south of Kurdistan, which is located on the border between Iraq and Iran. Hawrami music is a particular music style within Kurdish music. In this musical style there many melodies on just three tones.

   ![Hawrami Example](example.png)

As we see here the melody is only three tones which they are (a, b flat and c).

7. **Jorjina (Curcuna):** This is a common rhythm in Kurdish music. This rhythm is in 10/16 meter and it is divided into two groups of note (5+5), each group has five 16th notes.

   ![Jorjina Example](example.png)

This is one bar of 10/16 rhythm.

8. **Garyan:** This is another common rhythm in Kurdish music. This rhythm is in 7/8 meter and it is divided into three groups of note (3+2+2), first group has three eighth notes and two eighth notes in second and third group.

   ![Garyan Example](example.png)

This is one bar of 7/8 meter.
9. **Fast 2/4:*** This is a regular 2/4 meter and used for dancing songs with the speed of 135 Bpm and more, sometimes up to 145 Bpm.

*Technical Qualities:*

1. **Soft Bow:** In Kurdish and Middle Eastern violin playing bowing and the way of using is different compare to many other styles of music. The Kurdish music and the whole Middle Eastern music styles mostly are soft music and songs. Thus, the way of using the bow is optimized to get a soft sound. These are the techniques to get a soft sound:
   - Low bow pressure.
   - Lower range speed.
   - Upper top of the bow.
   - Sounding point of the bow close to the finger board.

2. **Complex left hand:** With the soft bowing with the right hand, there is too much of work in the left hand. The most focus during playing is on the left hand. And that is because there are many ornamentations.

3. **Vibrato trills:** This is a common technique in the Kurdish music, especially in (Kirmanji) playing style, and can be considered another type of trill. This is also very common in eastern European music, e.g. Hungarian and Rumanian Romani style. To play this technique, the violinist must put the two fingers right by each other at a half step distance and vibrate.

   This is how the symbol appears on the music:

   ![Symbol](image)

   This is how it is played, the first example is fast trill, and the second one is slower. The violinist can choose either of these depending on the character of the music.

   ![Example 1](image) ![Example 2](image)

4. **Glissando:** This is similar to the one used in the western classical music. The main differences are: first, it's used more frequently. Second, it is used between smaller intervals both upwards and downwards.

5. **Vibrato:** Just like in classical music, vibrato is an essential technique in Kurdish music.

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5 is one of the Kurdish dialect spoken in the Southern part of Turkey.
6. **Sul Ponticello**: This is used in order to get or imitate (Shimshal⁶) sound. The violinist used the bow close to the bridge of the violin, and with low pressure of the bow.

7. **Intense Vibrato**: In this kind of vibrato, the finger is not fixed on the top of the finger board. It instead slides back and forth much like a small glissando.

   This is how symbol appears on the music:
   ![Symbol Image]

   This is how it is played:
   ![Playing Image]

   It should be played with the same finger of the first tone (no finger changes).

*Instruments:*

1. **Balaban**: This is a very old wooden instrument and it played by blowing. This instrument has been used in many countries in the middle east. And it is also a very common instrument in Kurdish music. This instrument also called Duduk in Azeri.

2. **Shimshal**: This is a metallic wind instrument which is like a long flute. This instrument played with vertically positioned. It is a common instrument in Kurdish music.

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⁶ it is a metallic wind instrument which is like a long flute.
3. **Tapl**: This is a rhythmical instrument, and it is same as Zarb. The different between Tapl and Zarb is the body of the Tapl is made of metal, but the body of the Zard mad of wood. And both have sheepskin to the tope of the instrument.

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**Expression:**

1. **Sonati:** This is an Iranian traditional music style. This a usually a group of musician with old traditional instruments such as Tar, Santur, Kamancheh, Setar, Oud, Daf and Zarb.

2. **Melancholy:** See above.

**Musical Structure:**

1. **Radif:** This is a system for playing Persian music by Mirza Abdulla (1833-1918). **“The Radif is the traditional model repertory of Iranian classical music” (ICH).** This system contains 250 Iranian traditional melodies on 7 Destgah (Kamil, 2013). These Destgahs are formed on Maqams.

