

The
Awakening
of a
Tanbur

A RECORDING OF THE 18TH CENTURY
TANBUR BELONGING TO HIS HIGHNESS

Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani

*Oh server, bring me back
the wine of yesterday
Make it sing, make it talk,
my instrument.
I need this joy and pleasure
while I am still here
Before the day comes that
I disperse into dust.*

*Selîm III (1761–1808)
28th Sultan of the Ottoman Empire
Poet, calligrapher, tanbur player
and composer*



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Tanbur player & composer*



Commissioned by *His Highness Sheikh Hamad Al Thani*

Recorded & Mixed at *Real World Studios*
22–27 May 2018

Ney *Kudsi Erguner*
Tanbur *Murat Aydemir*
Vocals *Bora Uymaz*
Oud *Mehmet Emin Bitmez*
Kanun *Serkan Mesut Halili*
Viola & Violin *Michalis Kouloumis*
Tanbur with bow *Michalis Cholevas*
Percussion *Fahreddin Yarkin*

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Walter Feldman



*Tanburs & neys are resonating again
during this meeting. They give joy to the
hearts of desperate lovers.*

Tab'i Mustafa Efendi (d. 1770)

*Poet, calligrapher, singer, muezzin & tanbur player
at the court of Sultan Osman III (1699–1757)*

Foreword

When I first saw images from the collection of historical musical instruments belonging to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Al Thani, I dreamed to listen to them being played. When an opportunity to record the bewitching sounds of a tanbur made in the 18th century – the oldest surviving instrument of its kind that we know of – was presented to me, this dream became a reality. This recording of compositions by 18th century tanbur masters allows us to take part in a magical journey through the resonant sounds of that century.

Both the Sufis and classical Greek philosophers are of the belief that all our knowledge is innate to us and that we are rediscovering it through various occasions. Music is considered the most beautiful and effective way to access the hidden treasures that lie within ourselves. It is for this same reason the Ottomans considered the art of music as *İlm-u Sherif* (eminent knowledge), allowing human beings to travel from their origins to eternity.

Captivated by the magic sounds emanating from this historical tanbur, not only are we allowed to imagine the refined taste of the masters who have previously performed with it, we are also elevated by the powerful effect of its harmonious sound on our spirit.

Kudsi Erguner

Goodwill Ambassador

Artist of UNESCO for peace

Musician & Architect

Founder & Artistic director of Bîrûn Ensemble

at Fondazione CINI Venice

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Tracklisting

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----|--|
| Rast Taksîm | 1 | <i>Murat Aydemir</i> |
| Rast Peşrev | 2 | <i>Dimitri Cantemir (1673–1723)</i> |
| Rast Yürük Semâi | 3 | <i>Tanburi Mehmet Çelebi (1630–1694)</i> |
| Rast Saz Semâi | 4 | <i>Benli Hasan Ağa (1607–1662)</i> |
| Kürdi Taksîm | 5 | <i>Murat Aydemir & Kudsi Erguner</i> |
| Kürdi Peşrev | 6 | <i>Tanburi Angelos (1615–1690)</i> |
| Mâhûr Medhiye | 7 | <i>Hampartsoum Limondjian (1768–1839)</i> |
| Pencgâh Saz Semâi | 8 | <i>Dimitri Cantemir (1673–1723)</i> |
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| Hisârbûselik Aksak şarkı | 13 | <i>Tanburi Mustafa Çavuş (1700–1770)</i> |
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Introduction

Music language can be divided approximately into two branches: *tonal* and *modal*. Any melodic, modal music since antiquity can be related to the world of *makam* music. Makam is a framework of melody-types providing a complex set of rules for compositions and performances, each of which specify a unique structure of intervals and melodic development.

Classical Ottoman makam music is the highest point of development in the historical evolution of court music; continuing on from the Umayyads (661–750), Abbasids (750–1258) Ghaznavids (971–1030), Seljuks (1037–1194) and Timurids (1370–1405).

In the Ottoman court, music was interpreted by the performance of suites called a *fasıl* (chapter). Each *fasıl* is begun with a *taksim* (improvisation) to introduce the makam on which the *fasıl* will be interpreted. *Taksim* means to share and, although grounded on a large repertory of composed works, makam music can largely be seen to express itself through improvisation. Here musicians will use their inventive and interpretive skills to express their knowledge of the melodic development of the selected makam.

