

The Court Historian



Jeroen Duindam

RIVAL COURTS IN DYNASTIC EUROPE

Christer Jorgensen

'DAMNATIO MEMORIAE'

Jean Dubu

RACINE THE COURTIER

Ulrik Langen

THE MEANING OF INCOGNITO

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Courts and Culture

GIUSEPPE DONIZETTI PASHA AND THE POLYPHONIC COURT MUSIC OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

by Emre Araci

The eleventh in a series of articles on the way courts used, and were used and represented by, creative artists.

MUSIC OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE was as varied as its geography, and diverse as the cosmopolitan races and peoples it embraced. From the ferocious martial music of the janissaries which Turks brought from Central Asia, to the more subdued practice cultivated by the *sultans* in their religious services, it was possible to find a number of different styles of contrasted musical traditions side by side, not to mention the unique input by the minorities such as the Greeks, Jews and Armenians. But the official music of the court, like its poetry and other art forms, was under the heavy influence of the Arabo-Persian culture which had already been exposed to the Byzantine tradition. As a result, up until the nineteenth century the traditional music of the Ottoman court was monophonic; that is to say it was based on the principle of a single melodic line with no harmonic accompaniment. As a result of not having the third (harmonic) dimension, unlike the polyphonic music of the western world, which gradually streamlined its modal structure into two basic modes of major and minor with the advent of the Renaissance, the subtlety of oriental music came from its complex combination of hundreds of different modes known as *makams*. To the European ear, however, oriental melodies — which faithfully followed peculiar scalar inflections dictated by their specific makam structure while harbouring quarter-tones alien to the western system — sounded strange, out of tune and as a result primitive. Classic European travel literature to the Levant, as a consequence, abounds in splendid examples of misunderstood and misinterpreted local talent and merry music-making. “There are amongst the Turks some who affect a taste for music; but they understand not the concord of sweet sounds, nor comprehend, according to our system, a single principle of musical composition. An ill-shaped guitar, with several wires always out of tune [...] (with) which they continue for hours to torment with a monotony the most detestable” wrote a bemused Charles Griffiths in his *Travels in Europe, Asia Minor and Arabia* in the early nineteenth century.¹

Ironically, just over a century after Griffiths, the early republican regime in Turkey in the 1920s viewed its musical heritage from the Ottoman court in a remarkably similar way. Kemal Atatürk, deeply influenced by the views of the Turkish nationalist thinker Ziya Gökalp (1875–1924),² strongly believed that a modern Turkey could only progress in the field of musical composition if it

1 C. Griffiths, *Travels in Europe, Asia Minor and Arabia* (London, 1805), p.153.

2 In his influential book *The Principles of Turkishism*, Gökalp wrote: “We shall not copy the compositions of European composers, but learn the methods and the techniques of modern music by which we shall harmonise the melodies sung by our people. The aim, therefore, is to arrange our

followed European principles. For the republicans the ideal of “civilisation” and “advancement” in music found its full expression with the introduction of the third dimension to Turkish music.³ Thus began a systematic oppression of the Ottoman monophonic court tradition, and attempts at harmonising the folk melodies of Anatolia where the true source for genuine Turkish music, in their opinion, could only be found. Although this activity positively encouraged the formation of a distinct and important Western-style school of composition, still vibrant in modern-day Turkey, the monophonic musical tradition, which suffered heavily on aural continuity with no available and efficient notation system, suffered badly.

