

European University Studies



Musicology

Aylin Buran

# Fazıl Say and the Classical Music Stage as Informal Learning Space

**F**azıl Say and the Classical Music Stage as Informal Learning Space is an exploration of the classical music stage within a framework of informal learning through the interactive concert performances of Fazıl Say. It delves into the artist's conceptualization of the music-audience nexus along with his motivation for adopting an interactive manner that emerges through a verbal interaction between performer and listener during the concert performances. Using specific concert performances given in Malatya in Turkey, this book presents a detailed demonstration of such a space as a learning medium; and interprets its pedagogical meaning from both the artist's and the audience's perspectives.

"This is an important book to understand the pedagogical implications and inner dynamics of the interactive stage that Fazıl Say, the gifted famous classical pianist is able to create. Moreover, it is an invaluable contribution to the informal learning process."

(Prof. Fatma Gök, Department of Educational Sciences, Boğaziçi University, Turkey)

**Aylin Buran** got her B.A. in Psychological Counseling and M.A. in Adult Education from Boğaziçi University. The author has worked as a counselor with music students at high school level for the Faculty of Music at Bilkent University. She is currently a doctoral student in the Adult Education Program at Boğaziçi University and is working as the Chief Editor and Editorial Department Supervisor at Boğaziçi University Alumni Association's monthly publication, *Boğaziçi Magazine*.

Fazıl Say  
and the Classical  
Music Stage as Informal  
Learning Space

## **European University Studies**

Europäische Hochschulschriften

Publications Universitaires Européennes

### **Series XXXVI Musicology**

Reihe XXXVI Musikwissenschaft

Série XXXVI Musicologie

Band/Volume **261**

Aylin Buran

**Fazıl Say  
and the Classical  
Music Stage as Informal  
Learning Space**

Second, revised edition

**Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek**

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISSN 0721-3611

ISBN 978-3-631-63402-8 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-653-04741-7 (E-Book)

DOI 10.3726/978-3-653-04741-7

© Peter Lang GmbH

Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften

Frankfurt am Main 2010

Second revised edition, 2013

All rights reserved.

PL Academic Research is an imprint of Peter Lang GmbH

All parts of this publication are protected by copyright. Any utilisation outside the strict limits of the copyright law, without the permission of the publisher, is forbidden and liable to prosecution. This applies in particular to reproductions, translations, microfilming, and storage and processing in electronic retrieval systems.

[www.peterlang.de](http://www.peterlang.de)

To my mother

İlhan Gürkut Buran



## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	ix
Preface .....	xi
Acknowledgments .....	xiii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter I: THE MUSIC-AUDIENCE NEXUS SEEN THROUGH THE INTERACTIVE STAGE PERFORMANCE .....	9
Encoding-Decoding.....	10
The Interactive Stage.....	19
Fazıl Say and the Stage: Analyzing Say’s Conception of the Music–Audience Relationship .....	21
Chapter II: THE PERFORMANCE STAGE AS AN INFORMAL LEARNING SPACE .....	31
The Malatya Student and Public Concert .....	31
The Matter of Informality .....	42
Fazıl Say’s Interactive Stage: An Informal Learning Space.....	53
Chapter III: DATA COLLECTION.....	59
Sample Population: The Audience in Malatya .....	59
Instrument: How the Audience was Questioned.....	60
Design and Procedure. ....	61
Data Analysis. ....	63
Chapter IV: THE MALATYA EXPERIENCE.....	65
The Musical Exposure of the Malatya Audience.....	65
Reflections Provided by the Audience Before the Concert .....	67
Reflections Provided by the Audience After the Concert.....	81
Chapter V: CONCLUSION .....	95
Back to the Matter of Informality .....	95
The Democratic Stage. ....	97

Pedagogical Implications .....	99
Do Concerts Succeed in the Long Run? .....	100
Epilogue.....	103
Notes.....	105
References .....	109
APPENDIX A: A Biography of Fazıl Say.....	113
APPENDIX B: Information Given by Say at the Malatya Student Concert and the Transcription of the Discussion Session.....	117
APPENDIX C: Information Given by Say at the Malatya Public Concert .....	123
APPENDIX D: Questionnaires Used in the Study .....	125
APPENDIX E: Instructive Text Affixed on the Envelope .....	129
APPENDIX F: Categories Emerging from the Questionnaires .....	131
Name Index .....	137
Subject Index.....	139

## Foreword

Over the last thirty-two years as a teacher—first in secondary schools and in non-formal institutions, later at the university where I now work—I have read numerous books about education. Most of them were good, some of them were useful, but few of them were exceptional. This book, I believe, is among the exceptional.

When Aylin Buran, a psychological counsellor who also plays the piano, was about to start her master's thesis in adult education, she knew that she was going to do it about Fazıl Say, the world famous pianist and composer, and his concerts in Anatolia. I heard about her decision because she was my research assistant, and I was very interested in her project. I offered to be one of the jury members, which she gladly accepted. I have been a jury member of a lot of master's theses in my academic life. Most of them were very interesting, but hers seemed exceptionally so. This book came out of that master's thesis.