We have included a number of tanbur *taksims* in this recording in order to showcase the unique sound of this instrument, in addition to sessions of dialogue between the tanbur and other instruments. These dialogues include *sual* (question), *cevab* (answer), *asma karar* (suspended conclusion) and *nefes* (moments of silence) which are elaborated as the improvisation unfolds. *Taksims* are immediately followed by the *peşrev* (instrumental prelude), then lyrics composed on various rhythmic cycles and finally the ceremony closes with a performance of an instrumental *semâî*.

The two main institutions of Ottoman makam music: *enderûn* (inside the Sultan court) and *Sufi Zawiya* (Sufi centres) were closely related to each



A fasıl being performed at the British Embassy in Istanbul, 18th century
© Warsaw University Library, Claret Collection

other and to the Ottoman poetry of *divan*. Thus this musical heritage is referred to as either *Enderun*, *Ottoman Sufi* or *divan* music.

Today Istanbul is the only place where this historical heritage can be found, having been transcribed and preserved into different notational systems as a precious memory needing to be preserved. I am convinced this historic recording will not only rejuvenate old repertoire but also awaken the instruments and sensitivity of music lovers.

Kudsi Erguner

The Composers

Ottoman history during the first half of the 18th century, from which this tanbur and the recorded compositions have emerged, is stigmatised by successive attempts of reform and catastrophic revolutions; a pattern which was to continue until the dismantling of the empire after the first world war. It is paradoxical to note these two centuries of the decline of the Ottoman Empire were also the pinnacle of their arts, particularly music. This repertoire is a selection of compositions from tanbur players who lived during this rich period of music.



Sultan Selim III © Uğur Ataç İstanbul, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation

~ Sultan Selim III (1761–1808) ~

The history of Ottoman music can be divided into two periods: before and after *Sultan Selim III*. A poet, calligrapher, composer and performer of exceptional talent, Selim III's interest in music started when he was a student of *Tanburi İzak Efendi (1745–1814)* as a young Prince and continued until his death. Sixty four of his compositions have survived and some of the fourteen makams he created are still in use today. Of particular note is his composition *Ayin* for Rumi's Mevlevi 'Whirling Dervish' Order of Sufis, of whose order he was a member. A highly accomplished tanbur and ney player, he was also a prolific patron who encouraged other musicians of his day. He became a victim of his will to reform the Ottoman army and was killed in 1808.

One of his *rubai* (four-lined poem) is interpreted by Bora Uymaz as a *Gazel* (vocal taksim) on the *Pencgâh Saz Semâi* of Dimitri Cantemir:

*Sâkıy, getir getir yine dünkü şarâbımı
Söylet, dile getir yine çeng ü rebâbımı
Ben vâ r iken gerek bana, bu zevk u bu safâ
Bir gün gele ki görmeye kimse türâbımı*

*Oh server, bring me back the wine of yesterday
make it sing, make it talk, my instrument.
I need this joy and pleasure while I am still here
before the day comes that I disperse into dust*

~ Benli Hasan Ağa (1607–1662) ~

Hasan Ağa was companion to *Sultan Mehmet IV* (1642–1693) and educated in his enderûn, unfortunately only a few of his instrumental compositions survive.

~ Tanburi Angelos (1615–1690) ~

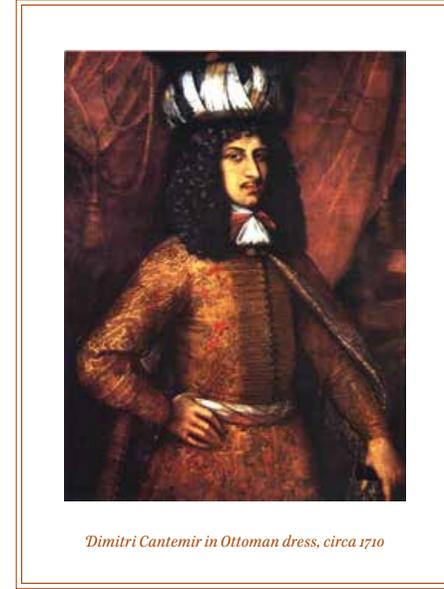
Several of his compositions were saved thanks to his pupil Dimitri Cantemir, though unfortunately no biographical information shared the same fate.

