

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

VIOLIN KABA IN THE FOLK MUSIC OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA



Ph.D. THESIS

Aida Alketa PULAKE ALTINBÜKEN

Department of Music

Music Programme

JANUARY 2025

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GÜNEY ARNAVUTLUK HALK MÜZİĞİNDE KEMAN İLE KABA İCRASI

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To my dearest parents,



FOREWORD

This thesis marked a turning point in my life as a classical violinist from Berat, Albania, where I discovered the convergence of my classical violin education and the traditional music of my native land.

I would like to thank my advisor Prof. Dr. Yelda ÖZGEN ÖZTÜRK, as well as members of the steering committee Prof. Dr. Tolgahan ÇOĞULU and Assoc. Prof. Sadık Uğraş DURMUŞ for their invaluable contributions and insight throughout the process.

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December 2024

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ABBREVIATIONS

12TET	: 12-Tone Equal Temperament
AIKP	: Arkivi i Institutit të Kulturës Popullore
M2	: Major 2nd Interval
m3	: Minor 3rd Interval
M3	: Major 3rd Interval
m6	: Minor 6th Interval
M6	: Major 6th Interval
m7	: Minor 7th Interval
P4	: Perfect 4th Interval
P5	: Perfect 5th Interval
TVSH	: Televizioni Shqiptar
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



SYMBOLS

b : Flat
: Sharp
n : Natural





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VIOLIN KABA IN THE FOLK MUSIC OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA

SUMMARY

Focusing on the unique and original characteristics of the folk music of Southern Albania, this thesis offers an in-depth look at the subtleties of the genre called as "kaba", which is the pinnacle of violin performance in this style. The study sheds light on this style by presenting a detailed analysis of violin performances by acclaimed violinists Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri, and Aurel Qirjo, highlighting their technical proficiency and the complex structure of the genre. The analysis is limited to recent sound recordings due to indistinct sound quality in the older ones.

In Albania, the concept of southern music is centred on acapella polyphonic singing, known as iso-polyphony, characterised by the use of all five modes of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale as well as by its original multi-voice texture, being also the main source for the folk music instrumental ensembles called "saze" in Southern Albania.

In the iso-polyphonic texture, the first part is called "marrës" [taker], usually starting the song. The second part, called "kthyes" [turner], responds the first one. In addition to these, there is also the aforementioned "iso" part which is the vocal drone featuring held long notes. In the two-voice settings, the taker is accompanied by either a turner or an iso. The three-voice texture has all three of these parts. In the Lab region, we sometimes find a fourth part called "hedhës" [thrower], contributing to the harmony.

In the second half of the 19th century, Western musical instruments like clarinet, violin, and accordion were introduced to Albania and instrumental ensembles known as "saze" emerged in the Tosk region. These ensembles adopted the iso-polyphony as a musical language, with the instruments playing the iso-polyphony parts. The clarinet assumes the role of taker-marrës, the violin acts as turner-kthyes, and the lute functions as iso, holding the drone. Added to these, a "dajre", large-sized circular percussion instrument, is used. This ensemble allows for multiple configurations, including the occasional inclusion of two clarinets or two violins.

In saze music, the type of piece called "kaba", in which the soloist improvises, constitutes the area where solo instruments such as clarinet and violin are used at the most skilful level. The kaba often plays the role of an instrumental, free-rhythmic opening that leads without pause to either a *këngë* [song] or a *valle* [dance music]. It is in free rhythm, but there is still a feel of a succession of beats, arranged in time in a way to represent an organic rhythmic flow where the time distance between the beats is altered based on the performer's interpretation.

The following conclusions has been drawn as the outcome of the analysis of main initial segments from kaba performances by Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri, and Aurel Qirjo.

Even though the kaba is in free rhythm, it was possible to make assumptions about meter and beats by considering accents and phrasing. Since there is no pre-existing

terminology to denote the rapidly played note groups, they have been notated in detail as close as possible to the actual performance. The bowing and articulations used by the player have also been included in the notation as possible. All the elements notated in the transcriptions are discussed in the analysis, as well as the bow positions, bow pressure and timbre colours reflected in the video and audio recordings. The harmonic flow of the kaba performances has been analysed in terms of the combined use of pentatonic modes, and the evidence for the existence of a simpler basic melodic trajectory upon which the melodic line is based, has been discussed.

The melodic structure of the kaba is found to consist mostly of the repetition of melodic figures or ideas coming back as variations. This also includes expansion and compression of the ideas, creating a control over the phrasing pace. Although the kaba is said to have a free-rhythm, the repetition of small melodic patterns gives it a motif-based intrinsic rhythmic flow and a feeling of successive beats although the objective time distance between beats is smoothly alternated as governed by the performer.

The basic melodic nature of the kaba is largely attributed to the continual modification of small melodic motifs, which forms the basis of its musical flow. The pentatonic scale modes serve as the foundational melodic framework. As shown in the analysis, it is possible to transition to an alternative pentatonic mode in different sections of the compositions. The three kaba analysed in the scope of this thesis make use of four distinct pentatonic scales, Pentatonic modes I, II, IV and V, or in other words, all modes of the pentatonic scale except mode III, which lacks scale degree 5, being a widely used structural tone subject to prolongation. It could easily be speculated that this aspect of the kaba performances could be the reason for the total lack of pentatonic mode III. Occasionally, non-pentatonic scale degrees are incorporated in the music, although they do not serve as structural points in the melody. Instead, they are used as ornamental figures or play surface roles, such as neighbour or passing notes. The analysis has also revealed that below the superficial and highly ornamented melodic surface, there is a deeper and essential melodic framework, which is found to be built on a pentatonic mode in all three of the analysed kaba performances. The detailed determination and representation of this fundamental structural essence or melodic background, as demonstrated in this research, is an unprecedented discovery, as it has not been observed in any previous scholarly investigations on Albanian folk music.

Regarding violin performance practice, the instrument position tends to be in line with Western classical performance practices if the players received a formal education, which is the case with all three performers studied in this thesis; whereas in the case of self-taught folk musicians we may observe various ways of holding the instrument. When it comes to the bow position, the studied musicians are found to use the bowing hand in various ways, sometimes very different than the Western classical style, in order to obtain various tone qualities, either consciously or intuitively, or both. The bow is used with different pressure levels and in various angles to produce different tones supporting the ornamentations made by the left hand.

In the studied kaba performances, a high variety of articulations is observed to be used. It can be speculated that this is because the instrumental music tends to adopt the traditional singing styles. The observed techniques are: glissando in general and typical use of glissando between some specific scale degrees, glissando combined with *molto* vibrato, glissando with various articulations such as grace notes, trills or staccatos as framing elements, glissando with *louré*, glissando with *ricochet*, glissando *tremolando*, bow vibrato, *molto* vibrato glissando combined with trill, and grace notes. Other

features that strike attention as melodic elements are the use of rapidly played note groups surrounding and ornamenting the "prolonged" structural notes of the melodic framework and a style-specific use of the leap of m7th between specific scale degrees. Suggestions for further research are also shared at the end of the thesis.





GÜNEY ARNAVUTLUK HALK MÜZİĞİNDE KEMAN İLE KABA İCRASI

ÖZET

Güney Arnavutluk halk müziğinin eşsiz ve özgün özelliklerine odaklanan bu tez, bu stilde keman icrasının zirvesi olan ve “kaba” olarak adlandırılan türün inceliklerine derinlemesine bir bakış sunuyor. Çalışma, ünlü kemancılar Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri ve Aurel Qirjo'nun keman performanslarının ayrıntılı bir analizini sunarak, teknik ustalıklarını ve türün karmaşık yapısını sergileyerek bu tarza ışık tutmaktadır. Analiz, eski kayıtlardaki ses kalitesinin yetersizliği nedeniyle yakın tarihli ses kayıtlarıyla sınırlı tutulmuştur.

Arnavutluk'ta güney müziği kavramı, iso-polifonia olarak bilinen akapella polifonik şarkı söyleme geleneği etrafında şekillenmiştir. Aile toplantılarında ve şenliklerde sıklıkla pentatonik modlara dayalı çok sesli şarkılar icra edilir. Bu şarkı söyleme geleneği antik Roma dönemindeki Epirus'a kadar uzanmaktadır ve 2008 yılında UNESCO'nun İnsanlığın Somut Olmayan Kültürel Mirası Temsili Listesi'nin bir parçası olarak “Arnavutluk halk iso-polifonisi” adı altında tanınmıştır. Anhemitonik pentatonik dizinin modlarının kullanımı ve özgün dokusuyla karakterize edilen iso-polifoni, Güney Arnavutluk'ta “saze” adı verilen halk müziği enstrüman topluluklarının performanslarının da kaynağı olmuştur.

İso-polifonik dokuda ilk parti “marrës” [alan] olarak adlandırılır. Alan genellikle şarkıyı başlatır. İkinci kısım “kthyes” [döndüren] olarak adlandırılır. Bu ikinci ses birincisine cevap verir. Bunlara ek olarak, yukarıda bahsedilen “iso” partisi de vardır; bu, tutulan uzun pedal sesini içeren bir partidir ve genellikle çok sesli şarkılar derlenip notaya alındığında en alt portede görülür. İki sesli iso-polifonik örneklerde, “alan” sese ya bir “döndüren” ya da bir iso eşlik eder. Üç sesli polifoni durumunda ise, bu partilerin her üçü de bulunur. Bir iso-polifonik şarkının ulaştığı maksimum parti sayısı dördür ve bu sayı Lab bölgesinde görülür. Dört partili iso-polifonik dokuda, yukarıda bahsedilen üç partiye ek olarak, “hedhës” [atan] olarak adlandırılan ve armonik palete ekstra bir hat olarak katkıda bulunan dördüncü bir parti eklenir. İso-polifoni, hem melodik hem de armonik yapının temeli olarak işlev gören anhemitonik pentatonik dizinin kullanımına dayanmaktadır. Güney Arnavutluk halk müziğinde pentatonik dizinin mevcut beş modunun tamamı kullanılır.

Arnavutluk'a 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren 12TET akort sistemini kullanan klarnet, keman ve akordeon gibi batı müziği aletleri getirilmiştir. Bunun sonucunda Tosk bölgesinde “saze” olarak bilinen enstrüman toplulukları ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu topluluklar, vokal çokseslilik geleneğinin temel yapısını müzikal bir dil olarak benimsemiş, böylece enstrümanlar iso-polifoni partilerini icra etmek için kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda geleneksel yaklaşım, klarnetin alan-marrës rolünü üstlendiği, kemanın döndüren-kthyes olarak hareket ettiği ve lavtanın ise pedal sesi tutan iso olarak işlev gördüğü üç sesli bir dokuyu içerir. Bunlara ek olarak, büyük ebatlı dairesel formda vurmali bir çalgı olan “dajre” kullanılır. Bu topluluk, zaman zaman iki klarnet veya iki kemanın dahil olduğu farklı kombinasyonlara olanak tanır.

Saze müziğinde, solistin doğaçlama yaptığı “kaba” adı verilen parça türü, klarnet ve keman gibi solo enstrümanların en ustaca kullanıldığı alanı oluşturur. Arnavutluk halk müziği üzerine yapılan mevcut çalışmalarda kaba'nın müzikal yapısı yayınların çok sınırlı bir kısmında ele alınmış olup, kaba'nın icra teknikleri ya da armonik-melodik yapısı üzerine daha fazla ve detaylı analizlere ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu çalışma, literatürde kısıtlı şekilde yer verilmiş bu alana ilişkin detaylı bilgi ve bulgular sunmaktadır.

Güney Arnavutluk'taki halk müziği türlerine baktığımızda, en temel ayrımın kengë [şarkı] ve valle [dans müziği] arasında olduğunu görürüz. Hem 20. yüzyıla ait kayıtlı icralarda hem de çağdaş uygulamalarda, kaba'nın genellikle bu iki türden birine enstrümantal, serbest ritimli bir giriş/açılış rolü oynadığını ve kaba bittiğinde müziğin araya sessizlik girmeden bir sonraki parçaya bağlandığını görüyoruz. Kaba tarzında enstrümantal bir doğaçlama tipik olarak ad libitum, yani serbest ritimle icra edilir; burada halen vuruşların art arda geldiği hissi vardır, ancak zaman, vuruşlar arasındaki zaman aralığının icracının yorumuna göre değiştiği organik bir ritmik akış şeklinde düzenlenmiştir.

Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri ve Aurel Qirjo'nun kaba icralarının temel materyali içeren ilk kesitlerinin analizi neticesinde aşağıdaki sonuçlara varılmıştır.

Transkripsiyonlarda geleneksel batı müziği notasyonu kullanılmıştır. Kaba serbest ritimde olmasına rağmen, vurgular ve cümleme dikkate alınarak ölçü ve vuruşlar hakkında varsayımlarda bulunmak mümkün olmuştur. Hızlı çalınan nota gruplarını belirtmek için önceden mevcut bir terminoloji bulunmadığından, bunlar gerçek icraya mümkün olduğunca yakın bir şekilde ayrıntılı olarak notaya alınmıştır. İcracının kullandığı yay ve artikülasyonlar da mümkün olduğunca notasyona dahil edilmiştir. Transkripsiyonlarda notaya alınan tüm unsurlar, video ve ses kayıtlarında yansıtılan yay pozisyonları, yay basıncı ve tını renkleri ile birlikte analizde ele alınmıştır. Kaba icralarının armonik akışı pentatonik modların bir arada kullanımı açısından analiz edilmiş ve yüzeydeki süsleme figürleriyle örülmüş melodik çizginin dayandığı daha basit bir temel melodik izleğin varlığına dair kanıtlar ortaya konmuştur. Analiz, kaba performanslarının konvansiyonel notasyon kullanılarak notaya alınabileceğini göstermektedir. Ritim ve nota değerleri, eserin serbest ritmik karakteri nedeniyle ancak yaklaşık olarak notaya yansıtılabilmektedir.

Pentatonik dizi derecelerini adlandırmak için ideal numaralandırma sisteminin ne olacağı araştırmacılar arasında hala bir tartışma konusu olsa da, saze müziğinde pentatonik ve diyatonik modların karışık kullanımı ve zaman zaman diyatonik akor eşliklerine rastlandığından, bu araştırma için en uygun yaklaşım olarak diyatonik dizi derece numaralandırmasının kullanılması tercih edilmiştir.

Kaba'nın melodik yapısının çoğunlukla melodik figürlerin ya da fikirlerin varyasyonlar halinde tekrarlanmasından oluştuğu görülür. Bu aynı zamanda fikirlerin genişletilmesi ya da sıkıştırılmasını da içerir ve bu da cümleme ritmi üzerinde bir kontrol yaratır. Kaba'nın serbest bir ritme sahip olduğu söylene de, küçük melodik kalıpların tekrarı ona motif temelli içsel bir ritmik akış ve vuruşlar arasındaki nesnel zaman mesafesinin değişkenliğinin icracı tarafından yönetildiği bir ardışıklık hissi verir. Vasil Tole bu cümle temelli ad libitum ritim türünü “parlando rubato” olarak adlandırmıştır.

Tole ayrıca, kaba çalmada özlü melodik kalıpların tekrarının yaygın olduğunu ve tekrarlar sırasında bu kalıpların uzatılmış veya sıkıştırılmış versiyonlarının kullanılarak ritmik akışın düzenlendiğini belirtir. Kaba'nın temel melodik doğası

büyük ölçüde, müzikal akışının temelini oluşturan küçük melodik motiflerin sürekli olarak değiştirilmesine bağlanır. Tole kaba'nın bu özelliğini “fraktalite” olarak adlandırır. Tole'ye göre, kaba performanslarının yapı taşları olarak kullanılan küçük melodik parçacıklar, hem Tosk hem de Lab bölgesi halk repertuvarlarında yer alan vokal ya da enstrümantal parçalardan gelmektedir.

Güney Arnavutluk halk müziğinin temel yapısını meydana getiren pentatonik dizi modları, melodik çerçevenin temelini oluşturur. Zaman zaman, pentatonik dışındaki dereceler yardımcı sesler olarak kullanılır, ancak incelendiğinde, bunların önemli bir yapısal role sahip olmadıkları açıktır. Analizde gösterildiği gibi, parçaların farklı bölümlerinde farklı bir pentatonik moda geçiş yapmak mümkündür. Bu tez kapsamında incelenen üç kaba'da, dört farklı pentatonik dizi, pentatonik mod I, II, IV ve V gözlemlenmiştir. Başka bir deyişle, mod III dışındaki tüm modları kullanılmaktadır. Mod III'ün kullanılmamasının nedeni olarak kaba icralarında yaygın olarak yapısal bir ton rolünde kullanılan dizi derecesi 5'ten yoksun olması gösterilebilir. Zaman zaman, pentatonik dışı gam dereceleri müziğe dahil edilir, ancak bunlar melodide yapısal notalar olarak işlev görmezler. Bunun yerine, süsleme figürleri olarak kullanılırlar ya da komşu ses veya geçiş sesi gibi yüzeysel roller oynarlar. Analiz ayrıca, yüzeydeki oldukça işlemeli melodik görünümün altında, daha derin ve temel bir ezgisel çerçeve olduğunu ve bu çerçevenin analiz edilen üç kaba icrasında da pentatonik bir mod üzerine inşa edildiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu araştırmada gösterildiği gibi, bu temel yapısal özün veya melodik arka planın ayrıntılı olarak belirlenmesi ve gösterilmesi, Arnavut halk müziği üzerine daha önce yapılan hiçbir bilimsel araştırmada gözlemlenmediği için özgün bir bulgudur.

Keman icra pratiği ile ilgili olarak, eğer icracılar formal bir eğitim almışlarsa, ki bu tezde incelenen üç icracıda da durum böyledir, çalgı pozisyonu Batı klasik icra pratikleri ile uyumlu olma eğilimindedir; oysa kendi kendini yetiştirmiş folk müzisyenleri söz konusu olduğunda, çalgıyı tutmanın bazen geleneksel Batı klasik tekniğinden oldukça farklı çeşitli şekillerini gözlemleyebiliriz. Yay pozisyonu konusunda, incelenen müzisyenlerin çeşitli ton özellikleri elde etmek için, bilinçli ve/veya sezgisel olarak, yay elini bazen Batı klasik stilinden çok farklı şekillerde kullandıkları görülmüştür. Yay, sol el tarafından yapılan süslemeleri destekleyen farklı tınılar üretmek için farklı basınç seviyelerinde ve çeşitli açılarda kullanılır.

İncelenen kaba icralarında çok çeşitli artikülasyonların kullanıldığı gözlemlenmiştir. Bunun, çalgısal müziğin geleneksel şarkı söyleme stillerini uyarlama eğiliminde olmasından kaynaklandığı tahmin edilebilir. Gözlemlenen teknikler şunlardır: genel anlamda glissando, tipik olarak belirli gam dereceleri arasında glissando kullanımı, molto vibrato ile birlikte glissando, glissando'yu çevreleyen unsurlar olarak çarpma notaları, tril veya staccato gibi çeşitli artikülasyonların kullanımı, louré ile glissando, ricochet ile glissando, glissando tremolando, yay vibratosu, tril ile birlikte molto vibrato glissando ve çarpma notaları. Melodik olarak dikkat çeken diğer unsurlar ise ezgisel iskeleti oluşturan yapısal notalarını çevreleyen ve süsleyen hızlı çalınan nota gruplarının kullanımı ve stile özgü şekilde belirli gam dereceleri arasında m7'lik atlamanın kullanımıdır.

Tezin sonunda gelecek çalışmalar için öneriler de paylaşılmıştır.



1. INTRODUCTION

A discussion on the traditional music of the southern part of Albania usually brings a need to speak at least very briefly about the historical roots to give the provide a better view with wider context.

The Albanian people are believed to be the direct descendants of the ancient Illyrians, who were a conglomeration of many tribes in the western part of the Balkans native to the area since the Bronze Age. The Greeks founded colonies on Illyrian soil from the 8th to the 6th century BCE. The Illyrian tribes evolved politically, forming temporary alliances, federations, and kingdoms. Rome defeated the Illyrians in 229 BCE and established control over Illyria for six centuries. After the division of Rome, the area became part of the Byzantine Empire, and it was later conquered by various foreign powers. Over numerous centuries, the tribes of southern Illyria experienced a shift, resulting in a transition from the ancient Illyrian population to a new Albanian one. Consequently, from the 8th to the 11th century, the designation Illyria progressively yielded to the appellation of the Albanoi tribe, which resided in present-day central Albania. The term originated from a single tribe and subsequently expanded to encompass the entire nation as Arbëri, ultimately evolving into Albania. The Serbs' occupation in 1347 led to massive migrations, while the Ottoman Turks started an invasion in 1388. Skanderbeg, an Albanian military genius, drove the Turks out, but after his death, the resistance eventually collapsed, allowing the Ottomans to reoccupy the area by 1506 (Biberaj & Prifti, 2024).

Albania remained part of the Ottoman Empire until early 20th century, when nationalist movements began to destabilise the Ottoman Rule in the Balkans. In 1912, Albania declared its independence although the aim to gather all Albanian-speaking communities under one flag remained a utopia when 30-40% of the total Albanian population was left out of Albania by the powers that be (Elsie, 2010).