   - Destgah Shur
   - Destgah Mahur
   - Destgah Segah
   - Destgah Chaegah
   - Destgah Nava
   - Destgah Rastpenjgah
   - Destgah Humayon (Shabahang)

2. **Bandari 6/8:** This is a dance rhythm and they usually use it with dance songs and music. *(Friend, 1998)*

3. **Long Taksim:** They usually play a very long taksim including all the parts of the Destgah.

4. **Single Instrument:** In Persian music they have one solo instrument playing and performing which is called Taknavazi. And this is very common in every music concert.

5. **High Quartertones:** Using the quarter tones in Iranian music is higher that the regular range of the pitch and more close to the sharp tone, similar to Kurdish music.

   **Arabic Range:**
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C#</th>
<th>D</th>
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</table>
   
   **Persian Range:**
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C#</th>
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   Quarter
**Technical Qualities:**

1. **Bowling Techniques:** In the Iranian music style there is (Chaharmezrab). *“The literal meaning of the term is ‘four strokes’ or ‘four plucks’.”* This is a rhythm and the player plays the rhythm of the song in a continued way beside playing the song or the tune, which means the player plays the music and also mixed with the rhythm. And this used to be played with different bowings.  
   (School of Oriental and African Studies)

2. **Complex Left Hand:** See above.

3. **Appoggiaturas:** They use many Appoggiaturas during playing in Persian style.

4. **Triplet:** They use many triplets in their music.

5. **Same pitch triplet:** This is very common technique in Persian music, which they use it in singing and playing as well. They make one note to three notes as triple. But this is different from singing to playing it with instrument especially the bowed instruments.

   This is how it should be singing:

   ![Note Example](image)

   This is how it should be played:

   ![Note Example](image)

6. **Trills:** They also use many trills in playing.

7. **Glissandos:** Using many Glissandos as well.

**Instruments:**

1. **Santur:** This is a stringed instrument which improved in Iran. It made of wood and it has 72 strings. This instrument played with (Mizrab) which is like two small mallets. It is very common instrument in Persian music style.
2. **Tar**: This is a stringed instrument and played with a pick. It made of wood and is a skin under the string bridge to has a loud sound. It positioned on lap during playing. This is one of the most popular instrument in Persian music.

3. **Setar**: This is also a stringed instrument and made of wood. It known as a small Tar, but this is smaller and no skin on the surface. It played with one finger nail. It has a very beautiful and soft song.

4. **Daf**: This is a rhythmical instrument it has a cercal shape and made of skin with a frame of wood.
5. **Zarb:** This is also a rhythmical instrument and made of wood and has skin on the surface. This instrument positioned on lap.

#### Turkish Music Style

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<td>6. Arabesque</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Expression:**

1. **Melancholy:** See above.

2. **Fluidity:** In the Turkish music style violin playing usually exaggerated softness heard by using soft and upper of the bow, and using many of slurs and very little bow changing. This makes the sound fluidity and this is a part of the style.

**Musical Structure:**

1. **Long Tones:** In Turkish music style long tones can be heard especially during playing taksim.

2. **Low Quartertones:** Using the quarter tones in Turkish music is lower that the regular range of the pitch compare to the Arabic range, and the sharp quarter tones are more close to the natural tones. There are also other higher and lower quartertones and used by mentioning numbers (2 or 3) next to the quarter tones signs.

   Arabic Range:

   ![Arabic Range Diagram]

   This is the range of the generally used quarter tones.

   Turkish Range:

   ![Turkish Range Diagram]

3. **Jorjina (Curtuna) 10/16:** See above.

4. **Different 7/8:** They use 7/8 meter signature in 3 different types of groupings. (3+2+2), (2+3+2) and (2+2+3):

   ![Different 7/8 Diagram]

5. **Rhythm 9/8:** In Turkish style 9/8 meter signature used in 4 different types of groupings. (2+2+2+3), (2+2+3+2), (2+3+2+2) and (3+2+2+2):

   ![Rhythm 9/8 Diagram]
6. Arabesque: This is a famous and popular music genre in the Middle East, highly ornamented, and it based on Arabic music and improved in Turkey. “An ornament or an embellished work. The term is taken from the Arabic art and architecture which was very ornate. This term is used for various kinds of melodic, contrapuntal, or harmonic ornamentation.” (Artopium)

*Technical Qualities:

1. Violin Holding: Holding the violin during playing is different in Turkish music style. The violinist holds the violin without shoulder rest and positioned more on the chest. Also holding the violin by the left hand and facing the surface of hand to the neck of the violin. This makes the Turkish ornaments easier and promotes sliding and softness in bowing.