~ Tanburi Mehmet Çelebi (1630–1694) ~

Composer, calligrapher, poet, singer and disciple of the Sufi order of Halvetiye; Çelebi lived during the reign of *Mehmet IV* (1642–1693) and was considered his greatest court musician. He learned the art of tanbur from *Prince Selim Giray Han* (1631–1704) of Crimea, was also a pupil of the poet *Nâilî* (1603–1666) and friend of the famous poet *Nâbî* (1642–1712). From a young age he memorized the Koran and thus became a *Hafiz*, he is often referred to as *Hafiz Post*. Unfortunately thousands of his compositions have been lost and forgotten.

*Gelse o şûh meclise naz ü tegâfûl eylese
Reng-i hicâb-ı ârızı meclisi gül gül eylese
Tan ger-î riyâz-ı huld olur idi vücûh ile
Aşık-ı zârı gülşen-i vashna bülbül eylese.*

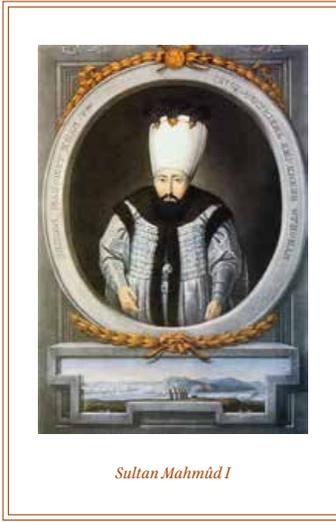
*If that beauty would participate discreetly in our meeting
Her cheek would become the colour of rose petals from timidity
By the arrival of the beloved, all will transform into an eternal garden
If that beauty would accept his lover, who is like a nightingale
lamenting nostalgically (Rast Yürük Semâî)*



Dimitri Cantemir in Ottoman dress, circa 1710

~ Dimitri Cantemir (1673–1723) ~

Son of Constantine Cantemir, King of Moldavia, Dimitri spent 22 years of his life in Istanbul. *Sultan Ahmed III* (1673–1763) considered him a son and introduced him to the enderûn where he had the opportunity to meet the period's master musicians and participate in fasıl. From a young age he was a prolific linguist and his knowledge of Ottoman Turkish allowed him to easily integrate into its culture. He wrote about Ottoman history in Latin, in addition to a very important book on Ottoman music '*Kitab-ı İlmü'l-musiki ala vechi'l-hurufa,t*' in which he transcribed 355 instrumental pieces of music and invented a system of notation which symbolised the intervals with the initials of their Arabic names. In 1711 he signed an agreement with *Tsar Peter the Great* against the Ottomans and was thereafter considered an enemy of the Ottoman Empire. He spent the remainder of his life in St. Petersburg, Russia.



~ Sultan Mahmûd I (1696–1754) ~

As a young prince he studied music, calligraphy and poetry at the enderûn, becoming a master of all these art forms. His poems were frequently used by the composers of his time and he was a renowned tanbur player and composer. He became Sultan when his uncle *Sultan Mustafa II* (1664–1703) was deposed in 1703 and became a great patron of the arts. Unfortunately after his death his cousin and successor *Osman III* (1699–1757) proved to be the only Sultan without interest in the arts and so a flourishing era of Ottoman music came to an end. His composition *Uşşak Saz Semâi* is included in this recording with a taksim by Serkan Halili.

~ Tanburi Mustafa Çavuş (1700–1770) ~

Due to a lack of biographical information, we know only that he was a *çavuş*: a high ranking member of the enderûn and important member of the court. He became famous as a result of his tanbur playing and compositions during the reign of *Sultans Mahmud I* (1696–1754) and *Selîm III* (1761–1808), both accomplished musicians themselves, and was considered a pioneer of the şarkı form of music, composed on the lyrics of popular quatrains. Thanks to the work of scholar *Tanburi Suphi Ezgi* (1869–1962) 36 of his compositions have survived, two of which are included in this recording.

