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A New Kind of National: Modified String Quartet Practices in Post-Soviet Eurasia

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A NEW KIND OF NATIONAL: MODIFIED STRING QUARTET
PRACTICES IN POST-SOVIET EURASIA

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
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A NEW KIND OF NATIONAL: MODIFIED STRING QUARTET
PRACTICES IN POST-SOVET EURASIA

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Western Michigan University, 2013

This thesis examines the practices of string quartet modification implemented by three post-Soviet Eurasian composers: Franghiz Ali-Zadeh (Azerbaijan), Vache Sharafyan (Armenia), and Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky (Uzbekistan). After an introduction to the geography of the region and the biographies of the composers, their works containing modified string quartet configurations are examined within three distinct modification practices. These practices consist of the addition of outside instruments, the addition of electronic components, and the alteration of performance practice. The evaluation of these techniques is carried out through musical analysis and examination of cultural context. After each work has been examined, the body of works as a whole is explored within the concepts of ethnic nationalism, violence and political unrest, and commissioning agents as primary setting factors. The string quartet is implemented by Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky as a vehicle for expressing their respective national music traditions. These practices and their role within a global musical context have established a new musical genre serving as an international extension of regional music traditions.
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Adam Taylor Lenz
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The present research explores a body of works created by composers from post-Soviet Eurasia that incorporate a variety of techniques to modify the string quartet as a means of expressing a message of greater cultural significance. After an introduction to the geographical distribution of the region and an introduction to the careers of each of the three composers surveyed, a description of string quartet modification practices will introduce the three methods employed by the post-Soviet composers whose works are evaluated within the scope of the present research. Following an analysis of these works within the confines of their respective modification practices, the developmental factors that serve as the catalyst for the creation of these works will also be evaluated. These factors include the rise in nationalism in the late-Soviet and post-Soviet periods, the role of violence within the region and the emigration that results from this violence, and the role of commissioning agents in the creative process. Last, an evaluation of the scope of the present research is provided with a proposal for further research within the field.
Geography of the Eurasian Region

The term Eurasia is generally applied to a region situated at the crossroads between South Asia, China, the Middle East, Europe, and Russia. For the purposes of the present research, I have chosen to confine my definition of Eurasia in two ways. When the term “post-Soviet Eurasia” is written, it describes the republics in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus regions that became independent following the fall of the Soviet Union. These republics include Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. When I write the term the “Greater Eurasian Region,” I am referring to the surrounding regions in Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Western China, Mongolia, and Southern Russia that maintain a primary political, cultural, and historical tie to the independent republics that make up the post-Soviet Region.

These terms are clearly represented in Figure 1. Here the independent republics that make up post-Soviet Eurasia are labeled and colored on the map of the region. The areas that are labeled, but not colored along the borders of the map are representative of the region referred to as the greater Eurasian region. The only exception to this is the lack of a clear representation of Mongolia and several of the regions housed within modern-day Russia which are also generally encompassed in the definition.
Franghiz Ali-Zadeh was born in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1947. She completed her music education at the Baku State Conservatory where she was awarded degrees in piano performance in 1970 and composition in 1972. Ali-Zadeh studied composition with Kara Karayev under whom she also served as a research assistant from 1973 to

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1976. Her composition studies culminated in 1989 with the completion of her doctoral studies at the Baku State Conservatory.

In 1992, Ali-Zadeh accepted a commission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture which took her to Mersin, Turkey at the height of the Nagorno-Karabakh War between Armenia and Azerbaijan. At this time she also began working with the Kronos Quartet on Mugam sayagi (2003), her first work for the ensemble and the initiation of a multi-decade partnership. She was awarded a fellowship from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) to come to Germany in 1999 where she has resided every since.


2 The Kronos Quartet is a string quartet based in San Francisco that as a major commissioning agent in the body of works being examined. A greater discussion of the quartet will appear in Chapter V.
Northwest, and the Summer Festival La Jolla, California (2003), the Vienna Altenburg Trio (2004), The Julliard School (2006), the Seattle Chamber Players (2006), the 7th International Violin Competition of Leopold Mozart (2009), and the 8th International Adilia Alieva Piano Competition (2012). She has also been a member of the Silk Road Ensemble\(^3\) since 2000.


### Vache Sharafyan

Vache Sharafyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1966. He graduated with honors from the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory in 1990 where he continued his graduate studies in composition under Edvard Mirzoyan. Completing his graduate studies in 1992, Sharafyan accepted a position as Professor of Music Composition and Sacred Music at the Theological Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Sharafyan returned to Yerevan in 1997 where he accepted a position as

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\(^3\) The Silk Road Ensemble is an ensemble directed by Yo-Yo Ma that brings together composers and musicians from across the greater Eurasian region to jointly perform works based on the region’s musical traditions. A greater discussion of the ensemble will appear in Chapter V.
Professor of Composition at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, a position he held until 2010. He also served as a guest lecturer on Armenian music at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) from 2010-2011.

In 1985, Sharafyan was the winner of the All-Union Composers’ Competition in Moscow. Other honors include recent commissions by the Baird Trio (2003), the Armenian General Benevolent Union (2004), the MATA Festival (2005), the Dilijan Chamber Music Series (2006), Boston Modern Orchestra Project (2008), Centre de Documentation de la Musique Contemporaine (2008), Kuniko Kato (2009), Maxim Novikov (2009) Soli Deo Gloria (2011), the Institute Français des Instruments à Vent and Quintette à vent de Marseille (2011), Ensemble ZERAFIN (2011), Anne Akiko Meyers (2012), and Suren Bagratuni and James Forger (2012). He has also been a member of the Silk Road Ensemble since 2001.

Sharafyan has composed six works incorporating string quartet. These include String Quartet (1997), Two Devotions for tar, kamancha, dhol, tam-tam, piano, and string quartet (1999), The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song for duduk and string quartet (2001), Quintetto Quasi Concerto for piano and string quartet (2006), Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas for duduk, dhol, and string quartet (2006), Have Mercy on me, O God for tenor and string quartet (2011).
Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky was born in 1963 into a family of musicians in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. His father was an acclaimed composer and professor of composition and his mother was a respected musicologist and expert on Uzbek music. Yanov-Yanovsky studied composition under his father at the Tashkent State Conservatory, graduating in 1986. During this time he also studied composition with Alfred Schnittke, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Edison Denisov during frequent trips to Moscow.

In 1991, Yanov-Yanovsky’s *Lacrymosa* for soprano and string quartet was premiered at the 4th International Festival of Sacred Music in Fribourg. The performance by Phyllis Bryn-Julson and the Arditti Quartet garnered Yanov-Yanovsky an honorable mention. Following his premiere in Fribourg he attended the Lerchenborg Musikdage in Denmark where he completed master classes with Poul Ruders and Edison Denisov. In 1992 he was also the recipient of ALEA III International Prize in Boston for his *Presentiment* and the Prix Spécial de Nantes at the Festival International du Film de Cannes. He continued his studies in Paris at IRCAM in 1993 where he participated in the Summer Academy. It was at this time that he began his fruitful partnership with David Harrington and the Kronos Quartet through the commission of *Chang Music IV*.

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Yanov-Yanovsky was awarded a residency with the Siemens Corporation USA in 2002 on a fellowship with the Hearing Solutions Laboratory in New-Jersey. He then became the composer in residence with the Musiques Nouvelles ensemble in Belgium from 2002-2004. In 1996 Yanov-Yanovsky founded the Ilkhom-XX International Festival of Contemporary Music in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The festival, presenting contemporary music from around the globe, ran successfully until a government clampdown by the Karimov regime on European artistic influence resulted in the canceling of the festival in 2006. At this time, Yanov-Yanovsky also stepped down from his post as Professor of Composition at the Tashkent State Conservatory and left Uzbekistan to pursue opportunities outside of Uzbekistan. Since 2006, Yanov-Yanovsky has maintained residencies abroad, serving as a visiting professor at Harvard University (2008-2009), Dartmouth College (2010), and North Central College (2011). Yanov-Yanovsky’s list of recent commissioning ensembles includes the Silk Road Ensemble (2000, 2006), the New Julliard Ensemble (2009), Brooklyn Rider String Quartet (2010), Yo-Yo Ma and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (2010), the Hilliard Ensemble and the Louth Contemporary Music Society (2010, 2012), and the Carolina Performing Arts Center and the Silk Road Ensemble (2012). He has also been a member of the Silk Road Ensemble since 2000.

Yanov-Yanovsky has composed six works incorporating string quartet. These include String Quartet (1985), Epilogue for piano and string quartet (1989), Lacrymosa for soprano and string quartet (1991), Awakening for string quartet and fixed media (1993), Chang Music IV for string quartet (1993), Chang Music V for

\textbf{Introduction to String Quartet Modification Practices}

As the Soviet period came to a close in 1991 with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, a new musical climate was ushered in across the Eurasian region. Newly formed states were faced with the challenge of structuring their independent national identity and they turned to their political and artistic fields as a means of solidifying these ideas. Although the republics that made up the Soviet Union maintained comparatively independent vernacular music traditions, the Western classical music tradition was heavily monitored by the Soviet authorities and often imposed on the Asiatic republics with a homogenized approach. The fall of the Soviet Union opened the doors for greater exploration within the Western classical music genre and provided a climate for artistic change. Joining in the search for a new national identity, composers in the region worked to create a new musical identity that infused the ideas of their national music tradition with that of the Western classical music tradition. To accomplish this, composers explored a variety of methods to expand their compositional tool set.

One of the primary tools explored was that of ensemble modification. By manipulating the formal structure of a standardized musical ensemble, composers expanded their opportunities to further integrate their national music traditions.
Ensemble modification practices manipulate the sonic outcome of a musical work and allow for a dramatic change in instrument functionality. By breaking the formal structure of an ensemble, composers break our preconceived musical expectations and allow for a standardized ensemble to convey an entirely new sonic concept. This method became a widely implemented tool in the former-Soviet region and was expressed quite readily within the string quartet genre. Although this technique has recently been widely explored in the region’s musical traditions, the string quartet provides an accessible model for broad analysis.

In 2005, Routledge published Mara E. Parker’s *String Quartets: A Research and Information Guide* as part of its music bibliographies series. While this guide provides a helpful introduction to the major keystones of the string quartet genre, its scope beyond Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn is erratic to say the least. The venerable Kronos Quartet, an organization that has commissioned well over seven hundred string quartets in its nearly forty year history, is awarded merely three entries in Parker’s guide. The Komitas Quartet, often cited as the oldest continuously performing string quartet, is not even acknowledged in the text. Despite Parker’s nearly eighteen hundred entries, the simple fact that the string quartet has become one of the most widely explored chamber ensembles in the history of Western music makes the task of producing an adequate research guide an impossible feat. Although documenting a tradition of such an incomprehensible size is unrealistic, it stands as a

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testament to the capabilities for communication inherent within the now internationally standardized ensemble.

The rationale for isolating this genre is even broader than its historical establishment as an ensemble or international ties. Bowed string instruments possess an immensely powerful ability to convey a wide range of timbres and have an endless array of pitch divisions available within their range. These features maximize the potential for conveying a wide range of non-Western musical styles and instrument timbres.

For the purposes of the present research, only the string quartets of the Azerbaijani composer Franghiz Ali-Zadeh, the Armenian composer Vache Sharafyan, and the Uzbek composer Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky that faced some level of modification were examined. It is important to note that several works that fulfill these general requirements have been excluded from this discussion. Works that contained piano in addition to the string quartet were excluded on the premise that the piano quintet is an established genre. Works for voice and string quartet were also avoided because the meaning of the texts that are employed serve as a major force in determining the end compositional product. These texts are not from the composers’ native languages and heavily influence the way in which the text is set. Yanov-Yanovsky’s Conjunctions for string quartet, orchestra, and fixed-media (1995) was also excluded because of its placement within the context of a full orchestra. 7

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In examining the works that were selected for inclusion, I have identified that string quartet modification practices encompass three standardized methods within post-Soviet Eurasian musical traditions. These methods focus on the techniques of adding instruments, adding electronics, and manipulating the performance practice of the individual instruments within the quartet. These techniques serve as tools for expanding the sonic capacities of the string quartet ensemble and provide a direct means of exploring non-Western musical traditions within the base medium of the string quartet.