2. Clarinet Playing: As they are known by having virtuoso clarinet player of Middle Eastern music.


4. Long Slurs: In the Turkish music style long slur used very much, and this is for making a soft sound of playing. And means playing many notes in one bow for the bowed instruments.

5. Chromatic: This is a very common technique in Turkish style, and they play chromatic by swiping the fingers on the notes with a long slur which it sounds like a long glissando.

*Instruments:

1. Yayli Tanbur: This is a traditional and old Turkish instrument. It is stringed and played with bow and it has a long neck. This is a common instrument in typical Turkish music
The Yayli Tanburist playing many glissando during playing and this is because of the long neck of the instrument.

Arabic Music Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression</th>
<th>Musical Structures</th>
<th>Technical Qualities</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
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</table>
| 1. Melancholy  
2. Exploring    | 1. Saba  
2. Rast  
3. Semai Form 10/8 | 1. Complex left hand  
2. Trills  
3. Turns  
4. Double turns  
5. Glissandos | 1. Khashaba  
2. Oud |

*Expression:*

1. **Melancholy:** See above.

2. **Exploring:** Exaggerating with exploring in the Maqams is common and can be heard clearly in the Arabic music style. This makes the listener to explore with music into the Maqam feelings and gives extra expressions.
*Musical Structure:

1. **Saba**: This is a maqam and very popular in Arabic music style. This maqam has an Arabian atmosphere feeling.

   ![Musical Note](image1.png)

2. **Rast**: Rast also is a maqam and they have lots of music and songs on this scale.

3. **Samae Form 10/8**: This is an Arabic form of music, which they have many music on this form.

*Technical Qualities:

1. **Complex Left Hand**: See above.

2. **Trills**: Fast and long trills is a very common technique in Arabic style.

3. **Turns**: Using many turns during playing.

4. **Double Turns**: They also have double turns, which they play two or more turns in a row.

5. **Glissandos**: Playing Glissando also is very common.

*Instruments:

1. **Khashaba**: This is a rhythmical oriental instrument. It made of wood and a skin on its surface with a small size. The player holds the instrument under the arm. And it is very popular in Iraqi Arabian music style.
2. **Oud**: This is the most popular and significant instrument in Arabic music style. They use it almost in every song and every music. This is a stringed instrument and played by a pick. It made of wood and it has a big body.
Mapping the styles

- The green square contains the typical expressions and techniques for the style, and this does not mean that they are not exist in the other styles.

- The red square is for the mutual expressions and techniques between those styles they have the square.

- The blue circle is for the expressions and techniques which existence in all four styles.
Listening list of Middle Eastern violin styles

This is my suggestion for a listening list of the violin styles of Kurdish, Persian, Turkish and Arabic music.

Kurdish style:
1. Mojtaba Mirzadeh; (Mirzadeh, 2014)
2. Dilshad Said; (Said, 2013)

Persian style:
1. Paviz Yahaghi; (Yahaghi, 2012)
2. Asadollah Malek; (Malek, 2011)
3. Bijan Mortazavi; (Mortazavi, 2016)

Turkish style:
1. Baki Kemanci; (Kemanci, 2016)
2. Şenol Dinleyen; (Dinleyen, 2016)

Arabic style:
1. Mahmoud Sorour; (Sorour, 2016)
2. Mohamed Amin Qari; (Qari, 2019)
3. Attieh Sharara; (Sharara, 2015)

Method

The method of the research study:
The research part of this study has been designed to explore how stylistic features of the styles can be described, represented in notation and communicated.

It has been performed in an iterative process starting from picking some recordings with violinists, which I consider to be typical and excellent examples of the styles. Then I started by listening repeatedly to the recordings, which I then imitated, trying to capture and replicate the style in my own playing. As a second step, I recorded my performance and evaluated my performance by listening to the recordings, and trying to perfect my playing by returning to the first step. Once I knew how to play this properly I started to transcribe the recordings, firstly into a brief transcription in the manner how this music is generally presented for performers, without details and stylistically significant elements. Those are generally not needed for performers that know the style by heart.

