

Ever since the neo-*Anadolu pop* group Altın Gün won a Grammy Award in 2019, Turkish pop music has become firmly established in the contemporary global music scene. Interest in *Anadolu pop* and *rock* music from the 1960s and 1970s had waned for decades, notably after the 1980 military coup in Turkey, when it was largely overshadowed by the success of *arabesk* music and later by more globalized pop music, as famously represented by Tarkan. In 2006, U.S. hip-hop beat diggers were the first to spark a revival. As a result, not only is the neo-*Anadolu pop* music scene thriving today, but there is also a renewed interest in the historical music productions, as demonstrated, for example, by the abundance of reissues of Anatolian pop from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the slowly but steadily growing number of academic studies on the topic. The first major study on pop music from Turkey in English, Ali C. Gedik's book *Made in Turkey. Studies in Popular Music*, was published almost parallel to Altın Gün's Grammy Award, in 2018. However, Turkish pop music has never been exclusively 'made in Turkey.' Indeed, much of Turkish (pop) music is 'made in Germany,' as numerous Turkish labels in the Federal Republic of Germany have enjoyed great success producing music for Turkish communities in Germany, Europe, and Turkey. Some music, such as Kurdish music, has even been produced primarily in Germany for political reasons.

Our work forms part of this field of rediscovery and academic exploration of Turkish pop music. This volume is a collection of texts grouped around the phenomenon of *Anadolu pop* and *rock*. It compiles over 15 years of research on Turkish music focusing on productions from Turkey and Germany.¹ This also implies that we started researching this topic well before it gained widespread international popularity and before a sizeable community dedicated to (re-)publishing, archiving, and researching this music had formed.

How, then, did we find this music or—better still, how did it find us? And why and how did we, two German academics, curators—one of us also a DJ—neither of us of Turkish descent nor trained musicologist, start to dig deeply into this music? Finally, what decisions led us to make this book? Before turning to the book itself and its internal organization, let's start at the beginning: This preface will not dwell at length on our research trajectory, which is addressed in greater depth in the assembled texts, as will be explained further below. The short version is that we encountered *Anadolu pop* through the already mentioned U.S. hip-hop musicians, most notably via the beat producer Egon's now legendary *Stones Throw Podcast #12*, the so-called "Turkish Funk Mix," published online by the Los Angeles-based record label Stones Throw in 2006. Over the years, the wish to learn more about this music resulted in various research activities and outputs combining archival, curatorial, and academic strategies. The main driving force

1 The year 2025 in the title of this book refers to the state of our research.

The year 2026, meanwhile, indicates the publication date of the book and texts within it.

behind these activities is not sheer scholarly curiosity, but rather an attempt to help make an important—yet at least partly forgotten or marginalized—chapter of pop music history accessible again.

The strategies used in this process are intertwined and mutually informative. Thus, our work on re-releasing Anatolian pop and rock on vinyl—published mainly on the labels Global Pop First Wave and, since 2022, on Seismographic Records—has nourished the academic texts assembled in this volume, and vice versa. Guiding key questions in this process address the specific historical, political, media-related, and aesthetic conditions that led to the emergence of Anatolian pop as a hybrid genre, as well as its relationship to other styles such as *arabesk*, belly dance, folk, and hip-hop. At the beginning of our journey into the field of Turkish pop music, I was mostly accompanying the research, giving advice on post- and decolonial approaches, for example, while it was Holger Lund who published the first vinyl compilations and texts. At that time, I was working in a large, DFG funded research project on the history of German documentary film, and I began to wonder whether the large community of so-called Turkish ‘guest workers’ in Germany and their music figured anywhere in those films. Although Turkish musical life in Germany was not at the center of my own research area within the project, conversations with colleagues who were assigned to work on pop music or migrant communities (see Selck 2017), as well as my own research into documentaries on children and youth quickly revealed that it was rarely represented. Very little emerged from my viewings, apart from a few brief glimpses in films concerned with other topics, such as *Der Boxer aus Kars* [The Boxer from Kars] (D: Thomas Tanner, 1977) or *Im Niemandsländ* [In No-Man’s Land] (D: Hans Andreas Guttner, 1983), part three from the TV series *Das Einwanderungsland* [The Immigration Country], that portrays a group of young Turkish men in Munich.

This absence seems even more surprising given that the Turkish communities in Germany have always been musically very active and that, from the 1960s onwards, a large music industry producing Turkish music existed in Germany. These activities were, however, not only ignored or marginalized in documentary film, but also by German mainstream society in general. This situation, in turn, gave rise to a series of new questions, looking for reasons why this extensive musical production was ignored and excluded from the German music market and media for decades.