Many of the works created after the fall of the Soviet Union seek to find new ground. Instead of interacting across musical genres, the works created by Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky establish a new genre of music altogether. This genre incorporates Western instruments, but it functions as a new medium for exploring a sense of cultural identity. By exploring Western instruments, these composers acknowledge a globalized means of musical communication. Their approach to modifying these ensembles and performance practices, however, maintains a strong role in exploring their musical heritage. These three methods of string quartet modification have become a direct means of presenting a contemporary take on Eurasian musical traditions for a global audience by capitalizing on an accessible and standardized vehicle of global music communication.
CHAPTER II
THE ADDITION OF OUTSIDE INSTRUMENTS

The first, and most prolific, method of string quartet modification is the addition of outside instruments. After turning to the implementation of non-Western scale systems and melodies, incorporating national musical instruments or standardized Western instruments that evoke the quality of non-Western instruments\(^1\) provides the most straightforward means of expressing a national music tradition through ensemble modification. This method is explored by all three composers to varying degrees of abstraction and with a variety of instrumental configurations.

The idea of adding other instruments to standardized Western ensembles is certainly not a new concept in the region. The Georgian born composers Lev Knipper combined the string quartet with a string orchestra in his 1944 work *Radif* as a means of expressing the formal structure of the Persian *radif* system.\(^2\) In 1974, the Armenian composer Khachatur Avetisyan published his first concerto for *kanun*.\(^3\) Even as early as 1908, Uzeyir Hajibeyov was implementing Azerbaijani instruments within the orchestra for his *Leyli and Majnun*, often cited as the first opera in the Islamic world.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) See Appendix A for an illustrated glossary of the non-Western instruments discussed below.
\(^2\) Lev Knipper, *Radif*, the Borodin Quartet and the Moscow Conservatory Chamber Orchestra, Melodiya D 07651-14766, LP.
\(^3\) Khachatur Avetisyan, *Kontsert dlia kanona s soprovozdeniem fortepiano* (Erevan: Hayastan, 1974).
While these works strike a balance between an Eastern and Western musical aesthetic, they keep us in a constant flux between the two regional ideas. In the case of Knipper’s *Radif* and Avetisyan’s concerti for *kanun* and orchestra, the Persian and Armenian musical ideas are trapped within a Western sonic context. While there are hints of Persian and Armenian scales, melodic motifs, and formal structures, *Radif* lacks the freedom and fluidity of the Persian *radif* system and the Avetisyan work is conceived as a Westernized concerto. Hajibeyov’s opera similarly focuses on placing Azerbaijani music within the context of the Western operatic tradition. These works operate as a friendly handshake between their national music traditions and that of the Western musical tradition.

The modified string quartets of Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky approach the addition of outside instruments in a slightly different manner. While all of the works discussed below implement a traditional Western string quartet, they implement the technique of instrument addition as a way of forming a new tradition of national chamber music, not just as a means of dabbling in two music traditions.

**The Addition of Percussion Instruments in *Mugam sayagi* and *Awakening***

Ali-Zadeh received her first commission for the Kronos Quartet in 1993 shortly after relocating to Turkey. The commission by Nora Norden materialized as *Mugam sayagi*, a work for string quartet, percussion instruments and synthesizer or
magnetic tape. Within the work, Ali-Zadeh incorporates four outside instruments within the string quartet ensemble. Because of the electronic means of sound production, the addition of the synthesizer/tape part will be discussed in Chapter III. The remaining three instruments, a side-drum, a triangle, and a tam-tam, will be discussed here as an addition to the second violin and viola parts.

The opening passage of *Mugam sayagi* “begins as a meditation, in darkness…trying to wake the world with the call to prayer.” The passage slowly develops across roughly four minutes until the ensemble breaks into a section at rehearsal 7 marked *agitato*. This section builds in intensity until the violin takes over with burning desire at rehearsal 15. As the violin takes over as the dominant voice in this moment, the tam-tam enters to mark the change. The tam-tam provides the underpinning for this transitory section of the work, lasting until the entrance of the side-drum part.

In *Figure 2*, we see the entrance of the side-drum at rehearsal 22 after a long cadenza in the first violin part. Its entrance echoes the rhythmic figure established by the cello in the preceding measure. The two performers work in tandem for the remainder of this section. As the violin and viola emerge with a conversational melodic function, the role of each ensemble member within this section becomes apparent.

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The violin cadenza preceding this section acts a profession of love and the subsequent passage becomes a celebratory dance. The cello and the side-drum in the second violin take on the roles of a tar, a string instruments popular in Iran and the Caucasus, and a daf, a hand-held frame drum from the region. The conversational material between the first violin and the viola become an extension of the mugham vocalist and a kemancha, a spike fiddle popular in the classical music of the Middle East. These musical roles combine to form a standard mugham ensemble that is

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7 Ibid., p. 38.
housed within the structure of a string quartet ensemble.

While the side-drum helps to establish an earthly music genre for us as listeners, the triangle and tam-tam take on other-worldly functions. In the introductory notes, Ali-Zadeh comments that “the violin plays an unbounded song of love where the soul flies high into the sky.” To establish the celestial trajectory, Ali-Zadeh identifies that “the sound of the triangle echoes a myriad of stars.” The tam-tam becomes our transitory device. After we reach the final tam-tam strike prior to rehearsal 20, there are four brief measures prior to the entrance of the triangle. The triangle enters on the downbeat of rehearsal 20 with an expressive indication change of *Arioso amoroso estatico (improvvisazione)*. The steady assent in the first violin part paired with the final strike of the tam-tam marks the entrance of the triangle as the arrival into the heavens. The tam-tam reenters in a similar manner just after the abandonment of side-drum part at rehearsal 25 and transitions us as listeners back to the opening material. The opening cello line returns “intoning the sunset prayer.”

Having returned to earth, we view the reentry of the triangle just before the end of the work as a viewing of the stars from solid ground, from the solitary perspective of the cellist.

Although the side-drum establishes an earthly music genre, Ali-Zadeh places the section evoking the *mugham* between the transitory tam-tam passages. This would indicate that the celebratory, *mugham*-like passages are occurring in a celestial

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
context. This ecstatic section of the work elevates the *mugham* tradition to an otherworldly inspiration. In the introductory notes, Ali-Zadeh writes that *mugham* historically functioned as a way to “disguise emotions discouraged in Islam” adding that “through Mugami, the ecstatic longing of a man for a women could be expressed as the love of God.”

Through this idea we see the elevation of the *mugham* tradition to a celebration of love within the context of *Mugam sayagi*. This paradigm is established through the addition of the side-drum, triangle, and tam-tam as a mean of breaking our ties to the string quartet ensemble. This allows for the reinforcement of the *mugham* ensemble function and allows us to connect to the work as a piece of *mugham* independent of its ensemble makeup.

Yanov-Yanovsky completed *Awakening* for string quartet, doubling percussion, and fixed media in 1993 on a commission from Mrs. Ralph I. Dorfman for the Kronos Quartet. Although scheduled for release on the ensembles 2009 album *Floodplain*, the recording is presently only available as a bonus track through the full album download on the Kronos Quartet’s page in the iTunes Store. Despite its limited availability, *Awakening* has served as the title work on the Kronos Quartet’s touring concert entitled *Awakening: A Musical Meditation on the Anniversary of 9/11* presented in concerts internationally since 2011.

In *Awakening*, Yanov-Yanovsky incorporates a fixed media recording, which will be discussed in the Chapter III, as well as crotales, a triangle, a tam-tam, and a

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14 Ibid.
16 The Kronos Quartet, *Floodplain*, Nonesuch 518349-2, iTunes download.
suspended cymbal. These additional instruments are reminiscent of the added instruments in Ali-Zadeh’s *Mugam sayagi*, yet they provide a very different functional role within the framework of the quartet.

Although the fixed-media part of *Awakening* will be discussed further in Chapter III, it is important to note that the fixed-media track is structured in three distinct parts. The opening section is derived from samples of a glass harmonica. Although these samples are not readily intelligible as a glass harmonica, they provide a drone structure as a base for the string quartet. The second section is a sample of the *adhan*, or the Muslim call to prayer, that slowly develops out of the glass harmonica drone. This is followed by the concluding section that returns to the drone structure.

Yanov-Yanovsky assigns a set of doubling percussion instruments to each member of the quartet. *Figure 3* shows the distribution of crotales across the ensemble. The violist also doubles on tam-tam and triangle and the cellist further doubles on tam-tam and suspended cymbal.

Ali-Zadeh adds outside instruments to *Mugam sayagi* as a means of transforming the string quartet by drawing reference to an Azerbaijani instrumental ensemble. In doing so, she transforms the string quartet from a standardized Western ensemble into a vehicle for expressing her take on Azerbaijani *mugam* music. Yanov-Yanovsky is using these outside instruments to draw our attention to something
entirely different. The only percussion sounds that we hear prior to rehearsal 5 are a scrape on the tam-tam followed immediately by a strike of the triangle. This gesture, shown in Figure 4, is performed by the violist.

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18 Ibid., p. 2.
Figure 5 shows the two measures immediately preceding and immediately following rehearsal 5. Two measures prior to rehearsal 5, the ensemble reaches its dynamic climax in the work. This is followed by a dissolving assent with a glissando to the highest points of the register in the first violin, second violin, and cello parts. The viola, however, completes a descending glissando at this point. The violist then initiates the third attack on the tam-tam, this time as a solitary strike on the instrument at the downbeat of rehearsal 5. This change in attack on the third tam-tam entrance announces the entrance of the adhan in the fixed-media part and it announces the entrance of the other added percussion instruments in the first violin, second violin, and cello parts.

Figure 5. The Musical Climax and Entrance of the Adhan in ‘Awakening’

\[\text{Figure 5. The Musical Climax and Entrance of the Adhan in ‘Awakening’}^1\]
From this point forward there is a strong reference to the *adhan* in the percussion interjections. The sustained attack that is followed by the slow decay in the bowed crotales, bowed suspended cymbal, and tam-tam interjections is highly reminiscent of the attack and decay periods in the recording of the *adhan*. Because the *adhan* is projected by loudspeakers from the minaret of a city’s mosque, there is a slow decay time as the recited text reverberates across a city. The bowed crotales, bowed suspended cymbal, and tam-tam mimic this, providing a sonic depth to the performance space.

The string instruments reinforce our connection to the *adhan* as well. At the beginning of the work, we hear a long melodic line in the cello part. This line is divided into short vocal-like phrases that are embellished with grace notes and *glissandi* within the context of a highly irregular rhythmic pacing. These seemingly spontaneous cello statements and their embellishments are strongly tied to the impassioned recitation style of the *adhan*. This connection is further enhanced by the quiet interjections of *sul ponticello tremolos* with subtle *glissandi* that act as small echoes behind the cello line. Following the abandonment of the *adhan* in the fixed media part, the string *tremolos* and the percussion attacks mentioned above continue until a final strike on the tam-tam by the cellist. This strike is allowed to fade into the distance as the fixed-media drone is slowly faded out.

By introducing the cello line and its accompanying figures prior to rehearsal 5, Yanov-Yanovsky foreshadows the entrance of the *adhan* and calls our attention to a cultural representation of Uzbekistan instead of a musical representation. Ali-Zadeh’s
addition of percussion instruments establishes a connection to the instrumental
structure of Azerbaijani music, but Yanov-Yanovsky establishes a connection to a
more abstract sonic reference of his cultural background.

The Addition of the Chang in Chang Music V

At the time of the present research, the score and recordings for Yanov-
Yanovsky’s Chang Music V are not available. The score, which was commissioned by
the Kronos Quartet in 1993 is housed in the composer’s personal archive, but has not
presently been published. A studio recording was also completed by the Kronos
Quartet prior to Joan Jeanrenaud’s announcement to leave the quartet in 1999, but this
recording also remains unpublished at the present time.