~ Tab'î Mustafa Efendi (d. 1770) ~

Poet, calligrapher, singer, tanbur player and *muezzin* (one who calls for prayers) at the court of *Sultan Osman III* (1699–1757). Only 17 of his compositions have survived.

Çıkmaz derûn-i dilden efendim muhabbetin
Kurbânın oldugum bize yok mu müriüvvetin
Ey dil nedir bu mertebe hâhişlerin senin
Cây-ı merâmın üzre ikamet mi niyyetin

*O my master your passion does not quit the deep of my heart
I sacrifice myself for you, don't you have a favor for me
O my heart why do you insist so much
Do you wish to remain faithful to your passion
(excerpt from Bayâtî Nakış Ağır Semâi)*

Gül yüzlülerin şevkine gel nûş idelim mey
İşret idelim yâr ile şimdi demidir hey
Bu kavli sürâhî eğilip sâgâra söyler ne der
Dünderelâ dir nâ tene dir nâ tene dir ney

*Mecliste çalındı yine Tanbur ile neyler
Aşık-ı biçârelerin gönlinü eğler
Dâire semâi tutarak Ney Ney'e söyler ne der
Dünderelâ dir nâ tene dir nâ tene dir ney*

*Come and join the joyful meeting of the faithful
With faces of rose petals and drink the wine of wisdom
Come to drink with the beloved, now is the right moment
I wonder what the jug (master) says when he bends towards
the cup to pour the words*

*Tanburs and neys are resonating again during this meeting
They give joy to the hearts of desperate lovers.
Whilst the frame drums keep the rhythm of semai
I wonder what they are saying to each other
(excerpt from Bayâtî Yürük Semâî)*

~ *Isak Fresco Romano (1745–1814)* ~

Musician, music teacher and companion to *Sultan Selîm III (1761–1808)* and his cousin, *Sultan Mahmud II (1785–1839)*. It is said the Sultan respected him so much that when he entered the court he stood to greet him, a scandalous neglect of the strict palace protocol of the time. He developed an elegant and lyrical style on the tanbur, introducing less picking which allowed him to create *legato* phrases (without breaks) on the tanbur.

~ *Hampartsoum Limondjian (1768–1839)* ~

Limondjian was introduced to music through the Armenian Church as a young singer where his talent quickly secured him a prominent position. His meeting with the famous Mevlevi dervish *Ismail Dede (1778–1846)* enabled him to develop his knowledge of makam and introduced him to the court of *Sultan Selîm III (1761–1808)*. It was through the encouragement of the Sultan he came to develop a musical notational system based on the Armenian alphabet. This system still bears his name (the Hampartsoum notation system) and was until recently the main source for the preservation of extensive repertoires of Ottoman music.

This *murabbâ* (poem of quatrains) from *Enderûnlu Osman Vâsıf (1771–1824)* is composed by Hampartsoum Limondjian in the makam *Hisârbûselik Murabbâ*:

*Kim olur zor ile maksûduna reh-yâb-ı zafer
Gelir elbette zuhûra ne ise hükm-i kader
Hakk'a tefvîz-i umûr et, ne elem çek ne keder
Kıl sözüüm ârif isen gûş-i kabûl ile güher
Mihneti kendine zevk etmedir âlemde hüner
Gâm-ı şâdi-i felek böyle gelir böyle gider*

*He who arrogantly finds a way to realise his wills
Will see that cruel fate's decree will appear at the end
It is a relief to place trust willingly in celestial justice
Listen to my words if you are wise and keep them as pearls
Great virtue is to live the difficulties of this world as pleasures.
Since always the joys and sorrows coming from the sky are thus*

The Ottoman Tanbur

Hampartsoum Limondjian also composed a *Medhiye* (praise) in *Mâhûr Medhiye* to celebrate the 1789 coronation of *Sultan Selîm III* (1761–1808):

*Ey şehin-şâh-ı cihân ey Padişâhum kâmrân
Zinet-ârâ bir serir-i devlet-i Osmâniyân
Bu cülûs-u mehvenet me'nusla ey şâh-ı cihân
Çok yaşa ey Padişâhum devletinle bin yaşa "âmin"*