In order to try and capture the style, I then made a second descriptive transcription, trying to capture all the significant details of the performance. Since this detailed transcription easily gets close to “unreadable” from a performance point of view and, as such, hard to use for communicating the scores, I started in the fourth step to try and represent different aspects of the playing style, such as e.g. ornaments, by symbols. Thus, reducing the score into a performance readable score, but keeping the stylistic elements.
I then evaluated the result by trying myself to play it and testing it with other violinists, both knowledgeable about Middle Eastern music and novices as well as discussing with my supervisor. I also did this in some experimental sessions (see further below).

After evaluating I reiterated the process, sometimes leading to alterations of the symbols used, inventions of new symbols and adding stylistic elements.

This process was repeated for characteristic pieces of the different styles.

In order to see whether stylistic competence could be developed from using these specific style elements in a general way, I then constructed exercises based on the identified style elements, in the manner of traditional violin school exercises, on transpositions of scales and phrases in a sequence of different tempos, applying Western violin methodology on Middle Eastern Style music.

These exercises were evaluated by practicing during some intense period and by applying them in experimental sessions (see further below).

The violin teaching method:

The method contains two major parts:

- The symbols:
  1. Exercises
  2. The most common techniques

- The music pieces:
  1. Simple version
  2. The version with the ornaments
(The Symbols)

To transcribe and notate the details of the Middle Eastern music I have used some symbols:

This is a small glissando between two notes, from a tone to another tone with a higher pitch.

This is how it appears on the music:

![Glissando symbol]

And this is how it is played:

![Glissando played]

This is also a glissando between two notes, from a tone to another tone with a lower pitch.

This is how it appears on the music:

![Glissando symbol]

And this is how it is played:

![Glissando played]

And for all the other tones with glissando, there are fingerings that learner can follow.
This is a symbol for a very common technique in Middle Eastern folk music. Having this symbol on a tone means to play the first tone and do a glissando to the next tone above, then glissando back to the first tone. This also should be very fast as two sixteenth notes. For instance, if this symbol appears on an A note, it means play A natural then glissando to B natural and again glissando back to A natural. The first A and B tones are like appoggiatura with glissandos between.

This is how it appears on the music:

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{symbol.png}} \]

And this is how it is played:

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{played.png}} \]

This is what called quartetone. It is higher than flat tones, and lower than natural tones. It is between a flat tone and a natural tone.

This is how it appears on the music:

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{quartetone.png}} \]

This is also a quartetone. It is higher than natural tones, and lower than sharp tones. It is between a natural tone and a sharp tone.

This is how it appears on the music:

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=0.2\textwidth]{sharp.png}} \]

This is trill as its known. In the Middle Eastern music, usually there are many of trills. This one that I have used is alike with classical music trills. It starts from a tone that has the trill and it played with the next tone on a higher pitch.
This is how it appears on the music:

And this is how it is played, the first example or the second one can be chosen as way of playing it:

🎵 Appoggiatura; in the classical music the Appoggiaturas usually exists behind the notes. But in the Middle Eastern music the Appoggiaturas are backward to the notes, which should be played after the main note.

This is how it appears on the music:

This is how it is played:

 turno

This is how it appears on the music:
This is how it is played (generally it is played very fast):

\[ \text{Mordent} \]

This is how it appears on the music:

\[ \text{Double Inverted Mordent} \]

This is how I have used them to be played, which may be different compare to its original.

This is how it is played:
This symbol is for an intense vibrato on the tones. The vibratos with this symbol should have sliding from the tone that has the symbol to a tone above and a tone below, but the slides to the other tone should be half of a quartertone.

This is how it appears on the music:

This is how it is played:

It should be played with the same finger of the first tone (no finger changes).

Rubato This is the same Rubato that have been used in the classical music. This means (play with a little free rhythm), which means the notes can be played little longer or shorter according to the phrases.

Vibrato Trill; This is common technique in the Middle Eastern styles, especially in the Kurdish music style. This is exact with its own name, Vibrato with Trill together on the same time, as long as the length of the note that has this symbol.