A portion of the southern part of Albania intersects with the area that once was the Roman province Epirus. As will be explained in more detail in the thesis, Epirus area

has a pentatonic-based acapella vocal polyphony tradition nowadays called as “Iso-polyphony” continuing still as part of the folk repertoire. When Western instruments got introduced to Albania in the second half of the 19 century and local musicians started the ensembles named as “saze”, they also adopted the fundamental structure of the vocal polyphony tradition as a musical language (Tole, 2015).

Right after the declaration of independence, came respectively the chaotic World War I years, the turbulent inter-war period and World War II bringing first the Italian and then German occupations, the country was freed by the communist Albanian forces, leading to the foundation of the communist Albania under the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha (Biberaj & Prifti, 2024).

During the communist period, folk music was embraced by the state as an important component of the national culture, giving it a high place both in the mass media broadcasts and the art institutions. Along the folk musicians, Western classical-style symphonic music composers were also expected to reflect the “people’s values” in their works through folk music influences. The clarinettist Laver Bariu, originating from Permet, has become an important national music figure, reflecting the heritage of the Southern Albania saze music ensembles (Tole, 2015). His phenomenal playing was also featured in the famous Albanian movie Gjeneral Gramofoni¹ produced in 1978, where it was used as a symbol of resistance against the Italian dominance in the 1930’s (FMAA, 2021). Although saze-rooted music became a prominent component of the Albania’s folk music scene during the communist years, the strict policy of banning Albanian citizens from traveling abroad kept the music inside the country’s borders.

The communist Albanian state would last until late 1990’s where the country would have a transition to parlemantary democracy after a few years of civil unrest. With the economical hardship brought by the political instability, many Albanian citizens had to travel and work abroad, forming a diaspora dispersed to many countries around the globe, such as Greece, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Great Britain, United States, Australia and so on. This resulted in an increasing demand of access to folk music of Albania from abroad, to which the use of internet eventually provided a solution beginning from early 2000’s. Despite the better conditions today in sense of later advancements

¹ The General Gramophone (Eng.), the original movie score composed by Aleksander Peçi.

in the communication technologies, the literature on the folk music of Albania remains still relatively limited. Hence, as an Albanian violinist from Berat, my will to leave a document on the use of violin in the culture I grew up in, has led me to write this thesis.

1.1 Purpose and Thesis Statement

This thesis aims to deliver an analytical examination of the structure of instrumental improvisation known as 'kaba' in the folk music of Southern Albania, focussing on the kabas performed on the violin, and to elucidate the performance practices of the violin within this musical tradition, thereby contributing to the academic discourse on traditional music in the context of violin literature.

1.2 Scope and Limitations

This thesis encompasses the transcription present-day Albanian folk music violinists' improvisational 'kaba' performances and their analysis regarding musical structure and performance practice.

As the author of the thesis and an Albanian violinist, I opted to do research that elucidates violin performance in the traditional music of Southern Albania. To do this, I concentrate on instrumental improvisations known as 'kaba.' The emphasis on the 'kaba' performance is due to its provision of an ideal framework for examining stylistic attributes and playing skills, as this form of improvisation allows the artist to exhibit complete technical proficiency on the instrument.

In the 'saze' groups of Southern Albania, the melodic lines are predominantly executed with clarinet or violin. The kaba performance is also executed with these two instruments within this tradition. This thesis concentrates on violin performance; thus, kaba performances with the clarinet are excluded from its scope.

The kaba is a showcase piece where the soloists display their utmost technical abilities. On the other hand, when we look at the performers, we see that they mostly play versions of one single kaba composition throughout many years during their career. It is considered as their signature in the style. However, this results in a problem when one tries to find kaba performances to analyse: there are a very limited number of performers whose performances could represent the genre at its best, and each of these musicians have mostly one kaba composition which they play with variations from

one performance to the other. With clarinet being the mostly preferred solo instrument in saze music, the violin kabas are even more rare.

The analysis of performances is limited to present day performers for two reasons: First, the contemporary kaba performers exemplify a sophisticated amalgamation of the traditional masters' styles, wherein distinct elements and phrases previously isolated in each master are now meticulously integrated in the current performances. Second, the historical recordings can be examined regarding phrasing and musical structure; nevertheless, their indistinct sound quality precludes the discernment of various performance methods, such as violin tone and articulations, by auditory analysis. Historical recordings are mostly from early 20th century where the recording quality is not clear enough to reflect the tone-colour variations or very complex and florid ornamentations and rapidly played note groups making the transcription task nearly impossible to execute with accuracy.

Within the limitations of such conditions, for this thesis project, kaba performances by three most renowned names of Southern Albania folk violin tradition in the recent decades, namely Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri and Aurel Qirjo, have been selected as actual examples reflecting all the complex structure based on motivic relations and fine and delicate details of the playing techniques.

In addition to the aforementioned matters, the transcriptions and the related analysis focus on the first and main part of the kaba where the whole motivic material is exposed and developed. Usually, this main part is recapitulated afterwards. Aiming to provide a deep analysis of both the motivic development techniques and performance practice proper to the style, the scope has been limited to the first and main segment of the analysed kaba performances.

The scope and limitations of the analytical approaches will be addressed separately in the introduction of the analysis chapter.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis employs a qualitative research method, more specifically the ground theory method, using both deductive and inductive approaches in combination. The deductive approach is followed in order to define the definition and scope of the musical material to be analysed, including its cultural and historical contextualisation, basing on the

existing literature; whereas the inductive approach becomes effective and prevalent in the collection and analysis of the data being the kaba performances studied in this thesis. A detailed content analysis is conducted then evaluating the transcribed musical scores as well as the related audio-visual sources, leading to generalisations on violin kaba performances in the music of Southern Albania. The analysis features detailed discussion on the melodic architecture and form of the kaba performances as well as performance practice-related observations shedding light on matters related to instrument position, bowing, tone quality and use of various violin articulations both individually and in various combinations.

As another type of qualitative research method, personal interviews have been made with violinists Ethem Qerimaj and Artur Ylli Zeqiri for this thesis project. Ethem Qerimaj has contributed with an exclusive violin kaba performance he gave for this research project whereas Artur Ylli Zeqiri gave a long interview where he provided very important information on many concepts related to the thesis research.

1.4 Literature Review

As sources covering theoretical aspects of folk music of Albania, the two comprehensive books by Sokol Shupo and Vasil Tole has been the main reference books for music theory-related subjects in this thesis.

Sokol Shupo's (2002) book titled "Folklori Muzikor Shqiptar" in two volumes is mostly focused on the musical structure, providing detailed information on the use of pentatonic and other modal systems, melodic structure, rhythmic aspects and the polyphonic and monodic applications in the folk music of Albania, with the second volume mostly devoted to detailed information on the use of intervals and leaps in the polyphonic vocal music.

The book "Folklori Muzikor" by Vasil Tole (2007) is also a complete guide that covers discussion on both polyphony and monody in the folk music of Albania offering a wide range of information in both history and music theory aspects. The book has chapters focusing on both vocal and instrumental iso-polyphony as well as monodic styles, providing examples and analytical insight.

Vasil Tole is definitely the author that has the most works cited in this thesis. Both a composer and musicologist, Tole has an important amount of published research

related to folk music of Albania. In relation to the subjects discussed in this thesis, Tole's (2010) "Inventory of Performers on Albanian Folk Iso-Polyphony", published as part of the international cultural heritage project: "Safeguarding Albanian Folk Iso-Polyphony, A UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" has also been an important reference source. The inventory includes information not only on performers, but also on all kinds of terms and concepts related to both vocal and instrumental music of on Southern Albania, forming an invaluable source in the literature. In addition, the article "Saze" by Vasil Tole (2015a) in the Grove Music Online has been a valuable source in the context of this thesis with the information it provides about the formation of the instrumental folk ensembles in Albania, as the kaba performances which are subject to study are part of the saze-related performance practice.

Among the sources of general information on folk music of Albania, we can also cite the article "Albania" in Grove Music Online by Jane Sugarman, George Leotsakos and Zana Shuteriqi Prella (2015). The article provides information on the different aspects of music of Albania including the Western art music-related styles, folk and urban music; however, it mentions about "kaba" only once to give a one-sentence definition.

Another good introduction to the traditional music styles of Albania is the "Part I" of Spiro Shetuni's (2011) book "Albanian Traditional Music: An Introduction, with Sheet Music and Lyrics for 48 Songs", featuring eight chapters providing information on the four "dialects" [as he names them] of traditional music in Albania: Gheg, Tosk, Lab and Urban styles.

Concerning the information on vocal Iso-polyphony, in addition to books by Tole (2007) and Shupo (2002), the books "Polifonia Labe" by Spiro Shetuni (1989) and "A Journey of the Vocal Ison" by Eno Koço (2015) are two important sources of information. Koço's (2015) book sheds light on the history, cultural and demographical contexts in which was formed the polyphonic acapella singing of the region, which he names as "Iso-based Multipart Unaccompanied Singing - IMUS". Spiro Shetuni's (1989) book "Polifonia Labe", on the other hand is a relatively earlier publication which focuses mainly on the Lab region vocal polyphony.

In addition to all this, the master's thesis by Marinela Mahony (2011) titled as "An Investigation of the Polyphonic Folk Music of Albania" is also a quick read which

provides introduction to general concepts of the subject, citing important publications in the field until year 2011.

Regarding the very limited publications discussing the musical content of the kaba performance, two sources stand out. Firstly, in the book “Folklori Muzikor” by Tole (2007), the chapters 10 and 23 focus on the kaba performances, especially the latter focusing on the “fractal” melodic structure, providing the transcription of a clarinet kaba, as example. Secondly, the book “The Versatile Clarinet” edited by R. Heaton has a chapter titled as “The Albanian Kaba and the Clarinet” by Dave Smith (2013) offering detailed observations about the kaba performances, again keeping the discussion limited to kaba with clarinet.

This thesis will hopefully become part of this existing literature on the subject, providing analytical information on the kaba performance exclusively focusing on the violin kaba.



2. THE MUSICAL TRADITIONS OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA AND VIOLIN KABA

Albania is situated on the western shore of the Balkan Peninsula. The western region of the country features a coastline along the Adriatic and Ionian seas, while the remaining three directions, beginning from the north, border the neighbouring countries of Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Greece. Albania's geographical position, bordering multiple countries with diverse folk music styles, results in the manifestation of various folk music traditions along its north-south axis. Albanian folk culture is mainly divided into two main geographical areas: Gheg and Tosk, situated respectively in the northern and southern parts of the country. The Shkumbin River provides a natural boundary between these two parts (Tole, 2002:5). As seen in Figure 2.1, the river, has its sources in the mountains near Lake Ohrid, a location near the Eastern borders of the country, and it traces a mostly horizontal line through the Albanian territory: it first flows northwest, then slightly changes direction near Qukës where it starts flowing west until reaching the Adriatic Sea.



Figure 2.1 : Shkumbin River dividing the Albanian territory into two areas (Biberaj & Prifti, 2024)

The Albanian language, despite minor regional variations, is fundamentally split by this natural boundary into two primary dialects: Gheg and Tosk (Demiraj & Esposito, 2006). Although the Elbasan dialect, being a midway between Gheg and Tosk, was used as lingua franca between intellectuals during the first half of the 20th century, after World War II, the new regime has favoured the Southern Tosk dialect as the basis of the modern standard Albanian language (Morina, 2015). In 1952, the Union of Albanian Writers designated the Tosk dialect of the south as the foundation of the national written language (Horecky et al., 1961).

A comparable stylistic variation is seen also in the forms of Albanian folk music across various regions of the country. Ethnomusicologist Spiro Shetuni (2011) illustrates the “dialects” of Albanian traditional music and their extensions beyond national borders in the map provided in Figure 2.2.

Shetuni lists four different “dialects” of traditional music found in Albania as: Gheg, which encompasses traditional music styles of the northern part of the country; Lab, which includes the most southern part of the country; Tosk, the wide area between the Gheg and Lab regions, and finally the distinctions Vasil Tole (2007) mentions about the differences found between Tosk and Lab-style vocal polyphony, also supports this classification.



Figure 2.2 : Dialects of traditional music in Albania with their musical extensions beyond national borders (Shetuni, 201).

Please note that the map by Shetuni shown in Figure 2.2 is purely music-related and it does not aim to suggest discussion on the present political borders of any country.

2.1 A General Overview of Folk Music in Southern Albania

While the music of the northern part of the country is mainly monophonic, southern folk music features polyphonic styles (Sugarman, 2001) with highly original musical material with roots going back to centuries. The southern part of the country is formed of four main regions: Toskëri, Labëri, Çamëri and Myzeqe, the first two being more important in sense of representing proper musical styles. Both vocal and instrumental folk music styles are of significance in the folk music of southern Albania. The concept of southern music is centred on the acapella polyphonic singing, termed as iso-polifonia (Tole, 2002). The iso-polyphonic choir having its origins in the Ilirio-Epirus region once inhabited by Illyrians, the ancestors of Albanians, and by the Greeks, now shared between the Albanian and Greek territories, is a multi-part polyphonic acapella singing tradition now included in UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list (UNESCO, 2008). The iso-polyphonic texture is also used as a framework for the instrumental music of the region, interpreted by ensembles named as “saze”, consisting of clarinet, violin, accordion, llauta [a kind of lute] and def [hand drum].

2.1.1 Instruments

Archaeological findings have brought to light a treasure trove of knowledge, about the ancestors of Albania shedding light on their history, economy, music and culture. These discoveries have revealed the heritage of Albanian musical instruments.

Through research spanning several decades, evidence has emerged of various recreational facilities scattered across Illyria. These include amphitheatres, theater complexes, odeons and grand arenas. Illyria was one of the prosperous regions in the Balkans with a flourishing economy and vibrant cultural scene. The regions inhabited by the Illyrians featured remnants of temples and libraries, alongside captivating sculptures and paintings portraying musicians, dancers and singers. It is evident that the Illyrians possessed a culture deeply rooted in beliefs. (Sokoli & Miso, 1991).

The traditional musical instruments of Albania include a number of plucked string, bowed, percussion and small wind instruments. The most frequently used ones are covered below.

The *çifteli* is a plucked string instrument played with a plectrum. It has two strings, an oval-shaped body and a long neck with frets. It has three sizes, with the smaller one

producing higher registers and the bigger one used for lower octaves (Mahony, 2011). The instrument is commonly played in northern Albania and neighboring regions, including Kosovo and is regarded as a quintessential representation of Albanian folk music (Minga, 2015b)

The two strings are usually tuned in unison, whereas there may be cases where a second, perfect fifth or perfect fourth interval is used instead. The usual playing practice is to use the first string to perform the melody while the second string provides a drone. The instrument accompanies both folk dances [valle] and songs [kenge] (Mahony, 2011).



Figure 2.3 : Çiftelia Ensemble (Agjencia Telegrafike Shqiptare, 2021)

Sharkia is also a plucked string instrument like the çifteli, but its size is bigger and it has more strings, as seen in Figure 2.4. According to Sokoli & Miso (1991) the number of strings may vary from 3 to 12, where the most popular setting is the one with 4 or 5 strings. The instrument is used mostly in the northern Albania and Kosovo.



Figure 2.4 : Sharkia² (Wikimedia Commons, 2014).

Cylja Dyjare is a folk music instrument made of two flutes carved in a single piece of wood in the shape of the letter "A". It is a polyphonic instrument: the right flute has four holes above and one behind, while the left one has only three holes parallel to the right. The right flute is used to play the melody, while the left side serves to produce countermelody or drones. The repertoire of the instrument is limited, with simple and short themes of well-known songs and dances, as well as with themes taken from women's laments. It is mainly used by shepherds. Archaeological discoveries in the region of Southern Illyria provide proof for the existence of *cylja dyjare* since the 5th-6th century BC (Akademisë së Shkencave të Shqipërisë, 1985).



Figure 2.5 : Cylja Dyjare³ (Top Channel Albania, 2019).

² Name of the player not mentioned in the source

³ Name of the player not mentioned in the source

Llautë is a kind of lute with four double strings tuned in perfect 4th, used mainly in Southern Albania. Until the 1920s, the *llautë* was primarily utilised as a solo instrument in the urban iso-polyphonic folk music of cities such as Korçë, Përmet and Berat. Following the establishment of the saze ensembles in the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the *llautë* was incorporated into these ensembles, this time mostly serving as an accompanying instrument (Tole, 2010).



Figure 2.6 : Llautë. Player: Ardian Muka⁴ (Maison des Cultures du Monde, 2021).

Dajre is a frame drum, named also as *def*. The name comes from the Turkish language where it literally means “circle”. It is widely used in the folk music of Albania, both in the northern and southern parts. *Dajre*, seen in Figure 2.7, is also the main percussion instrument used in the Saze ensembles of the south (Tole, 2010).



Figure 2.7 : Dajre. Player: Agron Nasi⁵ (Muziekpublieke, 2018).

⁴ Photo taken during a performance with Bajram Saçma saze ensemble in 2012.

⁵ Photo by Simon Blackley, taken during a performance with Saz-iso ensemble in 2018.

Fyell is a popular musical instrument widely used in all provinces, known especially as a shepherd's instrument. There are many forms and designations of the *fyell*, such as *cirifilja* and *cula* of Laberia; *duduk* of South-Eastern Albania. The size of the instrument varies according to the type, from 18 cm to 90 cm, where the bigger size is denoted by the name *kavall*. The instrument's repertoire consists of pieces such as well-known song and dance motifs or solo parts taken from women's laments. The sound of the *fyell* is beautifully combined with the bells of cattle during grazing. Often two *fyell* players perform together, with one playing the melody and the other holding the *iso* (Tole, 2007b).



Figure 2.8 : *Fyell*, size: *baritore*. Players: Ramadan & Xhaferr Kllogjri (ElrodiMusicOfficial, 2020).

2.1.2 Iso-Polyphony as singing tradition and stylistic source

As mentioned earlier, in Albania the concept of southern music is centred on the acapella polyphonic singing, termed as *iso-polifonia* (Tole, 2002).

Polyphonic singing in the southern regions of Albania is deeply rooted to social functions. Polyphonic songs are performed frequently in family gatherings and festivities and a big part of them are based on the pentatonic modes although the ornamental figures may include diatonic tones as well. The most traditional way of performing these polyphonic songs is purely acapella without any instruments. The

instruments have been included to the performance practice relatively late, beginning from the late 19th century (Sugarman et al, 2015)

As Koço (2015) mentions, there are claims that some properties of Albanian polyphonic singing tradition, especially the use of vocal drone, are related to the Byzantine church singing practices, where the vocal drone is named as “ison”, very similar to the term “iso” that is currently used in Albania related to the folk repertoires, only differing slightly with the final letter. Koço (2015) points out that the Southwest Balkan region developed unique indigenous genres distinctly influenced by the modal patterns of a pentatonic spectrum. The use of the vocal drone, is believed to be expanded from the old trade routes traversing this geographical boundary. The iso part accompanies multipart pentatonic singing systems, resulting in a more sophisticated melodic architecture for this vocal style. The gradual emergence of this singing style appears as a local process in the Southwest Balkans, with origins that are geographical rather than ethnic (Koço, 2015). This alone shows that the developmental phase of this tradition expands to Vasil Tole (2007), who has coined the term “Iso-Polyphony” and led the campaign on having the Albanian polyphonic singing included to the UNESCO’s intangible heritage list, clearly opposes to the idea which positions Byzantine church music as the source of multipart singing tradition of the old Epirus region, with the arguments that the pentatonic system’s central position in the Albanian polyphony makes it structurally different than the Byzantine church music which is mostly modal, and even in the case of one of these traditions impacting the other, it would be nearly impossible to tell whether it is the church music which influenced folk styles or vice-versa, or even both at the same time resulting from a reciprocal interrelation.

This chapter refrains from resolving this question as it is a contentious issue, subject to ongoing debate and requiring additional in-depth investigation. It is clear, however, that after the establishment of the Albanian and Greek nation states and up to the present day, the multi-part acapella singing tradition has been reflected in the national culture to a very significant extent on the Albanian side of the border.

The names given to the parts are illustrated in the Table 2.1. In the iso-polyphonic texture, the first part is called “marrës” [aker]. The taker usually starts the song. The second part is called “kthyes” [turner]. This second voice responds the first one. In addition to these, there is also the aforementioned “iso” part which is the vocal drone

featuring held long notes, usually appearing in the lower stave when multipart songs are collected and notated.

Table 2.1 : The vocal parts in Iso - Polyphony

Usual Part Order (in the notation)	Name of the Part (in Albanian)	Name of the Part (English Translation)
1st Part	Marrës	“Taker”, the one who starts the song
2nd Part	Kthyes	“Turner”, the one who responds
3rd part	Hedhës	“Thrower”, only found in four-voice settings, provides extra harmony.
Lower Part (in any setting)	Iso – Mbajnë ze	Iso – Keeping/Holding Voice (vocal drone)

There are usual combinations of these voice parts we encounter in the repertoire. In the two-voice settings, the taker is accompanied by either a turner or an iso. In the case of three voice polyphony, we have all three of these parts. The maximum number of parts an iso-polyphonic song reaches is four and it is found in the Lab region. In the four-part iso-polyphonic texture, in addition to the aforementioned three parts, there is a fourth part which is called “hedhës” [thrower], contributing to the harmonic palette as an extra line (Mahony, 2011).

