

The Musical-Artistic Dimension of the Mehterhane

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Abstract: Mehterhane represents the most important musical formation found in the royal courts of Moldova and the Wallachia, because it is the one that makes the connection – from an artistic and political point of view – between these countries and the Ottoman Empire. The context in which this musical formation comes into the possession of the Romanian rulers is related to the geopolitical context of the Romanian Countries related to the Ottoman Empire. Due to the increasing influence of the Ottomans on the Romanian Countries, they become an integral part of the empire from the Ottoman perspective. As a result, the Romanian rulers received the sultan’s reign, in exchange for a sum of money, and they invested them according to Ottoman practice, by conferring a badge, as a representation of the sultan’s political power, among which elements were the mehterhane. This formation was the one that accompanied the ruler not only in all the official public events, but also in the private ones, assuring him the necessary grandeur, being as well regarded as a bey in the political hierarchy of the Gate from this point of view. From an artistic point of view, in Moldova and the Wallachia, the mehterhane had to be heard daily at dusk (chindie) and to make the parade, called “nöbet”. The music of mehterhane was both instrumental and vocal-instrumental, while the main repertoire consisted of military marches and prayers (gülbank), sung during war, while he performed octaves, bestels and semais following the structure of “fasıl” concerts, specific to Ottoman music in general during peacetime. Due to the psychological effect exerted on the enemies on the battlefield and the moralizing effect on the Ottoman soldiers, the mehterhane was also adopted by some European armies, without reaching the expected effect, due to the mismatch with the foreign environment where it was active. The more, it starts to become well known by Western influence and its musical influences are taken over by famous composers such as Mozart.

Keywords: mehterhane, music, political power, ruler, Ottoman Empire.

1. Introduction

This research tries to provide information regarding the musical and artistic part of this musical formation, because, most contributors generally approach this topic or they particularly refer to the issues related to the historical context where the mehterhane or the political symbolism was manifested. Our attempt can also be justified from the perspective of a curiosity in knowing what this music sounds like and what the principles according to which it was created were. The literature abounds in works that

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approach Ottoman classical music, which is a very fashionable subject from multiple perspectives, which is why, according to our knowledge, it does not exist, and mehterhane works only dedicated to tackle the technical aspects of this music. The only information regarding the musical and artistic features of the Ottoman military music is briefly contained by works that do not have the mehterhane as main subject.

This research also aims at highlighting the role played by the mehterhane music in influencing the Western military music firstly, as well as by secondly introducing the new elements of musical language in the European cult music. All these aspects have contributed to the development of music in general, but also to its diversification.

Mehterhane or the Ottoman military music represents the most important musical band found in the royal courts of Moldavia and the Wallachia, because it makes the connection – not only from an artistic but also politically point of view – between these countries and the Ottoman Empire. The context in which the band enters under the Romanian rulers' law is related to the geopolitical situation of the Romanian Countries in relation to the Ottoman Empire.

Prior to the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the Islamic political structures in the Middle East used a music band formed by different types of drums, called “tabl-khana”, as military music and as a sign of their leader's (caliph) authority (Farmer, 2000, p. 35), along with other elements. Subsequently, with the decline of the caliphate, the rulers of the small Arab tribes demanded the right to benefit from the tabl-khana and to legitimize themselves through it, which led to the crystallization of a tradition, according to which, granting the political power to the tribal leader by the caliph to be done by offering a badge, composed of the mentioned musical band, a flag and an investment diploma (Farmer, 2000, p. 35).

This practice was adopted by the Ottoman empire – even Osman I, who laid the foundation of the future Empire was vested with such a badge (Hammer, 1840, p. 29) – and it was implemented in granting the positions within the imperial hierarchy by which each Ottoman dignitary was receiving a badge, according to the mentioned Islamic tradition (Hammer, 1836, p. 304). The tabl-khana band, named in the Romanian sources “tabulhanea”, adopts wind instruments, such as the drone in its composition, since the caliphate, while during the Ottoman Empire it develops into an institution, under the strict authority of the state, both from an artistic and political point of view.

The members of this musical group were included among senior ministers, called “mehters” because of the close connection between this and the supreme political authority – the Sultan (Hardy Campbell, 2012, pp. 2-3). The category of the mehters included those who took care of the Sultan's tents, those who were in charge of various domestic services and those who sang military music and wore flags during the battle (*Mehter'in Tarihi...*). The word

“mehterhane”, that is to say the “house of mehters” which represents the institution of this category of servants, was coined from the term “mehter”, translated as “very big”, to which the word “hâne”, which translates to “house” (Serदारu Agachi, 2000, p. 77), was added.