Chang Music V was completed between 1993 and 1994 at the request of the
Kronos Quartet. Scored for chang, an Uzbek hammer dulcimer, and string quartet, the
work was premiered by the Kronos Quartet and Yanov-Yanovsky in Salzau,
Germany in July of 1994. Because of the availability issues surrounding both the
score and the recording of Chang Music V, a significant discussion of the work is
neither readily possible nor practical. It is, however, important to note the existence of
this piece because of its significant ties to the Kronos Quartet and the greater string
quartet modification tradition in post-Soviet Eurasia. This work was the culmination
of a cycle of five pieces by Yanov-Yanovsky that were heavily influenced by the -
chang. A greater discussion of the chang and Yanov-Yanovsky’s chang music series
is located in Chapter IV in an extensive discussion of Yanov-Yanovsky’s *Chang Music IV* from the same series.

**Two Works for *Duduk* and String Quartet**

Like Yanov-Yanovsky, Sharafyan also approached string quartet modification through the addition of national musical instruments. The exploration of this modification practice led to the creation of two works that incorporate the *duduk* into the string quartet ensemble. *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* was completed in 2001 through a commission by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble.20

*Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas* was completed in 2006 through a commission by the Traditional Crossroads label.21

The Armenian *duduk* “is a cylindrical double-reed instrument with eight finger-holes and one thumb-hole, and a soft, slightly nasal timbre.”22 Almost exclusively made of apricot wood, the *duduk* hard body is capped with a large double reed that is inserted almost entirely inside the mouth during performance. Its long history in Armenian music and its connection to the apricot have led to its acceptance as a national symbol of Armenia. It has also become a standard identifier of the Middle East in film soundtracks ranging from Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*

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Sharafyan’s *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* was completed in 2001 on a commission from Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. The premiere performance occurred in Cologne, Germany in 2002 during the ensemble’s tour of Western Europe. The work was published by G. Schirmer following its premiere and a subsequent version for *duduk*, soprano, and string orchestra was completed later that year and published through a joint project between UNESCO and the Society for the Safeguarding of Armenian Folk Music (SSAFM). Although the two versions exist, there are very mild discrepancies between the two versions with the exception of the soprano addition. G. Schirmer carries the publishing rights for the work, but they were unable to locate sufficient materials to fulfill requests at this time, so I have opted to draw my examples from the later edition that is freely available from UNESCO at the present time.

In the opening passage of *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song*, Sharafyan establishes a string quartet context for the work. The *duduk*, in fact, does not enter with any significant material until measure 24. In Figure 6, we see the first melodic entrance of the *duduk*. At this moment the string quartet also converges for the first time on a set of sustained pitches. In this moment, Sharafyan establishes an

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23 *The Passion of the Christ*, directed by Mel Gibson (2004; Los Angeles: 20th Century Fox, 2004), DVD.
accompaniment role for the quartet behind the melodic lines in the duduk. This collection of sustained pitches hints at the function of the dam. The dam is a duduk that performs a drone function in Armenian music. It is generally played by a performer that can circular breath, maintaining a consistent tone to accompany the melodic lines. While the dam is generally paired with a solo duduk it can also serve as a drone for other melodic instruments like the kemancha.

**Figure 6. The Duduk Entrance at Measure 24 in Sharafyan’s ‘Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song’**

This function is strongly solidified in measure 77, shown in Figure 7. Here the viola returns with a solitary drone to accompany the solo duduk. Sharafyan fully establishes the duduk and dam relationship with this additional passage.

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26 Vache Sharafayn, “Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song,” *Scores of the Armenian Composers* (Moscow: SSAFM, 2007), 12.
This technique is highly reminiscent of his approach to a *dam* function in *Devotion No. 2* which will be discussed later in this chapter. The *dam* serves a very distinct accompaniment role in Armenian music and Sharafyan’s treatment of this role within the musical structure of *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* functionally serves as a departure point from a traditional usage of the string quartet. This departure highlights a connection to the Armenian music tradition and establishes a context for the listener to experience the new musical language being presented.

Sharafyan returned to the string quartet and *duduk* pairing in 2006 with *Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas*, a commission by the Traditional Crossroads recording label specifically for the Komitas String Quartet and *duduk* player Gevorg Dabaghyan. For this set of arrangements for *duduk*, string quartet, and *dhol*\(^\text{28}\), Sharafyan derived the musical content from the notebooks of the Armenian priest and musicologist Komitas Vartabet. He completed a

\(^{27}\) Vache Sharafyin, “Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song,” *Scores of the Armenian Composers* (Moscow: SSAFM, 2007), 20.

\(^{28}\) The *dhol* is a medium sized drum that serves as the rhythmic base for most Armenian traditional music ensembles. A more detailed description of the instrument is included in the next section.
total of seventeen arrangements as part of the project: fourteen of which were included in the 2007 release *Lost Songs of Eden* on the Traditional Crossroads label.\footnote{Vache Sharafyan, *Lost Songs of Eden*, performed by Gevorg Dabaghyan and the Komitas Quartet, Traditional Crossroads 780702-4335-2, Compact Disc.} These transcriptions were later adapted for *duduk*, string orchestra, and *dhol* and published as a set of eleven transcriptions by the Society for the Safeguarding of Armenian Folk Music (SSAFM) and UNESCO in 2007.

Unlike his approach to *The Morning scent of the Acacia’s Song*, Sharafyan provides a traditional, tonal accompaniment to the folksong arrangements in *Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas*. Across all seventeen arrangements, the *duduk* serves as the chief melodic contributor and is accompanied in rhythm by the *dhol* and in harmonic structure by the string quartet.

In the third movement of Sharafyan’s 2010 violin and percussion work *Verses*, he takes a melodic line and places it within the context of a contemporary compositional language. While heavily entrenched in a dissonant and highly embellished sonic context, Sharafyan maintains his clear connection to the melodic line despite its new harmonic context. Although this method is highly effective in *Verses*, he avoids this approach in *Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas* altogether. Instead, Sharafyan presents a more conservative treatment of the musical content. Unlike *Verses* and *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song, Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of*...
Komitas carries a greater historical weight: that of the connection to Komitas and to the Komitas String Quartet.

Komitas Vardapet, born Soghomon Soghomonyan in 1869, was a composer, musicologist, music director, and priest. He was responsible for deciphering the Armenian medieval notation system, cataloging countless folk songs, and restructuring the Armenian musical liturgy, just to name a few of his accomplishments. Having survived the Armenian Genocide, Komitas suffered from a mental breakdown after witnessing the atrocities of the period and lived out the remainder of his life in a psychiatric hospital in Paris. His connection to the Armenian Church, the Genocide, and his contributions to Armenian music solidified his place as an Armenian cultural icon. In many ways, Komitas is the face of post-Genocide Armenia. His name adorns parks, a cemetery, a major street, a world renowned string quartet, and the music conservatory in Yerevan. His image can also be found on sculptures, banknotes, and tourist items across the country. He has even been memorialized internationally in sculptures and by cultural organizations. Despite his cultural fame, he is most remembered for his songs which are known by Armenians living around the globe.

The Komitas Quartet was founded by Avet Gabrielyan (violin), Levon Ogandjanyan (violin), Mikhail Terian (viola), and Sergei Aslamazyan (cello) in 1924 while the members were students at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory. Taking the name of Komitas, the quartet established itself as a representative of the Armenian people and the Armenian music tradition. The quartet has maintained a
continuous performance schedule since its first performance in 1925, making it the oldest ensemble of its kind performing today. Their performance repertoire includes a wide spectrum of works ranging from the foundational string quartets of Beethoven and Haydn to a wide array of commissions by contemporary composers. Despite their eclectic repertoire, the quartet serves as an international face of Armenian music and maintains an affinity for the works of Armenian composers.

One of the standards in their repertoire is a collection of arrangements completed by the original cellist of the ensemble, Sergei Aslamazyan. This collection of fourteen arrangements was completed in 1950 and is entirely based off of popular Armenian songs attributed to Komitas.31 Since their completion, the Aslamazyan arrangements have become the center piece of the Komitas Quartet repertoire and are a mainstay for quartets with Armenian membership around the globe. The musical content is derived from the core of Armenia’s musical heritage and this collection of works has been a primary introduction to Armenian music for international concert audiences. The musical gesture presented by adding the duduk to the string quartet ensemble in The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song is understated, yet carries a great deal of symbolic weight. Had Sharafyan treated these melodies in the same manner as Verses or The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song, the focus would be taken off of Komitas and the national emphasis of setting his works. Instead, Sharafyan maintains a sense of purity of the musical content, follows in the tradition of Aslamazyan and

31 Sergei Aslamazyan, Pesy na temy armianskikh narodnykh pesen (Moscow: Muzyka, 1975).
the Komitas Quartet, and still leaves his mark through the gesture of adding the *duduk* to the ensemble makeup.

Beyond its auditory significance, the *duduk* sparks a greater meaning with its inclusion in these two works. Although forms of the instrument exist within the surrounding Azerbaijani and Turkish music traditions, the *duduk* is often regarded as the face of the Armenian music tradition and a symbol of the Armenian nation. By implementing the *duduk* as a primary sound source within *The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* and Seventeen *Arrangments of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas*, Sharafyan marks these works with a signifier of the Armenian music tradition itself. Despite the variation in the compositional language between these two works, they both produce a concrete connection to the Armenian music tradition that is solidified by Sharafyan’s incorporation of the *duduk*.

**Hybrid Ensemble Organization in Devotion No. 2**

Sharafyan completed his *Two Devotions* in 1999. Both pieces carry a string quartet foundation and incorporate a variety of regional instruments. *Devotion No. 1* is scored for *tar*, piano, and string quartet while *Devotion No. 2* adds a *kemanche*, *dhol*, and tam-tam to the string quartet base. Because of the extensive role of the piano in *Devotion No. 1*, the following analysis will primarily focus on *Devotion No. 2*. 

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Sharafyan notes that he chose to write *Two Devotions* as a means of “devoting to the art of several important people for [him],” citing Paradjanov, Terteryan, and Sayat-Nova. In drawing from the artistic tradition of these foundational Armenian artists, Sharafyan is motivated to express a work that establishes itself as a quintessentially Armenian piece. Like his later works for *duduk* and string quartet that were discussed above, Sharafyan turned to the addition of non-Western musical instruments to help convey this concept.

The *kemancha*, the *dhol*, and their variations are the primary melodic and rhythmic base of Armenian music and also play a significant role in the surrounding regional music traditions. The *kemancha* gained a significant role in Armenian music through its performance by the Armenian bard Sayat Nova in the 18th century. The *dhol* is a double-headed Armenian drum that is often made of walnut wood and played with the hands while angled on the performer’s knee. These instruments are combined with the string quartet in Sharafyan’s *Devotion No. 2* as a means of breaking down the instrumental function of the quartet and uniting the instruments as a hybrid ensemble.

In *Devotion No. 2* the string quartet functions as a sonic base. The violins play a continuous rhythmic patter that sits in contention with the slowly shifting viola line and the intermittent cello *pizzicatos*. After establishing the ostinato structure of these

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32 Personal correspondence from September 11th, 2012. Sergei Paradjanov (1924-1990) was a film director of Armenian descent, Avet Terteryan (1929-1994) was a composer of Armenian descent, and Sayat-Nova (1712-1795) was an Armenian bard.

lines between rehearsal 1 and rehearsal 2, Sharafyan asks the performers to repeat this material continuously with nothing more than dynamic change until rehearsal 3. At this point, the string quartet parts begin to merge until all of the performers meet on a unison G at rehearsal 12. This is sustained with almost no pitch differentiation in the string quartet part until the end of the piece.

At rehearsal 2 we hear the entrance of the kemancha following the first strike of the tam-tam. This melodic line slowly unfolds atop the textural sonic base of the string quartet. After a period of approximately 14 seconds of silence in the kemancha part, the kemancha returns following a second strike of the tam-tam. This return marks the beginning of an elaboration on the opening melodic statement in the kemancha part.