Tole (2007) speaks about the general traits related to iso-polyphony providing details on the differences seen in the Tosk and Lab style multi part singing traditions. The map shown in Figure 2.9, also by Tole (2008), illustrates the regions where these two styles are mostly seen.

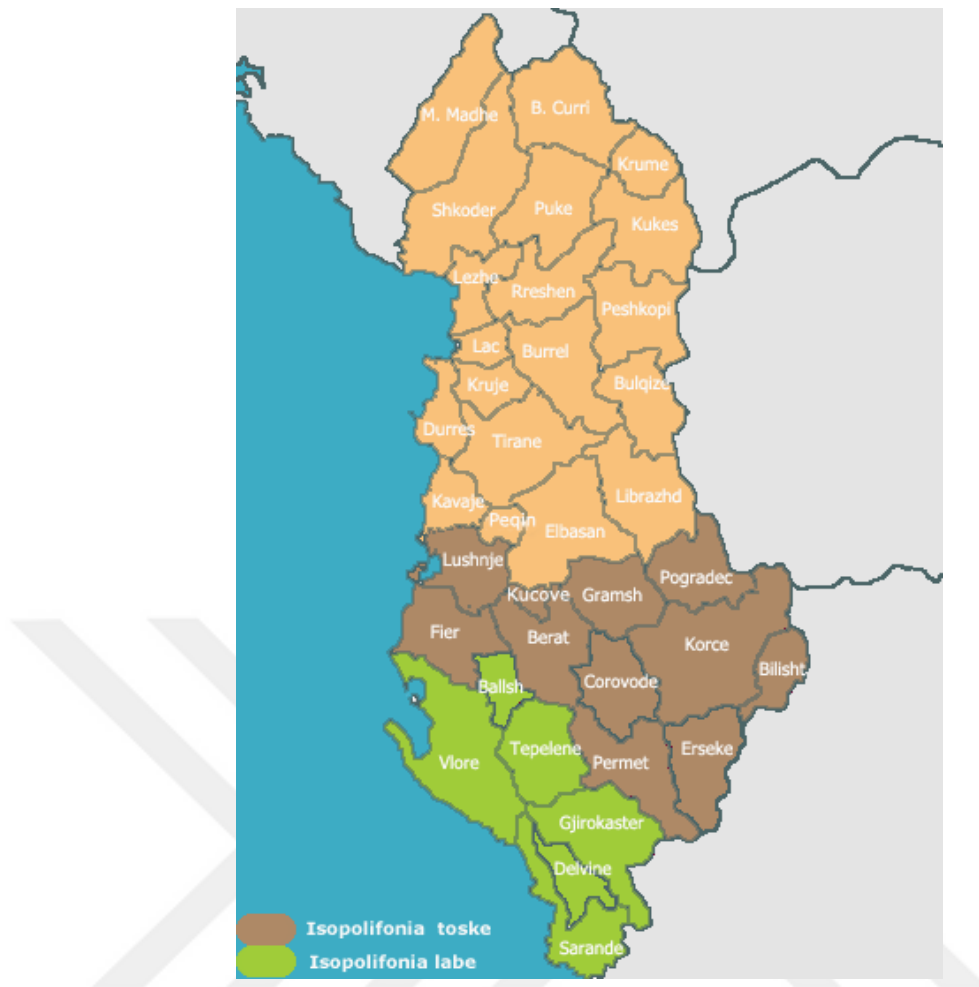


Figure 2.9 : Map of regions associated with Tosk and Lab style iso-polyphonic singing (Tole, 2008).

According to Tole (2007), in Lab-style iso-polyphony, the songs in both men's and women's repertoire always start with the first voice, the taker, and is closed in group by all the voices participating in the polyphony. The average formal length of singing a stanza in a two, three or four-part Lab song ranges from 25 to 30 seconds. On the other hand, in Tosk iso-polyphony, the song usually opens with the iso sung by the group, which plays the role of the initial pickup of the centre pitch for the song. After that, the interpretation of the first voice, taker, follows. We also have some cases when the song starts with the taker, mainly in two-voice songs with two singers. As in Lab iso-polyphony, the Tosk song is also closed by the whole group. The average formal length of singing a stanza in a two or three-voice Tosk song ranges between 40 to 50 seconds. Usually in two, three and four polyphonic voices, the first voice always develops in the middle and high registers of the song, while the second voice functions in low and mid register, and sometimes even below the iso part. In the Tosk iso-polyphonic song, the second voice, turner, has relatively more alternatives, it even has

the freedom to cut the song in the upper register at the same pitch as the first voice (Tole, 2007).

The Figure 2.10 below shows an example of Lab-style four-part iso-polyphonic singing. The transcription is taken from the Institute of Folk Culture Archive, *Arkivi i Institutit të Kulturës Popullore - AIKP*, sound recording Reel 355/9. The performance was recorded by M.Daiu, E.Dhei and A.Mustaqi, musical transcription by M.Daiu. The singers on the recording are listed as "Group of men from Gjirokastër": Xhevat Avdalli [b.1910], taker; Nusret Carçani [b.1909], turner; Isak Kadriu [b.1918] thrower; Isuf Asqeriu and friends, iso/voice-holders. The introduction to the song is made by the taker, the turner then responds, after which they form a two-voice texture together. The thrower comes in about the middle of the second system forming extra harmony, followed by the iso part that joins the group one measure later, holding the tone B.

Figure 2.10 : An example of Lab-style iso-polyphonic singing: “Këmb’ o këmbë pse mu pretë” (Tole, 2007).

2.1.3 Pentatonicism and iso-polyphony

The music of Southern Albania relies heavily on the use of pentatonic scale, serving as the basis of both melodic and harmonic structure. Tole (2010) emphasises that “iso-polyphonic texture and pentatonicism are inseparable twins in southern [Albanian] folk music”.

The pentatonic scale, as the name implies, is one that has five tones in an octave. The term usually refers to the “anahemitonic” pentatonic collection, characterised by the set C-D-E-G-A. From a Western music theory perspective, among the five modes derived from this collection, the one that is referred to as “major pentatonic scale”, with C as the tonic in the given example, is typically considered “the common pentatonic scale” although the mode commencing on A, referred to as “minor pentatonic”, also holds significance (Day-O’Connell, 2001). Pentatonic scale exists in many different parts of the World, “not only in China but also in almost all of South East Asia, in Japan, Bali, Oceania, Australia, India, South West Asia, in Turkey and in the Arab countries, among the Eurasian pastoral tribes, among Black Africans, Berbers, American Indians, and in Europe: Scotland, Ireland, among the Celts in general” (Van-Khe, 1977).

Van-Khe (1977) mentions that in Chinese music all five modes that can be produced from the anahemitonic pentatonic scale are used and they are named as “tiao”, meaning “system” or “mode”⁶.

As the “probable” source of the anahemitonic pentatonic scale, both Van-Khe (1977) and Tole (2010) refer to Romanian ethnomusicologist Brailoiu’s idea shown below in Figure 2.11.

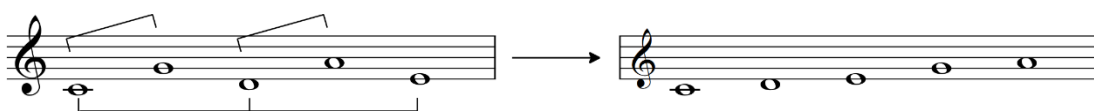


Figure 2.11 : The formation of anahemitonic pentatonic scale according to Brailoiu (1984).

Brailoiu (1984) discusses that among the theories explaining the formation of the anahemitonic pentatonic scale, the most ancient one from China appears still as valid and retainable. The theory in question suggests that the pentatonic scale stems from a

⁶ Van-Khe (1977) prefers to call these rather as “five different aspects” of the scale, with the worry that the term “mode” could lead to confusion.

series of intervals of fifth, not in the form of continually ascending fifths but rather as base notes progressing by whole tones with their added perfect fifths in between them, as shown in Figure 2.11. Brailoiu (1984) suggests that when one considers the typical practices of folk musicians, this formula seems more likely than a continuously ascending series of fifths expanding to a highly wide register span.

Brailoiu (1984), Shupo (2002) and Tole (2010) all list the modes produced out of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale in the format shown below in the first three columns of Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 : The anhemitonic pentatonic scale and its modes, expressed in diatonic scale degrees.

Pentatonic mode	Scale tones	Diatonic degrees (with centre tone C)	scale degrees (with the first note of the mode taken as centre tone)
Pentatonic Mode I	C-D-E-G-A	1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 6	1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 6
Pentatonic Mode II	D-E-G-A-C	2 – 3 – 5 – 6 – 1	1 – 2 – 4 – 5 – b7
Pentatonic Mode III	E-G-A-C-D	3 – 5 – 6 – 1 – 2	1 – b3 – 4 – b6 – b7
Pentatonic Mode IV	G-A-C-D-E	5 – 6 – 1 – 2 – 3	1 – 2 – 4 – 5 – 6
Pentatonic Mode V	A-C-D-E-G	6 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 5	1 – b3 – 4 – 5 – b7

Questions and discussions arise as to whether it is relevant or functional to refer to the pentatonic scale structures using diatonic scale degrees although the former contains only five tones while the latter has seven of them. As of year 2025, there is still no established or conventional way of referring to the pentatonic scale degrees using a pentatonic-specific enumeration system in the literature pertaining to the Western music theory.

A potential rationale for this seems to be the prevention of ambiguity. As an example, if we look at the right column in Table 2.2 above to compare the scale degrees that appear as the third tone of each scale, we see that it is a tone that is a P4 away from scale degree 1 (F), except the first mode where it is a M3 instead (E). In Western music

theory, diatonic scale degrees and the names given to the intervals are inter-related and this is very convenient: for instance, the third tone in a diatonic scale is either a m3 or M3 interval away from the tonic, and based on that, it is named respectively as either a scale degree 3 or b3. In the case of an anhemitonic pentatonic scale, if we would be willing to use pentatonic-specific scale degree numbers, we would have to redefine and rename the related intervals as well. Hence, diatonic the scale degree 4 appearing as the third tone in the scales given in Table 2.2 would be called as scale degree 3 and the related interval [defining the distance from the first scale tone] would have to be named as a “Perfect 3rd” being a perfect consonance, whereas a semitone lower version of this scale degree found in the Mode I [diatonically a M3 interval away from scale degree 1] would maybe be called as an “Imperfect 3rd” or even as a “Diminished 3rd”, given that there is a significant disparity in the consonance quality compared to the perfect intervals. This alone blurs the status given to the perfect intervals in the diatonic system defining them as specific and definite points of stability not having major or minor versions. They are either perfect or they become “altered” and an unstable element by definition.

Another confusion appears in the case of pentatonic scales used either in mode mixture with diatonic scales or with chordal accompaniment belonging to diatonic music. In both of these cases, music theory discussion about pentatonic-diatonic interrelations and the functioning of pentatonic structures inside a diatonic harmonic environment becomes highly confusing if we insist in using a pentatonic-specific scale degree enumeration system.

Given that this thesis focuses on a topic involving pentatonic and diatonic mode mixture with occasionally diatonic chordal accompaniment as found in saze music, keeping diatonic scale degree enumeration appears as the most viable approach for this research. Maybe that’s why both Tole (2007) and Shupo (2002) stick to the same approach in their publications on folk music of Albania.

In Southern Albanian folk music, all available five modes of the pentatonic scale are used (Shupo, 2002, v.1). Figure 2.12 displays the structure of these modes.

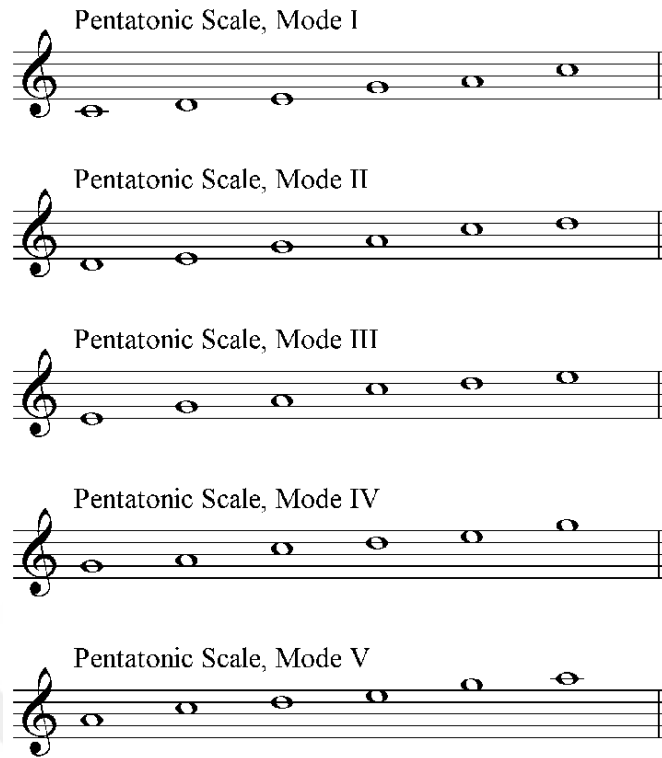


Figure 2.12 : Five modes of the pentatonic scale used in the music of Southern Albania, as shown by Shupo (2002).

The transcription provided in Figure 2.13 shows a three-voice folk song collected from the village Bërzhezhdë in Librazhd, showing the use of pentatonic mode IV with centre pitch D (Shupo, 2002, v.1: 25,26). The scale tones are then: D-E-G-A-B. Parts 1 and 2 make use of the whole scale while the iso part below keeps the centre tone D as pedal.



Figure 2.13 : Three-part iso-polyphonic piece collected from the village Bërzehzdë in Librazhd, transcription taken from Shupo (2002, v.1: 25,26).

2.1.4 Monody

In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the term monody is defined as a “style of accompanied solo song consisting of a vocal line, which is frequently embellished, and simple, often expressive, harmonies” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998). Although the term has been also used to refer to simply monophonic music, it mainly denotes a melodic structure forming the main material and easily differentiated secondary or accompanimental parts resulting in a polyphony without a polyphonic texture.

Monody is mostly associated with either urban music or northern folk music in Albania, although it also has some limited place in the southern repertoires as well (Tole, 2007).

Although monodic songs also take part in the saze ensembles’ repertoires, the monodic styles will not be discussed in detail in this thesis as they do not usually function as source material for the violin kaba.

2.1.5 Instrumental styles and ensembles

Albanian musical traditions are distinguished by the extensive utilisation of diverse folk instruments, ranging from ancient to modern, which are essential elements of numerous folk ensembles throughout the country. The notion of instrumental polyphony, particularly within Saze ensembles, has been examined in seclusion owing to its regarded antiquated and indigenous characteristics. Nonetheless, Saze and instrumental polyphony exemplify advancements in Albanian folk music, serving as indicators of creative merit and the boundless essence of folklore.

Saze, an influential folk music ensemble of the 20th century, was established to preserve and advance a specific formula of our musical ethnogenesis. The selection of Saze for its conservation and longevity encompasses multiple elements that may raise diverse concerns among individuals. The retention and transmission of the formula rely on its perceived closeness to the prior musical heritage.

The use of Saze and iso-polyphony with instruments underpins the internal evolution of this music, serving as a direct representation of urban musical folklore. The prior availability of instruments and various configurations in folk music facilitated the move to alternative modes of expression without compromising its fundamental attributes and qualities. The use of similarly tempered instruments in traditional formations enabled the capture of these areas, establishing their distinct subject matter and redefining the interplay between instrumental and vocal music characteristics.

Saze significantly contributed to the evolution of Albanian musical folklore from the 1800s to the 1900s, playing a vital role in the preservation, dissemination, and advancement of the popular musical culture to the present day. For the past century, Saze ensembles have successfully showcased and validated their music inside the spiritual realm of Albanians, both domestically and internationally. Examining Saze offers an authentic narrative of the life and musical traditions of 20th-century Albanian urban centres.

As the name suggests, South Albanian popular music is prevalent in the southern region of the country, characterised by two prominent ethnographic areas, Toskëria and Labëria, which are distinct from the others. The specified regions encompass the districts of Saranda, Delvina, Gjirokastra, Përmet, Tepelena, Mallakasta, Fieri,

Skrapar, Berat, Kuçova, Lushnja, Vlora, Cologne, Korça Devolli, Pogradec, Gramsh, and Librazhd, amounting to a total of 18 districts (Tole, 2007).

Musical instruments cannot be comprehended without their accompanying "discourse." The "musical language of instruments" transcends mere acoustic sounds produced by specific folk instruments; it embodies a performer engaging in artistic interpersonal communication. It formalises emotions through embellishment and intricate melodies in the instrumental presentation, linking those raised within the same tradition and familiar with its semantics.

The traditional repertory imparts a philosophical, artistic, and emotional significance that is entirely comprehensible to the popular musician and the instrument. Saze music embodies the essence of relationships, utilising considerable "free interpretation" (rubato rhythms in instrumental melodies) and conveying semantics with the simplicity of melo-linguistic frameworks. This interaction affects both vocal and instrumental music, refining musical dimensions and emotional depth, so transforming this musical language into an intercultural medium.

There remains a misapprehension regarding the authentic role that instrumental folk music should hold within Albanian musical tradition. Polyphonic folk instrumental music constitutes a vital component of folk music legacy, encompassing elements derived from ethnos in melody, polyphony, rhythm, forms, instruments, and structure. It has assumed the qualities of a comprehensive, personalised, and essential musical language.

Polyphonic folk music, characterised by instruments and sazes, symbolises unity and identity, thriving on the individuality and diversity of performances. It is regarded as a fundamental component of creativity, a means of inter-Albanian artistic contact, and a vital aspect of tradition, crucial for maintaining national identity. In this context, vocal folk music represents a distinct trajectory of evolution and a manifestation of the existence and continuity of Albanian musical folklore.

The boundary of dialects in Southern music illustrates prevalent musical inclinations towards modes and scales. The collection of instruments, musical organology, and pre-Saze vocal folk music all underscore the pentatonic scale as an essential component of Southern music. The Tosk and Lab regions exhibit the most intensity in the utilisation of the pentatonic scale, irrespective of varying viewpoints on melodic structure.

Pentatonicism manifests in auditory elements and proportions, with each nation's cultural identity defined by distinct interval usage, vertical harmonies, and horizontal melodic interactions. These qualities are integral to the Saze repertoire, seen as defining elements of their performance. In broadening the pentatonic expressive range in Saze music, the foundational melody is honoured, highlighting the evocative power of the southern pentatonic and its diverse "klangfarbe" characteristics.

Southern music featuring instruments encompasses various melodic forms, including monodic, diatonic, polyphonic, and heterophonic. These categories possess a distinctive repertory and can be classified as monophonic with Saz and heterophonic with pre-instruments. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognise that a liking for polyphonic music does not inherently signify a deficient musical culture.

Confusion frequently occurs owing to the interference of melodic styles or a deficiency in continuity in the production of popular music. This diversity and cohesion are seen in the evolution from monody to polyphony or in segments separated from a previously cohesive polyphonic theme.

Popular polyphony constitutes not merely a method of structuring melodic forms but also an integral phenomenon throughout the entirety of South Albanian folk music. The examination of southern folk music indicates that the "melodic types" are crudely analysed, as they represent the decomposition of polyphonic elements in reflections. The monodic structure in non-vocal sections reveals the disintegration of polyphonic lines when analysed horizontally.

Elements and formulas enable the reconfiguration of a polyphonic theme, as demonstrated in the spectral analysis of "Ison" and the "hidden polyphony" within popular monody (Tole, 2007).

2.1.6 Introduction of equally-tempered instruments to the folk music of Albania

The polyphonic formation of Saze is closely linked to the introduction of tempered instruments in Albania. The entry of these instruments was conditioned by two ways: using them in formations cultivated for "new urban music" and introducing them as folk instruments with a preliminary preparation. Traditional instruments were produced by instrumentalists themselves or by different craftsmen individually, which was closely related to the former condition of the Albanian peasants. However, the quality of the musical material that was produced and inserted into the structure of

traditional instruments represented the musical language of the popular Albanian performer and at the same time the relative obstacle to its expression.

The introduction of tempered instruments in Albania must have been greatly encouraged when the trade of Northern and Southern Albania mainly integrated into the Western European market system, creating powerful economic relations with the main ports of the Empire. In the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, the country's ruling class was made up of the wealthy classes: the Beylers, feudal lords, and the merchant bourgeoisie who were very open and interested in goods imported from Europe. Albanian trade had partners in half of the most preferred countries such as Austria-Hungary, Italy, France, Greece, Turkey, Malta, Tunisia, etc. The classification of trade relations of Southern Albania (from the ports of Lower Albania such as Preveza, Vlorë, Sarandë, Butrint, etc.) only for the year 1877 shows this.