*O Sultan of all Sultans O blessed Shah
With your luminous coming to the throne O Sultan of the universe
The throne of the Ottoman state is adorned with jewels
Long life to you and to your state O my Sultan. Amin!*

While the name '*tanbur*' is of antique Near Eastern origin—and includes modern cognates such as the Bulgarian '*tanbura*', Urdu '*tamboura*', Kazakh '*dombira*', and Russian '*dombra*' – the instrument known today by this name in Turkey is a unique creation of the Ottoman period. Since the tenth century an instrument going by this name was characteristic of both Turkic and Iranian peoples of '*Khorasan*' (Eastern Iran and Central Asia), and it was mentioned by the great musicologist/philosopher *Al-Farabi* (d. 951). In the early fifteenth century *Al-Maraghi* cited an instrument named *Ruh-Efza*, which seems to have been a closer ancestor of the Ottoman tanbur (Feldman 1996: 144). But the tanbur's organological and musicological development became specific to the Ottoman culture only in the seventeenth century. By the second half of that century the tanbur became the symbolic instrument of the Ottoman musical renaissance of that period. A long-necked lute of Turkic origin (with some Turco-Iranian intermediaries), the tanbur replaced and ousted all other lutes of either long or short-necked construction for music at the Ottoman Court and art music in general. The formerly-dominant oud was hardly played in Istanbul again for two hundred years, while the distantly related short-necked kopuz and şeshane went into permanent oblivion.

The earliest description of the Ottoman tanbur was penned by the Moldavian Prince *Demetrius Cantemir* (1673–1723), who lived most of his life in Istanbul and was apparently the most influential performer and composer for the tanbur in his generation. Cantemir begins his Turkish-language treatise from ca. 1700 "*The Book of the Science of Music According to the Alphabetic Notation*":

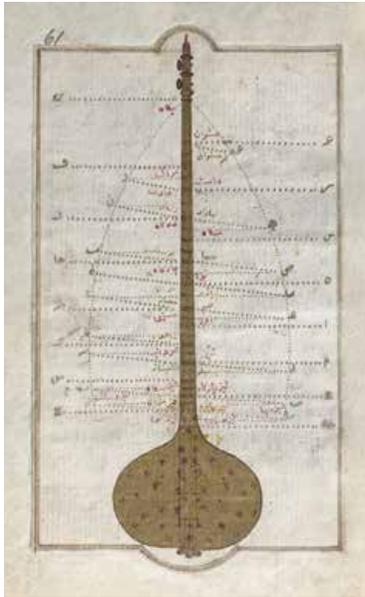


Illustration of a tanbur, circa 1710, often credited to Cantemir.
© Istanbul University, Research Institute Turkology

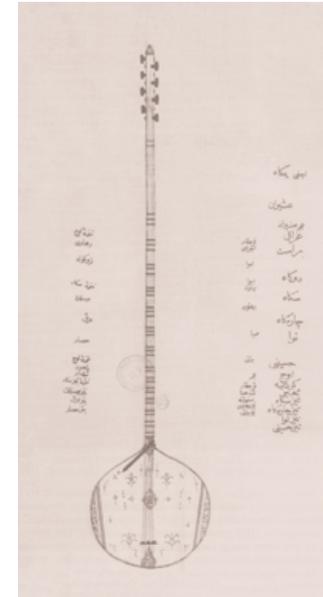


Illustration of a tanbur by Charles Fonton
© Eckhard Neubauer

“The instrument called tanbur is the most perfect and complete of all instruments which we know or have seen because it performs completely and without fault all the sounds and melodies which appear by means of the breath of man.”

Later in his book (chapter 10) Cantemir indicates that in a formal concert, the reed-flute ney and the tanbur sat directly behind the singer. The ney was the characteristic instrument of the the *Mevlevi* dervishes, followers of the Sufism of *Jallal al-Din Rumi* (1207–1273). This new Ottoman instrumentation represented a dialogue between the secular Turkic and Sufi /mystical models of culture.

