

# The Importance of Advanced Level Exercises in the Performance and Education of Qanun

Ömer Özden<sup>+</sup>

Traditional Turkish Music Department of Dilek Sabancı State Conservatory of Selçuk University, Konya-Turkey

**Abstract.** The aim of this study consists of the determination of the whether the advanced level of exercises for Qanun exist in the methods in literature and contribute to the literature in overcoming the deficiencies. This study relies on the document survey and observation techniques related to the determination of assessment in the descriptive system and qualitative research model. My experiences and my personal observations on the students were evaluated in this study. Seven methods for Qanun emerged in the literature of Turkish instrument education and a postgraduate thesis was analyzed through document survey and analysis techniques. The methods available in the literature serve the purpose of the Qanun education at the beginning level. Although the observation executed on the students clearly emphasizes the importance of advanced level exercises, such exercises weren't employed extensively in the Qanun methods in the literature. For that reason, it is necessary to prepare the methods containing advanced level exercises within this context and studies related to such advanced level exercises should be urgently employed in the literature.

**Keywords:** Music, Qanun Education, Exercises, Performance

## 1. Introduction

In Turkey, it can be seen that the number of the schools which give the education of Qanun in their curriculum has been rapidly increased since the establishment of the first conservatory on Turkish music in 1976. The education of Qanun forms the major dimension of the instrument education which is applied in the field of vocational music education and thus, it is necessary to train many performers in the field and provide new contributions on this education.

When the studies including exercises and researches performed on the education of Qanun and in the literature of Turkish instrument education analysed, it can be seen that they are scarce in quantity and consisted of only eight publications as following:

İsmail ŞENÇALAR-*The Method of Learning Qanun* (1976); Ümit MUTLU-*The Method of Qanun* (1988), Pınar SOMAKÇI-*Introduction to the Teaching of Qanun* (2001); Gültekin and Tahir AYDOĞDU *The Method of Qanun* (2005); Halil KARADUMAN-*The Method of Qanun* (2007); Özdemir HAFIZOĞLU *The Exercises and Education of Qanun* (2009); Ahmet Uğur AKSUNGUR-*The Performance, Teaching Techniques of Qanun, Comparative Analysis of the Methods for Qanun, and the Education Etudes for Qanun* (2010); Oğuz KARAKAYA-*The Method of Qanun* (2012).

In Turkish music culture, the instrumental music developed during the last 100 years and this development necessitated the emergence of advanced techniques and virtuoso performers in the instruments of Turkish music. The exercises in the methods for Qanun aforementioned and are convenient only for the beginning level are far from contributing to advanced level of performance and virtuosos. Thus, there is a huge gap in the advanced level exercises in the literature of the education of Qanun.

It is seen that the most important of Qanun performers emerged after the last quarter of 20.th century with the distinguishing of Turkish instrumental music and those performers use all sound register of the Qanun during their performances. It is clear that, whereas, the whole parts of sound register haven't been used in most of the methodological studies performed on the education of Qanun up to now and the lowest register and the highest register in the Qanun have been neglected with the fear of going beyond the borders

---

<sup>+</sup> Corresponding author. Tel.: +90 332 2410189; fax: +90 332 2410188.  
E-mail address: ozden@selcuk.edu.tr.

of maqams (melodic modes). In the exercises written according to tone sequences of Maqam Çargah, for example, five frets under the Kaba Cargah fret and five frets over the Tiz Çargah fret with a total of ten are never used. Thus, the majority of exercises in the literature doesn't include the whole sound register of 3,5 octaves in the Qanun and this is seen as a significant deficiency in the literature.

The performers started to adopt the applications of arpeggio and chord in the instrument of Qanun which is very convenient for such applications especially for the last 30-40 years in which polyphonic music elements started their development in the traditional Turkish music. Currently, the technique took root with this development emerged during the second half of 20'th century, and when the Qanun players in the level of virtuoso adopted these techniques and commonly used arpeggio and chord in their performances. Scarcely existence of the exercises of arpeggio and chord which are frequently used nowadays in the methods in the literature is a huge deficiency.