The intensification of trade exchanges created opportunities for the first instruments to enter the country, along with a series of imported industrial items. Although there are no specifications in the trade lists regarding purchases of musical instruments, it is possible that tempered instruments were also ordered. These instruments were bought by either those who were already interested in them or a minority of people, who in most cases were craftsmen who were wealthy enough to afford them.

The introduction of equally-tempered instruments such as clarinet, accordion, and violin, being the main constituent instruments of Saze and any other popular formation in southern Albanian music, was made at the exact moment when this music required the creation of a new dimension of its reflection. From the first contacts with these instruments, Albanian folk musicians found the perfect technical means for reflecting their emotional world, which subsequently conditioned the reasons for their musical absorption.

Of all the tempered instruments, only some of them were of immediate interest, as in the case of the clarinet, which was also absorbed by Albanian folk "gernetists" very quickly. Since the tempered instruments in Albania have come directly from the countries of Western Europe, even the first communication of the Albanian folk-musician with the tempered instrument (clarinet or violin) happened without foreign mediators.

The introduction of tempered instruments means a "borrowing" of their sonic qualities from southern folk instrumental music itself as a whole, and in particular from the instrumental music repertoire itself. Folk instruments, as carriers of this repertoire, underwent the same process. Due to the highly qualitative and evolutionary nature of Albanian musical folklore, it would be quite unpleasant to notice that after the painful cycles of processing and selecting the musical subject, it would remain in the same state again, that is, endlessly with the same musical content and timbre (Tole, 2007).

Nowadays, the same practice continues with the addition of popular music instruments and textures. In the newer pop-folk productions, especially instruments like clarinet and violin having usually primary or secondary melodic lines in their parts, are played by musicians coming from a traditional folk music background, keeping their original playing styles. That is why in this thesis, a few examples from the recent pop-folk productions are also included.

2.2 Place and Past of Violin in Folk Music of Albania and “Saze” Ensembles

The instrument often known as the violina is actually a violin. It is also referred to as qemanë, a name frequently used by the elderly population across the nation. The violin is utilised in both the northern and southern regions of Albania. Determining the precise date of the violin's initial introduction and importation into the country poses a challenging task. Miso states that around 1825, the violin became integrated into a prominent musical ensemble in Shkodër. The players were so enamoured with the instrument that a few of them made efforts to construct their own violins (Miso & Sokoli, 1991).

In the early days, Albanian folk musicians were holding the violin in vertical position, in a fashion that recalls other bowed instruments like kemenche and alikes, traditionally played in the Caucasian area, Middle East and Asia Minor. The tuning system was also slightly different than the classical violin, featuring a scordatura highest string tuned a major 2nd lower, namely to D instead of E. In the resulting tuning, strings were, from lower to higher: G-D-A-D, with the three higher strings matching the traditional tuning system of kemenche. This performance style continued until the 1940s, after which both the position and tuning of the instrument changed to conform the classical Western standards (Mahony, 2011).



Figure 2.14 : Qemane, held in vertical position (Miso & Sokoli, 1991)

The use of violin in this musical context is mostly as a member of the polyphonic texture based originally on the iso-polyphonic vocal tradition, this time played by instruments. In some other cases, violin may take up the role of a soloist accompanied by the ensemble, forming a monodic texture. Because the instrumental music tends to adopt the *a capella* vocal singing, the instrument players interpret musical lines using many ornamental techniques in order to reach effects similar to singing styles of the region, such as glissandi, special kinds of vibrati and rapidly played note groups, mostly assigned to specific degrees of the scales. The tone production also bears importance: the bow is used with different pressure levels and in various angles to produce different tones supporting the ornamentations made by the left hand. The scales used in the region include mostly different modes of pentatonic scale.

Starting in the latter half of the 19th century, Western musical instruments like clarinets, violins, and accordions, which used the 12TET tuning system, were introduced to Albania. As a result, instrumental ensembles known as "saze" emerged in the Tosk region. These ensembles adopted the fundamental structure of the vocal polyphony tradition as a musical language (Tole, 2015). The ahengxhi [ahengci] or sazexhi [sazci], who were initially a small group of semi-professional or professional musicians, primarily performed at ceremonies like weddings. They were not widely respected by the general public. However, as time passed, they played a significant role in introducing traditional music to urban settings. They began performing at

parties, dances, and concerts that went beyond the scope of weddings. The ensembles, primarily nomadic, extended from Southern and Southeastern Albania to the northern regions of Greece (Koço, 2018).

The instruments execute the iso-polyphony sections in saze ensembles. In this context, the customary approach involves a three-voice texture, where the clarinet assumes the role of taker-marrës, the violin acts as turner-kthyes, and the lute functions as iso-holding the drone (Tole, 2015). Added to these, a “dajre”, large-sized circular percussion instrument, is used. This ensemble allows for multiple configurations, including the occasional inclusion of two clarinets or two violins. Additionally, an accordion can be added to the lute to provide support for the iso, or alternatively, only an accordion can be utilised (Sugarman et al., 2015). Currently, electronic keyboard instruments are also employed for the iso section in amplified concerts.

The introduction of the violin into saze ensembles aligns with the emergence of these groups in the 19th century. During this time, the instrument was likely referred to as “qemanë” [keman], derived from Turkish, or “dhjoli” [violi], borrowed from European languages. The musician playing the instrument was known as “dhjoli” [violici], employing the Turkish suffix -ci (Tole, 2010, p.46). Today, these words are acknowledged as part of the archaic language and exclusively denote a genre of violin performance associated with folk music. The earliest documented saze violinist described in historical sources is Kralo Berati, succeeded by Ndrekë Gjon Teneqeja and Marko Krali. These musicians were associated with urban bands in Iskodër during the latter part of the 19th century. Notable Albanian folk violinists from the past to the present include Muzhani [Iskodër, 1892 - 1953], Hafize Leskoviku and the Leskovikli group [early 20th century], Korça Sazeja [early 20th century], Muharremi from Korça Saze, Riza Nebati from Berat, Bido Hajro from Korça, Kola i Qorres from Iskodra, Xhemal Muzikanti from Permedi saz [second half of the 20th century], Çerçiz Mehmeti also from Permedi, Ethem Qerimaj from recent history, as well as Aurel Qirjo (Tole, 2010, p.46) and Artur Ylli Zeqiri as living artists.

2.3 Kaba as an Improvisatory Form in the Folk Music of Southern Albania

By definition, Kaba is an improvised instrumental performance in mostly ad-libitum time. Since it is conceived as a showcase piece for the performer to display their musical abilities, most of the times Kaba performances contain a high number of

various articulations and ornamented highly florid melodic fragments used in combination. In most cases, the rapidly flowing groups of tones are centred around a prolonged main melody tone. As is the case with similar free-improvised pieces like Taksim, Kaba performances mostly rely on a melodic progression based on the scale, and in the case of music of Southern Albania, this is the pentatonic scale including its five modes.

When we look at the genres of folk music in southern Albania, the most basic distinction is between *këngë* [song] and *valle* [dance music]. Both in recorded performances from the 20th century and in contemporary practice, we see that the kaba often plays the role of an instrumental, free-rhythmic introduction/opener to either of these two genres, and when the kaba ends, the music is connected to the following piece without intervening silence.

Although the kaba is said to have a free-rhythm, the repetition of small melodic patterns gives it a motif-based intrinsic rhythmic flow and a feeling of successive beats although the objective time distance between beats is smoothly alternated as governed by the performer. Vasil Tole (2007:400) refers to this phrasing-based type of ad libitum rhythm as “parlando rubato”.

While the solo instrument performs the kaba, the other instruments play the role of accompaniment by holding a long pedal sound [iso] in the background. With this feature, the kaba, which seems to share common characteristics with the taksim in makam music, is distinguished from the taksim by its texture, which sometimes turns into a three-voice iso-polyphony with the participation of another instrument in the ensemble acting as the second voice, “turner-kthyes”, and also by its pentatonic sound content, as well as its independence from the task of providing any makam/mode change between the pieces.

According to Shituni (1989), when genres in Lab music are divided into singing music and instrumental music, basically four genres can be mentioned under the vocal music category: *ninulla* [lullaby], *boroitja* or *logatja* [shepherd song], *vajtimi* [lament/mourning], *kënga* [song]. The first three of these are performed homophonically, only the last one polyphonically, and constitute the most common part of the folk music repertoire. Coming to the instrumental music, Shituni (1989) states that there are instrumental “styles”, which can be understood as playing

attitudes, and we can list them as follows: baritore [pastoral], kaba, melody, e qarë [lament - for any reason], vajtim [mourning - after the dead], ligjërim [narrative-like recitative] (Shituni, 1989: p.42). Here we can see that the kaba is identified as one of the basic instrumental performance forms in Lab music.

As discussed under the previous sub-chapters, the lute - *llahuta*, accordion, and *dajre* are used as accompaniment instruments in the saze line-up, while the clarinet and violin play the melodic lines. For this reason, the instruments that perform the kaba are usually clarinet or violin.

In Dave Smith's (2013) detailed description of clarinet kabas, the following statements, which also apply to violin kabas, are found:

“The kaba, found especially in southern Albania, is a semi-improvised instrumental piece, almost always performed by clarinet or violin, supported by a pedal sound [drone] held by a long sound or tremolo [from below]. In the piece, which usually begins in a low voice [the word kaba means low or deep in Turkish] several short melodic motifs are repeated, intertwined and are the subject of variation. Many of these motifs are based on [old] pastoral improvisations, but perhaps the most recognisable is the ascending minor 7th leap figure. This motif is native to southern Albania and is originally found in the laments sung by women in polyphonic vocal music. The mournful and stylised laments in singing music are the strongest influence on the playing of the kaba and determine the general character. Many kaba open in a calm mood, then increase in dramatic power through gradual or abrupt changes in volume, rhythm, register and intensity; in turn, the kaba typically connects to dance music [valle] at a medium-fast tempo, ending in an optimistic mood with the release of tension. Abundant use of all types of glissandos, fast or slow, large or small, is an effective feature. Other common techniques are, small and subtle ornaments, use of microtones, the use of different sound colours for different sounds, and different types of vibratos” (Smith, 2013, p.48).

Vasil Tole (2007, p.399), corroborates Smith's previous findings on the recurrence and alteration of melodic motifs. Tole further asserts that the repetition of concise melodic patterns is prevalent in kaba playing, and that the rhythmic flow is regulated by employing elongated or condensed variations of these patterns during repetitions. The kaba's basic melodic nature is largely attributed to the continual modification of small

melodic motifs, which forms the basis of its musical flow. Tole (2007) refers to this property of the kaba as “fractality”.

According to Tole (2007), the small melodic fragments that are used as melodic building blocks of kaba performances come from both Tosk and Lab area folk repertoires, be it vocal or instrumental pieces. Tole (2007) argues that because both of these repertoires rely on iso-polyphonic texture and pentatonic scale systems, the iso-polyphony serves as a general framework in which melodic material coming from Tosk and Lab folk repertoires are used in combination in an organic way.

This thesis provides the opportunity to observe this trait through the kaba analyses conducted.





3. ANALYSIS OF VIOLIN KABA PERFORMANCES BY ETHEM QERIMAJ, ARTUR YLLI ZEQIRI AND AUREL QIRJO

This chapter presents musical transcriptions of violin kaba performances by renowned artists, together with an examination of their musical structure and performance-related components. The transcriptions are original content created for this thesis and are not sourced from other publications.

As previously explained in the discussion related to the scope and limitations of this thesis, the research will focus on violin kaba recordings by well-known recent-period performers for mainly two reasons. First, the research requires the analysis of performance practice and playing techniques in addition to the musical structure. The older recordings dating back from the early to mid-20th century are of very low audio fidelity, hence, based on them, it is not likely to form a clear analysis of performance practice and playing techniques beyond assumptions. Second, listening to the early recordings of kaba performances from the sources provided in the appendix part of this thesis comparing them to the recent recordings, it seems like later generations of performers have absorbed the earlier materials and ideas, combining them in their playing in a refined and organic way, creating a stylistic amalgamation. In line with the purpose of the thesis, it becomes more effective to focus solely on recent recordings, limiting the number of pieces to be analysed and opening up space for a more detailed and in-depth study.

In addition to the aforementioned matters, it is important to mention that the transcriptions and the related analysis focus on the first and main part of the kaba where the whole motivic material is exposed and developed. Usually, this main part is recapitulated afterwards. Aiming to provide a deep analysis of both the motivic development techniques and performance practice proper to the style, the scope has been limited to the first and main segment of the analysed kaba performances.

3.1 Biographies of the Artists Selected for Analysis

The biographies of the performers chosen for analysis are provided here to illustrate their significant place in the folk music of Albania.

3.1.1 Short biography of Ethem Qerimaj

Ethem Qerimaj, also spelled as Etem Qerimaj, Ethem Qerimi, or Etem Qerimi, was born in Albania in 1934. His family is from Permet, a city renowned for its significant contributions to the folk music of Southern Albania (Minga, 2015a); nonetheless, he was born in Cakran, a commune in Fier County, where the state relocated the family during the communist era (A2 | CNN Affiliate, 2019). The family initially participated in milling, but their father, a folk musician, introduced young Ethem to the mandolin and then the violin (Sejamini, 2020).

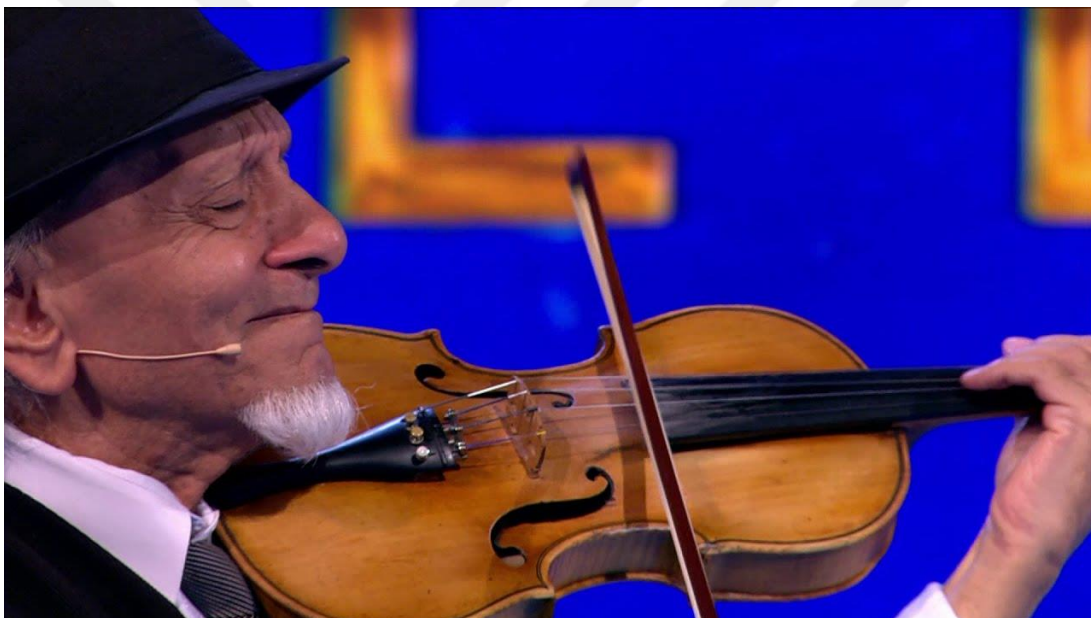


Figure 3.1 : Ethem Qerimaj performing in a TV show (Top Channel Albania, 2022).

At the age of 12, Qerimaj experienced a life-changing event. Mehmet Shehu, the Albanian Prime Minister at the time, visited the village accompanied by state officials, and a luncheon was organised at the village school for these dignitaries. At this moment, a musician was summoned, and Ethem Qerimaj performed several pieces on his violin. Prime Minister Shehu was captivated by the little artist's performance. Upon Ethem's conclusion, Shehu enquired about his name, recorded it in a notebook he retrieved from his pocket, and informed him to prepare for his forthcoming music studies in Tirana. The Prime Minister and his retinue depart

from the settlement, and time elapses. The occurrence is overlooked. A vehicle occupied by police officers arrived in the village one day. They located Ethem Qerimaj and placed him in the vehicle without any explanation. Qerimaj's family believed this constituted an arrest, resulting in profound dread and sorrow as the police abruptly apprehended him without any inquiry into the reason. The vehicle transported young Ethem directly from his village to Tirana, to the edifice of the Albanian Philharmonic Orchestra [Filarmonia Shqiptare], which currently houses the Academy of Arts [Akademia e Artëve]. He was informed that he had been summoned by the prime minister, Mehmet Shehu, to pursue art studies (KlanKosovo, 2014). Qerimaj was presented to violinists Lam Petrela and Adem Beqiri, alumni of Soviet conservatories and instructors at the university. Upon discovering that young Ethem was unable to read musical notation, the two artists deliberated briefly; nonetheless, acknowledging the directive's prestigious origin, they resolved to grant him a one-year trial period. Upon the successful conclusion of this period, Qerimaj pursued violin studies in the traditional Western tradition in Tirana under the tutelage of Lam Petrela and Pjetër Gaci. After completing his studies, he served as the second violin section leader in the Albanian Philharmonic Orchestra for five years, followed by 13 years with the Orchestra of the Albanian State Opera and Theatre, and then in the Albanian Army Orchestra until his retirement. Throughout the years, he toured in numerous locations globally, from Italy to China, consistently playing the violin in the folk music style that initiated his artistic career (Sejamini, 2020).



Figure 3.2 : Ethem Qerimaj on stage with his grandchildren (Familja Qerimaj, 2015).

Ethem Qerimaj's sons, Fatos Qerimaj and Bruno Qerimaj, became prominent musicians, and subsequently, his grandchildren, Valin Qerimaj and Klodi Qerimaj, pursued violin studies at the conservatory. Family members occasionally perform individually and at other times collectively under the name Familja Qerimaj as seen in Figure 3.2. Ethem Qerimaj persisted in his musical endeavours as a leading violinist, especially known for South Albanian-style folk music performances, until his passing on 13 September 2022 (“Ndahet”, 2022).

3.1.2 Short biography of Artur Ylli Zeqiri

Artur Ylli Zeqiri is a renowned violinist in Albania's folk music scene. Zeqiri, currently residing in France, was born in Albania on May 8, 1964, in the city of Përmet, notable for being the hometown of numerous prominent saze artists (Artur Ylli Zeqiri, n.d.).



Figure 3.3 : Artur Ylli Zeqiri on stage

He hails from the Zeqiri family, well-known in the realm of folk music, which has produced musicians including Xhelal Zeqiri, Sadik Zeqiri, Alban Zeqiri, among others. During our personal interview, Zeqiri indicated that his family had a longstanding history of musicianship. During the period when Albanian territories were under the Ottoman Empire, family members were summoned to perform music for the renowned Ali Pasha of Tepelena at his court (A.Y. Zeqiri, personal communication, February 3rd, 2016).



Figure 3.4 : Sazet e Përmetit: Ylli Muco, Sadik Zeqiri, Jarek Muco, Alban Zeqiri

Zeqiri commenced his formal musical education in Korça, from elementary school until the end of high school, then continued his violin studies at the University of Tirana. He also engaged in individual studies with renowned folk clarinetist Laver Bariu to attain proficiency in folk music. Bariu was a familial acquaintance who introduced the young Zeqiri to the culture and customs of folk music. Zeqiri states that despite Laver Bariu being a real master in folk music, he hadn't got formal musical training; thus, his instructional approach mostly involved practical exercises such as listening, imitation, and collaborative playing (A.Y. Zeqiri, personal communication, February 3rd, 2016).

Artur Ylli Zeqiri is in possession of a 136-years-old violin that once belonged to the famous saze musician Hafize Leskoviku (Report TV, 2016).

Zeqiri has resided in Bordeaux, France since 2016, maintaining an active performance career (Artur Ylli Zeqiri, n.d.).

3.1.3 Short biography of Aurel Qirjo

Violinist Aurel Qirjo, seen performing on stage in Figure 3.5, was born in 1964 in Korça, Albania. He has devoted his entire life to music, ultimately becoming a violin instructor in Albania, Greece, and the United Kingdom. Previously, he held the position of conductor for the symphony orchestra at the Academy of Music in Tirana and Korça.



Figure 3.5 : Aurel Qirjo on stage, photo by Artur Temo (Onassis Foundation, n.d.).

Qirjo has assimilated the idiomatic characteristics of Epirotic music, demonstrating a significant influence from Ethem Qerimaj. He has actively participated in the production of two CDs of Saze music and has played at various festivals across Europe. In 2009, he received the Grand Prize at the Gjirokaštër National Folklore Festival for his violin performance of 'mirologi', which refers to laments. For the past ten years, he has lived and worked in London, United Kingdom, featuring on BBC television.