While the Ottoman tanbur reached its formal perfection and cultural dominance only after the second half of the seventeenth century, it was apparently the object of many generations of formal development and exper-

imentation. Its earliest visual document lies in a fifteenth century Khorasanian manuscript (Feldman 1996:145) and several literary descriptions in Turkish and Persian refer to its further development in contemporary Anatolia. Somewhat later a related instrument developed in Iran under the name *sheshtar* (*şeshtar*), which went out of use in the course of the eighteenth century. But the general decline in music at the Ottoman Court during the sixteenth century seems to have allowed the more widespread Iranian courtly ensemble – and Iranian-born musicians – to replace most of the Anatolian Turkish organological developments. As part of the still understudied ‘renaissance’ of Ottoman music of the later seventeenth century, we see a new development of the ‘native’ tanbur.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the French dragoman Charles Fonton described the tanbur:

“The material of this instrument is ordinary wood. The sound box, in the form of a hollow hemisphere, must be only of fir, well-seasoned and sonorous. It is covered on top with two planks glued together and without any opening...The tanbur has eight strings arranged in pairs” (Fonton 1988–89<1751: 109). He also left an illustration (see previous page).

The increased volume of the instrument had led at the end of the seventeenth century to the replacement of the feather plectrum by a hard tortoise shell plectrum (*mızrap*), itself derived from the now defunct kopuz. Fonton described the plectrum:

“The strings are plucked with a thin strip of tortoise-shell called a mızrap, which is held between the thumb, index and middle fingers with only a short bit extended” (Fonton 1988–89<1751: 109).

While the many eighteenth century visual documents are not sufficiently precise, it would appear that perhaps by the end of that century (or early in the next) the sound-box ceased to be carved from fir-wood, but was composed of separate strips. This construction technique—evidently taken from the oud—increased the instrument’s resonance. In addition the face became increasingly thinner, also augmenting the volume, but exposing the instrument to seasonal changes in humidity—which are acute in Istanbul. This necessitated appropriate bridges for each season.

We might summarize the musical and cultural significance of the development of the new Ottoman tanbur with the following three points:

- i The tanbur featured the resonance and overtones of long-necked lutes, which are impossible to achieve with short-necked lutes. The extremely active overtone system of the tanbur is in keeping with the widespread and ancient Turco-Mongolian preference for *‘timbral’* musical expression in addition to a pitch-centered system.
- ii Urban Turkic cultures of Central Asia had used long-necked lutes (called tanbur) since the *‘Uyghur’* period. This may have further reflected a Turkic preference for playing the entire melody on one string (or two unison strings), as opposed to breaking up the melody between two or more strings on a short-necked lute. The conceptual division of the melody along the neck of a lute has Central Asian Turkic precedents.
- iii The very long neck and the long hard plectrum of the Ottoman tanbur limits agility, thus leading to a preference for slower and more ponderous tempos—in which the instrument’s overtones could be clearly perceived—that came to characterize Ottoman music during the eighteenth century.

The above three points are extremely relevant to the historical playing technique of the tanbur. The currently-known technique was adopted largely due to the influence of the playing and recorded performances of *Tanburi Cemil Bey (1871–1916)*. This technique emphasizes rapid right-handed strokes of the mızrap, allowing for faster pitch-changes. The technique known in the second half of the eighteenth century, and associated with *Tanburi Isak Fresco-Romano (d. 1814)* differs in that it de-emphasizes the right hand strokes in favor of glissandi with the left hand. This technique would have passed into oblivion were it not for *Cemil Özbal*, a medical doctor in Gaziantep who was

The Ottoman Tanbur in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century



recorded in the 1960s and by the greatest tanbur virtuoso of the later twentieth century, *Necdet Yaşar* (1930–2017). Necdet Bey had learned this technique from his teacher *Mes'ut Cemil* (1902–1963)—Cemil Bey's son—who had it from a line of teachers going back to *Kuyumcu Oskiyam* (d. 1870?), the Armenian student of *Tanburi Isak*. In the course of my recent research undertaken in 2016 in connection with the *Corpus Musicae Ottomanicae* (CMO) project at the *University of Münster*, together with researcher and *neyzen* *Jacob Olley*, it was revealed that Isak's compositions, as they were notated by his contemporary *Hampartsoum Limondjian* in 1813, were evidently composed with this technique in mind. It is not as appropriate for the later transcriptions of his compositions, such as those of the *Darüelhan* from 1926 (See CD *Tanburi Isak*, 2005), in which the rapid note changes would impede the left-hand glissandi.