These attempts to introduce a “concord of sweet sounds” to the lands once ruled by the sultans however, have a much earlier and more romantic beginning than the events of the early republican years and date back to the reforms of Mahmud II (1807–39), when Giuseppe Donizetti, the elder brother of the famous opera composer Gaetano, was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching young Turkish soldiers the rudiments of European music. Unlike the music reforms of Atatürk, which were in principal geared towards systematically influencing the cultural fabric of Turkish society over a long term period, as part of a general social regeneration programme, Mahmud’s introduction of Italian music to his armies was simply due to bare necessities. The corrupt corps of janissaries had just been extinguished in 1826 during the bloody uprising of *Vaka-i Hayriye*, (the Auspicious Incident); and with them went their centuries old colourful military bands that provided the music during the campaigns. The new modern army, *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye*, which replaced the janissaries, was structured completely after European models and was also to incorporate regimental bands to provide music during parades, drills and tattoos. Since European officers were engaged to oversee the training and transformation, it was only logical for the Ottoman authorities to seek for employment a well-qualified European bandmaster who would be willing to undertake the challenge. As a result of these developments, Hüseyin Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of War, contacted the Sardinian Ambassador Marchese Garapallo in Constantinople for advice; and he subsequently wrote to his ministry in Turin.⁴ It was through the officials at the Sardinian foreign ministry that Giuseppe Donizetti, who at this time was serving as bandmaster with the Primo Reggimento della Brigata Casale, was contacted for the prestigious post of becoming *Istruttore Generale delle Musiche Imperiali*

Ottomane.⁵ Despite fierce opposition from his family and in particular his father Andrea, who was very uncomfortable with the thought of his son going into the service of an Islamic ruler, Giuseppe Donizetti accepted the Porte’s invitation without hesitation.⁶

Like his younger and more celebrated brother Giuseppe Ambrogio was also born in the northern Italian city of Bergamo on 6 November 1788 as the eldest child of Andrea and Domenica Nava Donizetti.⁷ His musical talent was first spotted and cultivated by his uncle Giacomo Corini and later by the famous *kapellmeister* Johann Simon Mayr (1763–1845), who was in charge of the music at the local cathedral of Santa Maria Maggiore and who was also the key figure behind Gaetano’s early musical training. The Donizetti family constantly suffered from financial hardship and Giuseppe had to work to support the family from a young age. Initially trained and employed as a tailor’s apprentice,⁸ like most other family members along the Borgo Canal who earned their living through weaving and tailoring in those days, with the dawn of Napoleonic wars on the continent, in 1808 Giuseppe was eventually conscripted into the seventh regiment of the Italian army, which was in effect under French control since Bergamo at the time was part of the Kingdom. He served on the Austrian and Spanish fronts and took part in the famous siege of Saragossa. After the first downfall of Napoleon, in 1814 he joined the disgraced emperor and his forces on Elba as flautist, where he also married a local girl called Angela Tendi. Following Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo,

³ Donizetti, ed., *Ricordi*, p. 56.

⁴ In a letter to his father, Gaetano Donizetti tried to console him over Giuseppe’s decision to go into the Ottoman service: “I tell you sincerely, because I am unprejudiced, that one can love and adore God even in the deserts, and for a good Christian there is no need for churches to be the determining factor; one loves God in one’s heart and the presence or absence of sanctuaries makes no difference.” W. Ashbrook, *Donizetti* (London, 1965), p. 92; Original letter published in G. Zavadini, *Donizetti. Vita, musiche, epistolario* (Bergamo, 1948), no. 37.