In Figure 8 we see the opening bars of rehearsal 12. At this juncture, the string quartet fully converges on the unison G. This moment also marks the return of the kemancha after an extended period of silence. Each previous entry of the kemancha was marked by a tam-tam strike, but here Sharafyan excludes this act. The material explored by the kemancha at this point is a second elaboration on the opening melodic statement, but is left unmarked by the tam-tam. The abandonment of the tam-tam establishes a paradigm shift for us as listeners. This change is heightened by the entry of the dhol at the end of the first kemancha phrase.
As the string quartet converges on a unison G, there is a distinct change in functionality of this portion of the ensemble. The string quartet no longer serves as a textural contributor, it no longer expresses melodic fragments, and the unison pitch structure leaves it devoid of any significant potential for harmonic implication as a solitary entity within the greater ensemble. Instead, the quartet convergence at rehearsal 12 is indicative of the dam function discussed within the context of the *Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* above.

Sharafyan carefully constructs the transition of the string quartet from an independent ensemble to a collective part of a greater hybrid ensemble. While the string quartet abandons its traditional role, it is combined into a solitary, unified

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34 Vache Sharafyan, “Two Devotions,” score, 1999, manuscript facsimile from the archives of the composer, 13.
member of an Armenian ensemble. By establishing the initial function of the quartet as a textural and gestural contributor, Sharafyan is able to break this notion and transform the quartet from a “Western” sonic base into an “Armenian” sonic base, effectively bridging the gap between the two music traditions. The hybrid ensemble that is solidified at rehearsal 12 pays homage to the traditional structure of an Armenian musical style strongly associated with Sayat Nova, one of the main figures that Sharafyan cites as an inspiration of Two Devotions. It also simultaneously asks us to reconsider our ideas about how a string quartet ensemble can function. In doing this, Sharafyan explores a new style of contemporary Armenian music that approaches the fusion of Eastern and Western musical styles in a way that goes beyond the simple implementation of Eastern scales and rhythms that was the common practice in the Soviet period.
CHAPTER III

THE ADDITION OF ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS

The second approach to string quartet modification is the direct compositional implementation of electronic elements within a work. Although a wide variety of technologies are now being employed within the electroacoustic music genre, only fixed-media approaches are enacted within the body of works being examined from post-Soviet Eurasia.

Fixed-media is an approach to electronic music by which the electronic elements are pre-recorded. This makes the performance of the electronic part exactly replicated from performance to performance. Because a live electronic process is not employed, the composer is able to firmly establish the timeline within which sound sources are triggered and the precise sonic playback of the electronic part. Although a movement towards live processing and human event triggering is currently dominating the electroacoustic music genre, composers have historically employed fixed-media as the primary vehicle for electroacoustic music.

Roger Johnson explores the sociological implications of a shift towards electronically-based music in his 1991 article “Machine Songs I: Music and the Electronic Media.” In his discussion, Johnson examines the widespread integration of recorded sound and technology within contemporary society. He proposes that the
push towards integrating recorded technology into classical music in the late 1980s created a conundrum where electroacoustic art music was not fundamentally accepted.

Despite Johnson’s view that electroacoustic art music had not found a means of creating a substantial audience base, he draws attention to mainstream punk, rap, hardcore, thrash, and industrial music as an example that there are “some ways in which the serious artist can indeed communicate with a larger audience using the technology and industrial structure of our time.”¹ Although Johnson’s comment largely pertains to the growing collective of composers and musicians branching into electroacoustic music in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a general point, this statement can be directly applied to the issue of identifying a culturally relevant vehicle for communication in music on a larger scale.

If Johnson’s commentary is correct, then despite the alienation that electroacoustic music often faces, there is a direct means of communication possible within the electroacoustic genre. Furthermore, if this means of communication is tied to the electroacoustic genre as a whole, then it must provide a distinctive means of conveying meaning that is not inherent within purely acoustic music traditions.

By expanding the compositional range to include electronic elements in their works, Ali-Zadeh and Yanov-Yanovsky extend the sonic possibilities of the string quartet to convey large ideas through a culturally relevant medium. Because fixed-

media electronics provide a range of content only limited by the means of what can be physically recorded, the composers have an almost unlimited pallet of sounds through which to convey sonic ideas. This approach greatly expands the message-conveying possibilities of an acoustic ensemble like the string quartet. Through this method, the composers are able to present a strong cultural message by direct incorporation of distinct physical images through representation of their sonic counterparts.

To analyze the role these fixed-media parts play in the final compositions, we must first analyze the meaning of the images presented within the individual fixed-media examples. This analysis is achievable through the application of semiotic analytical methods. The Peirce and Emmerson models for musical semiotics provide a fundamental launching point for this type of direct analysis.

**Peirce’s Model for Semiotic Analysis**

In the mid-1800s, the American logician and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce began working on his analytical approach to semiotics. His writings diagram a process for categorizing signs as a means of providing a succinct methodology for examining the meaning of these signs.

Pierce outlines three types of signs: *likenesses, indications*, and *symbols*. In Peirce’s system, *likenesses* “convey ideas of the things they represent simply by
imitating them.” In music, likenesses convey the most direct message to the listener because they are a direct sonification of the image itself. If we hear a whistle and the clanking of metal, the image of a train is conjured up almost universally. This clean-cut approach leaves little room for confusion, but it narrows the level of complexity that the meaning can convey.

*Indications* convey ideas because they are “physically connected to them.” Although more subtle than likenesses, indications present a more complex message. The sound of rustling leaves on the pavement might indicate the presence of trees nearby, the sensation of wind needed move the leaves, and autumn as a point of time reference. We hear the sound of the leaves as a likeness of their direct physical counterpart, but they further conjure up indications of other physical parameters.

*Symbols* convey a meaning because they “have become associated with their meanings by usage.” The sound of bells, for instance, might symbolize victory, freedom, or a call to religious practice. Although symbols are highly tied to cultural perspectives and traditions, they carry the most encompassing means of expressing cultural meaning.

As the categorization of these sounds grows in complexity, the meaning is increasingly difficult for the listener to perceive. Someone who had never been in a temperate zone in autumn may interpret the indication of rustling leaves on the 

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pavement very differently from someone who had grown up in the Midwestern United States. Likewise, the sonic setting that bells are heard within would greatly affect our interpretation of their symbolism. The placement of a sound and its association with other sounds directly becomes an important factor in narrowing in on a sound’s meaning and the greater commentary being conveyed within the music. Because of the simplification of categories in the Peirce system, another method of analysis is required to fully examine the semiotic function of elements within fixed-media works.

**Emmerson’s Model of Mimetic Discourse**

In his landmark work “The Relation of Language to Materials,” Simon Emmerson explores the idea of musical mimesis. Emmerson defines mimesis as “the imitation not only of nature, but also of aspects of human culture not usually associated directly with musical material.”

Emmerson further breaks down his definition of mimesis into two categories: **timbral** and **syntactic mimesis**. *Timbral mimesis* is defined as “a direct imitation of the timbre (‘colour’) of natural sound.” Examples of timbral mimesis present a sound in its purest form because they are direct replications of the natural sounds.

*Syntactic mimesis*, on the other hand, “may imitate the relationship between natural events.” Emmerson cites the musical imitation of language’s rhythmic

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6 Ibid., p. 17-18
7 Ibid., p. 18
patterns as an example of direct syntactic mimesis. The rhythmic aspect of speech is directly presented without the exact replication of the human voice, its timbral specifications, and its precise inflection. By employing this method of mimesis, a composer abstractly draws reference to the voice and its particular linguistic pattern without the need for direct implementation of a vocal recording.

Emmerson goes on to outline the notions of abstract and abstracted syntax. In his discussion, abstract syntax is the organization of sonic elements independent of their individual meaning. These elements are evaluated solely based upon their sonic qualities and treated as compositional material without regard to their physical or cultural meaning. Abstracted syntax, on the other hand, is the organization of sonic elements in direct relation to their individual meaning. In its purest form, abstracted syntax consists of sonic elements grouped because of their collective meaning with no attention paid to the pure aural relationship of the sounds.

Emmerson proposes a continuum within which all structures containing some level of mimesis, be it timbral or syntactic, are encompassed. He notes that “in practice these two utopian positions are rarely found in isolation.” A pure arrangement based upon meaning or sound is almost unattainable because decisions of precise placement of a sound object are inadvertently made with some degree of consideration for both the sonic aspects as well as the individual and collective meaning of a sound’s placement. In analyzing the implementation of mimetic

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8 Ibid., p. 22
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 23
elements within a work, we are able to evaluate the significance of the role the mimesis is playing and observe what degree of integration it carries within the syntactic spectrum. By observing the mimetic elements in this manner, we are able to derive the level of communication the sonic objects are conveying and observe the cultural messages encoded by their greater meaning.

Ali-Zadeh’s *Oasis* and *Mugam Sayagi*

Ali-Zadeh completed *Oasis* in 1998 as a commission from Alta Tingle and The National Endowment for the Arts for the Kronos Quartet. The work examines a traveler’s journey through the vast, open desert and his search for the rejuvenating waters of the oasis. *Oasis* is constructed with a string quartet base, but is modified with the addition of a fixed-media part that assists in portraying this overall storyline.

The fixed-media component of *Oasis* contains five individual tracks. These tracks were prepared by sound designer Mark Grey and incorporate a variety of identifiable sound sources. The opening track contains the sound of dripping water. It is followed by a track containing the “low and anxious murmuring of men.” The third and fourth tracks contain a recording of a soprano singing an F-sharp. The final track is a return to the original sound recording of the dripping water that opened the work.

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Ali-Zadeh describes the oasis as “a quiet place of refuge, which everyone dreams about when weary from life’s tumults. It is a land of repose, beauty and prosperity.”\textsuperscript{12} The oasis represents a place of rest in which we are rejuvenated. She adds that “travelers…dream about oases, exhausted from the intense heat in the endless desert.”\textsuperscript{13} It becomes a place of refuge in a physical sense, but it also serves as a mental refuge in a metaphorical sense.

The opening passage is marked by the fixed-media recording of the dripping water. Set against this is an extended passage of intermittent pizzicatos mimicking the water droplets. This is a complex moment within Emmerson’s system. The fixed-media recording is timbrally mimetic. We are presented with an identifiable recording of water drops that serve directly as water drops. The string parts take on a level of syntactic mimesis as they form a mimetic function that emulates the role of the water drops. Furthermore, we are able to view this event with both an abstract and abstracted syntax. On one hand, the material can be experienced for its similarities in sound independent of its greater meaning. The two sources become fused and create a unified texture. On the other hand, the absence of bowed pitches prior to measure 26 and the syntactically mimetic function of the quartet in reference to the identifiable recording of the water drops establish a paradigm that some sort of abstracted meaning is being conveyed. Although this meaning is not clear at the opening of the work, further sections help us to uncover the message being conveyed.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}
The opening track of water drops is abandoned at measure 46. From here, the quartet slowly melds into an increasing melodic function. Although the pizzicatos are not fully abandoned until measure 104, their role moves to the background as the melodic ideas emerge. These wandering melodies reach their end at measure 111, marked *misterioso*, with a textural shift to quiet tremolos in each of the parts.

At measure 113, Ali-Zadeh indicates a vocalized whisper in each of the parts. These whispers foreshadow the entrance of the second fixed-media track at measure 118. This track is constructed from recordings of distant whispering voices set beneath the sound of wind and slowly emerges out of the quartet.

The arrival at the oasis at rehearsal 17 in measure 160 marks the ascent into a place of refuge. At this moment, shown in *Figure 9*, the quartet members converge on a “long soundless exhalation” on the syllable “ah” following the first violinist’s quiet glissando to the top of the register.\(^\text{14}\) There is a strong textural relief in this moment and the fixed-media part, having abandoned the quiet murmurs, reenters with a gentle and pure recording of a soprano holding a sustained pitch. After a second articulation of the soprano note, the string quartet material slowly dissolves back into the final water drop track until the end of the work.