The military music of the Ottomans evolved from a simple composition, consisting of several types of drums, to a large structure, with various instruments, created to meet the demands of the battlefield or ceremonials. Even before the set up of the Ottoman Empire, starting with the 12th century, the “tabl” (drums) sang every time the Ottoman sultans ascended or descended from the horse (Popescu). It also represented the official music of the empire and was under the direct ruling of the state. It started to sing in the presence of the pad shah inside both the inner and outer courtyards of the Top-Kapı palace, but never inside the harem and could be heard by a very large number of people, due to the loud sounds and the large number of hundreds of members (Veinstein, 2001, pp. 158-159). The main duties of mehters were to play continuously during the battle, ending the music meaning losing the battle, to sing the Sultan every night (at the sunset) a repertoire that included the prayer for him and play well every night and morning in the garden of the imperial palace or other cities of the empire, before evening and morning prayers (Feldman, 1991, p. 1007). There are examples regarding the Romanian courts, reporting on the habit of singing mehterhane at the sunset “they gathered the mehters and asked them to sing in court every day at the sunset” (Uricarul, 1994, p. 251, etc.).

Moving on from this brief introduction intended to create an image on the significance of mehterhane, we will further try to deepen musical and artistic side of this band, and to present details that guide and provide insight into its importance in terms of musical and artistic view.

2. Technical characteristics of the mehterhane music

Initially only instrumental and since the eighteenth century both instrumental and vocal (Nicolle and Hook, 1995, p. 32), the music of the mehterhane varied, depending on the circumstances where it was to be sung. The repertoire of “war” contains songs such as “peşrev”, “semai” and “beste”, composed according to the tact “usûl düyek”, representing the core essence of the traditional military marches. Another usûl specific to this music, called “ceng-i harbi” was created by mehters. Also, during the war context, the mehterhane also had a prayer, called “cenk-i gülbank” (Veinstein, 2001, pp. 166-167) which also denoted a religious dimension of this musical band. Another religious feature of the band is the prayer performed for the Sultan on special occasions, as it contained words of praise shouted by the hymns at certain times (Popescu). During peacetime, the mehterhane also sang folk songs, dance songs or “ilahi” in order to distract people from the Empire. By

adopting a diverse repertoire, this musical band proves that it has enjoyed a wide popularity among all social strata (Popescu).

The music of the mehters is a mix between the classical style of music and the popular one; it also implies a mixture of forms and instruments, which become specific to this (Jackson, 2009, p. 407).

Makam is a term to designate how the oriental music is composed. Each song is written in a different makam composed mainly of tunes specific to a certain musical scale. If a song is composed as “makam sūznak”, this means that notes specific to this scale have been used (Edelman, 1954, p. 27). Applied to mehterhane, “makam mâhur” represents the mostly used makam for its composition (O’Connell, 2017, pp. 104-106) with a cheerful sounding dynamic suitable to martial music. The corresponding of this makam in western music is the G major tone. Due to this similarity there is the possibility of modulation in C major or E minor, that is, in “çargah makam” or “buselik makam” (Tarikci, 2010, p. 17).

Usûl is the second makam feature typical to the Ottoman music – it includes all concepts related to pace and rhythm and it was born and developed during the Ottoman Turkish music (Tarikci, 2010, p. 17). Usûl (pl. usûllar) is a rhythmic interpretation, generally by using a drum, which considers the creation of a rhythm set, based on a certain duration, sound and certain accents. The Ottoman musical tradition created distinct rhythmic elements, of a predetermined length, divided into stressed and unstressed beats, called “düm” and “tek” (Graeme, 2008, p. 17). Depending on how you combine the duration, sound and stresses, the usûl can be of several types: „usûl devrirevan”, „usûl sengîn semaî”, „usûl sofyân”, „usûl düyek”, „usûl ceng-i harbi” etc., these rhythmic characteristics representing the limits within which the composer must fit his song (Edelman, 1954, p. 44). Specifically, due to the fact that the Ottoman music was not written on the music score, its learning and forwarding (meşk) was made by usûl, made in turn from a mix of various rhythms and metric stressed lyrics (Sari, 2015, p. 128).

During the Ottoman music the usûl is named according to the name of each subcategory already mentioned and not according to the number of measures. Just like the makam, the usûl is divided into several sub-categories, being divided into two groups, however, minor and major, according to the number of each part beats (Tarikci, 2010, p. 18). Düyek and Ceng-i Harbi, the ones we will further talk about are part of the usûl minor category, that is, they consist of up to 16 beats.

Düyek is an imbalanced beat and one of the most used usûl by the mehters being formed by a pattern of eight times and five beats. More than the 2/4 measure of the Western music, which can be divided into 4/8 and 8/16, the düyek beat of 8 can be subdivided into 16 or 32. In the case of rhythm subdivision, the general beat does not change, since the stresses retain the basic

form of a rhythmic pattern (Popescu-Judet, 1973, p. 116; Graeme, 2008, p. 17).

Ceng-i harbi also represents a minor use of 10 beats (10/8) used in music for military marches as well as in others (Saull, 2014, p. 68).