⁵ For biographical sources on Giuseppe Donizetti see: F. J. Fetis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (8 vols, Paris and Brussels, 1835–44); A. Bacolla, *Giuseppe Donizetti e la musica in Turchia, Plémont* (Turin, 1 June 1911, also translated into French by Giuseppe Donizetti (grandson)), in *La Musique en Turquie et Quelques traits biographiques, sur Giuseppe Donizetti Pascha*, Constantinople, 1911; Donizetti, ed., *La Musique en Turquie*, pp. 53–9; A. Baratta, *Costantinopoli nel 1831, ossia Notizie esatte e recentissime intorno a questa Capitale, ed agli usi e costumi de suoi abitanti*, (Genova, 1831), p. 39; F. Romani, ‘Donizetti in Constantinopoli (Frammento di un viaggio inedito in Oriente)’, *Miscelanea del Cavaliere Felice Romani tratta della Gazzetta Piemontese*, I ristampa dell’articolo della *Gazzetta Piemontese* del 12 novembre 1834, Turin, tipografia Favale, 1837), pp. 9–12; E. C. Verzino, *Contributo ad una biografia di Gaetano Donizetti* (Bergamo, 1896); G. Locatelli, ‘Giuseppe Donizetti Pasca’, *Bergamum* (Bergamo, 1912), pp. 22–5; U. Riva, ‘Un bergamasco (Giuseppe Donizetti Pasca) riformatore della musica in Turchia’, *Rivista di Bergamo* 1 (Bergamo, 1922), pp. 349–53; F. Abbati, ‘La musica in Turchia con Giuseppe Donizetti Pasca’, *Rivista di Bergamo* vii (Bergamo, 1928), pp. 305–12. For Turkish sources see: B. Aksoy, *Avrupalı Gezgincilerin Gözde Osmanlılarda Musikî* (Istanbul, 1994); T. A. Atâ, *Tarihî Adâ 3* (192–3 [1875–6]), pp. 109–13; M. R. Gazimihal [Kösemihal], *Türk Askerî Müzikleri Tarihi* (Maarif Basımevi, İstanbul, 1955); Çetçen Asr Ocağında Saray Müzikası, 1–11, *Ankara 6–7* (1 December 1945–1 January 1946); *Türkiye-Avrupa Musikî Münaşeretleri* (Istanbul, 1939); R. A. Seveglil, ‘Donizetti Pasca, Giuseppe Donizetti’nin Osmanlı Sarayı’ndeki Çalımları’, *Istanbul Oper.*, 2 (7), (February 1960, pp. 22–30c; *Opera Sanatı ile İle Temaslarmız*, MEB (Istanbul, 1959); *Saray Tiyatrosu*, MEB (Istanbul, 1962); R. Yekta, *Türk Musikisi*, trans. O. Nasuhioğlu, (Istanbul, 1986); E. Aracı, ‘Giuseppe Donizetti Pasha and the Family Archive in Istanbul’, *Donizetti Society Newsletter* 83, (June 2001), appendix.

⁶ Verzino, *Gaetano Donizetti*, p. 14.

national melodies on the basis of the techniques of modern music and produce our own modern national works of music”: N. Berkas, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: selected essays of Ziya Gökalp* (Connecticut, 1981), p. 268.

³ At a speech to the Turkish parliament in 1934, Mustafa Kemal referred to the old Ottoman music in the following words: “The speed with which a nation can transform itself, is related to how well it can adapt to new styles in music. The kind of [monophonic] music we are hearing today is far from doing any good for the future of our young nation. It is essential to create a new musical style rooted in our national heritage. Only after this, can the national music of Turkey be elevated to a universal musical level”. A. A. Saygun, *Anatürk ve Musikî* (Ankara, 1981), p. 49.

⁴ G. Donizetti, ed., *Ricordi di Gaetano Donizetti, Esposti Nella Maestra Centenaria Tenutasi in Bergamo, Nell’Agosto-Settembre 1897* (Bergamo, 1897), p. 54.

Giuseppe left Bergamo and joined the army of the Kingdom of Sardinia and Piedmont and became Musical Director of the Reggimento Provinciale di Casale.⁹ It was at this point in his career that the Ottoman offer came.

Why Giuseppe decided to embark on such an adventurous course at a crucial stage in his life deserves some explanation. One of the main reasons was no doubt financially motivated. Gaetano was shocked to hear of his brother's astronomical salary and was convinced "it must be that the 8,000 francs have blinded him"; he also stressed to put him off, still on the subject of money, how important it was that "in this world it is necessary to be discreet in one's desires, and one lives happily without debts and am very happy; Perhaps he desires too much and will find himself sorry".¹⁰ Another likely reason was Giuseppe's trouble with the Austrian authorities, who after the fall of Napoleon had taken control of the northern Italian territories. A great admirer of Napoleon and the French, Giuseppe strongly opposed his country's domination by the Austrians. Evidence shows that he secretly took part in the Carbonari resistance and even appeared at court trials.¹¹ Constantinople would be a safe and faraway destination in view of his troubled past. And finally, a royal appointment, be it Ottoman, was still very prestigious, and to be elevated to the rank of *Istiratore Generale* was no doubt an important step in his career.