Figure 3.6 : Aurel Qirjo, in the left, performing with the Saze ensemble “Saz-Iso” (BBC Music, 2017)

This thesis analyses the main segment from Aurel Qirjo's "Kaba me Violinë" (Kaba with Violin), featured on the album "At Least Wave Your Handkerchief" by the Saze ensemble "Saz-Iso" (Saz-iso, 2017).



Figure 3.7 : Aurel Qirjo with the Saze ensemble “Saz-Iso”

3.2 Considerations Pertaining to the Analysis Methodology

This thesis includes transcriptions of violin kabas, and the subsequent studies include observations and comments on both the melodic and harmonic structure as well as playing practices. These two aspects are not categorised separately, as they have a symbiotic relationship, interacting with each other, due to the overall structure of the music and the playing styles. To showcase this complex structure, a preferred approach has been adopted where structural analysis and performance analysis are interwoven.

Another crucial matter is the set of concepts that will serve as the foundation for the analysis, also affecting the vocabulary to be employed. Within the existing written literature on Albanian folk music, the analysis of the musical structure does not usually feature the examination of instrument playing techniques and performance practice. Instead, it primarily centres on the overall modal, harmonic, melodic and rhythmic analysis of the music. Consequently, there is currently no established violin-related terminology that is specifically tailored to Albanian folk music. In the analyses conducted here, the established and widely accepted concepts and terminology of classical Western music pertaining to violin playing will serve as the initial

point of reference. Any deviations from these practices will be described and discussed in addition, as well as other examinations regarding the playing techniques.

The analysed violin performances exhibit an "ad libitum" rhythmic aspect characterised by a free and flexible tempo, which is a typical feature of the kaba genre. Nevertheless, there exists an intrinsic rhythm in which the time intervals between beats fluctuate according to the player's feel, allowing for nuanced interpretations and suggestions for emphasis and expression. Within this framework, certain transcriptions employ approximations when it comes to metre and note values. These approximations incorporate the notator's subjective viewpoint and interpretation of the rhythmic structure heard in the recordings.

3.3 Transcriptions of Violin Kaba Performance Segments and Related Analysis

In this section, we will examine the main segments of kaba performances by three prolific performers of Southern Albania-style violin: Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri and Aurel Qirjo.

As stated in the preceding sections of this study, kaba, similar to Taksim in Turkish makam music, is an improvised performance centred around a primary instrument. It is typically played as an introductory piece before a song or dance, and, similar to Taksim performances, kaba performances do not bear a specific title. Therefore, the kabas that will be examined are identified by performance-related details, such as the performer's name, the date and location of the performance, or the recording's identifiers.

The kaba is a showcase piece where the soloists display their utmost technical abilities. On the other hand, when we look at the performers, we see that they mostly play versions of one single kaba composition throughout many years during their career. It is considered as their signature in the style. However, this results in a problem when one tries to find kaba performances to analyse: there are a very limited number of performers whose performances could represent the genre at its best, and each of these musicians have mostly one kaba composition which they play with variations from one performance to the other. With clarinet being the mostly preferred solo instrument in saze music, the violin kabas are even more rare. Historical recordings are mostly from early 20th century where the recording quality is not clear enough to reflect the tone-colour variations or very complex and florid ornamentations and rapidly played note groups making the transcription task nearly impossible to execute with accuracy.

In addition to the aforementioned matters, it is important to mention that the transcriptions and the related analysis focus on the first and main part of the kaba where the whole motivic material is exposed and developed. Usually, this main part is recapitulated afterwards. Aiming to provide a deep analysis of both the motivic development techniques and performance practice proper to the style, the scope has been limited to the first and main segment of the analysed kaba performances.

Within the limitations of such conditions, for this thesis project, main segments from kaba performances by three most renowned names of Southern Albania folk violin tradition in the recent decades, namely Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri and Aurel Qirjo, have been selected as actual examples reflecting all the complex structure based on motivic relations and fine and delicate details of the playing techniques.

3.3.1 Kaba segment by Ethem Qerimaj: transcription and analysis

The kaba performance by Ethem Qerimaj transcribed below was recorded during a personal interview with him made for this thesis in Tirana, Albania, on April 8th, 2017. A photo taken that day, showing the writer of this thesis and Qerimaj can be seen in Figure 3.8. The transcription of the Kaba is provided in Figure 3.9.

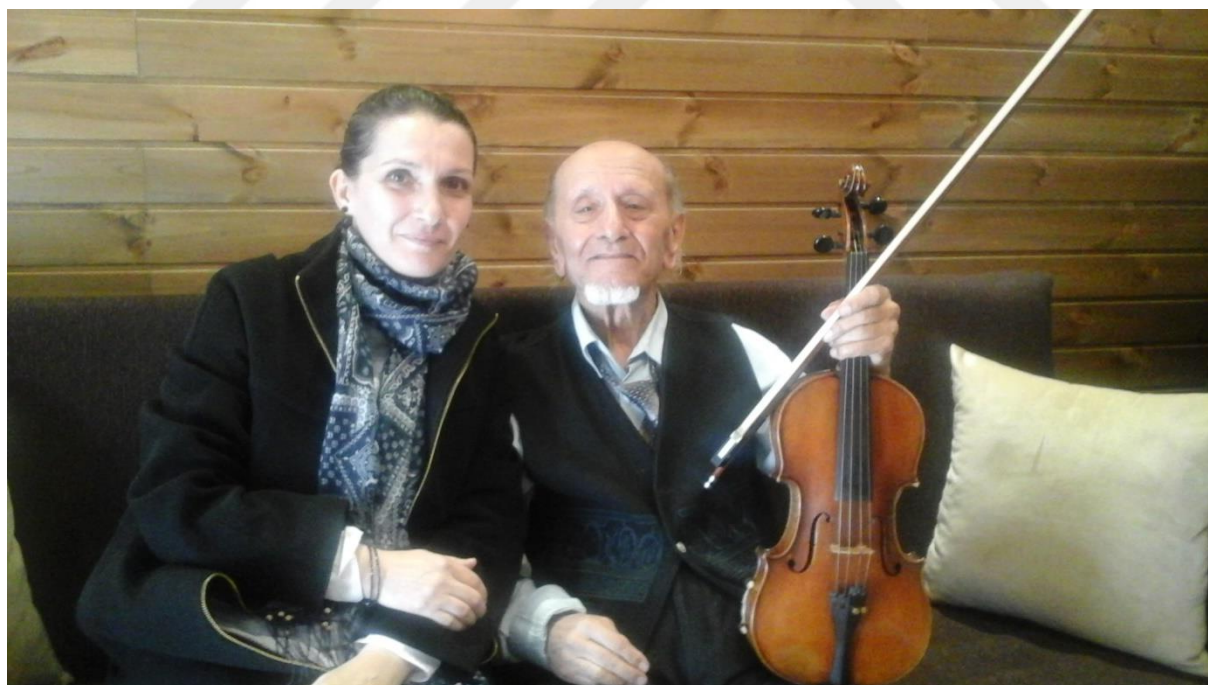


Figure 3.8 : Ethem Qerimaj and Aida Alketa Pulake Altınbüken, photo taken during the personal interview on April 8th, 2017 in Tirana, Albania.

The kaba in question is not a spontaneous improvisation by Qerimaj at that particular moment, but rather a rendition of a pre-existing kaba composition that the artist has previously performed at different concerts and recitals. A video recording of one of these prior performances can be accessed online (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014). In these other on-stage recordings of this kaba, usually after ends the part which Qerimaj played for the thesis project, the music continues with the birdsong effect and a recapitulation of the initial part. Similar to other forms of improvisational music, Qerimaj's kaba exhibits variations from one performance to another, while maintaining a consistent underlying structure and fundamental melodic content. The version provided in this thesis is based on the exclusive performance Qerimaj gave during the interview held for this thesis. The transcription of this performance is seen in Figure 3.9.



Kaba segment with violin - Ethem Qerimaj

(Recorded during personal interview on April 8th, 2017 at Tirana-Albania)

Transcription:
Aida Alketa Pulake Altınbüken

Ad libitum
♩=80 (approx.)

9 3 4 molto vib. nat. gliss.

22 3 3 vib. tr gliss. accel.

31 - - - **A tempo** 7

35 3 3 gliss. vib. gliss.

43 3 gliss. wide vib. 3

50 wide vib. molto vib. nat.

54 vib. gliss. gliss. 3

58 3 vib. 3

65 tr 3 tr 3

69 3 3

Figure 3.9 : Transcription of the kaba performance by Ethem Qerimaj, recorded during the interview, on April 8th, 2017, in Tirana, Albania

The centre pitch of the kaba performance by Qerimaj given in Figure 3.9 is A. This is emphasised by melodic movements that use A as the centre tone in the section from bar 1 to bar 13 in the introduction. Focusing on this section in more detail, it is seen that the opening is made by the central tone A between bars 1-4, reaching it with a slow ascending glissando from the G half-sharp, scale degree b7, functioning like an appoggiatura note to A. Regarding the performance characteristics here, the use of a slightly sharpened b7 is noteworthy. Such microtonal alterations are common to the style. In this first four-measure section, the key tone A is held as a long note, emphasised by a very wide vibrato, waving almost a semitone up and down. The sound of the violin is very sonorous, with a full bow used to produce the full dark colour of the G string.

At bar 5, the appoggiatura note this time comes from a lower point, the actual b7 scale degree G natural, resolving to the tonic. This figure is both a variant of the long vibrato figure of the opening, compressed into a shorter duration, and at the same time a precursor to the grupetto figures that follow from bar 6 onwards, again based on the ornamentation of the tonic A with its upper and lower neighbours. Here, the main melody tones appear as B, scale degree 2 and A, scale degree 1. When we look at the ornamentation notes, 2 is supported by C as scale degree b3 from above and 1 is supported by G as scale degree b7 from below, thus opening the music to a m3 range consisting of the notes A-B-C with the addition of G as b7 from below. In this section, the violin sound is different from the beginning. In order to achieve a pastoral tone reminiscent of the shepherd's flute (fyell), an almost flautando playing is preferred. Qerimaj achieves this tone by playing at the tip of the bow (*punta d'arco*) and using the bow in a position close to the fingerboard, although not a full *sul tasto*, and without pressing the bow too hard. The melodic figure, heard for the first time in 6/8 metre in bar 6, gets compressed to first fit into a 4/8 metre in bar 7, and then to 3/8 metre in bar 8. This most compressed version is then repeated six times from bar 8 to bar 12, providing a sense of insistence and collection of energy. The figure subject to repetition is played legato, with each statement in a single bow and by accentuating the first note, so that the insistent repetition is supported by the bowing as well. Then, in bar 14, this accumulated energy carries the listener to the upper degrees of the scale with a sudden, scalar ascending movement. Here, the G-A-B-D-E scalar motion can be interpreted in two different ways: It can be seen as a pentatonic mode II on A as the centre pitch, considering that the note G has been supporting the note A as a lower neighbour since the

beginning of the piece, or it can be analysed as pentatonic mode I on G, considering G as the starting tone. Either way, this scalar movement expands through the scale degrees in the upper region of E between bars 15-25, and although it is delayed, it eventually brings us to the note of E, which is an intermediate melodic cadence with the resolution gesture at bar 25. E is the perfect fifth of the center pitch A, and it seems that the melodic structure prepares for a cadence on scale degree 5 towards this point. However, in an orchestra-accompanied video recording of an earlier performance of this kaba (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014), it can be seen that although the melody resolves to scale degree 5, the iso part still remains on A, and the movement to the 5th is limited only to the melodic level.

From the moment we reach the note of E at the end of bar 14, tension is established, centred on F#, which is later resolved to E. Here, the intonation of the note G in the grace note figures, appearing as appoggiaturas to the F# in bars 15-18, is considerably higher than normal and is indicated as a half sharp in the transcription. It could be argued that this practice is a reference to the sharpened G note, which appeared in the very beginning of the kaba; however, the fact that right before this, G is used with normal intonation in the pentatonic scale ascent in bar 14 weakens the consistency of this interpretation. Another possibility is that such a playing may have occurred spontaneously while performing the grace notes very rapidly in a short period of time. Since there are already some liberties for playing out of 12TET Western music intonation in the actual style, the sharpened playing here does not constitute an out-of-style element. In bars 15-16-17-18, the prolonged F# note is repeated insistently with an ornamental figure consisting of the upper and lower neighbours E-G [half#] with two grace notes, and the tension increases. With this momentum, at the end of bar 18 the music suddenly ascends with a glissando from F# to the A above, and then descends again to F# with a long glissando spanning bars 19-20-21. This m3 ascent, followed by a long descent, releases much, if not all, of the tension that has built up on F#. The descending glissando here is also played with a wide molto vibrato trill. Near the end of the glissando towards the end of bar 21, Qerimaj reaches the note F#, the target of the glissando, at the end of bar 21 by using the bow very lightly and applying a staccato-portato-like but shorter playing technique by widening the bow and approaching towards the nut. In bar 22, a melodic figure, which is the precursor of the cadential movement towards E, extends F# by ornamenting it with its upper neighbour G, followed by a melodic figure that dissolves to E and ornaments it with its lower neighbour D. The ornamentation figure

here forms a separate gestural whole in combination with the continuous vibrato. In bars 23-24, a variant of the same figure is heard, extended over two measures. In bars 25-26, the music exhibits a melodic cadence on E. If we look at other accompanied performances of this kaba available on the internet, we see that this passage, which can be summarised as an embellished prolongation of F# in bar 15 and its resolution to E in bar 25, is accompanied by an iso part that moves to D throughout the section where the F# is prolonged, forming a D Major chord with the melody, returning to the main key of A where the melody ends on E. When this bass change is taken into account, a chord progression corresponding to Dorian harmony emerges in this passage. If Roman numerals were to be used, the chords D Major and A Minor that occur in the other performance with the accompaniment could be labelled as IV and i respectively. Since the performance recorded for this research, which is the subject of the present analysis, does not have an iso accompaniment, this information has been added only as a subsidiary element.

A more extended and embellished variant of the above-mentioned melodic and harmonic plan from bars 14-26 reappears in bars 27-38. Instead of the scalar ascent in bar 14, another preparatory scalar motion comes in bars 27-28-29 this time, because E has already been reached beforehand. The section here takes us from E, an octave above, which is heard as a grace note, by a glissando down to C, P4 below, then moving up again, but this time dividing the distance into two smaller glissandos, and passing through the same E to reach its upper neighbour, F#, at bar 30. This is an echo of bar 15, where we first reached the previously prolonged F#. Listening to the alternative performances with iso accompaniment, here again the pedal sound is heard to change to D, creating a Dorian colour.

From bar 30 to the end of bar 35, the section is again based on prolonging and elaborating F# through various melodic figures and ornamentations. In bars 36-37-38, as in the first variant of the section, the music again resolves from F# down to E, and the iso returns to the tonic A in alternative performances of the kaba, once again releasing the established tension. The sense of resolution here is achieved not only through reaching a stable scale degree, but also by the release of rhythmic tension achieved through note durations and tempo changes. The descending glissando in bars 27-28 is played over a considerable amount of time, the following ascending glissandos in bar 29 are slightly faster, then in the figure of insistence on F# in bars 30-31, both tempo accelerando and rhythmic accelerando are in effect. The rhythmic tension obtained throughout bars 33-34-35 is suspended at its peak, and finally in bar 36, while

resolving to E, the rhythmic activity comes to an end and the rhythmic tension is released. The E-F#-A-F# motif repeated throughout bar 33 makes it clear that the tones of primary structural importance here are still members of the pentatonic scale, with G always used in superficial roles such as passing or neighbouring tone or appoggiatura note. By the end of the passage in bar 38, G is no longer heard at all until the music finally reaches a cadence on E, and the pentatonic mode II on E emerges as the prevalent scale of this section.

Qerimaj plays this entire section between bars 27-38, discussed in the previous two paragraphs, using the bow in a region very close to the fingerboard without approaching the bridge, but not above the fingerboard either, without really turning into *sul tasto*. It can be thought that this is a decision to maintain the audibility of this passage, which already has a high rhythmic intensity, by avoiding the aggressive and metallic timbral characters that would emerge near the bridge. The fact that the glissando in bar 36, which is directed from below to the cadential tone E, is played with a sharp intonation almost a quarter tone higher than D, is a reflection of the opening gesture in bar 1, where A is prepared with half-sharp G. The cadential tone E in bars 36-37 is played with a vibrato as wide as half a tone.

In bars 39-46 the music moves back up to A in the upper octave and descends to F# with a long, trill-like glissando, lingers on F# in bar 43 but continues this descent with the glissando in bars 44-45, and then, with a gesture based on a half-tone-wide vibrato in bar 46, finally reaching C as an intermediate cadential point. The entire section from bars 39-46 is played with only the second and third fingers in the left hand, but from bar 47 onwards the first finger is reintroduced. The half-sharp of the grace note leading to D at the opening of the measure is also reminiscent of the similar intonation of the lead-in notes in bars 1 and 36. The idea in bars 47-50 and its variant in bars 51-55 also targets C as an intermediate cadential note. Here we notice an A minor arpeggio ornamented with semitone lower neighbours, a very characteristic melodic motif in bars 47-48 and bars 51-52. Then, in bars 53-55, C, which is again the prolonged tone of this passage, is embellished with a P5 descent from G. After the descending glissando in bar 55 finds the target note C, the centre pitch A is recalled with a leap involving m3 interval. The glissando here is based on a mixture of trill and vibrato obtained by using the second and third fingers on the left hand, sliding on the string in the lower direction. While applying this gesture, the third finger is slightly pressed and relaxed without losing contact with the string to create a trill effect, while the second finger acts as the engine of the main glissando movement. In the

following bar 56, a descent from C to A is performed, this time with a normal glissando, and the music finally reaches the final note A at the beginning of bar 57, where the melodic target is achieved. The note A reached at the beginning of bar 57 is first repeated as a triplet, then turns into a static long cadential note. Although this triplet is on the open A string, it is based on a technique that resembles the *louré* technique but differs from it because there is not much space between the notes. It is also possible to call this technique a bowed vibrato, which is used to create an artificial vibrato effect in order to hide the vibrato-free timbre of the open string.

Although the melodic goal, or the final tone, has been reached at bar 57, a fully satisfying finale in terms of gestures and phrasing has not yet been reached, so the parts to be heard from bar 57 to the end of the *kaba* undertake the function of closing the music like a kind of coda. Firstly, at bars 57-58, there is an intense repetition of the m7 leaping figure, which is characteristic of southern Albanian folk music and also mentioned by Smith (2013, p.48). This figure can be described as a series of tremolos between the tonic A and the G half-sharp, approximately m7 above it with slightly higher intonation. The playing of this figure is realised as a two-string tremolo between the open string A and the G half-sharp on the E string, played with an open bow and the tip of the bow. This gesture continues persistently in bars 57-58, expands with the addition of a descent from C to A as a second component in the second half of bar 59, and becomes a variation with the use of E-G instead of the A-G 7th interval. Here, since the notes C on the A string and G on the E string fall on the same line on the fingerboard, the use of the second finger alternating between the two strings enables a rapid playing. As a result, with the pentatonic character descending gesture containing the notes A-G-E in bars 61-62, the music reaches the note E in the lower octave. Here the tone E is not used as a new tonic, but rather like a tone that provides a half-cadence. In the section between bars 63-66, pentatonic mode V on A is used in its purest form and with all its members, E in the lower octave ascends to E one octave higher, and from there, using all the degrees of the scale, it descends to the final tone A, situated between them. Bars 67-70 are variants of the figure previously heard in bars 59-60. Bars 71-74 contain a closing gesture based on the same pentatonic scale, reaching the *kaba*'s key centre at bar 74. In this section, the fact that the E is given both in the upper octave and in the lower octave in the final closing gesture reminds us of the conventional 5-1 closing resolution of Western music; at the same time, the E-D-C-A melodic figure in the final two measures also resolves the pentatonic scale horizontally, providing a linear cadential resolution.



Figure 3.10 : Structural background reduction of the kaba segment performed by Ethem Qerimaj

When we look at the prolonged voices in this analysed kaba, a scalar descending progression is in fact noticeable. The A note is prolonged between bars 1-13, a shorter G appears in the role of a passing note in bar 14, followed by F# in bars 15-24 and E in bars 25-26. Bars 27-28 brings us up again to E, from bars 29-35 the F# is prolonged and again it resolves to E in bars 36-38. The E note is then prolonged with the descent of A-(G)-F#-E between bars 39-46, then it passes through D as a passing note and descends to C. After this, the note C, which is prolonged between bars 47-55, is resolved by descending to A with leaping and glissando gestures in bar 57. From this point onwards, the music does not change structurally, and the basic scalar material and motivic elements in the piece are revisited in a coda-like final section. Thus, when we look at the overall movement of the kaba, as shown in Figure 3.10, there emerges a descending scalar motion that can be summarised as A-F#-E-C-A.