Fasıl refers to concert performances of Ottoman classical music in general. In case of mehterhane we don't know exactly if concerts were made according to the classic form "fasıl", but given the fact that the repertoire of this band was made up of the same species of music, like peşrev, semai or beste as well as in the Ottoman classical music and bore the name "newbet" or "fasıl (Feldman, 1991, p. 1008) we may think that the representations were still unfolding according to classic fasıl. On fasıl concert, Eugenia Popescu-Judet offers the most concise and clear explanation: "The concert suite (*fasıl*, author's note) comprised a succession of vocal, vocal-instrumental and instrumental pieces composed in the same way but by different authors. Although all the pieces in a suite are composed in the same way, however, other modulations and passages within the same piece are allowed, respecting precise composition rules. They can also be composed in related or derivative ways, according to the theory of Oriental music. Changes allowed extent and pace of a piece to another and rhythmic variations in the content of the same parts. The variety of meter and rhythm is a guiding principle in the composition of the suite. In contrast, the tempo differences between the movements of the concert are not striking, creating the impression of homogeneity in a number of pieces. They follow one another in a fixed order by tradition and become an inexorable rule: 1. *Taksim* (initial prelude with free form); 2. *Peşrev* (instrumental piece); 3. One or two *Beste* (voice track); 4. *Aghir semâ'î* (very slow vocal track); 5. A series of 5-15 *sarki* (vocal tracks with instrumental parts); 6. *Sâz semâ'îsi* (instrumental piece related to the *peşrev*, with which the suite ends). On request an additional piece of any kind can be sung". (Popescu-Judet, 1973, p. 39)

An account of a mehterhane "concert" refers even to the Romanian area and corresponds with performing the fasıl in some respects. The story made in 1768 by a German commercial agent, traveling through the Romanian Countries, captures the musical atmosphere at the the khan court in Căușani as follows: "I have never heard anything more sinful, more discordant as a song and a tone. Ten individuals blow from some similar tools like oboe (*zurna*), but half the size of a single item and having a very thick end. Three of them were beating in small dulcimers (*nagarals* properly) about which you could not know what they were made of, because of the mud on them. Ten people were hung by big throats with red patches attached to their necks; they beat according to the rhythm with a big stick over the drum and at the bottom with a smaller one, very fast. This music was started by ten oboes who blew a few minutes in the same tone; then one blew a solo and made strings, runs, triplets, blooms until it turned green, blue and black; afterwards they all sang together and a little later

the dulcimer players (nagaragii) started their drumming with the drums. Everything was going well, but to make a real song would have been a pure impossibility. When one piece was finished the first oboe began again and the others followed it as described above. Finally, one of the musicians was making a wish, and the others ended it with a shout (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1997, p. 638).

Comparing the two texts we can consider that the mehterhane also followed, at least to a certain extent, the pattern of the Ottoman classical concert of music, considering that the melodic sections coincided as a name or as a composition. Moreover, in the year 1762, Mr. Grigore Callimachi of Moldova receives the visit of Hamza-Pasa, welcomed with a lavish ceremony. Within the context of this visit, the mehter of the Moldavian gentleman sings a peşrev to the pasha to his delight (Simonescu, 1939, p. 311). We have here another argument that the mehterhane music was made according to the terminology of the Ottoman classical music and most likely, according to its perceptions.

Peşrev are instrumental works, preludes, composed of smaller sections, termed “garments”, generally having four such sections. Each hane ends with another section, called “teslim”. The grouper is generally composed to be sung in the usûl major style, and there are some that do not have the teslim section (*Mousique classique...*). According to Sulzer, the sections of the peşrev are called as follows: “First, *şerhane*, second *mülazime*, third *orthane* and fourth *zonhane*. Each of the last three parts differs completely from the basic sound or tone of *şerhane*, and when the third or the *orthane* part is finished, the first part is not repeated, but the second part, i.e. *mülazime*. The same thing happens after the completion of the *zonhane*, so of the last part” (Zinveliu, 1995, p. 163).

The peşrevs sung by the mehterhana, in contrast to those of the Ottoman classical music, generally bear functional names such as: “Parade order”, “Carrying horses”, “Flag”, etc., according to the context in which they were performed (Feldman, 1996, p. 306; Feldman, 1991, p. 1008).

Semai is one of the great forms of varied composition of Turkish music. It is divided, like the peşrev, into four sections, with a teslim at the end of each hane. The first three hane of the semai have introductory and transitive characteristics, and the tune and structure of the fourth section are completely free, depending on the composer’s choice (*Mousique classique...*). There are two types of semai, one has a rhythmic pattern of the form 10/8 and it is sung before the second semai, which has a ternary rhythmic formula of 6/4 or 6/8 (Behar 2006, p. 406). The semai is distinguished by a faster tempo and according to its own specificity, it must end in the same tone in which the first section of the peşrev is sung. The tune of the semai has nothing to do with the previous musical species (Zinveliu, 1995, p. 164).

Beste (bestea (Suciu, 2010, p. 97) in Romanian) or the Turkish areas are pieces vocally interpreted and instrumentally accompanied, as they belong to the fasıl concerts (Behar, 2006, pp. 405-406). The beste is made of four sections, each having different versions. The song used for the first, second and fourth verse or section is the same, which gives the beste the AABA type of musical composition. The first two as “zemin”, the third forms “myan”, and the last “karar”. The beste type always uses a slow, wide usûl rhythm (Edelman, 1954, pp. 70-71).