The texts resulting from our research into Turkish and German-Turkish pop music have been published in different media, formats, and contexts; some of them are easily accessible, others remain more or less hidden. As our earlier web project, *lundaudiovisualwritings.de* (2017), which compiled a comparable array of texts on our research into audiovisual art forms, had generated very positive feedback, we decided to follow a similar path to make our writings on the field of Turkish and German-Turkish pop music more visible and accessible to a wider international community.

This time, we opted for a book that is available in both printed and open-access formats to ensure academic visibility as well as easy, low-threshold availability for anyone interested. This volume is thus presented for the first time as a standalone publication, although several of the collected texts have been published before in different contexts. Transcript seemed like the ideal home for this endeavor, as the publishing house has already devoted itself to Turkish and German-Turkish cultural production through a number of related publications.

Here, the book also contributes to filling a gap: While the aforementioned silence on Turkish music in German documentary films has been skillfully broken by Fatih Akin, Mirza Odabaşı, or Cem Kaya, academic research on German-Turkish music production remains scarce compared to other areas such as German-Turkish cinema and literature (see Neubauer 2011; Alkın 2017; Sievers 2024) or German-Turkish theater (see Boran 2023).

In order to create a more coherent book experience from the collection of texts, we made a number of decisions, starting with arranging the texts into thematic groups: The first three texts explore the historical conditions that led to the emergence and the resulting specific hybrid aesthetic of *Anadolu pop* and *rock*. The second group of three texts focuses on the music and related media, ranging from the *gazino* as a particular musical environment to films, posters, and magazines. The third group comprises two texts that use Turkish pop music as a case study for developing decolonial approaches to pop music and its historiography. The book concludes with three texts that explore the (difficult) status and life of Turkish music in Germany from different angles.

While these thematic groups are intended to facilitate navigation of the content, the texts simultaneously allow us to observe how research on Turkish pop music has evolved. As the texts more or less follow the chronological order of their publication—with the exception of the first, hitherto unpublished text on radio—it becomes clear how little academic research on the topic was available 15 years ago, and how quickly the field has evolved. The texts, of course, also bear witness to our own research journey, leading from tentative approaches to a deeper understanding of the field. As the thematic groups already show, the texts approach the topic of Turkish and German-Turkish pop music from different perspectives and focus on different aspects. Consequently, no single methodology applies to the whole book. While all texts are methodologically informed by our disciplinary backgrounds in media studies, art history, and literature, the multifaceted nature of the topic requires a transdisciplinary approach. The methods used are detailed in each text; in addition to media studies, they draw on musicology, cultural studies, history, and sociology. Non-academic sources such as films or newspaper articles are important for gaining a complete picture, as are the numerous conversations with experts and members of the Turkish communities in Turkey and Germany, without whose help our

research would not have been possible. All texts have been thoroughly checked and discussed with expert members of these communities to avoid cultural misunderstandings and mistakes, and for some texts we have teamed up with expert colleagues.

As already mentioned, the texts assembled in this book come from a variety of sources, printed and online, following different logics of publication. For the sake of keeping the research history readable, we chose not to completely homogenize the texts, but to preserve their different tones and styles as much as possible. We did, however, adapt them to the logics of book publication and to a stylesheet, with the exception of original quotes in English. To facilitate the reading flow, all quotes have been translated into English by the editors.

Although English has become the contemporary 'lingua franca' of academic writing, we are well aware that this decision not only entails accessibility and inclusion but also produces linguistic exclusions. Unfortunately, the means available for this publication are limited and do not allow for translations into additional languages, so that we can offer only this compromise at the moment.

Last but not least, the texts have undergone various degrees of reworking, as indicated at their respective beginnings. Some texts remain unchanged, while others have been adapted and updated with new research. In some cases, an earlier published version has merely been used as a basis for the current text.

The book's textual plurality is expertly woven together by Chan-Young Ramert's perceptive design, supported by the typographical choice of FH Oscar—a font designed by Fatih Hardal of Hardal Studio.

This book certainly sums up our research into (historical) Turkish pop music, mainly released on vinyl from the 1960s to the 1980s. But rather than marking an end, it seems more interesting to look to the future and ask: what comes next? One step further in time, the next medium is the cassette. Turkish music cassettes constituted a mass media market from the 1970s to around 2000, with many of them being produced in Germany. Despite being sold in the thousands, these productions are barely archived and now occupy a niche position in music history and the music market. Consequently, certain independent Turkish diaspora music developments that primarily occurred on cassette—such as *disco folk*, *Anadolu synth*, *gurbet şarkıları*, or even Kurdish music—are difficult to research and rarely heard, a situation that calls for both further archival strategies and research activity.

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