This is how it appears on the music:

This is how it is played, the first example or the second can be chosen:

It is the same as regular trill, but the only difference is doing vibrato while doing the trill. It has to be trilled with half notes always.
This is Double Turns symbol, which is a very common technique in the Middle Eastern music, especially in Arabic music. It is a sort of regular Turn, but this has to be played twice.

This is how it appears on the music:

This is how it should be played:

This is an other common technique from the Persian folk music, which also used very much with vocal in the Persian style of singing. This symbol used for tripling a music note on the same pitch. For instance, if it exists on a C note, it changes it to three C such a triplet. This technique called (Chah-chaha) in Farsi. The same technique is existing for the instruments, but instead of separating the three triplet notes, it played with two appoggiaturas. For instance, one of the appoggiaturas takes place between the first and second, and the other between second and third notes.

This is how it appears on the music:

This is how it is singed:

This is how it is played:
Experiment – videotaped tests with Swedish fiddlers

First experiment:

I was interested if the method including a simpler and a more detailed version of a tune as well as practicing a maqam on beforehand playing a piece were sufficient for learning to play this music if you are not familiar with the music on beforehand.

I conducted an experiment session with three Swedish fiddlers. The session was video recorded and I did examine the recording after the session. I prepared two Kurdish pieces in two versions, one without details and one with ornaments. I also sent the fiddlers a recording of my playing of the pieces with a description list of the ornaments and maqam scales. However, none of them had listened to it on beforehand. These pieces are Kurdish folk songs, and they are in two different maqams. One of them is in Ajam maqam, which is similar to a major scale in western music and the other is Hussieni maqam with quarter tones. Choosing these two different maqams was to know how the participants were able to play quarter tones and also to get them into the music, starting from the major scale, which is easier and well known scale for them. These fiddlers are used to play Swedish folk music, and it was their first time to play Kurdish or Middle Eastern music.

First, we started with listening to the recordings. Then we began with reading and playing the simple version. After they learned the simple version I showed and explained the ornament descriptions. Before playing the second version, first we played and practiced the ornaments with giving the way of playing them. Then we started with playing the maqam scales of the songs, the Ajam and the Hussieni with quarter tone, and improvising on the scales one by one. Last, we played the second version. And for playing this version, we started the piece with only one bar with ornaments, then learning the second bar and trying the first and the second bar together. We used this way of learning the piece until the end of the piece.

Result and discussion:

After the experiment I had discussion with the participants. They reported that in the beginning of the experiment they thought that is very hard to play and understand the pieces just by listening and even with reading the simple versions. But practicing the ornaments by themselves and using the second more detailed version made it easier and faster for them to understand it and play it as well. In their reflections over playing the pieces and performing the ornaments, they observed that I use vibrato between the notes which they were missing and did not really understand. And my response to this was that in this style of music we use to make vibrato on the longer notes, similarly to slow vibratos in western classical music. One thing I learned was that they don’t generally use vibrato in Swedish folk music.
My reflections over the experiment:

I was a bit surprised that the Swedish fiddlers with no experience in middle eastern musical styles actually could make sense of these notations and perform quite well, for instance quarter tones.

However, after this experiment and from experiencing that it was difficult to play the ornaments I had written I realized that I had to write some exercises for the ornaments for them to learn and get used to play them. And something else which was missing was the expression of the music. Expression is the hardest thing to notate and transcribe, and this can be achieved only by listening to the music many times and get the feeling of it. This is of course common to all musical styles, not every aspect of the music can be written.

Second experiment:

Motivation: After analyzing the first experiment I realized that the violinists had a few problems with playing the songs. Among the problems were:

- It was hard for them to play the ornaments.
- They had problem with the beats, and emphasizing the downbeat, also the timing of beats.

The idea of the second experiment was to solve the problems from the experiment 1 by using some other ideas:

- To test whether specific exercises for ornaments would help them, perform them better? How can the exercises be developed?
- I wanted to test whether a background track would help them to orientate within the structure of the music?
- I wanted to know how it feels playing with non-triadic chords?
- I wanted more fiddlers to participate in the experiment.

Method – Experiment design

Also in this case I sent out notations of the music on before hand and made a video recording of the session. The session lasted for 1 ½ hour.