3.3.2 Kaba segment by Artur Ylli Zeqiri: transcription and analysis

The kaba performance segment by Artur Ylli Zeqiri transcribed below has been shared by himself as a video from his social media account in 2017 and it is recorded during a live show, of which a snapshot is seen in Figure 3.11 (Artur Ylli Zeqiri, n.d.). The kaba was played as an introduction to the famous dance music Valle e Osman Takës (The Dance of Osman Taka). After finishes the main segment of the kaba transcribed in the thesis, Zeqiri continues with birdsong imitation, followed by a recapitulation of the initial part. A photo showing Zeqiri during the personal interview made for this thesis can be seen in Figure 3.12. Provided in Figure 3.13 is the transcription of the main segment from Kaba which he played.



Figure 3.11 : A snapshot from the video which shows Artur Ylli Zeqiri giving the kaba performance analysed in this thesis (Artur Ylli Zeqiri, n.d.).



Figure 3.12 : Artur Ylli Zeqiri, photo taken during the personal interview on February 3rd, 2016, in Elbasan, Albania.

Kaba segment with violin - Artur Ylli Zeqiri

Ad Libitum

♩ = 70 (approx.)

Transcription:

Aida Alketa Pulake Altınbüken

The musical score is written for Violin (Vln.) and Iso in 2/4 time. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 70$ (approx.). The score is divided into systems, with measures numbered 1 through 32. The Violin part includes various musical notations such as triplets (3), glissandos (gliss.), trills (tr), and trills with grace notes (tr~). The Iso part is primarily composed of sustained chords and single notes. The score includes tempo changes, specifically *accel.* (accelerando) and *A tempo*. The Violin part features several passages of rapid sixteenth-note runs, some marked with *gliss.* and *tr*. The Iso part provides a harmonic foundation with sustained chords and occasional single notes.

Figure 3.13 : Main segment of a Kaba performance by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, recorded during a live show in 2017

The center pitch of the kaba performance segment provided in Figure 3.13 is A, given in the iso part from the very beginning as a bass drone. The melodic line of the kaba starts by prolonging scale degree 5 in the first three bars, heard in the lower octave of the violin. This note of E is ornamented both through grace notes featuring a small m3 leap to scale degree b7 and through a rhythmically meaningful repetition. The repeated E starts with regular eighth notes, changing into triplet eighth notes, thus providing first a slight increase in the rhythmic pace, then continues with a decrease, with gradually longer note values. At the beginning of bar 4, the melodic line gets transferred to the higher octave. Although the music seems to leap up by a seventh, if we rule out the octave change, it is actually a descending line in terms of scale degrees, continuing with scale degrees b3 and 2, where the musical phrase comes to a halt. This descent features also a number of microtonal aspects: after the first D note at the beginning of bar 4, comes a slightly flattened variant of it where also starts a glissando which encompasses all the microtonal area until scale degree 2 coming at the beginning of bar 5. Although the phrase seems to end with an unstable tone in bar 5, the melodic resolution to a stable scale degree, namely the tonic in this case, comes at the beginning of bar 6. The note A in question here, is actually part of a harmonic function which could be labelled as V/IV in tonal terms. Although this chord is not played by any accompaniment instruments, the melodic figure in bar 6 actually is based on its arpeggiation: A, C#, D coming as a passing note, E as a chord tone. This ascending arpeggio then ends by hitting F#, given here as an anticipation to the upcoming harmony in the next bar. As was depicted by V/IV, the upcoming bar starts with a change in the iso part from A into D, namely to scale degree 4, with the prolongation of F#, scale degree 6 in the melody line, resulting in a IV chord. Since we are in the minor context at least in this section, having IV coming as a major chord with scale degree 6 [and not b6] creates a Dorian effect.

This is the first moment we hear clearly Dorian mode in this kaba which will consistently stay connected with the Dorian sonority avoiding any use of b6. It will be further discussed in detail whether the use of scale degree 6 is connected to the Dorian idiom or it is a sign of Pentatonic mode IV, consisting of scale degrees 1-2-4-5-6-1. The most significant difference between these two scalar idioms would be the prolonged and structurally significant use of scale degrees b3 and b7. As it appears, this evaluation requires a complete perspective upon the whole kaba in question, thus it will be saved for the last part of this analysis.

During bars 7 and 8, upon the note D in the iso line, the violin plays quick figures featuring the prolongation of melody note F#. These figures use C#, D, and E from the lower side and G and A from the higher register side to build small melodic fragments to be repeated like very quick “grupetti”, enclosing the prolonged harmony tone F# from both upper and lower neighbouring areas. In bar 9, this melodic motion comes to a stop by getting to E, as an anticipation tone to the upcoming return to the tonic harmony in bar 10, providing the real resolution supported harmonically and ending the irregular 5+5 phrasal structure, although with the melody marking scale degree 5, thus still saving a stronger resolution which will come at the end of the following four-bar section. This section, from bar 11 to 14, includes a more fragmented melodic construction with small gestures. The first one, in bar 11, provides a descent from E to B, or scale degree 5 to 2. The upcoming gesture which comes twice in bars 12 and 13, enhanced through rhythmic displacement, is based on a G major chord arpeggio with pitches arranged in such an order that it creates the virtual representation of two contrapuntal lines at the same time: a lower line marked by the G notes heard at the beginning of the figure and a higher melodic line marking a descending leap from scale degree 4 to 2, or from D to B. Both lines then get together by reaching a unison on the tonic note A at the beginning of bar 14, where the music achieves the delayed strong resolution.

In bar 15, a new section begins. After bar 15 featuring only the bass drone as an introduction, bars 16 and 17 bring back the idea featuring a melodic descent from scale degree 5 to 2 which we heard back in bars 1 to 5, now in a compressed version lasting only three and a half beats. The following two bars, 18 and 19, include a more elaborate version of the same melodic figure with E in the upper octave circled with grupetti featuring neighbour tones. In the following phrase heard through bars 20 to 23, we hear a modal exchange to pentatonic mode I, or major pentatonic with its Western name, although the tonic seems to stick to the note A in the iso part. Because this new and secondary mode is of major character, featuring a major 3rd, the change has an instant impact when the C# notes appear at the end of bar 20 and becomes subject to a two-and-a-half measure long prolongation beginning from bar 21. There could be two different ways of interpreting the modal mixture happening in this section: If one would look at solely the violin part without the iso accompaniment, the mode seems to start from the note E at the end of bar 19, ascending in the scalar order: E-F#-A-B-C#-E, which would be the pentatonic mode IV built on E. The same scale tones are also used in the descent which starts in the middle

of bar 22 continuing until getting to the note B in the lower octave at the end of bar 24. Please note that the note D comes in two very small instances where it is used in non-structural status: in bar 22 as a microtonal passing note [half sharp] and in bar 24 as a lower diatonic neighbour to the note E, thus it is not considered as a scale tone in this section. So, from a perspective based only on violin part's musical content, the passage seems to make a modulation to E upon which we hear pentatonic mode IV in E. This perspective may be criticised in the sense it ignores the harmonic context created by the pedal drone which still prolongues the note A. If we also take the bass into account, then we have to come up with a different interpretation of this passage: Rather than a modulation to a different center pitch, the music still has A as its tonic but there is a mode mixture obviously involving pentatonic mode I [or major pentatonic] built on A. So the first melody note of the passage, the note E, coming at the end of bar 19 represents actually scale degree 5 and not the tonic. It becomes evident that this second more holistic approach is more valid when a melodic cadence prolonged through bars 25 to 29 resolves to A, marking it as the final stable pitch of the melodic line. This section starts with bar 25 where the violin echoes the last gesture of the previous bar, a descent from C# to B with B as an unstable tone against the A in the iso part, but this time the echo features a C natural instead of C#, providing another modal exchange which takes the listener back to the minor idiom, ending the secondary modal area. This flattened 3rd also sounds like a reference to the "natural-3-against-b3" blue note idea found in jazz and blues music, although whether it is intended or not is open to debate. After other quick repetitions of small grupetti in bar 26 enclosing B as the penultimate prolonged note before the tonic, the music finally resolves to A in bar 27, repeating the tonic for two bars in triplets with each repetition ornamented and marked by grace notes, namely C still emphasising that the final harmony is in minor character.

Until that point in this kaba, we observed two sections, both starting with the note E while we have A in the bass as tonic pedal and finally making a melodic cadence to A, the tonic, respectively in bars 14 and 27. In bar 30, starts a shorter section where we have something that looks like a post-cadential function or a codetta, where the music, as a whole passage, represents the echoing of the previous resolution to the tonic now in two parts both heard in the violin part in two different registers. We may think of it like the interval of 6th with scale degree 2 below and 7 on top, resolving to the octave tonic note through a contrasting motion, with 2-1 resolution in the lower line and b7-1 resolution in the upper line. First, we hear the interval of 6th in the

first two beats of bar 31 as a tremolo between two pitches in neighbouring strings. Then, this tremolo is morphed into a “6th-leap-plus-a-descending-M2-glissando” figure in the last beat of bar 31, being subject to a rhythmically condensed repetition throughout bar 32. Here, the while the note G is played over and over in stronger points of the rhythmic subgroups, a downwards stepwise resolution from B to A is heard repetitively in the lower octave right after each G note. If we leave out the glissando, we can look at this new version as a G-A descending m7 leap. Now that the lower line seems to be resolved to A, the music focuses on the upper line beginning from bar 33, where we have repeated trills on the note G, scale degree b7, then in bars 34 and 35, we have another melodic figure repeated thrice where the notes G and B prepare the resolution to as double neighbours to A, which finally provides the ultimate resolution in bar 36.

If we were to make a summary of the melodic trajectory of this kaba segment, we could create a graph that represents such an overview, as displayed in Figure 3.14, right below.

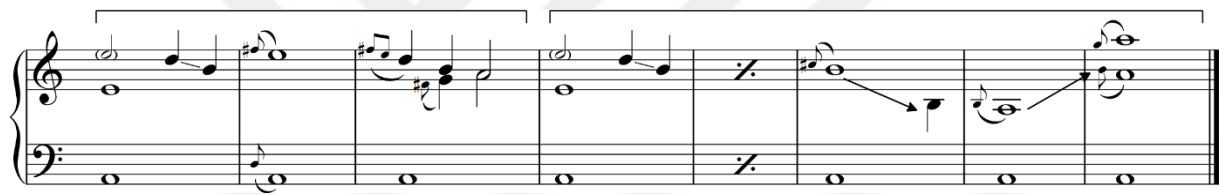


Figure 3.14 : The melodic outline of the kaba performance segment by Artur Ylli Zeqiri

Please note that the music has two main sections as supported by structural resolutions to the tonic, which could be termed as a “binary form”.

3.3.3 Kaba segment by Aurel Qirjo: transcription and analysis

The following violin kaba performance segment as transcribed here displays music heard in the track titled “Kaba me Violine” from the album by folk music ensemble Saz’iso titled as “At Least Wave Your Handkerchief” (Saz’iso, 2017) and it is performed by violinist Aurel Qirjo. The transcription is provided in Figure 3.15.

The center pitch of the analysed kaba is G and it uses mainly pentatonic mode II, featuring scale degrees 1-2-4-5-b6. Other diatonic scale degrees will also be in use occasionally but only as auxiliary tones in non-structural status.

The first eight bars of the kaba does not include any accompaniment, so the kaba starts only with the violin. The first note Bb is prepared and reached through a quick ascending glissando from A, scale degree 2. This is the first time in this kaba, that we hear the idea of making regular glissandi between scale tones in the lower register, played all on the G string; and this idea will be consistently in use throughout this whole kaba performance. The opening gesture in the first bar begins with scale degree b3, using upper neighbour ornamentation, repeating also the same pattern on scale degree 4. In the second beat the music reaches scale degree 5 and slides back down to the scale degree 2, the note A, with a descending glissando from C to A. When the note A heard twice in the second half of the measure, as the target note in the lower register, it becomes evident that the opening pitches, Bb and C, surrounded by neighbouring tones, are both there only to prepare the descending glissando to A. The scale degree 2, A, then virtually goes to the tonic G, but in the upper octave by leaping up by m7 interval, with G ornamented through its lower neighbour, F.

Now that the first phrase has been heard twice, beginning from bar 10, the music continues to discover some previously non-elaborated parts of the scale while still keeping the connection to the previous material at the gestural level. The opening gesture of the kaba in the first bar, namely the small glissando from A to Bb, now serves as a starting point to a transposed version of the last figure in bar 3, providing here an ascent to D supported by the lower neighbour C. This new combination gives us a scalar ascent from A to D, or from scale degree 2 to 5. This is in fact really meaningful since the main prolonged note in the first 9 bars has been A, scale degree 2, and in this new section the melody is about to focus on a slightly higher area with the main prolonged tone being D, scale degree 5. So, this opening gesture to the new section also provides a scalar transition from the previous prolongation to the newer one.

Following this, in bar 11 first two beats, comes a variant of the closing gesture of the first phrase which we heard in bars 4 and 9, now transposed diatonically to enclose the prolonged note D with its upper and lower neighbours. The figure is two-beats long and it gets repeated in the second half of the measure, then, when heard for a third time in bar 12, it becomes varied through expansion and with a descending glissando it provides a return to scale degree 2, where the phrase had started back in bar 10. This three-bars long phrase then gets repeated from bar 13 to 15 with further ornamentation and slightly wider registral span where the scalar ascent goes up until getting to F, scale degree b7, before descending back again to A.

Kaba segment with violin - Aurel Qirjo

Transcription:
Aida Alketa Pulake Altunbükten

Ad Libitum
♩ = 60 (approx.)

molto accel. A tempo

Violin

Iso

4

molto accel.

Vln.

Iso

7 **A tempo** **molto accel. A tempo**

Vln.

Iso

11

Vln.

Iso

15

Vln.

Iso

(Clarinet - kthyes)

18

Vln.

Iso

gliss.

gliss.

21

Vln.

Iso

gliss.

Figure 3.15 : Transcription of the main segment from “Kaba me Violinë” (Kaba with violin) by Aurel Qirjo.

Please note that here, first scale degree b6, Eb, then scale degree natural 6, E are used as non-harmonic tones like the diatonic upper neighbour to D or diatonic lower neighbour to F, or sometimes as passing note between D and F. Scale degree 6 and its chromatic variant b6, are both non-structural auxiliary tones in the context of the pentatonic mode II, and they are used with quite varied intonation depending on the specific roles they bear in the whole kaba, encompassing a great part of the microtonal area between scale degrees 5 and b7, namely D and F.

In bar 16, comes a compressed and dense version of the 3-bars long phrase already heard twice in the previous measures, this time all the structure is squeezed into a four and a half beat span, again ending on A. Following this, the last half beat of the bar marking D back again with its lower and upper neighbours, functions as an anacrusis to the next measure, bar 17 where a variant of the opening phrase comes in, creating some sort of recapitulation. In this reoccurring of the opening phrase, especially the first part is highly varied, with the opening gesture replaced with an expanded version of the descent from D to A in which the microtonal area in between C and A gets clearly included to the music through a descending glissando with articulated 8th note attacks marking the microtonal pitches encompassed. The rest of the phrase expands until the end of bar 20, in a similar fashion to its previous versions although slightly varied. On the other hand, perhaps the most striking novelty heard here is the entrance of the clarinet playing a third part between the soloist and the iso, which we could call “kthyes – the turner” using an iso-polyphonic part name. It creates a linear character behind the violin line playing the A-G 7th leap figure with many repetitions.

The following bars, 21, 22 have both compressed repetitions of the previous phrase heard in bars 17 to 20, where the four bars-long phrase is represented in only one-bar time span. Finally in bars 23 and 24, we hear the cadential figure previously heard in bars 7 and 8, at the end of the first section of the kaba, again providing here the final resolution to the tonic G in the upper octave, ending the whole structure.

If we would be to sum up the whole pitch trajectory of this kaba segment in parallel with its motif-based formal structure as discussed in the previous paragraphs in detail, we could come up with a reduction as displayed in Figure 3.16.

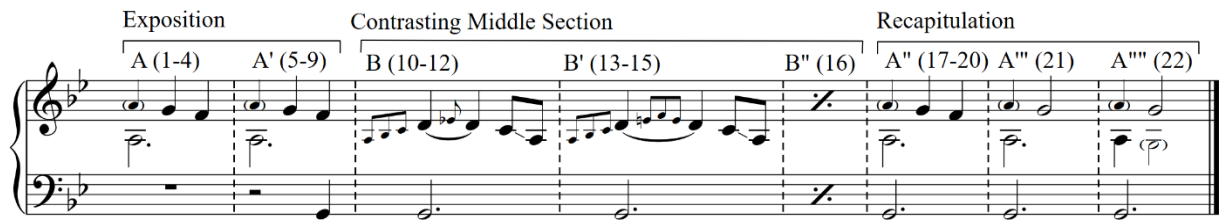


Figure 3.16 : Melodic outline and formal structure of the initial segment from “Kaba me Violinē” by Aurel Qirjo.

Please note that the general form of the studied segment could be describes as a “small ternary” form using the Western classical terminology.



4. ASSESSMENT OF THE ANALYSES: MUSICAL STRUCTURE AND PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

This chapter seeks to reveal the shared musical language in the kaba performances examined in this thesis by assessing the analytical findings regarding musical structure and performance practice. The discourse on musical structure encompasses aspects such as form, the underlying architecture of the melodic framework, and the identification of the scales upon which it is built. Simultaneously, one will be able to observe the individual artistic distinctions of the three performers inside a common musical language.

4.1 Assessment of the Conducted Analyses in Sense of Musical Structure

The following general characteristics and examinations are found to be consistent with all three kaba examples analysed in this thesis.

An instrumental improvisation in the kaba style is typically performed *ad libitum*, in free rhythm where there is still a feel of a succession of beats, but arranged in time in a way to represent an organic rhythmic flow where the time distance between the beats is altered based on the performer's interpretation. There can be different ways of transcribing this type of rhythmic structure. In this work, in order to reflect the feeling of beats, although in variable pace, it is preferred to use approximately realistic note values organised inside bars of varying length in order to reflect the phrasing structure and the duration proportions of the small melodic gestures that form the phrases.

The melodic structure of the kaba is found to consist mostly of the repetition of melodic figures or ideas coming back as variations. This also includes expansion and compression of the ideas, creating a control over the phrasing pace.

A fragment from the introductory part of Qerimaj's kaba is given in Figure 4.1 as an example illustrating this process.

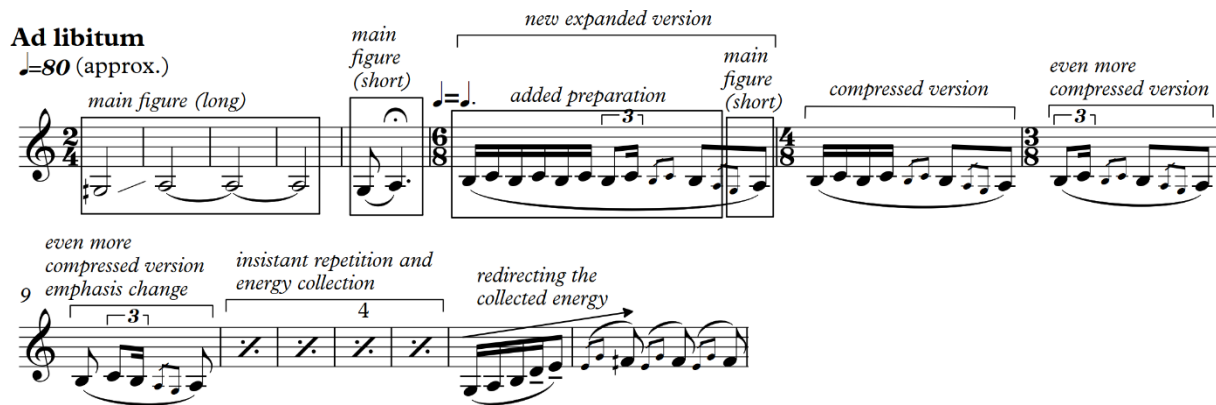


Figure 4.1 : Segment from the violin kaba by Ethem Qerimaj, bars 1 to 15, illustrating the motivic expansion and compression process

In this section of Qerimaj's kaba performance, we see how the main figure consisting of scalar motion from scale degree b7 to 1 is first introduced in its most simple form, followed by a short version in bar 2, then becoming a more elaborate idea in bar 3 with an added preparation consisting of the prolongation of the upper neighbour B ornamented through its own upper neighbour C. Beginning from bar 4, a slightly compressed version of this idea is heard, then gets more compressed in bar 5 and even more compressed in bar 6, after which this final version becomes subject to rapid and insistant repetition building a growing tension, using which Qerimaj jumps to scale degree 6 with a quick scalar ascent in bars 14 and 15.

Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, present a similar motivic expansion and compression process, this time with segments taken from the violin kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri. In Figure 4.2, Zeqiri presents the intial version of the main melodic idea, formed of a long-held note of E, which is scale degree 5, followed by a scalar descent coming in the upper register through octave transfer, from scale degree 4 to 2, namely D to B.