While little is known about the life of *Tanburi Isak*, he was the tanbur teacher of his patron *Sultan Selim III*, who was also a major composer. It is even related that while the sultan received the ambassadors of foreign powers while seated—as was customary—whenever Isak entered the room he would rise to his feet. At the court Isak frequently performed as part of a duet with the Moldavian virtuoso on the *viola de'amore* *Kemani Miron*. His younger contemporary *Zeki Mehmed Ağa* (1776–1846) was also a major tanbur virtuoso and composer.

The Ottoman tanbur made its prominent appearance in the middle of the seventeenth century with such virtuosi as *Tanburi Angelos*, who was praised by *Evlia Enderûn* and became the teacher of *Prince Cantemir*, and the former's contemporary *Eyyubi Mehmet Enderûn*. From the beginning to the end of the eighteenth century the tanbur is rather well-documented visually and through literary/musicological references. The Dutch painter *Jean-Baptiste Vanmour* depicted a woman of the *Saray* playing tanbur in 1707 (illustrated overleaf), while the Ottoman painter *Levni* painted it several times in the reign of *Ahmed III* (1703–1730). Perhaps the most beautiful image was created in 1737–41 by the French-Swiss painter *Jean Etienne Liotard* (1702–1789), depicting the daughter of the French consul to the Crimea playing a tanbur. His contemporary *Kemani Hzır Ağa* included, in his book of music theory, a notable album painting of an Ottoman gentleman playing the tanbur at home. The Venetian *Abbe Toderini* included a schematic drawing of the scale of the tanbur in his little book on Ottoman literature in 1781–86.

The tanbur was much appreciated during the reign of *Sultan Mahmud I* (1730–1754), whose leading tanburi was *Moshe Faro*, known as *Haham Musi*, also a prominent composer. It is not known whether *Haham Musi* was the teacher of his successor *Tanburi Isak Fresco-Romano* (d. 1814), who was also an Ottoman Sephardic Jew. During Mahmud's reign the Armenian *Tanburi Küçük Harutin* (*Artin*) was sent as part of an embassy to Iran in 1736, and after accompanying the Iranian *Nadir Shah* to India, he only returned to Istanbul in 1741. After this time he composed a treatise on Ottoman music in Armeno-Turkish. The Greek-language comparative work of musical theory written by *Kyrillos Marmarinos* in 1749 used the tanbur as the model through which to present the general scale of Ottoman music. In 1751 the

French dragoman *Charles Fonton* described the tanbur at the court, portrayed it visually in detail, and included a lively illustration of a typical ensemble, featuring the ney, tanbur, rebab, miskal (pan-pipes) and kudüm (small kettledrums).

The tanbur retained its position throughout the nineteenth century at the court, among aristocratic amateurs and even within the new “middle-brow” music of the *gazino* night clubs of the capital. It was still documented in the ensemble led by the Armenian violinist *Tatyos Efendi* (1858–1913). In the middle of the nineteenth century the leading performer was *Tanburi Büyük Osman Bey* (1816–1885)—the son of *Tanburi Zeki Mehmed Ağa*—who was a major composer of both instrumental and vocal music.

But by the later 1980s it did indeed appear as though the tanbur’s days were numbered. Its intimate sound could not compete with the oud, while the massive rural immigration from Anatolia imprinted the sound of the folkloric saz both live and on radio broadcasts—upon the urban population as well. Fortunately by the later 1990s a new generation of tanbur players came on the scene, such as *Murat Aydemir*. While still the instrument of a rather small minority of musicians, within the past generation the tanbur has made a significant comeback. Thus it would appear that the tanbur will be part of the future of Ottoman Turkish music as well as of its past.

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Jean-Baptiste Vanmour's Lady Montagu with her son Edward standing next to a tanbur player, perhaps the earliest known depiction of the instrument. © National Portrait Gallery, London