Giuseppe Donizetti, accompanied by his wife, arrived in Constantinople in the autumn of 1828 to take up his employment at a special school of military music called *Muzika-i Humayun*, founded by Mahmud as part of his sweeping reforms.¹² What the Donizettis at the time most likely did not realise was that Constantinople was to become their home for the rest of their lives. Until his death in 1856 Giuseppe, for twenty-eight years, served under two Ottoman sultans, Mahmud II and Abdulmejid, during a distinguished career and not only received the highest honours of the empire, but was also elevated to the rank of a *pasha*. His responsibility also went beyond teaching young Ottoman recruits; he taught members of the Ottoman imperial family, arranged concert trips of the famous virtuosi of the time to Constantinople including Franz Liszt,¹³ and took an active role in the musical life of Pera, where the Christian community lived and where lively seasons of Italian opera flourished at the Imperial Ottoman Theatre of the Naum brothers.¹⁴

Giuseppe's early work with the regimental bands of the Ottoman army was recorded by some foreign travellers who visited Constantinople, and since no personal accounts seem to have survived from this period among the Donizetti papers, contemporary travel literature forms an important source of information. The British naval officer Sir Adolphus Slade, for example, heard the new band rehearsing on the quay-side of one of the palaces on the banks of the Bosphorus and was impressed not only by the youth of the musicians, who were imperial pages from the palace school, but also by the fact that they were playing for the Sultan's amusement. "Rossini's music, executed in a manner very creditable to Professor Signor Donizetti", Slade concluded that "their aptitude in learning, which Donizetti informed me would have been remarkable even in Italy, showed that the Turks are naturally musical"¹⁵ Charles MacFarlane, another British visitor, who was in Constantinople at more or less the same time as Slade, however, depicts a completely different picture. He records of having heard the military band of the sultan near Tophane "practising a march from Rossini, under the direction of an old purblind Italian"¹⁶ and points out that "an old Italian charged with the instruction of one of the bands, told me however, that the Turks themselves had not much aptitude for learning it, and that most of the musicians were Armenian rayas".¹⁷ We are also told that "the sultan afterwards placed a few of the younger ichogians or pages, under the maestro's instructions, and these were making some progress when I left Stamboul, as they were docile and could be kept to work like mere schoolboys as they were. The love for music will do much; for with the Turks, the great difficulty is, to awaken an interest in their minds for any art or science."¹⁸

Neither Slade nor MacFarlane were professional musicians, therefore their subjective views on the musical ability of the Turks or the standard of the performance could be misleading. But what their accounts help us to establish is that Giuseppe was actively in charge on the streets of Constantinople and his military bands were able to play works from the standard military repertoire of the time, such as instrumental numbers by Rossini and other Italian opera composers. The famous librettist Felice Romani, who also visited the city in 1832, was most surprised to hear the chorus from Bellini's opera *Straniera* and a song by Gaetano Donizetti, *Il barcaiolo*, from *Nuits d'été à Paussilippe* coming from the palace quay.¹⁹

Throughout history, as part of courtly entertainment and pastime, music and music-making always had an important place for the Ottomans and especially for the ladies of the harem who led a severely secluded and isolated life. Ottoman

9 His military appointments are listed in full in Donizetti, ed., *La Misure en Turquie*, pp. 53–4.

10 Ashbrook, *Donizetti*, p. 92; Zavardini, *Donizetti*, no. 37.

11 B. Belotti, *Storia di Bergamo e dei Bergamaschi* (9 vols., Bergamo, 1989), VII, p. 30.

12 Mahmud founded the military schools of medicine and science, and sent groups of Turkish students to Paris for education. The first Ottoman official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, started circulation during his reign and a new postal system across the empire was inaugurated. Radical changes were also made to the official court dress: the crimson *fes* replaced the turban and tight frock coats and trousers took the place of the baggy *shalvar*.

13 Liszt came to Constantinople in the summer of 1847 for a series of recitals at court and for the general public. He was impressed to find the Ottoman ruler "so well informed about my bit of celebrity"; E. Araci, 'Franz Liszt at the Ottoman court', *International Piano Quarterly* (Winter 2001), pp. 14–19.