In viewing the work as a whole, we can read its dialogue on two levels. The surface level is a story of the traveler. Ali-Zadeh describes their journey through the desert stating that “most of all they dream of water—clean, cold, crystalline water! They see water in their dreams—in the form of brooks and fountains, drops and

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If we examine the string writing, we see Ali-Zadeh’s sonic recreations of these forms of water. She adds that “they dream about hearing the mellifluous singing of the Ghazals of love again.” We can also find the representation of the Ghazals, a love song form that is found from the Middle East all the way to South Asia, in the melodic sections following the exit of the first fixed-media track at measure 45. We can even hear the arrival at the oasis and the return of the water drop sounds that close out the work. But to find the deeper symbolism within the work, we have to look to the dedication.

In the score, Ali-Zadeh inscribes a dedication to Adam Harrington, Kronos Quartet founder David Harrington’s son. Adam Harrington died during a family hike

\[\text{FIGURE 9. Performer Vocalization at Rehearsal 17 in ‘Oasis’}\]

\[15\text{Ibid.}\]
\[16\text{Program notes, Kronos Quartet and Alim Qazimov Ensemble, Hetzer Hall, Berkley, California, February 5, 2012.}\]
\[17\text{Ibid.}\]
up Mount Diablo, just outside of San Francisco, in 1995. His death was the result of heart failure induced by a blood clot.

If we examine *Oasis* with this information in mind, a deeper symbolic meaning is apparent. Adam Harrington died on a journey. His death was incredibly difficult for his family and sparked the commissioning of a number of works for the Kronos Quartet. While *Oasis* presents the story of the journey of a traveler in the desert, it also very profoundly confronts the death of Adam Harrington. Through this lens, the water drops become a metaphor for tears. The journey through the empty desert to the oasis becomes the journey from death to heaven. The distant voices mark the ascent from earth and the solo soprano recording becomes the quiet voice of an angel. Although the work returns to the mournful water drops, it quietly ends on a consonant open fifth between the cello and the first violin.

The extensive implementation of the fixed-media part allows Ali-Zadeh to capture a multilevel sonic image. By presenting the story of the desert traveler within the context of identifiable fixed-media recordings, Ali-Zadeh is able to connect with the story of Adam Harrington through the cultural lens of her past. The mourning that David Harrington expresses for his son is paralleled with the mourning for the lost and weary travelers in Azerbaijani culture. The music becomes a shared cultural message in a way that would not be as clearly expressed without the implementation of the fix-media part.

Unlike *Oasis*, Ali-Zadeh incorporates electronics to a very minimum in *Mugam sayagi*. The electronic components, which are only found from rehearsal 20
until rehearsal 21, are also not highly specific in the form that they are presented. The official score reads “for string quartet with percussion instruments and synthesizer,” marking “(magnetic tape)” as an addition.\(^\text{18}\) This ambiguity has led to the distribution of several versions of the electronic part.

The score maintains the primary electronic performance method of the synthesizer. In Figure 10, we see the entrance of the synthesizer at rehearsal 20. This entrance is accompanied by a note stating “C major with C sharp waves.”\(^\text{19}\) As we see in Figure 10, the score provides no further explanation as to the execution on the electronics part.

**Figure 10. The Entrance of the Synthesizer in ‘Mugam sayagi’**\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^\text{19}\) *Ibid.*, p. 34.

We do, however, have the indication of “(magnetic tape)” from the original title page. In replacement of a live synthesizer performance, a fixed-media recording is also available from the publisher Hans Sikorski. The recording, which lasts four minutes and thirty seconds, contains samples from an electric organ slowly oscillating between pitches and interjections of electronic wind chime samples. We also have the recording, produced by the Kronos Quartet, which presents a third form. In the Kronos Quartet recording, this passage was created by Scott Fraser on synthesizer and Bonnie Barnett on *tambura*.

Despite the variety of performance possibilities that result from a lack of composer specificity in this particular part, each of these performance possibilities evokes the same sonic function within the context of the work. The addition of the electronic component adds a drone function to accompany the solo violin passage present at rehearsal 20. In the program notes that accompany the score, Ali-Zadeh comments that at this moment “the violin plays an unbounded song of love where the soul flies high into the sky.” This notion is reiterated with the entrance of the triangle performed by the second violinist at rehearsal 20. Ali-Zadeh describes that “the sound of the triangle echoes a myriad of stars.”

The function of the synthesizer/fixed-media part in *Mugam-sayagi* becomes two fold. On one hand this part serves a syntactically mimetic function. While the actual timbre of the electronic part is not specified, it relationally functions as a drone.

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On this level, there is a mimetic function that is derived from the syntax of the drone function in Azerbaijani music. On the other hand, this function can be viewed within the context of an abstract syntax. The sound source for this material is highly variable and outside of the control of the composer. By relinquishing our ties to the synthesizer/fixed-media part as a mimetic function within the context of the Azerbaijani *mugham* system, we are able to evaluate the sonic material as a source independent of its individual meaning. Within the abstract syntax, we experience the sounds as neither Eastern nor Western and hear them as something timbrally unconnected to this world. Within this context, we read the entrance of the synthesizer/fixed/media as a departure from this world, an ascent into the sky amongst the “myriad of stars.”

Although this moment is very short within the work, it carries a very important function in elevating our connection to the Azerbaijani *mugham* tradition and Azerbaijani cultural history as a whole. Ali-Zadeh describes the *mugham* as “a secret language used in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century to disguise emotions discouraged in Islam.”\textsuperscript{24} She further notes that through this tradition “the ecstatic longing of a man for a woman could be expressed as the love of God.”\textsuperscript{25} By using the electronically produced sounds as a means of breaking our ties to the natural world, Ali-Zadeh allows this moment to be elevated to something divine: the violin line, a sonification of human love, expressed as something transcendental to the world itself. This

\textsuperscript{24} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{25} *Ibid.*
commentary is echoed in the *mugham* tradition as a whole, but it also forms the basis of *Leyla and Majnun*, the epic Azerbaijani literary work by Nizami Ganjavi, and forms an integral part of the cultural history of Azerbaijan.

*Mugam sayagi* is not simply a recreation of *mugham*. At the core of the work, Ali-Zadeh presents the notion of the *mugham* within a new context as a mean of breaking our ties to *mugham* as a musical tradition. Instead, she asks us to consider the symbolic meaning of this tradition to garner a greater understanding of Azerbaijan and its cultural heritage and she asks us to elevate this connection to a universal level where we can experience it regardless of our own cultural and historical backgrounds. Incorporating the electronic part within the works highlights this breakdown of cultural barriers and elevates the conceptual ideas to something greater than humanity, uniting all listeners regardless of their background.

**Yanov-Yanovsky’s *Awakening***

The sound materials incorporated in the fixed-media part in *Awakening* are derived from two sources: a glass harmonica and the *adhan*. The glass harmonica samples were recorded by William Zeitler and are implemented in the outer two sections of the fixed-media part. The *adhan*, or Muslim call to prayer, forms the center section. When combined with the string quartet and doubling percussion parts, these sections establish a transformation structure that changes our perception of the
meaning and function of the musical content as well as the cultural message being presented.

*Awakening* opens with the sound of a glass harmonica drone. It would be over-stepping to suggest that Yanov-Yanovskyy was intentionally using the glass harmonica samples to evoke a particular Uzbek instrument. If he were indeed trying to evoke the sound of a particular Uzbek instrument, working in an electroacoustic medium allowed him the potential of recording samples of any instrument of his choosing. The fact that he implements recorded samples of a glass harmonica instead of another regional acoustic instrument suggests a conscious decision to work with the glass harmonica, an instrument directly tied to American history through its invention by Benjamin Franklin, as a principal sound source.

The glass harmonica is an instrument rarely heard in performance. Because of its rarity, the sound of the glass harmonica does not possess a high potential for timbre recognition among a fairly widespread audience. While it is not concealed within the fixed-media part, the glass harmonica is also not readily intelligible. This forces the glass harmonica samples to take on a new set of meanings within the context of *Awakening*.

These glass harmonica samples serve as a strong example of syntactic mimesis. On the surface level, the samples take on a drone function independent of the actual timbral source. Although the glass harmonica does not traditionally provide a drone in Uzbek music, it mimics the sound of a drone function that is present across the music of Uzbekistan and many of the other nations across Southwest Asia. In
Uzbek music, the ghidjack, an Uzbek spike fiddle, often accompanies other instrument or vocal works as a drone function and many of the plucked string instruments of Uzbekistan are additionally equipped with drone strings as a means of self accompaniment. The sound of the glass harmonica is not connected in timbre to the drones of Uzbek string instruments, but it takes on their basic function within the work. This fixed-media material rests directly below the solo cello line, reinforcing the accompanying drone function.

This opening section establishes a connection to the Uzbek music tradition for us sonically. Although the material is not a direct transcription of an Uzbek folk song, we hear the functional connection of each role within the ensemble and are tied to an Eastern musical realm. As Awakening progresses, however, the roles of these materials change.

The entrance of the adhan at rehearsal 5 creates a syntactic shift for us sonically. Prior to rehearsal 5, the fixed-media is syntactically mimetic. The sound source is not readily identifiable, but we are experiencing its drone function within the context of the sound world that Yanov-Yanovsky is creating. On an even larger scale the fixed media is also forming an abstract syntax. We can identify the way in which each sonic element is functioning and relating to one another, yet we cannot discern a specific ensemble structure being identified. Because of this, we hear the sound sources purely for their timbral characteristics and simply relate their functions to an Eastern music tradition. At rehearsal 5, however, the glass harmonica melds into the sound of the adhan and we make a connection of the original sound sources to the
sound of the *adhan* itself. This moment marks a change in meaning of the material for us as listeners.

The *adhan* recording is a direct example of timbral mimesis. Although it is produced electronically in performance and not directly produced by a live human voice, the recording is a replication of the original sound source. Because this sound source is familiar and a timbral replication, our identification of the sound overrides our connection to the abstract syntax that is created prior to rehearsal 5. Instead, our notion of abstract syntax is replaced with a notion of abstracted syntax in which our new found meaning of the *adhan* recording allows us to derive meaning from the string parts as well. With this change, we become aware of the meaning of the *adhan* and connect this meaning to the solo cello line prior to rehearsal 5. In this moment, the cello retroactively takes on the function of the voice and serves as an extension of the *adhan* itself.

Timbrally mimetic sound sources are often present at the beginning of a work to provide context for the syntactically mimetic sounds. In Reich’s *Different Trains* for instance, we are almost instantly confronted by an abstracted syntax.  

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The entrance of the train whistles set the context through which we hear all of the syntactically mimetic sounds produced by the string quartet as a means of evoking the mechanical sounds of the train. This context defines the way we hear and interpret every sound that follows. By waiting until the climax of the work to introduce the *adhan* recording, Yanov-Yanovsky allows us to hear the sounds being produced by

the quartet and the fixed-media parts prior to rehearsal 5 within an abstract syntax. When we finally reach the entrance of the *adhan*, we hear the climax of the work in an unexpected way. More importantly, the new syntax allows the *adhan* and Yanov-Yanovsky’s syntactically mimetic treatment of the quartet to be profoundly impactful, serving as a radically transformative change instead just an initial context setter.

In the wake of this moment, Yanov-Yanovsky challenges the cultural implications of the *adhan* and the way in which these implications divide Eastern and Western culture. The *adhan* is one of the chief signifiers of Islam, but its interpretation as anything other than formal recitation is generally prohibited in Islamic culture. It is meant to call the followers of Islam to prayer, but it also serves as an imposed part of the sonic landscape within which it is projected. The *adhan* becomes an integral part of the landscape in Uzbekistan, as it is across the Islamic world. In *Awakening*, Yanov-Yanovsky draws a connection to both the cultural meaning of the *adhan* and the sonic qualities of its recitation. Despite the cultural dangers of implementing the *adhan* within a musical context, Yanov-Yanovsky asks us to think about the musical qualities of the *adhan* and place all sounds within a greater cultural context.