Ilahi are popular hymns of religious inspiration, composed to praise Allah, Muhammad and other saints. They are written in Turkish, in different makams and usûls, in a unique style, specific to them. Although these ilahi can be formed in any makam, according to tradition it is not preferable to be composed in bright, shiny makam (*Mousique classique...*). Something worth mentioning to this musical species is the fact that it can be sung by a singer or choir, but without musical accompaniment (Boratav, 1986, p. 1094).

3. Composition and musical instruments

There are several references regarding the structure of mehterhane that may seem contrary or inappropriate, due to the speaker's different perception or reality in many cases. These generally refer to the same family of instruments, but their used names vary depending on their own musical knowledge. In this respect, the account of Mouradgea d'Ohsson is relevant, who states that the mehterhane comprises sixteen drums, sixteen zurna, eleven trumpets, eight naré drums (nagarals), seven cymbals and four large kös drums. This company of 62 musicians is doubled when the Sultan leads the army. Except for the drums, the other instruments are reduced to the number of nine (nine of each kind of instrument), when they compose the music of the great Vizier and of all the pashas (d'Ohsson, 1824, pp. 23, 155).

Davul (Fig. 1) is a membranophone percussion instrument – a type of large drum – whose length can range between 40 and 100 centimeters (Bărbuceanu, 1999, p. 83). Within the research sources, the davul employs different terms, such as: “grande caisse”, “grosse caisse” and “bass drum”, terms that translate by “big drum”. Although this instrument can be met as slightly modified according to the needs and specificities of each nation in part, in most cases, the davul or the big drum are synonymous. In Turkey, the davul is the percussion instrument characteristic to popular music, being found in every region of the country. The term is derived from the Arabic word “tabl”, a general term for the family of drums and represent the instrument of mainly Islamic military musical bands, called “‘tabl-khāna” (Farmer, 2000, p. 32). About davul de la Croix says: “The drummers of the janissaries [...] compared to ours are twice as long and almost twice as wide; they beat them at both ends; with the right hand they hit the ordinary stick and the left one, with a hoard,

and their arm is supported on the drum which they hold much higher than the usual one” (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1980, p. 288).



Fig. 1 Performer at davul (*mehter.com*)

“**Naḳḳāra**”, “**Naqqāra**” or “**Nagara**” (Fig. 2) are different names of the same musical instrument. It is of Arab-Persian origin; ancient eardrum with hemispherical or conical basin, of small size, made of wood or bronze (Bărbuceanu, 1999, p. 178). The Nagara drum is considered to be the ancestor of the eardrum currently used in a symphonic music ensemble.

These were introduced to the Iberian Peninsula by the Arabs in the eighth century, while they only reached the other part of Europe during the fifteenth century (Demian, 1968, p. 39), most probably through the Ottomans and their military music.

Identifying this musical instrument in sources raises several problems, because, in French, the term has several forms: “caissettes” (d’Ohsson, 1824, p. 155), “petite timballes” (Hammer, 1839, p. 17; Dumont and de Rousset Missy 1739, p. 497), “naré” (d’Ohsson, 1824, p. 23) or simply “timbales” (d’Ohsson, 1791, p. 416). Most often used the last term has been translated into Romanian by “țimbal/țambal”, as Emil Suciū also states in his dictionary (2010, p. 533). According to George Henry Farmer, the reason why this term takes several forms, being difficult to be identified, depends on the source of the instrument’s name and the transformations it undergoes. There are various terms used to be designated but subsequently, the nagara drum was crystallized as the “naḳḳāra “. The term has been taken over in Europe as “naker”,

“nacaire”, and the Persian synonym “*tinbal*”, becomes “*timbale*”, “*tymbala*” (2000, p. 34).



Fig. 2 Performer at nagara (*mehter.com*)

Among the Romanian and Italian sources (Toderini, 1787, p. 239), the nagara occurs under the name “*tumbelechi*”¹ (Ionescu-Gion, 1891, p. 216) or even *darabană*² (Cantemir, 1973, p. 231), a Romanian small drum (Bărbuceanu, 1999, p. 83). Teodor Burada uses the same *tumbelechi* to designate the nagara, according to who these are “small tambourines, like teas sites brass casting, covered with leather, on which the straps braided leather were used” (1974, p. 242).

Kös, (Fig. 3) as called in Turkish, is the most important drum of the mehterhane and the core of the band otherwise, because it represents the person of the Ottoman Sultan, within his own mehterhane, in that of the great vizier or another, during the war, when the Sultan does not participate in the respective military campaign (Schmidt-Jones, p. 2).

For the Romanian Countries and for the mehterhane belonging to the gentlemen, there is no evidence of the *kös* drum. However, there are testimonies that show that a mehterhane of the sultan who had the *kös* drum was present in these countries. The context in which this aspect was mentioned refers to the 1484 conquest of the Moldovan cities, Chilia and the White

¹ The “*tumbelechi*” drum is not strictly a nagara, but it is also a small drum, also called “*darbuka*” or “*küdüm*” (Bărbuceanu 1999, pp. 83, 147, 264).

² This is clearly about small drums, because it refers to the Lord’s Table, which took place in a room and where one could bring large drums because of the limited space.