14 Naum brothers were Syrian Christians who settled in Constantinople in the early nineteenth century. Abdulmejid granted them an exclusive licence to engage artists from Italy. Most standard operas from the Italian repertoire were performed by a highly professional cast engaged from Italy

each season. For further information see M. And, *Türkiyede taban sahnesi — taban sahnesinde Türkiye* (Istanbul, 1989); S. Umut, 'Abdulmejid, Opera ve Dolmabahçe Saray Tiyatrosu', *Milli Sanaylar Dergisi* (1987/1), pp. 43–59.

15 Sir Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece etc. and of a cruise in the Black Sea with Captain Pasha in the years 1829, 1830 and 1831* (2 vols., London, 1833), I, p. 135.

16 C. MacFarlane, *Constantinople in 1828* (2nd ed., 2 vols., London, 1829), I, p. 517.

17 MacFarlane, *Constantinople*, II, p. 173.

18 MacFarlane, *Constantinople*, II, p. 173.

19 Romani, 'Donizetti in Constantinopoli', p. 11.

miniatures are full of examples, showing groups of musicians taking part in wedding and circumcision ceremonies or at grand public events like *Bayram* festivities. Composers obtained patronage at court and a number of sultans themselves excelled in musical composition and were first-class performers. Selim III (1789–1807), in this respect, was perhaps the most accomplished of all: a performer on the *ney* and the *tanbur*, he composed and contributed fourteen new *makams* to the tradition; two of which — *Evca'vî* and *evkefza* — have survived to this day.²⁰ Today one hundred original compositions, in various genres — in a tradition where no written notation system at the time existed — are attributed to him.²¹

In the nineteenth century, however, as the court began to assume a more European identity under Mahmud's reforms, musical life also began to show signs of change. Music reforms in the military, it seems, were beginning to spread to the inner sanctuaries of Topkapı and to the spacious rooms of the new western-style imperial residences along the Beşiktaş coastline, so much so, that one of the most widely-read French music journals *Le Ménestrel* published an article on its front page entitled *Mahmoud Compositeur*, with the opening lines "A Constantinople la vieille musique turque meurt d'agonie."²² *The Musical World* in London also published a brief report on this new and unexpected development at the Ottoman court: "The gods have made his Sublimity, Mahmud, musical and in return he has determined to infuse his tastes into his harem. With this view he has recently given a concert to the fair ones, at which a young Turk, who had acquired his education at Paris, played among other pieces one of Beethoven's sonatas with variations, which enraptured the assembly and drew down thunders of applause."²³

Grand concerts and operatic performances at court were now part of daily life, and when Abdülmecid (1839–61) succeeded to his father's throne in 1839 at the age of sixteen, he was already exposed to a great deal of western harmony and Italian style of operatic singing. The young sultan also gave orders for his master musician Giuseppe to be elevated to the rank of a colonel²⁴ and continued to patronise European music and opera, as well as donating handsomely to the new opera house of the Nâiums, when the old theatre burned down in 1846. Visiting opera troupes to Constantinople were regularly invited to perform at court and Abdülmecid took great pleasure following the story line from the *libretto*; a habit

²⁰ Y. Özayna, *Türk Musikisi* (Istanbul, 1987), p. 92.

²¹ *Osmana, Türk Musikisi*, p. 91.

²² "In Constantinople Turkish music has died in agony", *Le Ménestrel* (18 December 1836), p. 1. The rest of the report reads: "Sultan Mahmud loves Italian music and has introduced it in his armies. This is only one of his reforms; the brother of Donizetti is the director of his music, and since they do not have much music, they always play one particular work, called the *March of the Sultan*, which is said to have been composed by him. He particularly loves the piano, so much so that he ordered many instruments from Vienna for his ladies. I do not know how they are going to learn to play since no one so far has succeeded to approach them."

²³ *The Musical World* (6 June 1839), p. 91.