In the international field, numerous methodological studies including advanced level exercises were carried out for all types of instruments in order to upgrade and maintain the performances of the musicians. When those methodological studies examined on the education of Qanun in Turkey, and compared to those which were internationally executed, it can be seen that the methods of teaching Qanun and studies related to it were written for the beginners who newly learn to play this instrument. It can be seen that teaching those methods, the history of Qanun, its structure and characteristics, its production, the peg system and its use, information related to the sound register besides note values and the rhythmical differences of the note, the names of pitches in the sound system of Turkish music, their definition on the instrument of Qanun, the summary information related to maqams and usûls (rhythmic modes) used in Turkish music, examples from Turkish music, the coordination of right and left hands in Qanun , strengthening and distinguishing right and left hands, getting it comprehended, the ornament techniques such as tremolo, appoggiatura, vibrato and dynamics and related basic applications are all focused on teaching and developing them only in the 'beginner level'. In those studies aiming the introduction of the scales of maqams and especially providing the skill of playing the instrument Qanun, in addition to this focusing, the advanced level and cyclical exercises which functionalize the finger muscles in advanced level and requiring high metronome speeds are little used. In conclusion, numerous difficulties and deficiencies still remain dissolved although no problems were encountered in the presentation of the theoretical information in the literature. Since those studies employ the advanced level exercises and applications of arpeggio and chord little during the performance of the songs with polyphonic elements, this has inconvenienced the reaching to the developed performance mastery and hindered the teaching methods and techniques. However, the performances depending on advanced level exercises have great significance generally in the world and especially in the international teaching instruments and the literature when the performers reach to a definite level. Numerous advanced level methodological studies have been carried out for all types of instruments in order to increase and maintain the performances of the musicians while they are playing the instruments. The aforementioned studies which exist in the literature and have been executed on the education of the instrument Qanun generally fail in answering the needs related to teaching Qanun and more comprehensive approaches are needed.

The importance of exercising is rather crucial for all the instruments. Starting from this determination, it should be considered that exercising which is rather important and effective in playing Qanun is an activity and it is an activity that is maintained not only during the learning process but also during the entire music life. Nowadays, the Qanun players who can play it in virtuoso level spend at least 1,5-2 hours of practicing every day to maintain their form and it supports this determination. The exercises which increase the performance level in playing Qanun have great importance and should be definitely applied in addition to a regular exercising program.

## **1.1. The Problem**

The problem of this study includes the discussion about the importance and necessity of advanced level exercises in the performance and education of the instrument Qanun within the context of other methods in the literature.

## **1.2. The Aim**

The aim of this study consists of the determination of the whether the advanced level of exercises exist in the methods in literature and contribute to the literature in overcoming the deficiencies.

## **2. Method**

This study relies on the document survey and observation techniques related to the determination of assessment in the descriptive system and qualitative research model (See, Karasar 2010, Özer 1997). My experiences of 24 years, especially 8 years of it was in education and my personal observations on the students were evaluated in this study. Seven methods for Qanun emerged in the literature of Turkish instrument education and a postgraduate thesis were analyzed through document survey and analysis techniques. Then, the deficiencies of advanced level cyclical exercises (which are performed in high metronome speeds) and a cyclical arpeggio and chord applications in the system were determined. In order to overcome the deficiencies, the studies especially prepared by me and containing my advanced level exercises were applied on all my students for two years and those students whom advanced level exercises were applied through the observation technique. When the executed observations were evaluated, all the advanced level exercises which were determined to have great contributions in the performance developments levels of the students and aimed at filling the gap in the literature were compiled in two books called *The Exercises for Qanun* (Özden 2012) and *The Applications of Arpeggio and Chord for Qanun* (Özden 2012).

## **3. Data and Comments**

As a result of the analysis of eight studies in the literature through document analysis technique, total 531 specific exercises were found in those sources. Only 89 of them were found to be the advanced level cyclical exercises working on high metronome speeds. Furthermore, entire sound register of Qanun were used in none of those 531 exercises. Remaining 442 exercises include only the exercises at the beginning level. When it is expressed in percentage, only 16,7 % of the exercises in the eight studies is in the advanced level. This quantity, shows both that there are deficiencies in great amount in the education of Qanun and advanced level exercises in the literature and the scarce amount of advanced level exercises in methods of Qanun which are only convenient for the beginning level. The deficiency of the methods in the literature from the point of contributing to advanced performance level and virtuoso is extremely precise.