Fortress (Cetatea Albă), where the victorious Ottoman army introduces the sounds of the royal music (Guboglu and Mehmet, 1966, pp. 98-99, 131), flies the Islamic flags and beats the “royal drum, according to the Osmanian custom” (Guboglu and Mehmet, 1966, p. 326).



Fig. 3 Performer at kös (mehter.com)

Zil (Fig. 4) is the percussion instrument found under names such as: cymbals, cinel, cymbals. Its origins are very old, and can be found in countless lines in the writings of the Old Testament, especially in the *Book of Psalms*. In the music of the mehters, the cymbal or zil as it is referred to this band, have different sizes, the smallest were used in Mevlevi ceremonies, and the highest were used in big countries very similar to nowadays tools (Graeme, 2008, p. 6).

In the descriptions of foreign travelers, who have passed through our territory, the zil is depicted as follows: “two-handed collisions on the back to place hands in them; they are of a metal that has a very vibrant sound. Some young people hit these tracks with each other, which produces a very pleasant martial sound with the drum and which is heard from a distance” (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1980, p. 288).



Fig. 4 Performer at zil (*mehter.com*)

Zurna (Fig. 5) is a wind instrument with double reed and can be seen in the Balkans, India and Arabia. In Turkey it is one of the most popular musical instruments, where it is associated with the davul (Bărbuceanu, 1999, p. 293). Among the used sources, zurna is a type of whistle, flute (Cantemir, 1973, p. 163) or is referred to as “trumpet”, “oboe”, “flûte”, “chalumeau” etc. In some accounts of foreign travelers on the territory of our country, the zurna is described as: “instruments similar to an oboe, but as half as one and with a very thick end” (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1997, p. 638).



Fig. 5 Performer at zurna (*mehter.com*)

The **trumpet** (Fig. 6) represents a wind instrument with a terminal clutch, in the category of brass, with an origin that is lost in the darkness of the centuries. The purpose of its use was to give a solemn character to the military ceremonies and to encourage the soldiers during the battles. Its probable origin is Egyptian, while gradually evolving into many forms and sounds (Demian, 1968, p. 161). In the music of the mehters, the trumpets used were natural and were called “boru”. The natural trumpet in the simplest form is a sound tube open at both ends, without holes or flaps. It was brought into Turkish culture by the Arab peoples, where it bears the name of “nafir / nefir”, with a length of 1.5 meters (Bărbuceanu, 1999, pp. 259, 175).



Fig. 6 Performer at trumpet (boru) (*mehter.com*)

Chinese pavilion (Fig. 7) is referred to as the “chapeau chinois” (Fr.), “Jingling Johnnie” (Eng.) and “çevgân” (Tur.) It is an idiophone percussion instrument, made of a cylindrical timber wand topped by a decorative Chinese hat, several kinds of bells being hung of it (Bărbuceanu, 1999, p. 49). About its use in the mehterhane we also find from Teodor Burada: “the mehter-başa was holding a silver rod (hasdran) as a Chinese pavilion of various types and sizes, adorned with silver chains and a lot of golden bells while leading the troupe of mehters by shaking it” (1974, p. 242). Similar instruments (but richer adorned) also had the vocal interpreters within the mehterhane, which they used at certain times, shaking them rhythmically, as Raouf Yekta Bey suggests: “chacun d’eux tenait un pavillon chinois” [each of them held a Chinese flag] (Yekta Bey, 1922, p. 2981).



Fig. 7 Performer at *çevgân* (*mehter.com*; Farmer, 1912, p. 76)

4. The artistic dimension

Except for the political and musical importance of this band, the mehterhane also imposed and impressed by the physical aspect, having several members, dressed predominantly in red clothes, but also through the choreographic movements – if we can call them that – by which he fulfilled one of the main tasks, namely the evening singing, at the sunset, according to the Ottoman custom.

The choreography or military parades are called “*nöbet*” and consists of the intonation of the music military in front of the Sultan and high officials (Siruni, 1941, p. 77). The mehterhane held five daily performances, which overlapped the five times of prayer specific to Muslims. “*Nöbet*” was an entire ensemble, which included both music and movements of the soldiers or guards. Reference to this military parade is also provided by Dimitrie Cantemir, who shows that *nöbet* was the signal of the sentinels (1973, p. 163).

In connection with what has been said here, we have to mention that when the mehters were singing in a fixed place, without moving, they were placed in an open circle, like a crescent and during the march, they were stepping with big, solemn steps, similar to the steps of the warrior dance, called “*zeybek*” (Popescu).



Fig. 8 Mehterhane in concert form (Yum, 2002, p. 108)

In the Romanian space, the *nöbet* is most often related to the time of day when the *chindia* was sung, that is, in the evening, at sunset, when the mehterhane performed its well-known parade: “they gathered the mehters to beat the *chindia* in the courtyard all day long” (Uricarul, 1994, p. 251). According to an anonymous Turkish story from 1740, in Bucharest the mehterhane sings in front of the lord every afternoon (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1997, p. 263), and according to another author, at the palace of the khan court in Căușani the military music was sung every day, about one hour, before night (Holban, Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Cernovodeanu, 1997, p. 638).