Why did it seem so exceptional to me? Why did I believe in it so much that I encouraged her to have it published? Why am I so excited about it? It is because I believe in education, and because I believe that education plays the main role in the development of a country. It is not just formal education or non-formal education or informal education that is important, but education of any kind from any competent, expert, and/or advanced person in any field.

Formal education is part of the institutionalized education system, which also contains vocational and technical schools, government training programs, and continuing higher education. They are most often supported by governmental and/or private funds. In industrialized and developed countries, formal education is designed and applied with care and diligence. However, in developing countries formal education is usually inadequate, and non-formal systems by nongovernmental agencies and private voluntary organizations try to help the whole education system by creating opportunities for those who wish to enhance their knowledge in the fields that they feel inadequate in.

Although a clear-cut difference between non-formal and informal education is difficult to establish, we know that informal education is the spontaneous, unstructured learning one has in daily life—at home, in school, on the street, in the market, at a concert, and so on. It occurs naturally, without any preparation or expectation on the receiver's side. That is exactly the point where the importance of the educator, his/her expertise, knowledge, attitude, and world-view come into sight. The quality of the educator is of utmost importance because, in informal education environments, information is given and received in an uncontrolled manner. Given to the hands of the ignorant, bad results may be unavoidable.

Turkey is a developing country with an approximate population of 73 million, and 38% of the people are studying in various stages of formal education including university. The reliability of the formal education system is open to question, with too many standard tests preparing children of a variety of ages for the next stage in their education, be it secondary or college/university levels. In this race, which is made up of mostly formal and natural sciences with a little bit of social sciences, what is deliberately forgotten and not given any attention are the subjects like music, physical education, and fine arts. However, these subjects help students to develop their creativity, to get to know the extent of their abilities, to be aware of their own culture as well as other cultures. They help students to improve their aesthetic sides, deepen their learning potential, and develop within them a deeper understanding of the core subjects as well. Unfortunately, our students in Turkey are deprived of the vast benefits of these subjects.

This is where the importance of Fazıl Say's education in his concerts is clearly seen. This is often the only time when the audience encounters the genius of world famous composers such as Mozart, Bach, or Beethoven. However, this is also the time when Say willingly takes the professional role of a teacher, and with great care and responsibility not only plays their music, but gives information about their lives, their music and music in general. This is the place where there is no syllabus, no course design, no concerns about discipline; there is only the careful initiative of the expert musician with civic values providing people with a sense of broad knowledge of the wider world. This is where children in the audience learn that there is something very entertaining that they can do in their spare time. This is where human flourishing takes place through lively and sincere conversation. This is where the satisfaction of learning is at its highest.

I wish from the bottom of my heart that, through this book, Fazıl Say's sense of social responsibility and action are known by a wider audience, and thus imitated and taken as an example in various fields by experts and competent people in those fields.

That is why this book is exceptional to me.

Associate Professor Zeynep Kızıltepe  
Boğaziçi University, Istanbul

## Preface

Learning is a lifelong process. When we look around ourselves with curiosity and awareness, we may notice that even every tiny detail regarding life may offer an inspiration for new acquisitions. I believe that, to move in a lifelong learning plane, one naturally needs to act in that manner. If we look around ourselves with such a perspective, we may also notice there are thousands of subjects to be researched. I encountered one of them one night when I could not sleep, and deciding to watch television. I came across a classical music concert that took place in Gaziantep (a city in Anatolia, Turkey). The performer was Fazıl Say, the Turkish pianist and composer. What was impressive about this concert was that, during the performance, the artist was conversing with his audience, delivering some simple pieces of information regarding the works he was playing, and including technical information and points of interest about the composers and performers. First he talked, and then he performed, and sometimes he improvised musical pieces based on themes given to him by the audience. This was a scene that one would not normally expect at a classical music concert, and I realized that here was an informal learning space at work.

For someone who tries to deepen her knowledge, and who is primarily interested in informal learning (which I believe has a deep involvement in life), such an atmosphere was a prolific area for research. What are the inner dynamics of such an interactive space? What is the artist's motivation to act in this way? Is such an atmosphere affected one way or another by the audience's views on music? What are the possible pedagogical influences of that manner over its participants? These were my specific concerns. In the following days, I tried to plan in my mind how to examine the dynamics of this atmosphere within its unique context. It took quite a long time to plan and to research the subject throughout my MA studies. From time to time, I had difficulties due to the nature of the research topic. After my analyses, as with the composer who wants to share a composition with the audience, I wanted to share my findings, insights, and observations. This book is the outcome of that wish, and is a developed and re-arranged version of the research I did in 2003-2005.