This commentary becomes the direct result of the fixed-media parts that Yanov-Yanovsky incorporates within *Awakening*. Because of the religious requirements of the *adhan*, it would not be possible to have a live recitation of the *adhan* within a performance of *Awakening*. The implementation of the fixed-media part allows Yanov-Yanovsky to incorporate the *adhan* despite these religious
constraints. Furthermore, presenting this recording allows the listeners to connect to the cello recitation from the opening in a way that would not be possible without the addition of electronic means.
CHAPTER IV

THE ALTERATION OF PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

The final practice of string quartet modification is the altering of performance practice. By manipulating the way in which string instruments are performed, we receive visual and audile cues that transition us away from the traditional notion of a conventional string quartet. By breaking the idea of traditional string quartet performance practice, a more exaggerated method of evoking a non-Western musical tradition emerges within the string quartet ensemble. Unlike the first two methods of modification that were outlined, this approach is a non-additive method. It does not require the addition of an outside sound source in conveying the notion of a non-Western national music tradition.

In his Chang Music IV (1993), Yanov-Yanovsky implements an extended passage that imitates the chang – an Uzbek hammer dulcimer closely related to the Persian santur – and implements nonconventional performance techniques to recreate the sounds of other regional percussion instruments. By using extended performance techniques within the work, Yanov-Yanovsky systematically breaks down our notion of the string quartet as a singular performance medium and instead enlists it as a universal vehicle for expressing a contemporary brand of Uzbek music.
The Uzbek Musical Context and Yanov-Yanovsky’s Chang Music Series

Being situated at the heart of the Silk Road trade routes, Uzbekistan was historically a key center for the exchanging of ideas. Bukhara, Samarkand, and the Fergana Valley were cosmopolitan centers that proved to be important developmental zones in the creation of the *maqam*\(^1\) tradition in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek *maqam* developed in close connection with the other high-art musical traditions of the Eurasian region: the Arabic *maqam*, Persian *radif*, Azerbaijani *mugham*, Turkish *maqam*, and Uygur *mugham*. The term *maqam* encompasses a canon of formal works, a musical structure, a collection of scales, and a variety of performance practices.

The *maqam* tradition in Uzbekistan saw its complete, modern standardization during the Soviet period at the hand of Yunus Rajabi.\(^2\) In addition to solidifying the *maqam* repertoire, Rajabi also transformed the ensemble makeup of the tradition. His transformation of the *maqam* brought together a variety of Uzbek instruments to form an expanded ensemble accompaniment: a significant change from the self accompaniment and small ensemble practice that often characterized earlier Uzbek *maqam* traditions. These modern chamber ensembles brought the *chang* into a direct

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interaction with the ghidjack\(^3\) and dayre,\(^4\) as well as a variety of other instruments, to accompany the ensemble of maqam vocalists. In fully notating and standardizing the Maqam repertoire, Rajabi took a significant step towards uniting the high-art musical traditions of the Uzbek region with that of the newly infiltrated European musical context. Rajabi was not, however, the only driving force linking the two traditions during this period.

The Soviet presence in the region also brought an interest in connecting the musical traditions of Europeanized Russia with the musical practice of the Asiatic republics as part of the State agenda. As the Stalinist administration set to carving out the Eurasian region into arbitrary republics, they took great interest in “modernizing” the many facets of the regional culture. The rich history of Western music in Russia was a means of connecting the region with the outside world, and the Stalinist administration set to establishing a Western classical tradition in the region. In 1939, construction began on a state opera and ballet theatre in Tashkent that would house the music and theatre troupes that began forming in Tashkent around 1918. Composers from Moscow were also dispatched to train the first generation of Uzbek composers, a practice implemented across the Central Asian region.

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky completed his musical training under the product of this musical policy. His father, Felix Yanov-Yanovsky, is among the early generation

\(^3\) The ghidjack is a Central Asian spike fiddle, very similar to the Persian kamanche. For a further description see: The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1984), s.v. “Ghichak.”

\(^4\) They dayre is a frame drum, popular across the Eurasian region. For a further description see: Ibid., s.v. “Daire.”
of Uzbek composers working in this hybrid tradition and his mother, Natalia Yanov-Yanovskaya, is a specialist on Uzbek symphonic music and the implementation of Uzbek folk idioms within this tradition. Dmitri studied under his father at the Tashkent State Conservatory and completed additional study under Sofia Gubaidulina, Alfred Schnitke, and Edison Denisov at his father’s urging. As Yanov-Yanovsky developed a further interest in Uzbek music, he completed an independent study of the musical traditions of the region. This hybridized study led to the development of Yanov-Yanovsky’s compositional language, incorporating elements of Uzbek music within the context of a contemporary Western musical language. The development of this musical approach led Yanov-Yanovsky to embark on a series of pieces exploring the *chang* as a central compositional feature.

The *chang* is an Uzbek hammer dulcimer, closely connected to the other dulcimers of the Middle Eastern and Eurasian regions. The instrument itself sits atop three legs, requiring the performer to be seated in a chair for performance. Sound is produced on the instrument by striking the horizontal strings with a pair of hammers. In its traditional practice, the *chang* carries a primary melodic function and is rarely seen in a truly percussive role. Despite its divergence from the traditional performance approach, the notion of the *chang*’s percussive qualities was a driving factor in Yanov-Yaovsky’s Chang Music Series.

Yanov-Yanovsky began his Chang Music Series in 1990 and completed the last work in 1994. The Chang Music Series consists of five works for various chamber music ensembles: *Chang Music I* for *chang* solo (1990), *Chang Music II* for
two pianos (1990), *Chang Music III* for string trio (1991), *Chang Music IV* for string quartet (1993), and *Chang Music V* for string quartet and *chang* (1994). Yanov-Yanovsky notes that “these works are not meant to form a real cycle, but, nevertheless, they have many common features in their rhythmical and melodic idiom, in their treatment of the instruments, and in the architecture of their musical forms.”

Although the works in the series are intended to serve as standalone pieces, they each share the common aim of presenting the *chang* in new musical contexts.

In 1993, at the request of violinist David Harrington, Yanov-Yanovsky completed his first work for the Kronos Quartet. This commission materialized as *Chang Music IV*. In this work, Yanov-Yanovsky employs a series of performance modifications to transform the sound world of the string quartet in a manner that evokes the *chang* and an Uzbek musical setting.

**The Notational Approach in Chang Music IV**

In the ‘Table of Signs’ printed in the introduction of the score, Yanov-Yanovsky includes indications for quartertones and three-quartertones, a mark

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6 In total, the Kronos Quartet premiered four of Yanov-Yanovsky’s works: *Chang Music IV* (New York: April 24, 1993), *Awakening* (San Francisco: November 19, 1993), *Chang Music V* (Salzau, Germany: July 15, 1994), and *Conjunctions* (New York: November 17, 1995). They have also recorded his *Lacrymosa* with Dawn Upshaw, see Kronos Quartet, “Night Prayers,” performed with Dawn Upshaw, compact disc.

7 *Ibid.*, Table of Signs.
indicating the bow to strike the sounding-board *col legno*, and a symbol indicating a left-hand pizzicato to be executed with the fingernail. The adjoining ‘Notes on Performance’ section contains a note for a special “pizzicato produced by the finger forcefully striking the string and then the fingerboard, almost simultaneously.”

This section also presents an extended description of the unconventional notation system and performance practice that forms the compositional base of the second movement of the work.

In the second movement of *Chang Music IV*, Yanov-Yanovsky notes that “the strings are to be regarded as if they were an ensemble of exotic percussion instruments.” To execute this concept, the composer employs a nontraditional staff that is equipped with numerical indications for each line. These numerical indications coincide with given points on the body of the instrument that are to be struck whenever a note appears on the numbered line. The staff also contains a side bracket that indicates which hand should strike the given points of percussion. On the left hand side of *Figure 11*, we see the diagram that is printed in the score to indicate these points of percussion. Each performer is assigned three numerals, two in the right hand and one in the left hand, with the exception of the second violinist that is only assigned one point of percussion in each hand. The right hand side of *Figure 11*

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shows an example of the staves employed within the score to demonstrate the notational system.

**Figure 11. Notes on Performance for the Opening of Movement II in ‘Chang Music IV’**

Performance Technique in *Chang Music IV*

Across *Chang Music IV*, Yanov-Yanovsky works with extended techniques on the instruments to imitate the *chang* and selected percussion instruments, as well as to remove the listener from the string quartet as a sonic medium. The most conventional of these techniques are the standard *col legno, sul ponticello*, and *ricochet* indications found in many works for strings, but Yanov-Yanovsky quickly dives into less

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conventional techniques to create the desired musical effects. Beyond the experimental notational aspects, there is an added level of experimentation in the performance practice in *Chang Music IV*.

At measure 53 in movement one, we see the first indication for the second violinist and the violist to hold their instruments in a vertical orientation to execute the indicated passage. In the performance note at the bottom of the page, Yanov-Yanovsky draws reference to the *ghidjack* for this performance indication. Placing the instruments on the knee in the manner of a spike fiddle facilitates the execution of the passage. Yanov-Yanovsky notes that “it would be impossible to perform this kind of *tremolo* and *glissando* keeping traditional position of the instruments.”

In addition to the physical necessity for the alternative instrument orientation, this musical moment provides three particular functional roles within the structure of the quartet. First, by placing the instruments in such an unconventional performance orientation, he initiates a musical context that begins the transition away from the string quartet medium. The orientation assists in the execution of the passage, but perhaps more importantly it gives a visual cue that we are departing from the expected.

Secondly, from a conceptual view this shift introduces the listener to the *chang* itself. In *Figure* 12 we see this passage at measure 53. Here the second violin and the viola play a *tremolo* on their lowest open strings creating an open fifth

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12 Personal correspondence with Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky on November 21, 2011.
mirrored by the sustained open fifth drone on the lowest open strings in the cello part. The violin and viola tremolos are “to be played with the fingernails of the right hand in quick succession.” The violin and viola lines then glissando to the highest possible pitch on the indicated open strings in measure 57. After a breath mark, the first violin enters at the Senza misura in measure 58 with a part that is indicative of a solo chang line.

Figure 12. Introduction of the Chang (Measures 51-58, Movement I)

14 Ibid.
At first glance, the second violin and viola part from measures 53 to 57 merely imitates the *chang* with its sounding attack reminiscent of the hammer strikes on the actually instrument. But Yanov-Yanovsky takes this idea to a different conceptual level. These parts are actually functioning as the left and right hammers of a performer on the *chang*. The left and right hammers correspond to the viola and second violin parts respectively. This establishes the *chang* performance practice and provides the sounding context for the solo violin line at measure 58. This moment sets up the listener for the complete departure from the string quartet medium in the opening of the second movement of the work.

The second movement enacts the altered notational system and the designated points of percussion presented in *Figure 13*. Yanov-Yanovsky began work on *Chang Music I* at the request of the Russian percussionist Mark Pekarsky. Pekarsky is the owner of a large collection of world percussion instruments that was started as a gift from the Italian avant-grade composer Luigi Nono. This collection grew to include a *chang* and led Pekarsky to approach Yanov-Yanovsky to write a work for the instrument. In approaching the commission, Yanov-Yanovsky “was very interested to show the percussion possibilities of the *chang*,” adding that “Uzbek composers usually use the instrument only in a melodic way, forgetting that the *chang* first of all is percussion.”  

In developing *Chang Music IV* as a composition, the approach of the *chang* as a percussion instrument continues to be evident.

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35 Personal correspondence with Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky on November 21, 2011.
Within the opening section of the second movement, the jarring percussive passage forces the listener to look at the percussive possibilities of the instruments making up the string quartet. This concept mirrors the precise concept that Yanov-Yanovksy sought to convey with the chang in his Chang Music I. Of this section he remarks that “even melodic elements of the score are parts of rhythmical patterns,” citing the glissandos and accents as examples within the passage. Likewise, the rhythmical and percussive elements he chooses to apply to the string quartet form a definitive melodic content as they begin to meld back into an imitation of a more conventional chang melody.