Moving from the choreographic representations of the mehterhane to the clothing of its members, we can see that this was generally red, which also impressed from an artistic point of view. The red color in Islam has two meanings, symbolizing both the cycle of life, with love and desire, as well as war and violence against one another (Sadek Abaza, 2017, p. 67), the second meaning in our case being more appropriate. Specifically, the mehter and each “party leader” wore a red long ceremony dress with wide sleeves, red turbans wrapped in white chiffon, and they wore puttee with red felt and boots made of yellow leather. The other members wore green turban, wrapped in white gauze, long purple, blue or black felt garments, red cloth leggings and red boots (Schmidt-Jones, p. 2).

The ceremonial importance of the mehterhane is unquestionable. Basically, in the Romanian countries there was no public and even private manifestation in which the lord would not be accompanied by this musical

band, in order to support his political legitimacy and as evidence of the dependence on the Ottoman Empire, whose mandate was. Also, the lord was the only one who was allowed to play military music, manifesting this attribute of his political power in front of his subjects.

The suite made up for different occasions, such as receiving the kingdom, receiving important messages and guests, various trips and other such situations represent the most specific way of artistic manifestation of the mehterhane, because its members occupied a predetermined place and were displayed in all their splendor, being visible to all.

5. The “export” of the mehterhane

All the states of the Ottoman Empire appreciated this music, and the exponents of the power held even more such musical groups. The greatness of this music has always raised the attention of Europe, the heads of states send their masters in music to observe the methods of the mehterhane, and the Ottoman ambassadors in Europe always had such a band. In the eighteenth century mehterhane influenced the military music in Europe and contributed to the development of military musical groups, but the Europeans uninterrupted by the mysteries of the Ottoman music, failed to reach results that match the nature of mehterhane (Gazimihal). This is also stated by Franz Joseph Sulzer, contemporary with these facts, as follows: “you must be careful to consider that the music of winters, which was recently introduced, in most regiments of the Austrian Roman-Imperial Army and for which new parts are produced daily by the German pens. The difference between them is immense. Our German-Turkish war music cannot even be proud of the same instruments, let alone in the same manner, trying in vain to imitate it by European beats and German ears” (Zinveliu, 1995, p. 155). This music began to be associated with the Ottoman music as a whole and at the same time to influence the European music, facilitating the introduction into European orchestras, of a percussion style called “mehter”, to such an extent that even some great composers such as Mozart and Beethoven took over the musical motifs from the repertoire of the mehterhane in their works (Jackson, 2009, p. 407).

The first European ruler to adopt the military music according to the model of the mehterhane was Augustus II (1697-1704) king of Poland, who received such a musical band from the sultan. He was followed by Anna of Austria, Frederick the Great, the latter introducing such music in all his regiments (Meyer, 1974, p. 485).

The growing influence of the mehterhane music on the European military music, due primarily to the fact that over the centuries the Ottoman military music has retained its characteristics, has led to the formation of the so-called “alla turca” (Turkish style), “Turkische Musik” or “turquerie” style inspired by this music and used by the great European composers. The elements that led to

the aforementioned influence and implicit to the creation of the new style, according to Eric Rice are the following: 1. The songs are sung monophonically; 2. Musical instruments have stronger, more incisive stamps than their European correspondent; 3. Cymbals are always used; 4. Some types of drum (nagara) perform subdivisions of the basic rhythm, on different metric levels; 5. The various and complex system. For those accustomed to the sounds of the Western music, the songs sound as if sudden changes were unprepared from major to minor and vice versa; 6. The meter may be double or irregular; 7. The initial rhythm of the songs is often given by three notes sung in relation to the basic rhythm; 8. The songs are characterized by fast interpreted ornamental patterns; 9. The pieces have a rondo-like shape, with many repeated sections (Schmidt-Jones, p. 3).

One of the places where this new style manifested itself was the scene “O pari,” a favorable frame for developing an active image world meant to bring the audience as close to the authentic specificity of the suggested ideas. The increasingly felt presence of Ottoman influence has generally led to the “Turkish representation”, which acts as the audience into an exotic world, and this has been translated by “Alla Turca” which became an important element of portraying the Turkish music (Babaoğlu Balkiș, 2010, p. 189).

Alla turca is not an authentic Ottoman music, but rather a musical style introduced within the European music culture inspired by the Ottoman military music (mehterhane). Until the eighteenth century this style was present within the European works by means of musical instruments specific to the Western music, but starting with the eighteenth century or instruments specific to the Ottoman military music called “Turkish drums” such as: triangle, tambourine, drums of different sizes, for different rhythms and harmonies (davul, nagara), which did not have a western recognition were introduced. Through this mix of familiar and exotic, a new musical language was implemented, in accordance with the public’s attraction to non-European cultures (Babaoğlu Balkiș, 2010, p. 190).