I started by playing and we listened to a recording of the music by me first. Then I asked them what do they think? Is it easy to play what they heard? Is it possible? Their answer was “is not easy to play such a music like this”. Then I started to demonstrate and describe the scale and explained the concept a Maqam. I played the Maqam scale and they repeated it after me a few times. I played a taksim (improvisation on the Maqam), and asked them to improvise also, to get into the expression of the scale. Just two of the participants volunteered to improvise.
After this we started to read and play the simple version of the music, with less details, a few times. Between this simple version and the detailed version, I showed and introduced the ornaments and the symbols for ornaments that I have used in the notations. Beside this, I had the exercises for the ornaments. We played all the exercises and they learned the ornaments.

Then I started with the detailed version with a slow tempo. First bar first and playing a few times, then adding the second bar and so on. They learned the whole music and I speeded up the tempo. At last, I played the pre-recorded accompaniment that I had made for playing along with the song in order to understand the structure of the song and the beat better. The accompaniment entails the rhythm and the chords, and also some accompanying voices. Then I played with them the same song without music notation and no accompaniment, and this was to pass the expression of the song by imitation, just playing by ear.

These were the steps of learning the song:

1. Listening to the song.  
   (This helps the students to have an idea of what the final product should sound like).
2. The maqam and improvising.  
   (This was to understand the maqam scale and get used to it).
3. The simple version notation.  
   (To learn the main notes of the song).
4. Introducing the ornaments.  
   (To learn and understand each individual ornament and the corresponding symbol).
5. The exercises.  
   (To break down the ornaments into their building blocks).
6. The detailed version notation.  
   (Here the students will be able to play the song with the written ornaments).
7. Playing with the accompaniment.  
   (This was to solve the rhythmical problems and the groove of the song).
8. Playing by imitating.  
   (To get the expression of the song).

As mentioned above, the session was video taped.

Evaluation:

This experiment was more successful than the first one in terms of the participants learning, because the exercises made the piece much easier. I had more fiddlers and that made the sound better as a violin group. They also had problem with the acciaccatura (backward appoggiatura) and downward glissandos, but they reported that the exercises made this easier and it would be beneficial to practice the ornament exercises after the session to improve the performance.

Another problem was quarter tone, which was a little bit too low, especially the b-quarter tone. This was probably because they are more used to vary the intonation than playing a specific intonation all the time, for the quarter tones; also that some of the students never play quarter tones.
My reflection on the experiment:

From the second experiment I think I found a solution to the problems in the first experiment, by the specific exercises for the ornaments, and the accompanying background track for learning to overcome the rhythmical problems.

New ideas: I prefer to have more improvising on the maqam, and also improvising by imitating. Through more of imitation in combination with notation the true expression of the song can be passed on to the unexperienced in a more comprehensive way.

Self experiment:
Motivation: I wanted to know if the method itself is useful for me as well? Is it too complicated? Do I need more intermediary exercises? And test on myself before testing on the students.

Method: How was the experiment performed?

1) Record playing by ear.
2) Written exercises that I had not tested was constructed from examples.
3) Play with metronome.
4) Tried two weeks every day for 2 hours.

Evaluation:
The exercises were developed and useful for the ornaments and more understandable. There were some notation mistakes and less fingering.

Results and my reflections:
- I have never played these techniques many times in a sequence.
  Comment: This is a challenge because I haven’t used them on all positions before and it is demanding to play them sequentially – takes time and concentration.
- I have never played them with metronome from slow tempo to fast.
- It was new to play all these techniques on the all pitches.
- It feels more emphasizing the techniques.
- All the ornaments became easier and more comfortable to play through my fingers.

All in all, it turned out that even for me, it is useful since it makes me more aware of the ornaments and also give me a more flexible technique.

Private experiment:
During creating the method, I had two violinists, one of them is an oriental Kurdish violinist and the other is a classical violinist that agreed on testing my method. Rebaz is oriental violinist, and Rebin is classical. I wrote the notations and sent it to them iteratively, and then I was asking them to play and record exactly what I have written. I was also chatting by camera and asking them to play for me live. The oriental violinist was missing some small details with the notations sometimes, and was turning to play by ear with more expression. The classical violinist was reading and playing the notations with all the details. They were sending me
recordings and I was analyzing their playing with the notations, and adding more ornaments with more details. I changed many of the symbols in order to make them understandable, and made the details clear to get and hear what I wanted to be played. Many notation problems were solved through this process.