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17 Personal correspondence with Dmitri Yanov-Yanovksy on November 21, 2011.
On beat 10 of measure 11 in the second movement, the cellist enters with a minor-third glissando landing on the down beat of measure 12 before joining the second violin and viola with the new, percussive notation system. This glissando fragment repeats unwaveringly until just before the sectional shift at measure 48. Across these thirty or so bars, the cellist is joined by fragments of pitch based motives, performed by the first violinist and violist. As these fragments begin to take shape as a collective whole, we hear the hinting at the chang through a series of mini glissandi in the cello part and pizzicato strikes below the bridge of the first violin. This hinting at the chang is executed with a less conventional, more percussive approach to the instrument. The slowly developing idea converges at measure 48 where Yanov-Yanovsky brings back an indicative chang-like melody. Even here, however, Yanov-Yanovsky avoids a conventional arco technique to execute the melodic content. Instead he implements a special pizzicato that involves the finger striking the string and then the fingerboard simultaneously with force.

In this adjoining section, the quartet reaches its highest synthesis of musical styles. Here Yanov-Yanovsky overlays the chang melody with the percussive material beneath. Although the composer insists that there are no specific percussion instruments envisioned for this section, it is difficult not to observe the close aural connection to Uzbek percussion instruments like the dayra.\footnote{Ibid.} Between this connection and the reorienting of the instruments in the manner of the ghidjack, we are reminded of the instrumental format of the Uzbek Maqam tradition standardized
by Yunus Rajabi in the twentieth century. This re-creation of a national musical ensemble within the string quartet form is not unexplored territory. Ali-Zadeh and Sharafyan enact similar methods, but here Yanov-Yanovskly goes a step further by adding a third layer.

In measure 56, the second violin interjects with a quiet harmonic that is derived directly from the introductory material in the first movement. This then slowly builds back to the final section for the work that restates the context of the string quartet provided in Chang Music IV’s opening. By adding this third layer, the audience hears a simultaneous occurrence of the eastern and western musical styles and the percussive and melodic musical elements.

The Formal Breakdown of the String Quartet Genre in Chang Music IV

If we examine the form of the quartet, we get a logical mapping of Yanov-Yanovskly’s departure from the string quartet medium. In the opening section of the work (measures 1 through 50), he provides an aural context of the string quartet. While there are certainly elements in this introductory section that take a new shape across the full breadth of the work, this passage primarily grounds us by establishing the medium that is to be broken in subsequent passages. Our first break occurs at the Sostenuto, molto rubato at measure 51. Although Yanov-Yanovskly melds in some of
the introductory material throughout this passage, it essentially continues as a divergence until the end of movement one. The opening of movement two marks the complete departure of the medium with the implementation of the nonconventional percussive passage. The return of a melodic structure reminiscent of the chang enters in measure 48 and carries through to a reestablishment of the string quartet aural context at the Sostenuto in measure 102. Chang Music IV is not a direct arch form, but an overarching conceptual structure is carefully implemented across the work. The context is set, the material is modified to enact a new transitioning context that supports a departure from the medium, the medium is formally broken, it returns to the transitioning aural context, and the original context is reaffirmed.

The layering that occurs beginning in measure 56 of the second movement showcases the juxtaposition of all of these sectional elements. In essence, we hear both the melodic content as well as the percussive approach to the string instruments and the implied chang. At this moment, Yanov-Yanovsky breaks the boundaries between Eastern and Western musical traditions by presenting them in their respective manners atop their new unconventional roles. The two traditions are heard as one unified vehicle.

Although Chang Music IV is scored for string quartet, Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky clearly enlists the string quartet medium as a universal vehicle for disseminating contemporary music for the chang itself. His unified musical background, firsthand knowledge of Uzbek instruments, and fresh approach to writing for these instruments allows him to transcend the string quartet as a performance
medium and instead unify the ensemble in expressing his vision of contemporary Uzbek instrumental music.
CHAPTER V
CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Having analyzed the three methods of string quartet modification and evaluated their roles within the context of each work, we are left to evaluate the catalysts that brought about the creation of these works and to surmise an overarching meaning behind their creation. In evaluating the setting factors that form the conditions under which these pieces were created, we identify three primary factors of consideration: the formation of newly independent states, notions of regional violence and exile, and the role of commissioning bodies. By evaluating the works and the methods of modification that they have undergone through the lens of these three primary setting factors, we are able to understand fully the primary findings of the present research.

The Formation of Newly Independent Nations

Mikhail Gorbachev’s reform policies of *Perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness) of the late 1980s resulted in a cooling of government censorship. With the decline in censorship came greater autonomy for the republics housed within the Soviet Union and with this autonomy came a rebirth of ethnic nationalism.
throughout the region. While this rise in ethnic nationalism is generally cited as a leading cause for the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it brought with it a wide spectrum of results that both assisted in establishing independent nations as well as hindered their successful transition to independence.

A rise in ethnic nationalism, combined with the declining role of government censorship through the Perestroika reforms, brought about a rebirth of individualized cultural practice for the many ethnic groups governed by the Soviet Union. This became apparent within several areas of society. Religious groups, heavily restricted by the Soviet authorities, were able to operate with ever-growing freedom. Mosques were reopened, Buddhists were allowed to travel outside of the Soviet Union to study in monasteries, and Christian groups were able to function more openly and with less governmental control. Artists were able to take advantage of the new economic policies and work outside of state sponsored positions. This allowed them to explore styles and subject matter not formerly allowed under Soviet control. The new freedoms in religion and the arts opened the doors for ethnic groups within the Soviet Union to reconstruct their national identities and to strip away the elements of their cultural practice that had experienced high levels of Russianization.

This relaxing of government censorship became a twofold situation for composers. In one respect, the lack of censorship played a key role in the opening of opportunity for composers working in styles formerly categorized as bourgeois. This allowed for a freer use of a contemporary compositional language and a more explorative approach to instrumental configurations. It also provided freedoms for
composers to explore their national music traditions without the pressures of the State agenda and within communities supportive of a rebirth of their national music traditions. Because the cooling of censorship also led to the fall of the Soviet Union, however, the already poor economic situation plummeted and opportunities for composers became a low priority. This was especially the case in the years directly following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ali-Zadeh notes that she “sensed that her possibilities as a composer and pianist were not needed in Azerbaijan at that time,” adding that her “works were performed in Germany, Switzerland, and America, but in Baku they were hardly ever played or recorded.” Composers like Ali-Zadeh and Sharafyan were forced to look for opportunities outside of their respective countries to maintain sustainable careers.

Prior to its fall in 1991, the Soviet Union was made up of fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) over 30 Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR). These republics were made up of a large range of Slavic, Indo-European, Turkic, Uralic, Altaic, Caucasian, and Paleo-Siberian ethnic groups that were further divided into a wide array of language and religious groups. During the Perestroika years and into the post-Soviet period, there was a significant revival of religious practice and ethnic language usage that further differentiated the cultural makeup of the region. The sheer diversity of the Soviet Union and the presence of arbitrary boarders within the Eurasian republics made the establishment of independent nations a problematic

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situation. The geopolitical disputes combine with the decline in economic stability and the rise in ethnic nationalism resulted in an outbreak of ethnic violence across the post-Soviet Eurasian region as national building efforts moved forward.

Violence, Emigration, and Political Exile

As the newly independent republics began solidifying their boundaries and establishing their governmental structures, conflicts over national borders and ethnic dividing lines broke out across the region. Violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated over the Karabakh region, shown in Figure 14, and soon spiraled into a

Figure 14. The Nagorno-Karabakh Region²

full-fledged war. The violence that resulted made it a difficult time for the arts within the region. The lack of opportunity combined with the dangers of staying in the region made the opening of the 1990s a time when many artists left their respective nations to seek out opportunities abroad.

At the height of the Karabakh War in 1992, Sharafyan left Armenia and accepted a position at the Theological Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Here he taught music composition and sacred music to seminary students and authored a book of chants for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Sharafyan remained in Jerusalem until almost three years after the war, when he accepted a teaching position in 1997 at the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory which brought him back to Armenia.

During his time in Israel, Sharafyan focused his attention on both the musical heritage of Armenian and the spiritual tradition of the Armenian Apostolic church. His work in teaching sacred music and composing religious chants left a marked impact on his musical perspective. All of his works discussed within the present research share a strong connection to this tradition and to the work of Komitas, having also worked within these musical spheres during his lifetime. Although his time of residence outside of Armenia was rather short, it provided him with an opportunity to begin gaining support from the international music community.
In 2009, the music publisher Hans Sikorski released an issue of their publication Sikorski Magazine which was titled *Music and Emigration.* The issue presented the responses to twelve questions about the effects of emigration by twelve composers from the greater Eurasian region. The first composer included in the article was Franghiz Ali-Zadeh.

Like Sharafyan, Ali-Zadeh left the South Caucasus in 1992. Upon accepting a ballet commission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture, Ali-Zadeh left Azerbaijan and relocated to Mersin, Turkey to complete the project. Ali-Zadeh notes in the Sikorski article that at the time she accepted the commission from the Turkish Ministry of Culture, she “had absolutely no intention of emigrating from Azerbaijan or staying abroad for many years.” After a brief stint in Baku, however, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), a German organization overseeing international academic cooperation and exchange, awarded an artist stipend to Ali-Zadeh which took her to Germany in 1999 where she has primarily resided ever since.

Despite her geographical distance from Azerbaijan, Ali-Zadeh has maintained a strong connection to the music of her homeland. She notes that “it is a great honour to represent one’s homeland to the listener’s of other countries.” Although the violence that resulted from the conflict over Karabakh and the lack of opportunity for

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Ali-Zadeh as a contemporary music composer and pianist ultimately led her out of Azerbaijan, she maintains that…

Azerbaijan was never a “former homeland” for me. My musical language was formed precisely there, where the good old Soviet musical education on the one hand and the national traditional music on the other hand – the Mugam, the art of the Aschugen and the folksong – were connected with each other in an interesting way.⁶

Yanov-Yanovský’s departure from Uzbekistan came much later than that of Ali-Zadeh and Sharafyan. While Yanov-Yanovský had established a successful international career, he had remained in Uzbekistan to serve as composition professor at the Uzbek State Conservatory and to run the contemporary music festival that he founded. As the political climate under the Karimov regime became increasingly unwelcoming of outside influence, the political situation for Yanov-Yanovský became too difficult to maintain his career. As a result, Yanov-Yanovský left Uzbekistan to seek out more conducive opportunities abroad.

In 1996, Yanov-Yanovský founded the Ilkhom-XX International Festival of Contemporary Music in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The festival ran successfully for ten years presenting over 660 works with performances by major international contemporary music ensembles like Bang on a Can All-Stars, the Continuum Ensemble, and the Hilliard Ensemble. After a decade of performances, however, the festival came to an abrupt end in 2006. In an article about Yanov-Yanovský’s residency at North Central College in 2011, he remarked that the Ilkhom-XX

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⁶ Ibid.
International Festival of Contemporary Music “was the only cultural event in Uzbekistan that was independent, but that means the government had no control. I had no future there.” The Scholars Rescue Fund, which has supported Yanov-Yanovksy since he left Uzbekistan, cites that the Karimov regime viewed Yanov-Yanovsky “as a threat to nationalist identity and Uzbek autonomy” because of his work within “European-style art forms.” As a result, Yanov-Yanovsky has lived in political exile maintaining residencies at Dartmouth College, Harvard University, and North Central College in Naperville, Illinois.

While Sharafyan, Ali-Zadeh, and Yanov-Yanovsky left their homelands for different reasons, they were each united in leaving at a point after the development of their musical styles. Ali-Zadeh left Azerbaijan when she was forty-five years old. Likewise, Yanov-Yanovsky was forty-three when he left Uzbekistan. While Sharafyan was only twenty-six when he left for Israel, he had completed his graduate education at the conservatory prior to leaving. Because these composers remained in their respective countries until a period at which they had solidified their musical approach, it is difficult to argue that the act of leaving or the cause had a direct effect on the compositional style each composer has maintained. It is, however, possible to trace a more indirect effect on the compositions that each composer has produced through a look at the role of commissioning agents.

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The Role of the Kronos Quartet and Other Commissioning Agents

In the act of leaving their respective countries, Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky were forced to establish a career outside of their homeland. By doing this, they became musical ambassadors for Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Uzbekistan. As they established themselves within an international arena, the compositions that they have created have been the result of outside commissioning agents that have shaped their work through commissioning agreements. These agreements have played a role in determining the instrumentation of their works and have called for them to produce works representative of their national music traditions.