There were several composers who were influenced by the Ottoman music and used that “Turkish”, very fashionable during the second half of the eighteenth century and the following. Among them we mention here: Frank with *Cara Mustapha*, Lully with *Le bourgeois gentilhomme (The Bourgeois Gentleman)*, Rameau with *Les Indes galantes (The Gentle Indies)*, Gluck with the *Rencontre imprévue (The Unexpected Meeting)*, Michael Haydn with the *Turkish Suite*, Joseph Haydn “*Military*” *Symphony*, Mozart with *Rondo alla Turca* (Piano Sonata no. 11, in A, K. 331) and *Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio)* or Beethoven with *Alla marcía* at the end of the *Symphony no. 9* (Schmidt-Jones, p. 4).

The implementation of the Turkish style within the Western music was done in two ways. First of all, the composers used the melody and harmonica

specific to this music, and secondly they introduced some specific musical instruments in specific orchestras, precisely for their “Turkish” tone. An curious example in this respect is the acceptance of the triangle (triangulate), though this belonged to mehterhane, but the reason may be explained by the inclusion of an attempt to imitate the instrument of the *çevgan* – “jingling Johnnie” (Schmidt-Jones, p.4), as mentioned above which consisted of chains and bells, which were buzzing.

The extent to which the Ottoman musical elements have penetrated the works of some European composers is also related to the degree, greater or lesser, of their contact with the Ottoman music and of course the way in which it was produced. The question arose whether the composers in question really listened to a meter or how accurately they transposed this influence in their work, in order to be recognizable by the public. It is supposed that Mozart heard the music of the mehterhane through diplomatic exchanges between the two empires or even through the frequent military confrontations between them, whose echoes spread throughout the society. For example, in *Rondo alla Turca*, during the musical discourse, while on the right hand, the pianist plays the lively and luminous music of the flute (*zurna*), the left hand reproduces exactly the famous rhythm of the drums, called “*düyek*” (*Gazimihal*). A clear answer cannot be given about Beethoven and most of the other composers who used “*alla turca*”, as they most probably did not use such live music (Schmidt-Jones, pp. 4-5).

The most well-known musical examples that contain the imprint of the percussion instruments specific to the mehterhane, the so-called “Turkish drums” are the *Military Symphony no. 100* by Haydn, and three works by Beethoven: *Alla marcia*, the end of *Symphony no. 9*, *Wellington’s Victory Symphony*, as well as the *Turkish March* and *The Dervishes Choir* of the work *The Ruins of Athens* (Meyer, 1974, p. 487).

6. Examples and musical analysis

The Ottoman march songs are known for their ongoing and strongly focused rhythm, mostly achieved by the use of drums. This metric route is generally intended to keep the marching pace of the soldiers during the journey and the uniformity and synchronization with others. The tone of the march is generally major, given the character of this music and its role, but we can also find composite examples in minor tones.

The texts of these marches make general reference to the praises of God, the love of the homeland and the desire for permanent victory. The soldiers listening to these verses are animated and urged to face any danger and shortcoming to win victories and to spread the doctrine of the Islamic empire and religion.

Eski Ordu Marşı (Ceddin Deden) (Fig. 9)³ is a Hûseyîni makam march by an overture of 7 instrumental beats in a Aeolian mode on *A*. The next part, A (Tripod period) is made of 8 beats: **a** – 2 on Aeolian mode on *A* (minor *A*); **a1** – 2 on Dorian mode on *D* and **varied a1** – 4 on Aeolian mode on *A* (minor *A*).

Eski Ordu Marşı

Beste : Ali Rıza bey

Con loco

S ENSTRUMAN

(İB, DİN DE, DEN NES - LİN BA - BAN S

HEP KAH_RA - MAN TÜRK MİLLE - Tİ OR_DU ZA - RIN PEK ÇOK ZA - MÂN VER_MİŞTİ - LER DÜNYA YA ŞAN

ESKİ ORDU MARŞI

Beste : ALİ RIZA BEY

Ceddin deden, neslin baban
 Hep kahraman Türk milleti.
 Orduların pek çok zaman
 Vermiştiler dünyaya şan.

Türk Milleti, Türk Milleti
 Aşk ile sev milliyeti.
 Kahret vatan düşmanını.
 Çeksin o mel'un zilleti.

Fig. 9 *Eski Ordu Marşı*, on the most famous marches of the mehterhane (Şahiner, 1977, p. 41)

³ *Your Ancestors Your Grandfathers* represent the most famous melody of the mehterhane, sung today by these bands belonging to the Ministry of Defense of Turkey and various cultural organization. The text is follows: “Your ancestors, your grandfathers, your generation, your father Always heroic, The Turkish Nation Your armies, many times, gave glory to the world. O Turkish Nation! O Turkish Nation! Love the Nation with passion Crush the enemy of Motherland Let that cursed one taste humiliation”.