²⁴ In a letter dated 26 May 1842 Gaetano jokingly wrote to Signora Giuseppina Appiani, *nata Strigelli*: "My brother in the Orient has been decorated (in brilliants) with the distinguished order of the Colonel of the Imperial Guard. As you know, over there everything comes in brilliants and decorations. Probably there will be a day when he would be general and then stiff as a board. I am sure God will agree"; Zavattini, no. 420.

he also encouraged in his harem.²⁵ Italian opera, in particular, seems to have struck a particular chord with the Sultan's taste, so much so that Abdülmecid even commissioned a private theatre for his sumptuous new palace, Dolmabahçe. The theatre, which opened in 1858 with great pomp and ceremony, burnt down only a few years later during a devastating fire.²⁶

It is especially extraordinary that it had also become quite acceptable for Western musical compositions to be played even at most solemn religious ceremonial occasions. The sultan's regular Friday procession to the mosque, the *selâmlik*, was no longer to the drums and cymbal clashes of the janissary bands, but instead to the lively strains of a Rossini or Donizetti march. On a visit in 1841 Hans Christian Andersen, to his great astonishment, heard the "merry music of Rossini and Donizetti" which sounded through the streets of Constantinople while "the troops were marching on, to be paraded between the Serail and the Mosque of Ahmed, whither the Sultan [Abdülmecid] was about to proceed in state."²⁷ More significantly, Abdülmecid had a number of personal marches dedicated to him by eminent European composers including Gaetano Donizetti and Rossini.²⁸ Giuseppe Donizetti, in his capacity as master of music to the sultan, also provided Abdülmecid with a ceremonial march *Mecidiye* (1839), as he had produced *Mahmudîye* for Mahmud II in 1831. The main thematic material from *Mecidiye* was later used by Franz Liszt in a *Grande Marche Paraphrasée*, which he composed expressly for Abdülmecid.²⁹ A vogue for grand choral works in the Turkish language also started at this time. The recently discovered score of Giuseppe Donizetti's *Inno Popolare di S. M. Imperiale Il Sultano Abdal Medjidî Kan* is in a musical style fit to be part of a Christian mass, yet it contains a text in Ottoman in praise of Abdülmecid and his reign, which roughly translates: "Oh Padishah of noble ancestry, Your justice enlightens us. It is thanks to you that people live in much prosperity, Long may you live Sultan Medjid, Long may you live!"³⁰ A similar hymn was also composed by Giuseppe to mark the end of the siege of Silistria and when the work was sung for

²⁵ According to a report in the *The Times*, Donizetti's *Belshario* was performed at the palace of Sultana Valide in an apartment newly fitted up as a theatre. All the members of the harem were given printed copies of the libretto which was translated into Turkish: "The ladies listened very earnestly during the performance and perused the books with great attention. The sympathy of one was strongly excited by the appearance of blind Belshario, and she became so moved by the representation of his distress, that she started up suddenly; and with expression of pity threw a purse full of gold at him"; *The Times* (17 February 1843), p. 6.

²⁶ An engraving of the sumptuous interior of the new theatre was published in *L'Illustration* (25 June 1859).

²⁷ Mahomet's Birthday — A Scene in Constantinople? *The Complete Illustrated Stories of Hans Christian Andersen*, trans. H. W. Dulcken (Chancellor Press, London, 1983), p. 833.

²⁸ Donizetti composed the Grand Imperial Military March in 1840 and dedicated it to Abdülmecid. Rossini's *Marta Militare* for Sultan Abdülmecid was composed and published twelve years later, in 1852. Both were awarded the Ottoman Order of *Nigân-i-Fihrih*. On receiving his honour at the Ottoman Embassy in Paris, Gaetano's comment was "Napoleon belongs to two centuries, I to two religions"; Ashbrook, *Donizetti*, p. 252; Zavattini, *Donizetti*, no. 356.

²⁹ *Grande Paraphrase de la marche de J. Donizetti* was published by Schlesinger of Berlin in 1848; a simplified version was also published.

³⁰ "Ey padişahi pür ata, Adlim verir Pehrreza, sayende arem pür seta, sultan Mecid bintir bintir yaşa." The manuscript copy of this hymn in Giuseppe's autograph is at the Museo Donizettiano in Bergamo; catalogue no. I-BGM VII, p. 8.

the first time by very able Ottoman singers at the palace in the autumn of 1854, on the first day of Bayram, *La France Musicale* informed its French readership that “the Sultan was so much moved by this patriotic composition that tears came down his eyes, a moving emotion shared by all in the audience.”³¹

