

YESCOLAB #4 (29 June 2021)

Accompanying Thoughts

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Farzad composed a first version of a new piece (“The Eleventh”) in particular for our session — wow! We agreed that we should encourage this in future . . .

As Farzad used some elements of traditional Iranian music in his piece, we had a soft transition between his composition and our discussion on how to use traditional music in electronic music. So I try to collect some questions which showed up in our discussion.

Aspects of composing electronic music with (elements of) traditional music

1. Traditional music is part of my identity. So I want to use and show it.
2. When I use traditional music in my own composition, I dignify and honor my own tradition and culture.
3. And by this, I can communicate with others in my society. (It may even allow me to share my music with those who do not like/understand contemporary music.)
4. But traditional music is such an own world; how can I use it without hurting or misusing it?
5. When does the reference to traditional music become kitschy, superficial or labelling?
6. How deep should my knowledge be before I can dare to reference traditional music in my own composition?
7. Or is there no need to be too anxious? Is it just about to try out and to see what result comes out?
8. Is not the freedom of referencing anything in a new way something which is an essential part of contemporary art? Can respect to something not go together with treating something in an unusual way, even with damaging it, or being blasphemous to some stereotypes?
9. Is using traditional music in own electronic compositions just one of many cases in using different materials?
10. So that being attentive to the difference of sine tones and a radif melody would be quite similar as being attentive to the difference of a filtered noise band and a spoken word?
11. And is using European traditional music, for instance Guillaume de Machaut, Carlo Gesualdo or Wolfgang Mozart similar to the usage of

iranian traditional music? Are both constellations mostly related to the question, how to use different (foreign) materials in a good way?

12. Or does this neglect the dominance of western music in the world?