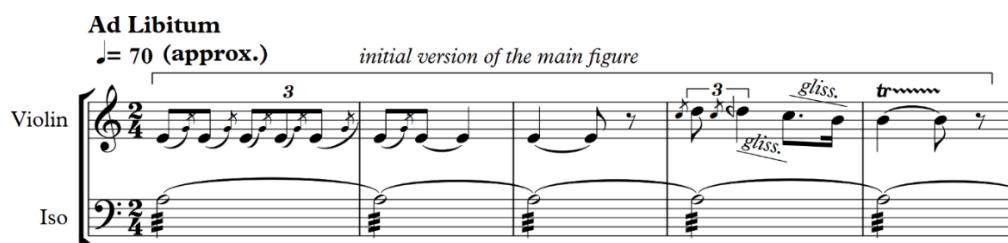


Figure 4.2 : Segment from the violin kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 1 to 5, where the initial version of the melodic figure is introduced

As shown in Figure 4.3, a variant of this initial idea comes in bars 9 to 12, where the long-held scale degree 5 also gets transferred to the upper octave, becoming a series of repeated shorter

notes accentuated through trills. The scalar descent from D to B appears also in a newer variation where D is expanded through a short melodic figure featuring its upper neighbour and the scalar descent is represented by an glissando instead.

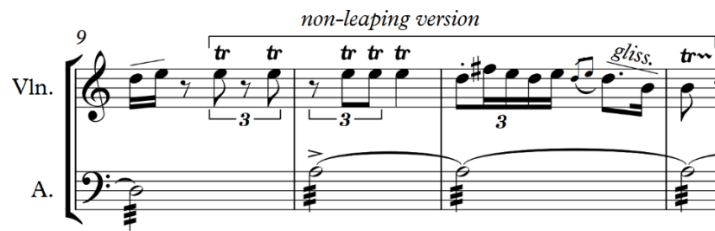


Figure 4.3 : Segment from the violin kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 9 to 12-1st beat, a variation of the melodic figure

Figure 4.4 below shows three different occurrences of the same idea in bars 15 to 23. The first one is compressed to three and a half beats, whereas the second one is virtually expanded, keeping the same length with a higher pace of musical events, in other words more notes happening in the same given time interval. A very expanded version of the idea appears in bars 20 to 23, including the pickup note at the end of bar 19. This time the initial 7th leap from E to D comes in the form of a highly ornamented scalar ascent, reaching C# instead of D. After insisting on C# by repeating it, building tension through accelerando and added accentuation through trills and finally elaborating it by visiting a 3rd-interval-wide area above it, the music releases the tension by moving down from C# to B in bar 23.

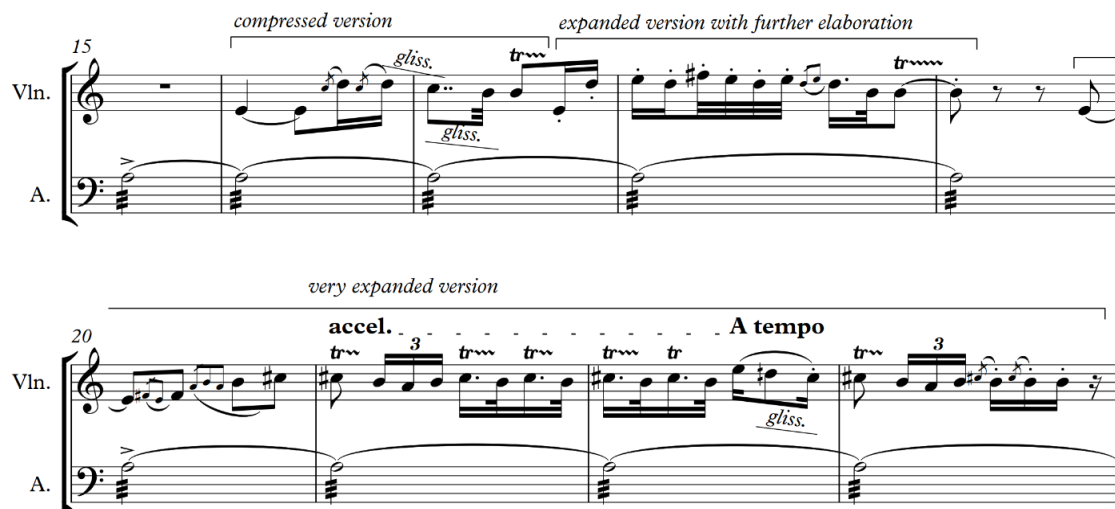


Figure 4.4 : Segment from the violin kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 15 to 23, where three different variations of the melodic figure are heard in succession.

Figure 4.5 seen below provides a motivic analysis of the first nine bars of the violin kaba by Aurel Qirjo where the essential motivic content is introduced and the main motive labeled as “a” gets emphasised through a repetition process making it possible for the player to control the tension through motivic expansion and compression as well as tempo fluctuations.

Ad Libitum
♩ = 60 (approx.)

Vln. Iso.

preparatory gesture (p) main motive(a) a a a a a a ax ax second motive(b1) third motive(b2)

molto accel. A tempo

5 preparatory gesture a a a a a a a a a a a a b2

Vln. Iso.

molto accel. A tempo molto accel. A tempo

Figure 4.5 : Segment from the violin kaba by Aurel Qirjo, bars 1 to 9, where essential motivic content is introduced and main motive “a” is emphasised through repetition.

In this first section of the kaba by Qirjo, following a preparatory gesture, the main motif labeled as “a” is introduced. The motif is actually the minor 7th leap figure from scale degree 2 to scale degree 1 in the upper octave, a well-known gesture in the style, also covered in this thesis as a typical feature. The tonic is also embellished through the use of a lower neighbour, the note F. Please see how this motive gets first expanded through the replacement of the preparatory gesture with a long-held scale degree 2 instead, in its second appearance. Then, the motive gets compressed again with this first note becoming shorter while the repetitions continue with accelerando, creating more tension. Then in the second half of bar 3, the last two notes of the motive, labeled as “ax”, are taken as a fragment and by repeating it twice, Qirjo produces another motive, labeled as “b1” organically derived from the first one. This new motive, b1 is followed and answered by b2, a quick melodic figure ornamenting the note F with its upper and lower neighbours. The whole four-bar phrase is a very good example of how the tension is built through repetition and this tension is held at the highest note, G, being then released with a descent to F. Please also note that when this first phrase gets repeated in bars 5 to 9, the main motive gets even more repetitions to create a relatively higher tension, resulting in a very compact version of the motive in bar 7 with the lower neighbour F removed this time. With the

note F absent, the long-held G note at the last statement of the main figure also represent a very simplified version of the motive b1.

As mentioned above, the collection of energy through repetition of motifs is a typical practice in the kaba playing. Figure 4.6 below shows a section from the kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri where the player prolongs the note of G, scale degree b7. The prolongation is obtained by repeated short melodic gestures, all having G as their highest note. In bar 31, the gesture is a tremolo figure repeated twice, then it becomes slightly larger three-note motive where G, still isolated in the higher register, is followed by a quick glissando from B to A in the lower octave. In bar 33, the figure becomes very compressed, being reduced to only the prolonged note G getting extra stress by trills. The bars 34 to 36 provides a resolution, one that still has added tension with the cadential gesture repeated three times until getting to the final note A in bar 36.

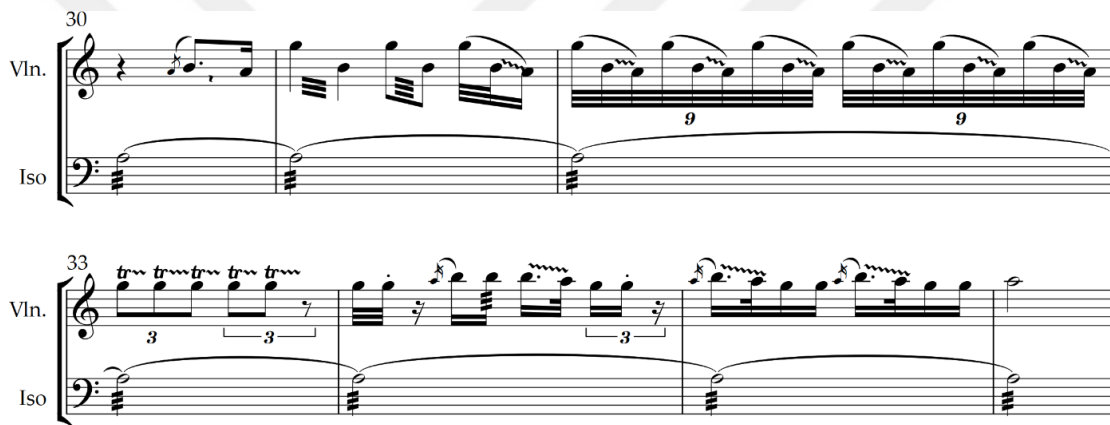


Figure 4.6 : Segment from the violin kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 30 to 36, displaying the collection of energy through repetition of motifs

Analysing the musical structure and melodic-harmonic progression used in these three kaba performances, we observe that the fundamental components derive from iso-polyphony related ideas and concepts. This entails a pentatonic melody line embellished with ornaments, situated above a sustained bass line known as iso, which occupies the lower register as the main accompaniment. The three kaba analysed in the scope of this thesis make use of four distinct pentatonic scales. The kaba performance by Ethem Qerimaj features pentatonic modes I, II and V, Artur Ylli Zeqiri's violin kaba makes use of the pentatonic modes I and IV whereas the violin kaba by Aurel Qirjo is based mostly on pentatonic mode II. As a consequence, we can say that at least in the analysed kaba performances, the music uses pentatonic modes I, II, IV and V, or in other words, all modes of the pentatonic scale except mode III, which lacks scale

degree 5, being a widely used structural tone subject to prolongation. It could easily be speculated that this aspect of the kaba performances could be the reason for the total lack of pentatonic mode III.

Occasionally, non-pentatonic scale degrees are incorporated in the music, although they do not serve as structural points in the melody. Instead, they are used as ornamental figures or play surface roles, such as neighbour or passing notes. Below the superficial and highly ornamented melodic surface, there is a deeper and essential melodic framework, which is found to be built on a pentatonic mode in all three of the analysed kaba performances.

4.2 Assessment of the Analyses Focusing on Playing Techniques and Performance

Practice

In this chapter, will be discussed the violin ornamentation and playing techniques as found in current folk music styles of Southern Albania. Due to the scarcity of material on Southern Albanian folk music, there is a lack of extensive analysis specifically focused on violin performance. Consequently, descriptions of playing techniques and musical expressions in the analysis are adapted from classical music terminology. These terms are found to be adequate in defining the performance for the most part, although in the text there are also verbal descriptions of different combinations or unusual applications of these already known techniques. One notable aspect is the very expressive and heavy utilisation of different articulations, including glissando, molto vibrato, and trill. These articulations are employed alone or in combination, often simultaneously. Furthermore, the violin offers a wide range of timbres in addition to its various articulations. The diverse range of sound colours is created by employing various levels of loudness, ranging from very soft to loud, and by utilising varied bow placements between the neck and bridge regions, applying varying degrees of bow pressure. The way players hold the bow also affects the sound quality and the way some bowing techniques are executed. The sound colour preferences, when used in conjunction with articulations, amplify the effects achieved through their combined use and contribute a dramatic element to them.

4.2.1 Position of the instrument

As discussed in the previous chapter, in the early period when the violin was first adopted by folk musicians of Albania, there were players who held the instrument in horizontal position,

on the left shoulder, and also some others who held it in vertical position just like some Asian or Middle-Eastern or East European bowed string instruments, like the Azerbaijani kemancha, the Turkish kemençe, the Cretan lyra, the Chinese erhu, and so on.

Today the folk violinists of Albania have quit this practice and almost all of them hold the instrument on shoulder; but in the meantime, as frequently seen with folk violinists from different parts of the world, the instrument may not be held always in a usual Western-classical discipline. Please see Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8 for relatively-free instrument holding positions.



Figure 4.7 : Upheld violin position, player: Reme Hysa (renos huse, 2012).



Figure 4.8 : Violin position, player: Ramadan Bilali (Basrillapi, 2013).

When we look at the instrument holding positions of the three famous violinists examined in this thesis, we see that all three of them tend to hold the violin in a way closer to the classical style, with the bow holding part excluded and to be discussed in the next subtitle. This can be expected when we consider that all three artists have received Western-classical violin

education alongside their folk music practice. Figure 4.9 shows Ethem Qerimaj, with an instrument position much closer to the Western-classical style.



Figure 4.9 : Violin position, Etem Qerimaj (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014).

Figure 4.10 shows the violin position during Artur Ylli Zeqiri's playing. Zeqiri is also holding the violin in a conventional classical position, probably as a result of his educational background.



Figure 4.10 : Violin position, Artur Ylli Zeqiri (n.d.)

Figure 4.11 below shows Aurel Qirjo during a performance. Having received a formal violin education, Qirjo also holds the instrument in a conventional manner.



Figure 4.11 : Violin position, Aurel Qirjo (Radiowe Centrum Kultury Ludowej, 2019).

As seen in the pictures of three violinists examined in this thesis, the instrument position tends to be in line with Western classical performance practices when the players receive a formal education, whereas in the case of self-taught folk musicians we may observe various ways of holding the instrument, sometimes highly different than the conventional Western classical technique.

4.2.2 Bowing and sound

As commonly seen in different folk violin playing practices around the Balkans and East Europe, folk violinists in Albania also use the bowing hand in different ways than the classical violin style, in order to obtain various tone qualities, sometimes consciously, sometimes intuitively. Figure 4.12 and Figure 4.13, showing instances from a performance by Ethem Qerimaj, illustrate how a violinist can change his/her wrist position in different parts of the same Kaba recording.



Figure 4.12 : Unusual wrist position, Etem Qerimaj (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014).



Figure 4.13 : Normal wrist position, Etem Qerimaj (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014)

Figure 4.14, Figure 4.15 and Figure 4.16 show how the bow may be held at different points to produce a thinner and more open to produce instant timbral variations.



Figure 4.14 : Alternative bow holding position, Artur Ylli Zeqiri (toelato, 2016).



Figure 4.15 : Alternative bow holding position to produce a thinner sound, Niko Plaku (keisonp9, 2013).



Figure 4.16 : Artur Ylli Zeqiri holding the bow in an alternative position (toleato, 2016).

4.2.3 Articulations and typical gestures

As playing lead instruments such as clarinet and violin in Southern Albania mostly relies on imitating the vocal iso-polyphony, ornamentations and some typical gestures are widely used by instruments playing solo parts in order to achieve various effects originally produced by singers' throats, or sometimes to create imitations of nature and animal sounds. Although some of these are similar to ornamentation figures found in Western art music, the way they are used in the music is mostly different.

4.2.3.1 Glissando

When imitating vocal gestures in a bowed string instrument, the techniques which come in the first place are glissando and portamento. As discussed in the previous chapters, the music of Southern Albania is mostly pentatonic, which includes minor 3rd intervals besides the major 2nd. The most common glissando figure is the one made between the two notes forming this 3rd interval. Especially when the final note is also the modal centre, the glissando serves as a cadential gesture. The transcription in Figure 4.17 shows that this typical gesture is used also when accompanying songs. Figure 4.18 displays a similar glissando in the context of a violin kaba, as performed by Ethem Qerimaj.



Figure 4.17 : Glissando from scale degree b3 to 1. Violin part transcribed from “N’penxherenë e zotris’ sate”, traditional folk song, recorded by Family Lela; 00:00:23 (vrije geluiden, 2010).

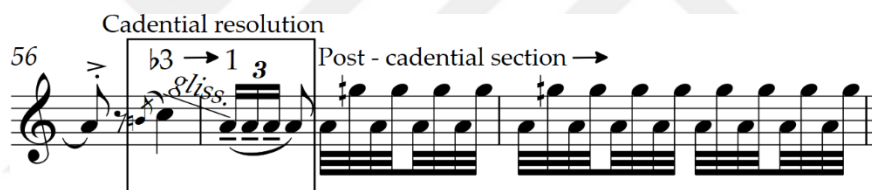


Figure 4.18 : Glissando from scale degree b3 to 1, taken from the analysed kaba by Qerimaj, bar 56.

The descending b3 to 1 glissando can transform into a scale degree 2 to 1 glissando if the pentatonic scale employed in that section of the music includes scale degree 2 instead of scale degree b3. This version of the cadential glissando is seen in Figure 4.19 and Figure 4.20. In Figure 4.19, Qirjo first reaches the centre tone with a b3 to 1 glissando in bar 16 beat 4, but this gesture is not used to make a cadential resolution since the music very quickly returns to scale degree 4 at the end of the bar. In the following measure, the resolution to the tonic comes this time with a pentatonic modal mixture involving Pentatonic mode II, with the glissando from scale degree 2 to 1, bowed as repeated 8th notes emphasising some microtonal pitches as the glissando covers a narrow interval span, namely a M2.

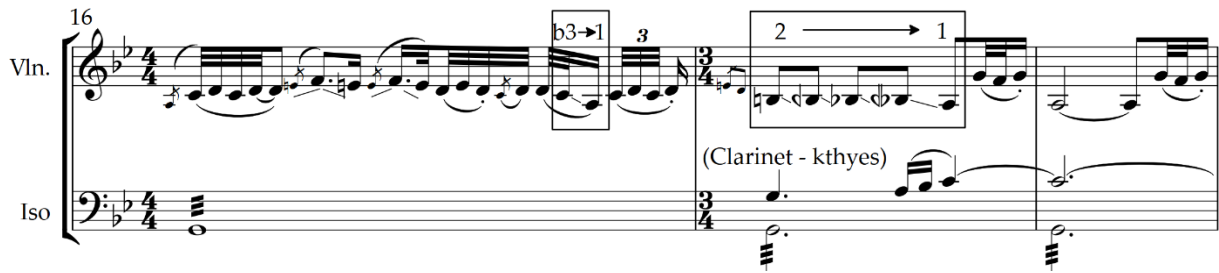


Figure 4.19 : Glissando between scale degrees b3-1 and 2-1, taken from the analysed kaba by Qirjo, bars 16-18.

In Figure 4.20 below, Zeqiri makes a cadential resolution to the tonic with a scale degree 2 to 1 glissando.



Figure 4.20 : Glissando from scale degree 2 to 1, taken from the analysed kaba by Zeqiri, bars 12-14.

Another type of typical glissando aiming at providing a resolution to the tonic is the ascending glissando from b7 scale degree to 1, the centre tone. This can be seen as the ascending version of the previously discussed b3-1 glissando but its function may differ from time to time. The b3-to-1 glissando is mostly cadential, or resolution-wise functional whereas the b7-to-1 glissando is frequently used as an opening gesture as well. as seen in Figure 4.21 below. In these measures, Qerimaj makes an opening to the kaba with a slow glissando covering the whole first bar, marking the centre tone A by preparing it by approaching from its lower neighbour.

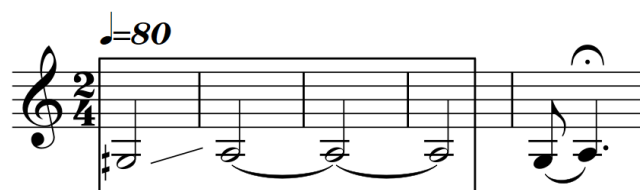


Figure 4.21 : Long and slow ascending glissando from scale degree b7 to 1, the opening gesture of violin kaba by Qerimaj

The example below by Zeqiri, shown in Figure 4.22, shows a similar b7 to 1 ascending glissando.

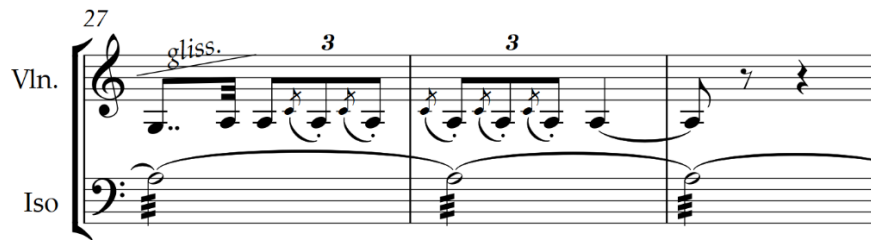


Figure 4.22 : Ascending glissando from scale degree b7 to 1, from violin kaba by Zeqiri, bars 27 to 29.

Sometimes we encounter a very quick glissando mimicking the effect of a grace note, as seen in Figure 4.23.

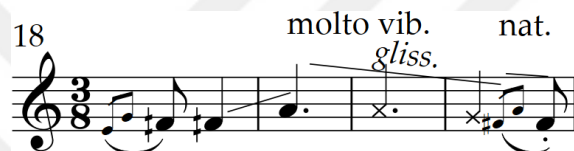


Figure 4.23 : A very quick glissando mimicking the effect of a grace note, kaba by Qerimaj, bar 21, last eighth note preceded by two grace notes played in this fashion.

In the example below given in Figure 4.24, taken the kaba by Zeqiri, bar 11 last beat and bar 13 last beat both feature grace notes actually performed as very quick glissandos



Figure 4.24 : Quick glissandos mimicking grace notes, kaba by Zeqiri, bars 11 to 14.

4.2.3.2 Glissando with molto vibrato

A combination of glissando and molto vibrato techniques is also employed in the studied kaba performances. Figure 4.20 shows an example of this technique, taken from Qerimaj's kaba.