In view of this cultural influence from the west, it is not surprising to see, only a generation after Mahmud, Ottoman princes, among whom were ruling sultans, also began to produce compositions in European musical genres. Sultan Abdulaziz (1861–76), and more prominently Sultan Murad V (1876), both composed music for the pianoforte, in the latter’s case running into hundreds of unpublished pieces in manuscript, mainly in popular dance forms of the nineteenth century, including waltzes, polkas, schottisches and quadrilles.³² Four individual piano pieces by Abdulaziz with French titles were published by Lucca in Milan in the 1860s; they included a polka, *La Harpe Caprice*, *La Gondole Barcarolle* and *Invitation à la Valse*.³³ Incidentally, *La Gondole Barcarolle* was performed by the bands of the Grenadier Guards, under the direction of Dan Godfrey, at Marlborough House during a dinner hosted by the Prince of Wales when Abdulaziz paid a state visit to Britain in the summer of 1867.³⁴ Abdulaziz also supported Wagner’s Bayreuth project, when most of the German nobility did not take much interest in either the composer or his works.³⁵ The last Caliph Abdülmecid (1922–4) was also an accomplished composer and painter. His famous painting entitled *Beethoven at court*³⁶ (the Ottoman court of course) depicts a performance of a Beethoven piano trio in progress, with the bust of the great composer watching the players above its pedestal, and a copy of the score of music lying on the floor (the painting is so detailed that it is even possible to tell it is *Edizioni Peters*).

When Giuseppe Donizetti died on 17 February 1856, the progress of Ottoman music on western lines did not come to a halt and the Ottoman Porte, this time, did not have to seek the assistance of a foreign embassy. A large number of foreign musicians, some of whom had arrived on Giuseppe’s recommendations from Italy, had settled in Constantinople, and therefore it was not difficult to find a successor to him. Callisto Grattelli, a Parmese musician, who had been working at the Naum Theatre was appointed as the new Istruttore Generale. In 1916, for the first and last time in its history, the Imperial Ottoman Orchestra toured Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria,³⁷ performing works by Beethoven and Wagner. After the proclamation of

the republic it was moved to Ankara and became the foundation for the newly created Presidential Symphony Orchestra. After being left to moulder in state and newspaper archives of Europe and Turkey and years of neglect, the history of the European musical tradition of the Ottoman court is finally beginning to enjoy a new and well-deserved revival.

Emre Aracı

Emre Aracı specialises in the history and practice of the European musical tradition at the Ottoman court. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Faculty of Music, he completed a doctorate on the life and works of the seminal twentieth-century Turkish composer Ahmed Adnan Saygun and subsequently became post-doctoral Research Associate at the Skiller Centre for Ottoman Studies, University of Cambridge, where his research on the life of Giuseppe Donizetti Pasha was sponsored by the Türk Ekonomi Bankası. His pioneering CD European Music at the Ottoman Court was published in London in 2000. He is at present Director of the London Academy of Ottoman Court Music Ensemble which he founded in 1999 and finishing a book entitled The other Donizetti: the life and times of Giuseppe Donizetti Pasha, Master of Music at the Ottoman court.

³¹ *La France Musicale*, xviii, 41 (1 October 1854), p. 323.

³² Following his brief three-month sultanate in 1876 Sultan Murad spent the rest of his life under house arrest in Çırağan Palace where he composed music. An activity which seems to have brought him therapeutic relief from the depressions of a forced seclusion. Most of his autograph scores have survived and are preserved at the Istanbul University Library. For the first ever world recording of his music (Waltz in E flat and Schottische in C) see *European Music at the Ottoman Court* (Kalan Label, CD177), performed by The London Academy of Ottoman Court Music Ensemble, Director Emre Aracı.

³³ For premier world recordings of *La Gondole Barcarolle* and *Invitation à la Valse* see Kalan Label CD177.

³⁴ *The Times* (15 July 1867).

³⁵ E. Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner* (4 vols, Cambridge, 1976), iv, p. 351.

³⁶ This painting is in the collections of Resim Heykel Müzesi, Istanbul.

³⁷ There is a detailed account of this tour in M. R. Gazimihal [Kosemihal], *Türk Askeri Müzikalari Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1955), pp. 132–41.