Mehter Marşı (Gâfil Ne Bilir) (Fig. 10)⁴ is made of makam Mahur, with an instrumental introduction of 16 beats on Ionian mode *C* (major *C*). Then part **A** follows consisting of **a** – 7 beats on Ionian mode on *C* (major *C*) (between the repetition bars); **a1** - 8 beats on Ionian mode on *C* note with a mobile stage IV and **a2** – 8 beats starting in harmonic *C* major and it ends in Ionian *G* (major *G*). Part **B** consists of **b** – 8 bichromatic beats on *G* note and **b1** – 8 beats on Ionian mode on *C*. The **varied A** part: **varied a**, a missing part, **varied a1** – 8 beats on Ionian mode on *C* (major *C*) and **varied a2** – 8 beats on Ionian mode on *C* (major *C*).

Mehter Marşı
(Mehterhane-i Hâkâni Harp Marşı)

Beste : İsmail Hakkı bey
Güfte : Ahmet Muhtar paşa

Con fuoco

S ENSTRÜMAN

10

FINE GA_FIL NE BI_LİR

NESE_YI FÜR SEV_Mİ VE_ CA... Yİ MEY_DA_ NI CE_LÂ DET_TE_Kİ EM_

⁴ *Gâfil Ne Bilir*: “How would unwary know the joy of fighting a war in vigor
Light of purity emanating from the battlefield of heroism
When the men of war started to scream „the Allah is great” in over excitement
The surface of the earth shook again the vault of heaven
Let’s fight in name of the Allah and have all the glory
Which the Hz Yezdan (Allah) is promising in Quran
Let’s fight in name of the Allah and have all the glory
Which the Hz Yezdan (Allah) is promising in Quran
Creator of the universe, made the holy war (jihad) our religious duty
Names of my ancestors have always been ascended through war
Our ancestor who conquered the world, for the name of El Hak (Allah) were just and protective
of right of people
Let’s fight in name of the Allah and have all the glory
Which the Hz Yezdan (Allah) is promising in Quran
Let’s fight in name of the Allah and have all the glory
Which the Hz Yezdan (Allah) is promising in Quran”.

VA RI SE FA YI MEY.DA NI CE LÂ DET.TE.Rİ EN VÂ RI SE
 FA YI MEY.DA NI GA ZÂ AŞK İ LE TEK BİR LER
 LÂ CA TIT.RET Tİ Yİ NE RU Yİ ZE MİN AR ŞU SE MA
 Yİ AL LAH YO LU NA CEN GE DE LİM ŞAN A LA LİM ŞAN
 KUR AN DA ZA FER VA DE Dİ YOR HAZ RE Tİ YEZ DÂN

MEHTER MARŞI

Beste : İSMAİL HAKKI BEY

Güfte : AHMED MUHTAR PAŞA

Gafil ne bilir neşve-i pür şevk-i vegayı,
 Meydan-ı celâdetteki envâr-ı sefayı.
 Merdân-ı gaza aşk ile tekbirler alınca,
 Titretti yine rûy-i zemin arş u semâyı.
 Allah yoluna cenk edelim, şan alalım şan;
 Kur'ân'da zafer vâdediyor Hazret-i Yezdan.

Farz eyledi hallâk-ı Cihan harb-u cihâdı.
 Hep cenk ile yükselmede ecdadımın adı.
 Dünyaları fethেyleyen ecdadımız el'hak,
 Âdil idi, hıfz eyler idi, hakk-ı ibâdı.
 Allah yoluna cenk edelim, şan alalım şan;
 Kur'ân'da zafer vâdediyor Hazret-i Yezdân.

Fig. 10 Mehter Marşı (*Gâfil Ne Bilir*) (Şahiner, 1977, pp. 37-38)

SANCAK MARŞI

Beste : İZZEDDİN HÜMAYİ ELÇİOĞLU

Güfte : İBRAHİM ALÂADDİN GÖVSA

**Ertuğrul'un ocağında uyandım,
Şehitlerin kanlariyle boyandım,
Nice düşman kal'asına uzandım
Sana selâm ey Osmanlı Bayrağı (*).**

- **Çırpınarak dalgalanır kanadın,
Gökyüzüne çıkmak mıdır muradın?
Gölgende can vermek ister evlâdın,
Sana, selâm ey Osmanlı Bayrağı.**

Fig. 11 *Sancak Marşı* (Şahiner, 1977, p. 65)

7. Conclusions

Firstly, these few examples are a timid contribution meant to create an image about the impact and influence of the Oriental source music, especially the Ottoman military not only on the European military music, but also on the creative act of the great composers, who were increasingly curious and interested in the new world and its exoticism. The gradual insertion of elements specific to the Ottoman musical culture into the European musical language, starting with the eighteenth century led to the enrichment of the European music with new musical sounds and instruments, which led to the general development of the cult music.

Unfortunately for the Romanian space, although the mehterhane bands have been a constant presence for a long time, their musical characteristics have not been taken over in the Romanian music, mainly because of the lack of a musical culture of the western one, but also because of the fact that, the Romanian Principalities were considered, especially during the Phanariot period, as part of the Ottoman Empire, as there was no interest in exploiting and developing a music that they could listen to daily and which most of them hated. However, the Romanian music was influenced by the classical Ottoman music, very popular here, which rooted through fiddlers to posterity, who synthesized and transformed it in the “lay songs”, famous category of urban folklore, carried in the Romanian countries during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

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