Figure 4.25 : Glissando with molto vibrato, from the violin kaba by Qerimaj, bars 18-21

4.2.3.3 Glissandos framed through various articulations

In the studied kaba performances, players are observed to frame the glissandos by using various articulations such as grace notes, trills or staccatos like punctuation marks. An example of it can be seen below in Figure 4.21, where Zeqiri marks the beginning note of the glissando using a grace note lower neighbour whereas the final note of the glissando is highlighted by a trill.



Figure 4.26 : Glissando combined with grace notes and trill as framing elements, from violin kaba by Zeqiri, bars 4-5

Zeqiri employs a similar framing to a more compressed variant of this glissando with a duration of only one beat, still through placing two grace notes to the beginning and a trill to the end, as pictured in Figure 4.22 below.



Figure 4.27 : Glissando combined with grace notes and trill as framing elements, from violin kaba by Zeqiri, bars 11-12

Another example reflecting the glissando framing technique is seen in Figure 4.23. Here, Zeqiri frames both the first glissando and its slightly compressed repetitions using similar articulations. The first version coming in bar 34, starts with extra repetitions of the first note of

the gesture before the glissando begins, first one marked by a lower neighbour grace note and second one by an unmeasured tremolo. After the glissando, the upcoming note is repeated twice with a staccato articulation in the last one and a very quick rest coming afterwards. All these elements mark the glissando and keep the energy high for the further repetitions of the melodic gesture, coming in bar 35, still marked with lower neighbour grace notes in the beginning and a repeated last note after the glissando.



Figure 4.28 : Glissando combined with grace notes, tremolo and staccato as framing elements, from violin kaba by Zeqiri, bars 34-35.

Qerimaj also uses a similar framing technique in the glissando shown in Figure 4.29 below. It is a m3 descending glissando from C to A, the first note is articulated with a lower neighbour grace note whereas the final note is held through an undulation effect created by the *louré* technique.

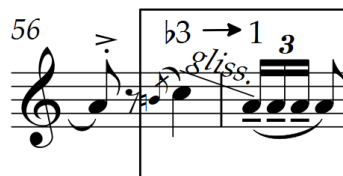


Figure 4.29 : Glissando combined with a grace note and *louré* bowing as framing elements, from violin Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 56-57

4.2.3.4 Glissando with *louré* (slurred tenuto)

A special gesture typically used by the studied violinists is achieved by combining a descending glissando in the left hand with *louré* bowing in the right hand. This results in a chromatic-like sounding descending glissando, but with smoother bowing avoiding silent instants between the bowed notes; and it is different from a regular chromatic glissando because the player makes a normal glissando move with the left hand, without aiming at playing any specific notes before the final one. As shown in Figure 4.30, Qerimaj uses this technique in bar 29 while playing the

scalar ascent as a glissando following the long descending glissando tremolando in the two previous bars.



Figure 4.30 : Ascending glissando combined with *louré* bowing, from Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 27-30

4.2.3.5 Bow vibrato

The bow vibrato is obtained by applying a *louré* bowing made with a fluctuating rhythm to simulate a vibrato. This can be done both with long-held notes or slow glissandos. The example provided below in Figure 4.31 shows a passage from the kaba performance by Ethem Qerimaj where the bow vibrato is employed during a slow vibrato encompassing a descending minor third melodic interval.

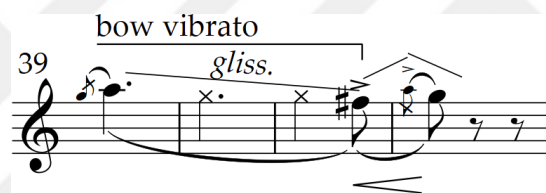


Figure 4.31 : Bow vibrato employed during a m3 descending glissando, violin kaba by Qerimaj, bars 39-41

Despite the specificity of the measures given as an example in Figure 4.22, Qerimaj actually uses this technique all over his kaba performance as a means of keeping his violin sound in an “undulating” fashion like the constant throat vibrato used by the Southern acapella singers.

Zeqiri creates a similar undulation effect not through bow vibrato, but by means of repeated grace notes instead. Thus, his technique will be covered under the subtitle on grace notes.

4.2.3.6 Glissando tremolando

A more tense kind of glissando can be achieved when it is combined with an unmeasured tremolo. This energy-collecting type of glissando is exemplified in Figure 4.32, taken from the kaba by Qerimaj.



Figure 4.32 : Glissando tremolando, taken from the Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 27-29.

In the context of the given measures of the kaba, Qerimaj doesn't prefer to play a regular descending glissando and release energy, probably because after the lead-in figure at the end of bar 29, will come a new section where scale degree 6 will be prolonged as a relatively higher position in the scale, therefore there is a need for collected energy to make the scalar climb, hence comes the added tremolo as an energy collecting device.

The example below in Figure 4.33 shows another instance from the kaba by Qerimaj where the descending glissando is combined with a measured tremolo this time.

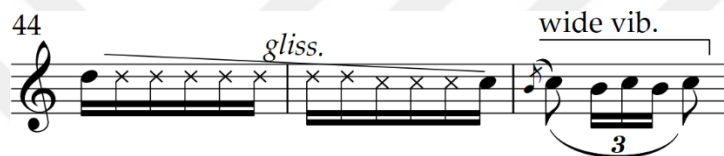


Figure 4.33 : Glissando combined with measured tremolo, taken from Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 44-46

4.2.3.7 Molto vibrato glissando combined with trill

This is a type of glissando with molto vibrato where the vibrato is achieved through a continuous series of trills. Figure 4.34 below features this technique as employed by Ethem Qerimaj, seen in bar 55. Please note that the added molto vibrato effect to the glissando provides a continuation of the high energy achieved in the previous bar through the very rapidly played note groups.



Figure 4.34 : Molto vibrato glissando combined with trill, from the Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 24-55

4.2.3.8 Rapid note groups

The use of various rapidly played note group figures is common in violin playing in Southern Albania. These rapid melodic figures usually elaborate the musical line moving by steps through the scale. The usual production technique for these note groups is to ornament the prolonged scale tone using its lower and upper neighbours creating repeated neighbour motions with short note values such as 16th and 32nd notes. Quick note group figures generally interrupt long-held tones to provide a kinetic energy or on the contrary, they can serve as a prolongation device and, in the latter case, they are usually interrupted by sudden rests. The example below in Figure 4.35 shows a passage from the kaba by Qerimaj using this technique. The rapid note groups with a repeated pattern of four notes serve in prolonging F#, scale degree 6 to resolve down to E temporarily at the end of bar 34, and totally in bar 36.



Figure 4.35 : Rapidly played groups of notes, from the Kaba by Qerimaj, bars 32-36

A similar passage with rapidly played note groups, this time from the kaba by Zeqiri is shown below in Figure 4.36. Very similarly, the rapid note groups serve in prolonging F#, scale degree 6, resolving finally to E in bar 9.



Figure 4.36 : Rapidly played groups of notes, from the Kaba by Zeqiri, bars 7-10

The example given in Figure 4.37, shows a rapidly played note group used to abruptly cut a preceding long-held note.



Figure 4.37 : Rapidly played note group used to abruptly cut a preceding long-held note, kaba by Qirjo, bars 8-9.

4.2.3.9 Leaps of m7 interval

A typical feature examined in the studied kaba performances is a highly original use of a specific type of wide leap encompassing a minor 7th interval. This kind of leap is actually an inversion of the stepwise motion along the scale. The most frequent m7 leap is used in pentatonic modes I, II and IV where a scale degree 2 exists. In such a case, scale degree 2 works as an upper leading tone, so it is expected to resolve down by step to the centre tone by whole step, which happens from time to time; while in the case where a m7 leap is used, it virtually resolves to the one octave higher centre tone with a m7 ascending leap, which is usually emphasised by being repeated two or three times. Figure 4.38 shows an example of such practice.



Figure 4.38 : Reaching the modal centre through the m7 leap; Kaba by Qirjo, bars 7-9

Figure 4.39 shows a cadential passage from the kaba by Zeqiri where the m7 leap comes in the descending form, with scale degree b7 on top and the centre tone in the lower register. With the added upper neighbour marking the centre tone A with a glissando, the m7 leap figure becomes a rapidly repeated three-note group.



Figure 4.39 : The m7 leap with an added upper neighbour to the centre tone A in the lower register, kaba by Zeqiri, bars 32-36

Sometimes, during a kaba performance, the music passes by secondary centre tones, just like a set of small modulations. The m7 leap may also be used to resolve to these secondary centres as well. In the part shown in Figure 4.40, the passage is based on a 1-b7-5, or namely A-G-E melodic progression. The m7 leap provides the 1-b7 scalar movement with an added octave displacement. Please also note how the m7 leap gets embellished in bar 59 where G on top has

an added modal lower neighbour⁷ and A below is replaced by a quick glissando from its upper modal neighbour C, causing the leap to become a rapid note group as explained in the previous subtitle.



Figure 4.40 : The m7 leap used in a passage that makes a half resolution to scale degree 5, kaba by Qerimaj, bars 57-62

4.2.3.10 Grace notes

In the studied kaba performances, grace note figures are generally used either to enhance a repeated note or to put extra emphasis on some notes in a figure by ornamenting them; both practices shown in Figure 4.41. In this example, in bar 22, the repeated C notes receive an extra emphasis through the grace notes providing a more articulated attack with the added upper neighbour D. In bar 23 on the other hand, the first appearance of the repeated m7 leap is expanded to a relatively wider one-beat space in the bar, leaving time to emphasise its first note with a lower neighbour appearing as a grace note.



Figure 4.41 : Grace notes enhancing repeated notes, kaba by Qirjo, bars 22-24.

There is also a technique featuring repeated grace notes to add an undulation effect to a longer note. This is utilised by Zeqiri in his Kaba performance as part of the opening figure, as shown in Figure 4.42.



Figure 4.42 : Undulation through repeated grace notes, Kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 1-3.

⁷ Due to the intervallic content of the pentatonic modes, a modal neighbour can be a third interval away.

Figure 4.43 displays another moment from the Kaba by Zeqiri where the same technique is used to articulate the long centre tone reached in bar 27.

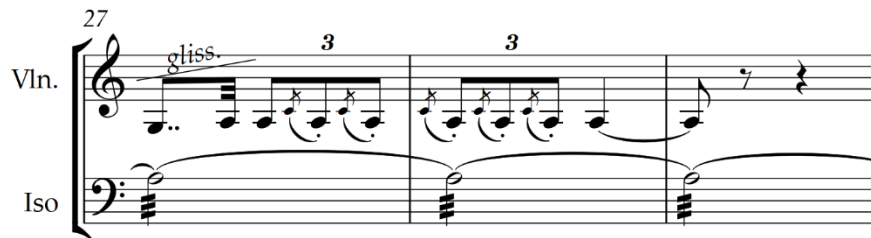


Figure 4.43 : Undulation through repeated grace notes, Kaba by Artur Ylli Zeqiri, bars 27-29.

4.2.3.11 Cicëron / cicërim – birdsong

Cicërim (twittering) means the imitation of a bird song. It is frequently observed in violin performances, primarily in the middle section of a kaba, characterised by a pastoral quality, aiming for a vivid depiction of nature. This term is utilised across Albania (Tole, 2010). In order to create this effect violinists use very high registers of the instrument, combining various bowings, glissandi, trills and tremolos in a soft dynamic. This effect is used after the main part of a kaba performance gets concluded, creating a magical moment like a cadenza. Usually, following the birdsong effect, the kaba continues with a kind of recapitulation part where the material before the birdsong comes back, ending with another final cadence similar to the end of the first part.

The kaba performance analysed here given by Ethem Qerimaj during the personal interview ends right at the point where he usually makes a transition to the birdsong part. Other performances of the same kaba available online all have that part (Albanian Art and Culture Movement, 2014). The kaba performance by Artur Ylli Zeqiri also features a birdsong part that comes right after the transcribed part ends. The violin kaba by Aurel Qirjo on the other hand, does not include a birdsong section in the album version (Saz'iso, 2017) whereas some concert versions of the same kaba do (Radiowe Centrum Kultury Ludowej, 2019).

4.2.3.12 Glissando with ricochet

A version of the descending glissando discussed in the previous paragraph is the ricochet-glissando where the glissando move in the left hand is accompanied by a ricochet bowing in the right hand. This results in a less smooth effect when compared to the loured-glissando, since the produced notes are all accentuated; also, the notes come in quick succession producing

much more sounding notes in a given time period. The ricochet-glissando is mostly seen in the Zogu – Birdsong part of the kaba performances, encompassing extreme high registers at the end of the fingerboard.





5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyse the kaba performance with violin in order to observe the distinct stylistic elements of violin playing that are proper to the folk music of Southern Albania. The kaba performances of Ethem Qerimaj, Artur Ylli Zeqiri, and Aurel Qirjo, who are the foremost practitioners of this style, exemplify the use of violin in southern Albanian folk music. These performances were transcribed and studied. The subsequent study yielded findings and conclusions, as provided below.

The primary origin of folk music in southern Albania is the classic polyphonic singing technique practiced in the historical region named as Epirus in the Roman Empire period. The polyphonic vocal legacy of the region, known today as Iso-polyphony, gained recognition in the field of music studies, particularly during the latter half of the 20th century. In 2008, Albania successfully applied for the inclusion of this multipart acapella singing tradition under the name of “Albanian folk iso-polyphony” in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. A hundred years before that, during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, Albania stood out among the Balkan states for the significant place it gave to this traditional polyphony as an important component of its folk music repertoire. Beginning from that period, the instrumental ensembles known as saze that arose in the area playing traditional music, also adopted this polyphonic structure as the foundation for their music. The music of saze encompasses three primary genres: valle (dancing music), këngë (song), and kaba. The kaba serves as an instrumental and freely rhythmic prelude or opener, typically preceding dancing music or a song. Once the kaba concludes, the music seamlessly transitions to the next piece without any intervening pause.

An instrumental improvisation in the kaba style is typically performed *ad libitum*, in free rhythm where there is still a feel of a succession of beats, but arranged in time in a way to represent an organic rhythmic flow where the time distance between the beats is altered based on the performer's interpretation.

The melodic structure of the kaba is found to consist mostly of the repetition of melodic figures or ideas coming back as variations. This also includes expansion and compression of the ideas, creating a control over the phrasing pace.

The pentatonic scale modes, which form the fundamental structure of Southern Albanian folk music, serve as the foundational melodic framework. Occasionally, non-pentatonic degrees are used as auxiliary sounds, but upon study, it is evident that they do not hold a significant structural role. The findings align with the content presented in Tole's (2007) and Smith's (2013) books, which include sections specifically on kaba. As shown in the analysis, it is feasible to transition to an alternative pentatonic mode in different sections of the compositions. This investigation discovered four distinct pentatonic scales in various sections of the examined kaba performances, namely all modes of the pentatonic scale except pentatonic mode III, which lacks scale degree 5, being a widely used structural tone subject to prolongation. It could easily be speculated that this aspect of the kaba performances could be the reason for the total lack of pentatonic mode III.

Regarding violin playing skills, the utilisation of articulations, occasionally singular but frequently in conjunction with two or more, was noted. The abundance of articulation enables a wide range of tonal options, encompassing variations in volume as well as the utilisation of diverse bow positions and pressures across the whole length of the instrument, from the neck to the bridge. All the elements mentioned can be utilised to generate profound dramatic effects. The analytical examination of the elements derived from kaba performance practice, particularly for the violin, has not been addressed in the current literature. Smith's (2013) book focuses on the clarinet and also addresses the kaba in relation to the clarinet specifically. Tole (2007), however, focuses on the kaba as a musical framework and does not discuss the intricacies of violin performance. Consequently, the results of this research are introduced as novel information to the existing body of literature.

According to Tole (2007), an analysis of improvisations in the kaba style reveals a melodic structure characterised by the repeating of short melodic motifs and their variants. Nevertheless, our investigation revealed the existence of a deeper underlying structural pathway beneath the surface layer. It has been established that the fundamental underlying structure is derived from the pentatonic scale, which is also present in the music that is perceived by the listener. The explicit determination and

representation of this fundamental structural essence or nucleus, as demonstrated in this research, is an unprecedented discovery, as it has not been observed in any previous scholarly investigations on Albanian folk music.

The suggestions for future research on the utilisation of violin and kaba in Southern Albanian traditional music would be as follows.

It would be important to examine whether other kaba performances share similar structural melodic framework, or deep melodic plan, as the ones provided in this study. Investigation of the similarities and contrasts among them could point to some generalisations on widely or scarcely used pitch organisation frameworks also discussing whether there is a consistent connection with performers' choices and the different regions they come from.

Research can be conducted to establish nomenclature for the combinations of different articulations and bowing techniques employed in Southern Albanian folk music on the violin. In order to achieve this objective, it will be imperative to conduct an extensive analysis of a greater quantity of examples, with a specific emphasis on identifying the most prevalent and representative ones.

Research can be conducted to identify and explain the ornamental motifs frequently employed on the violin in the context of Southern Albanian folk music, as well as provide appropriate names and notations for these motifs.

The incorporation of the violin in song and dance music ensembles, distinct from the kaba, can be examined in Southern Albanian folk music.

An investigation could be conducted to determine the degree to which the indicated style features are present in contemporary pop-folk productions in Albania.

Violinists aspiring to perform in the researched style could implement the playing techniques observed in the analysis.

Educators seeking to instruct this playing style could create scholarly articles and musical exercises focusing on the performing attributes outlined in this thesis.

Furthermore, short kaba compositions can be crafted with the intention of serving teaching objectives, allowing students to perform them or endeavour to create their own improvisations based on them.



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EDUCATION :

- **B.Mus.** : 1996, Tirana Fine Arts Academy, Music Faculty, Violin Department.
- **M.Mus.** : 2004, Istanbul Technical University, Social Sciences Institute, Music Department (MIAM - Dr. Erol Üçer Center for Advanced Studies in Music), Violin major.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1989-current: Classical violin player giving concerts as soloist or with chamber ensembles.
- 2000-current: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, 1st violin section
- 2006-current: Violin instructor, private lessons
- 2007-2011: Violin instructor, Marmara University Fine Arts Faculty, Music Department
- 2006-2007: Violin instructor, Yıldız University Faculty of Arts and Design, Music Department

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS ON THE THESIS:

- **Pulake Altınbüken, A., & Özgen Öztürk, Y. (2023):** Violin Kaba in Folk Music of Albania: Musical Structure and Performance Practice. International Congress - 2nd International Graduate Research Symposium – IGRS’23, May 16-18, 2023 Istanbul, Turkey.
- **Pulake Altınbüken, A., & Özgen Öztürk, Y. (2023).** Güney Arnavutluk halk müziğine Ethem Qerimaj ekseninden bakış ve bir kaba icrasının analizi. *Rast Müzikoloji Dergisi*, 11(3), 425-445. <https://doi.org/10.12975/rastmd.20231134>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS: CD and DVD recordings

As Soloist

2017 CD: “From Istanbul”, chamber music compilation. Lila Music. CD No: 8697427993194. Appearing as soloist in the track titled: “Variations for Violin and Piano”.

As Chamber Ensemble Member

2017 CD: “From Istanbul”, chamber music compilation. Lila Music. CD No: 8697427993194. Appearing as MIAM Modern Music Ensemble (MMME) member in the whole album.

2014 CD: MIAM Modern Music Ensemble, “(M)av(i)’ye: New Music by MIAM composers”, produced by ITU and MIAM, distributed as bundle CD with Andante Classical Music Magazine, issue: January 2015. Appearing as MIAM Modern Music Ensemble (MMME) member in the whole album.

As Orchestra Member

2018 CD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, “Turnage & Berlioz”, conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Onyx Music. CD No: Onyx 4188. Orchestra Member

2017 CD: Nemanja Radulovic, TCHAIKOVSKY CARMEN (with Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra) conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Deutsche Grammophon. CD no: 0289 479 8089 6. Orchestra Member

2016 CD: Ksenija Sidorova, CARMEN (with Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra) conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Deutsche Grammophon. Cd no: 0289 479 5224 4. Orchestra Member

2014 DVD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra “Oriental Promise”, conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Live concert recording made during BBC Proms 2014, Royal Albert Hall, London, UK. Onyx Classics and BIPO, DVD No. BIP0001. Orchestra Member

2014 CD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, “Rimsky-Korsakov: Scheherazade: Balakirev, Erkin, Ippolitov-Ivanov, Rimsky Korsakov”, conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Onyx Music. CD No: Onyx 4124. Orchestra Member

2012 CD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, “Music from the Machine Age: Bartók, Holst, Prokofiev, Ravel, Schulhoff”, conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Onyx Music. CD No: Onyx 4086. Orchestra Member

2011 DVD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra “BİFO & CMYLMZ”, conductor: Gürer Aykal, guest conductor: Cem Yılmaz. CMYLMZ Fikirsanat, Tiglon. Orchestra Member

2010 CD: Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, “Respighi, Hindemith, Schmitt”, conductor: Sascha Goetzel. Onyx Music. CD No: Onyx 4048. Orchestra Member