The fall of the Soviet Union and the violence that followed brought the Eurasian region, an area rarely discussed in the West, into the media spotlight. A generation in the United States that grew up in fear of Soviet attack had their first glimpse at the other side of the Cold War. For some this came with great caution and skepticism. Many others welcomed the opening of the region with curiosity. Two such individuals were David Harrington and Yo-Yo Ma.

In an interview with James Everest at the Walker Art Center, Harrington recalls at a young age “realizing that all of the music that I’d played for string quartet was written by four guys that lived in the same city...Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and
Schubert and they all lived in Vienna, Austria. This realization led to Harrington’s mission to found the Kronos Quartet as a figurehead for performing new works by composers from around the globe. As the Iron Curtain fell, Harrington began commissioning works from the newly opened region. These commissions resulted in the collaborations with Ali-Zadeh and Yanov-Yanovsky, discussed in the present research, as well as a variety of other composers and musicians from across the greater Eurasian region.

Like Harrington, Ma also began working with the music of the greater Eurasian region shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. Harrington developed musical ties in the region around a string quartet centric model. Ma, however, took a broad instrumental approach. This approach incorporated instruments from across the greater Eurasian region and placed them side by side in direct musical interaction. In doing so, Ma launched the Silk Road Ensemble as a performance, collaboration, and commissioning body in 1998 to help propagate the music of the greater Eurasian region on a global scale. Like the Kronos Quartet, the Silk Road Ensemble has also commissioned works by Yanov-Yanovsky and Ali-Zadeh. They were also responsible for the commissioning of Sharafyan’s *Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song* discussed in Chapter II.

The work undertaken by Harrington and Ma helped to launch an international movement focused on bringing the music, culture, and history of the greater Eurasian

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region to mainstream audiences. Both groups have commissioned a sizable body of works by composers from the region and these composers are now being performed by a plethora of new ensembles from across the globe.

*Figure 15* shows the balance of each of these roles in the creation of the body of works represented in the present research. Here we see the works as the result of three distinct forces: the regional context, the composer’s personal experiences, and the commissioning agents. The regional context plays two main roles. It is the primary factor in shaping the cultural and musical perspective of the composer. It also

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**Figure 15. Factors in the Creation of the New Body of Works**

![Diagram showing the creation of new body of works involving regional context, personal perspective, and commissioning agents.](image-url)
shapes the international perspective of the region and its music for outside audiences and the commissioning agents that determine what projects to fund. Additionally, where the commissioning agents and the composer intersect, there is a level of interpersonal interaction that determines the conditions of the commission. All of these factors combine to form the conditions under which this body of works was created.

While these factors play equal roles within the creation of these works, the commissioning organizations carry a sizable weight in determining the product that is presented to the global community. The Kronos Performing Arts Association commissions works primarily for string quartet because the ensemble they are tied to is a string quartet. Likewise, the Silk Road Project commissions works based upon the instrumentation of the current membership of the Silk Road Ensemble. The high rate of activity of the Kronos Quartet and the fact that Silk Road Ensemble carries a string quartet membership on its roster has been the primary reason that a sizable body of works for modified string quartet exist within the context of post-Soviet Eurasia. While string quartets are not an uncommon occurrence in the region today, the body of works that have been examined within this document are a direct result of the commissioning agents that have championed the composers emerging within this recent movement. It is unlikely that such a sizable body of these works would have developed and gained the international attention they have received without the assistance of the commissioning agents responsible for initiating the projects.
New Music for a New Audience

The Soviet Union maintained itself as a self-contained entity. The art traditions that developed in the republics that made up the Soviet Union were showcased across the region, but opportunities outside of the national borders were heavily controlled by Soviet authorities. This formed a musical climate that was geared towards the will of the Soviet political structure. Those who fell outside of the government sponsored ideas about art and culture were not afforded the opportunities to continue their work. The perceived harshness of the contemporary compositional language was deemed *bourgeois* and denounced by Soviet authorities. Many composers including Sofia Gubaidulina, Galina Ustvolskaya, and Alfred Schnittke were barred from performances and faced little international recognition until after the fall of the Soviet Union. Although Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky began their careers after political control over the arts had cooled, they were also faced with challenges of having their music widely dispersed within the region.

As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the political situations that developed as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union made the conditions for artists and composers in the region extremely difficult. Because of this, Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky were forced to turn to the global music community as a means of establishing a career. While a peaked interest in the region developed at the time these composers were forced to move progressively further outside of their homelands for support, they were faced with the challenges of writing music for a new global
audience. They were faced with finding a means of maintaining their personal music perspectives within the confines of the commissioning constraints and the concerns of the international classical music community. The result was an approach that adapted the instrumental configurations of standardized outside ensembles, like the string quartet, as a means of expressing the national music traditions of their respective countries through a vehicle that was globally understood.

Within the post-Soviet Eurasian region a new genre of music has developed. This genre incorporates compositional elements from both the Western contemporary tradition as well as the national music traditions of each respective composer. Because of this, the composers working in this genre have incorporated a variety of techniques to modify standardized Western ensembles as a means of creating globally recognized vehicles for expressing their national music perspectives. The genre that has resulted developed out of the political and cultural shifts that occurred as a result of the Soviet period and its fall. It has also formed as a result of a peaked global interest in the region following the fall of the Soviet Union. Although the works being produced within this genre are often not directly distinguishable as part of their respective national music traditions, they are in fact a new national tradition that is geared at both an internal cultural audience as well as a global listening community.
Further Research

As the nations within the greater Eurasian region continue to develop economically and build even strong ties to foreign nations, the number of composers working within this genre is certain to expand. With this expansion in practice and its further accessibility to the global music community, there will be an even greater need to expand further upon the ideas being explored within the present research. This research has served as an introduction to the methods of ensemble modification being explored within post-Soviet Eurasia. While the present research outlines the methods that have been applied to the string quartet genre by Ali-Zadeh, Sharafyan, and Yanov-Yanovsky, it does not address these methods within the wider context of post-Soviet Eurasian classical music. To understand further the scope of this newly developed genre, it is important that the methods outlined within the present research be applied to a wider body of works for a wider body of instrumentations being created by a wider body of composers from the region. It would also be useful to examine these methods within a broader Eurasian context and to complete comparative studies with similar genres from the globalized music community. This genre is still in the early stages of its establishment and is certain to provide ample opportunity for further research.
APPENDIX A

LIST OF NON-WESTERN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS
LIST OF NON-WESTERN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

**Chang** – An Uzbek hammer dulcimer, closely connected to the other dulcimers of the Middle Eastern and Eurasian regions. The instrument itself sits atop three legs, requiring the performer to be seated in a chair for performance. Sound is produced on the instrument by striking the horizontal strings with a pair of hammers.

*Figure 16. The Uzbek Chang*¹

**Daf** – A large frame drum often associated with Azerbaijani music. It is sometimes adorned with small metal rings that act as jangles. These drums are a fixture of *mugham* ensembles and are often played by *mugham* vocalists. Similar frame drums are found throughout the region.

**Figure 17. The Azerbaijani Daf**

![The Azerbaijani Daf](image)

**Dayre** – A large frame drum from the greater Eurasian region. Often used in Uzbek *maqam* and Persian music ensembles, it is very similar to the Azerbaijani *daf*. Like the *daf* it is sometimes adorned with small metal rings that act as jangles.

**Figure 18. The Dayre**

![The Dayre](image)

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Dhol – A cylindrical hand drum often made of walnut wood. It is played on its side by resting the body of the drum between the performer’s leg and arm. It provides the primary rhythmic function in Armenian music. Similar drums are found across the greater Eurasian region.

Figure 19. The Armenian Dhol

Duduk – A cylindrical double reed from Armenia. The large double reed is inserted all the way into the mouth and is affixed to the slender, apricot wood body. Variations of the duduk are found in Azerbaijan and Turkey.

4 Photograph taken by the author in Yerevan, Armenia in 2009.
Ghidjack – A four string spike fiddle from Uzbekistan. It is performed with a bow while the instrument is rested on top of the performer’s knee. It is closely related to the Kemancha found throughout the greater Eurasian region.

Figure 21. The Uzbek Ghidjack\(^6\)


Kemancha – A four string spike fiddle popular in Armenian, Persian, and Azerbaijani music. It is performed with a bow while the instrument is rested on top of the performer’s knee. Similar fiddles are found throughout the greater Eurasian region.

Figure 22. *The Kemancha*⁷

[Image of Kemancha players]

Tar – An eleven string, fretted instrument played by strumming the strings with the fingers or a small plectrum. The body is made of mulberry wood and the face of the instrument is covered with an animal skin. It is common in the music of the South Caucasus and Iran.

⁷ Photograph taken by the author in Yerevan, Armenia in 2009.
Figure 23. *The Azerbaijani Tar*⁸


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APPENDIX B

LIST OF WORKS SURVEYED
LIST OF WORKS SURVEYED

Frangiz Ali-Zadeh (1947 Baku – )

*Mugam Sayagi* (String Quartet No. 3) for String Quartet, Percussion Instruments, and Synthesizer (Magnetic Tape) (1993)
Duration: 19:00
Commissioned: Nora Norden for the Kronos Quartet
Premiered: April 24, 1993 in New York by the Kronos Quartet
Published: Hans Sikorski, Hamburg
Recordings: Elektra/Nonesuch 979346-2 (Kronos Quartet), Nonesuch 79504-2 (Kronos Quartet), Felmay/ Newtown 21750 7022 (Xenia Ensemble) *Eastern Approaches*, Nonesuch 79804-2 (Kronos Quartet)

*Oasis* (String Quartet No. 4) for String Quartet and Tape (1998)
Duration: 13:00
Commissioned: Alta Tingle and the National Endowment for the Arts for the Kronos Quartet
Premiered: February 23, 1999 in Glasgow by the Kronos Quartet
Published: Hans Sikorski, Hamburg
Recordings: Nonesuch 79804-2 (Kronos Quartet)

Vache Sharafyan (1966 Yerevan – )

*Two Devotions* for Tar, Kamancha, Dhol, Tam-Tam, Piano, and String Quartet (1999)
Duration: 25:00
Commissioned: not commissioned
Published: unpublished
The Morning Scent of the Acacia’s Song for Duduk and String Quartet (2001)
Duration: 16:00
Commissioned: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Project, Inc.
Premiered: February 1, 2002 in Cologne, Germany by Gevorg Dabaghyan (duduk), Shirly Laub (violin), Colin Jacobsen (violin), Daniel Heim (viola), and Jeroen den Herder (cello)
Published: G. Schirmer, Inc., New York (Both the chamber and orchestral editions)
SSAFM and UNESCO, Moscow (just the orchestral edition)
Recordings: unpublished

Seventeen Arrangements of the Folk Tunes and Transcriptions of Komitas for Duduk, Dhol, and String Quartet (2006)
Duration: 48:00
Commissioned: Traditional Crossroads
Published: SSAFM and UNESCO, Moscow (just the orchestral edition is published and only eleven of the seventeen arrangements are included)
Recordings: Traditional Crossroads 4335 (Dabaghyan and Komitas Quartet)

Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky (1963 Tashkent – )

Awakening for string quartet and tape (1993)
Duration: 7:00
Commissioned: Mrs. Ralph I. Dorfman for the Kronos Quartet
Premiered: November 19, 1993 in San Francisco by the Kronos Quartet
Published: Boosey & Hawkes, London
Recordings: Nonesuch 518349-2 (Only available as a bonus track on the iTunes digital download of the album)

Chang Music IV for string quartet (1993)
Duration: 13:00
Commissioned: the Kronos Quartet
Premiered: April 24, 1993 in New York City by the Kronos Quartet
Published: Boosey & Hawkes, London
Recordings: Louth Contemporary Music Society 1001 (Carducci Quartet)
*Chang Music V* for string quartet and chang (1994)
Duration: 15:00
Commissioned: the Kronos Quartet
Premiered: July 15, 1994 in Salzau by Dmitri Yanov-Yanovsky and the Kronos Quartet
Published: unpublished
Recordings: unpublished
BIBLIOGRAPHY