A second crucial finding determined in this study about advanced level exercises is the observations meaning that the application of advanced level exercises on the students at the beginning level including the whole sound register of the Qanun on the students with the specific, cyclical and having high metronome values developed by me related to the performances of the students during the first two years. Those benefits can be listed as follows:

The first, the students can play technical pieces comfortably so long as they practice regularly.

The second, the higher the metronome speeds of the technical works to be performed after the advanced level exercises which are practiced at very high metronome speeds, planned and everyday are, the practice and performance of these works become easier since they are lower than those exercises; thus, they are performed in an almost perfect and precise manner.

The third, the use of advanced level cyclical exercises in the entire sound register of the Qanun extremely increases the mastery of performance on the whole sound register in the Qanun.

The fourth, practicing those exercises everyday strengthens the finger muscles, functionalizes, warms and prepares the hands. These changes lead great comfort during the performance and provide great contributions for musicality.

## **4. Conclusion and Suggestions**

In this study, following conclusions were obtained based on the problems about importance and necessity of advanced level exercises in the performance and teaching the instrument Qanun: The importance of advanced level exercises (having high metronome speed levels and including the entire sound field of the Qanun) applied on the students were determined through observation technique and they were found to be

useful. According to the obtained results from the study, for that reason, advanced level exercises are important and necessary in the performance and teaching the instrument Qanun.

After the determination of the importance and necessity of the performance and teaching Qanun, all the exercises in all the methods in the literature were analyzed through document survey technique within the context of employing advanced level exercises and following results were obtained: Although the observation executed on the students clearly emphasizes the importance of such exercises, advanced level exercises weren't employed extensively in the Qanun methods in the literature. For that reason, it is necessary to prepare the methods containing advanced level exercises within this context and studies related to such advanced level exercises should be urgently employed in the literature. The methods available in the literature serve the purpose of the Qanun education at the beginning level. In order not to lose time, studies containing directly advanced level exercises should be carried out. The books with the names of *The Exercises for Qanun* and *The Applications of Arpeggio and Chord for Qanun* were presented to the literature of Qanun teaching with this purpose and requirement. However, more studies should be carried out related to the topic and the gap in the literature should be immediately filled.

## 5. References

- [1] A.U. Aksungur. "Kanun Sazının İcrası, Öğretim Teknikleri, Karşılaştırmalı Kanun Metodu Analizleri ve Kanun Eğitim Etütleri". Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Sakarya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Kocaeli, 2010.
- [2] T. Aydoğdu and G. Aydoğdu. *Kanun Metodu*. Ankara: Yurtrenkleri Yayınevi, 2005.
- [3] Ö. Hafizoğlu. *Kanun Egzersizleri ve Eğitimi*. Trabzon: Gündüz Basımevi, 2009.
- [4] H. Karaduman. *Kanun Metodu*. İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yayın, 2007.
- [5] O. Karakaya. *Kanun Metodu*. Konya: Aybil Yayınları, 2012.
- [6] N. Karasar. *Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi*. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2010.
- [7] Ü. Mutlu. *Kanun Metodu*. İzmir: Ermat Matbaa, 1988.
- [8] Ö. Özden. *Kanun İçin Egzersizler*. Konya: Aybil Yayınları, 2012.
- [9] Ö. Özden. *Kanun İçin Arpej&Akor Uygulamaları*. Konya: Aybil Yayınları, 2012.
- [10] Y. Özer.. *Bilim Perspektifinde Müzik*. İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Yayınları, 1997.
- [11] İ. Şençalar. *Kanun Öğrenme Metodu*. İstanbul: Müzik Dünyası Yayınları, 1976.
- [12] P. Somakçı. *Kanun Öğretimine Giriş*. İstanbul: Haliç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2001.