It was useful for me to have the two of them trying out my notations in order to understand what problem will be, and also to see how the method works when someone such as these violinists want to use the method.

The Concert

My final master’s concert took place at KMH, I played and demonstrated the four styles of Kurdish, Persian, Turkish and Arabic with improvisations. This was a new experience playing all of these together in one concert, and it is not easy to play and focus on the ornaments, techniques and expression at the same time. I also played two pieces, which they were a mixture of Middle Eastern and western classical style. The feedback of the concert was successful and I was satisfied from listening to the recordings.

I shared the stage with some other oriental musicians. I also shared one of the experiment of my master project with some Swedish fiddlers by playing a Kurdish tune live on stage. This was the final experiment as a live playing test.

This was the concert’s program:

1. Samai Hijaz  
   Göksel Baktagir (Turkish)
2. Bogazici  
   Baki Kemanci (Turkish)  
   Alan Kamil – Violin  
   Feras Sharstan – Kanun  
   Saman Taha – Piano  
   Mårten Hillbom – Raqq and Cajon
3. Swedish folk music meets Kurdish folk music!  
   (Kurdish and Swedish)  
   Alan Kamil – Violin  
   Tommy Lundberg – Violin
4. Pirozbe  
   Nasir Razazi’s Song (Kurdish)  
   Violins:  
   Alan Kamil  
   Tommy Lundberg  
   Anna Ekborg  
   Sandra Arvman  
   Nichelle Johansson  
   Saman Taha – Piano  
   Mårten Hillbom – Cajon
5. Swan Lake  
   Mojtaba Mirzadeh (Persian)
6. Soran Badinan  
   Dilshad Said (Kurdish)  
   Alan Kamil – Violin
Discussion – summary

What did I learn by conducting these experiments?
This was my first time to teach someone Middle Eastern style violin playing. Moreover, I had not written exercises or detailed in this way before. It was challenging to teach someone a complicated music who did not have any background about that style of music.

I could see that some elements, that was technically demanding or foreign was not easily learned by the unexperienced learners, which halted the learning process. Simultaneously, some elements that they felt connected to, was immediately adapted to their own playing style, missing out some important features of the style.

From this experience I learned that I need to take intermediary steps, which led to the development of specific exercises with the aim of helping out with specific instrumental hurdles and also introducing style elements in a rigorous manner.

Is the means of communicating style technique in my work however, can be a problem relying too much on notations?
Yes, it is a problem relying too much on notation, as I have mentioned that this method is not enough without listening. This method can be used as a tool, it is for those who want to notate this kind of music with all details, and also for the learner to have something to understand the music through eyes not just by listening again and again. I have been spending time to understand the ornaments and slowing them down, but now students can see the techniques clearly with having exercises to get high skills of playing.

What could be the next steps?
The next step could be experimenting this method with Middle Eastern music students. Transcribing more music and songs from these styles with using the symbols for the details.

Through this project I have learned more about the styles, and have learned more details of playing in these styles, and I also explored and read more about them.
Conclusion

This thesis is only the first step in a much larger project. After my graduation, my hope is to refine my work and organize it in a series of pedagogical books starting from beginner to most advance. These books will be accompanied by a DVD in which students can find videos made by myself explaining all the exercises and tunes in the book. Furthermore, I would like to teach and train other teachers in my country, and familiarize them with my method. This way, more and more people can have access to it. Finally, I would like my method to become a part of the curriculum of the musical institutions in Iraq such as, the Institute of Fine Arts, and the College of Fine Arts. I believe this project can change the lives of many students and raise the standards of music education. Through these efforts, I wish to provide a small service to my people and my culture.
Alan Kamil - Violin

Examenskonsert master
folkmusik/konstmusik
från andra kulturer

Feras Sharstan
kanun

Saman Taha
piano

Mårten Hillbom
slagverk

Tommy Lundberg
fiol

Fiolgrupp från
Institutionen för
folkmusik

Ons 24 april 19.00
Nathan Milsteinsalen
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