Throughout my study, I had the chance to attend Say's interactive concerts in different cities, to share the atmosphere with the audience, and to witness their reactions to those events. Sometimes, I had the opportunity to talk to them and learn how they felt and thought about such an experience. Predominantly, I encountered enthusiastic approaches from the audiences. I also had many opportunities to discuss the issue with the artist and try to look at the subject from his perspective. I realized that even these concerts were not obviously defined as highly planned learning environments (even when they included learning elements about classical music), were not formally structured, their objectives were not strictly set, and the outcomes of the interaction for the

audience were not planned to be systematically assessed; they were simply housing the clear intention of the artist to share the gratification that his music may awake in the audience. Copland (1952/ 1980) states that “listening is its own rewards; there are no prizes to be won, no contest of creative listening. But I hold that person fortunate who has the gift, for there are few pleasures in art greater than the secure sense that one can recognize beauty when one comes upon it” (p. 8). I believe that Say’s philosophy exactly coincides with this sentiment. In other words, his standing and his desire to transmit his music to as many people as possible rests on the wish to share the taste he has through music so that people may then own it by having had an intimate contact with the genre. In concerts, with their communal sharing relationship (in Fiske’s term), where a group of people simultaneously experiences something together, witnessing the live re-creation process may serve as an effective environment in which an artist can achieve his goal. Say’s style of interaction (verbal communication) seems to function as a facilitator for this. Based on my findings, observations and insights, this manner seems to suit the purpose.

I also strongly believe that the meaning of this experience (as well as other similar experiences in life) lies in its contribution to people’s personal repertoires in terms of both music appreciation and being open to related future acquisition, and also in terms of its potential power for individuals to open up to new horizons, and its function as a source of inspiration to discover one’s deeper tendencies and talents. That is, the creative side of a person coming into being might well be deeply influenced and triggered by one’s ongoing initiation into that kind of creative space. Therefore, I believe that it is immensely important for the enrichment of the environment and, consequently, human experience.

This book aims to analyze such an experience—interactive concerts—within the context of informal learning and to have a better, clearer understanding of its inner mechanisms. This space’s probable pedagogical influence on the audience and the motivation that leads the artist to adopt this style are the core points of the study. I believe that those who are willing to live in a lifelong learning plane, who are interested in learning opportunities in life especially in cultural settings, those who appreciate music and are curious about how an artist connects with the audience may benefit from this work. I also hope this study will be a contribution to those who wish to analyze informal learning and its intimate connection to life.

I should add that the dynamics I focus on and try to investigate were not only the integral parts of my research but an immensely new acquisition for myself, too, as someone willing to deeply understand the wishes of an artist to take another side and act as a mediator and the probable affects of this manner on people’s minds and levels of affection. Hopefully, this study is a modest contribution to the subject and will serve as an inspiration for new questions, discussions and investigations.

## Acknowledgments

I am particularly pleased to acknowledge to my teachers Professor Fatma Gök and Associate Professor Zeynep Kızıltepe, who provided me with theoretical and emotional support whenever I needed to complete this book. Their substantial advice, their love for music, their valuable criticisms and continuous encouragement were of the utmost value for me.

I would like to acknowledge Fazıl Say, who allowed me to collect data during his concerts and contributed to my analysis. Despite his immensely busy schedule, he has been available whenever I needed to discuss the issue, to delve into my research questions and reach a better understanding of the subject matter.

I greatly appreciate the valuable contributions of Dr. Bülent Gürkut throughout regarding the re-arrangements of the text.

My heartfelt thanks also go to Professor Ali Uçan, Dr. Yavuz Akbulut, Dr. Onur Türkmen, Dr. Melis Gazioğlu, Turgut Pöğün, Mert Karabey, İbrahim Yazıcı, Özgür İşgören and Melike Acar for the insightful discussions and reviews.

I would like to thank Ahmet Say for his valuable contribution and comments regarding my study. My thanks go to Evin İlyasoğlu for her sincere support right at the beginning my studies.

I offer my sincere gratitude to Professor Selçuk Atalay who guided me during the data collection at İnönü University, Malatya, and to my friends from Malatya who volunteered and collaborated in data collection: Barış-Özlem Koçak, Cem-Okan-Mesut Avcı, Esra Özkul, Meltem Ekici, Fatoş Kaymaz and İlker Mete.

I would like to offer my appreciation to Kadir Dursun who arranged every single activity throughout my travels to collect data. His meticulous personality and perfect organization skills made the data collection procedure easier. I would also like to thank Doğuş Group for the help given while collecting the data.

I would like to add my sincere gratitude to Verda-Oktay Soymen for their insightful contributions. My thanks also go to Ayşegül Smith, Özlem-Esra Ekşi, Burçak Çullu, Melda Marduç, Selen Erbay, Seçil Özbeklik, Duygu Cankılıç and Yasemin Dut for their kind encouragement. I would also like to offer my appreciation to Ergun Kocabiyik, Gülcan Karahasanoğlu and Sefa Coşkun for the technical support they provided.

Many thanks go to the audiences of Kayseri, Ümraniye and Malatya during the piloting and the actual data collection for their willingness to participate in my study.

