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A Qualitative Study on Turkish Composers' Views on Artificial Intelligence and Composition

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Abstract Technological advancements have profoundly impacted artistic and musical creation, redefining the boundaries between human creativity and artificial intelligence (AI). The growing integration of AI into compositional practices has sparked debates on creativity, originality, and aesthetic values. This study analyzes the perspectives of five composers-each representing a distinct artistic approach within the contemporary Turkish music scene-regarding AI's influence on composition. A qualitative methodology was employed, using semi-structured in-depth interviews, and the data were interpreted through content analysis. The findings indicate that while composers acknowledge the functional potential of AI, particularly in commercial music production, they also stress that artistic creativity is shaped by human emotions, originality, and aesthetic sensitivity. Although some view AI as a technical support tool, the prevailing consensus is that AI-generated music lacks artistic depth and emotional expressiveness. Additionally, concerns such as ethical implications, plagiarism risks, and technological dependency emerge as significant points of contention. This study offers valuable insight into the evolving relationship between AI and creative processes, revealing both the limitations and potential applications of AI in composition.

Keywords Composition · creativity · artificial intelligence

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A Qualitative Study on Turkish Composers' Views on Artificial Intelligence and Composition

Artificial intelligence (AI) encompasses techniques that enable computers to simulate intelligent behavior, ranging from simple algorithmic processes to the creation of autonomous, potentially self-aware agents (Raynor, 1999, p. 13). Larry Tesler famously described AI as "whatever hasn't been done yet," underlining the field's fluid and evolving boundaries. While grounded in rigorous computational models and optimization algorithms, the concept of AI is also shaped by commercial narratives and cultural discourse (Arielli & Manovich, 2023, p. 218). This duality-echnical precision on one side and sociocultural perception on the other-remains central to understanding AI's role in artistic creation.

The introduction of AI into the arts dates back to the 1970s, gradually expanding across domains such as visual arts, music, architecture, poetry, and design (Martins; Rodríguez-Fernández, Rebelo, 2022, p. V). Since the early 2000s, AI has gained increased visibility in the creation of cultural artifacts (Arielli & Manovich, 2023, p. 215; Grabe et al., 2022, p. 84), provoking both enthusiasm and skepticism. Guljajeva and Sola (2023, p. 357) highlight AI's polarizing reception in the art world, while Privato et al. (2022, p. 243) point to its transformative influence on creative practice. As Miranda (2021, p. XIX) observes, the notion of AI-based music composition-once dismissed by many musicians-has now entered mainstream consideration. This evolution reflects a broader historical pattern: technological innovations in music often encounter resistance at first but gain legitimacy as their creative potential becomes recognized, even as debates over authorship, originality, and artistic control persist.

AI also offers new theoretical frameworks for understanding musical intelligence-an intelligence that extends beyond logical and algorithmic reasoning. Emerging AI-driven research into music examines how musical structures can model, reflect, or even stimulate human cognitive processes (Miranda, 2021, pp. XIX-XX; 2022, p. 116). In this respect, AI serves not only as a compositional tool but also as a conceptual lens through which long-standing assumptions about "musical thinking" can be re-examined.

The integration of computational systems into music has given rise to novel compositional paradigms. Examples include Winograd's "Systemic Grammar" adapted from linguistic theory, Berger and Gang's application of neural networks to model musical perception, and Orlarey's "Concrete Abstraction" approach for compositional modeling (Balaban, 2002, p. 1). While these developments illustrate AI's potential to reshape the theoretical and practical dimensions of music, they also raise critical questions regarding the balance between machine-led processes and human interpretive agency. My own position is that AI should be regarded as an augmentative force-expanding the spectrum of creative options-rather than as a substitute for the affective, contextual, and interpretive depth that human musicians bring to the compositional process.

Despite the growing acceptance of AI, skepticism remains-particularly regarding its role in creativity. While fears of AI replacing human composers are often overstated, they reflect deeper anxieties surrounding the potential devaluation of human artistry and the homogenization of creative output. As Zlatkov, Ens, and Pasquier (2023, pp. 320-321) note, there is still limited empirical evidence addressing bias against AI-generated music. This research gap is especially notable in the Turkish context, where composers operate at the intersection of deeply rooted musical traditions and rapidly evolving digital technologies. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how Turkish composers perceive, integrate, and critique AI technologies within their creative processes. By foregrounding these perspectives, the research seeks to contribute to a

richer understanding of the evolving relationship between AI and music, while situating this dialogue within the broader framework of cultural identity and artistic practice.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the impact of AI on the compositional process. It examined the views of five Turkish composers-academically active in university composition departments-regarding AI's role in their creative work. By drawing on participants from different generations and academic backgrounds, the study aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of the relationship between AI and composition in contemporary Turkey. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, and online semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The resulting data were evaluated using content analysis; interview transcripts were carefully reviewed, and key themes were identified by the researcher. Direct quotations were included to faithfully represent participants' perspectives. Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Adıyaman University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee. The application was reviewed on May 10, 2025 under the decision number 145, and the study was approved by majority vote. All procedures were carried out in accordance with institutional ethical standards.

Five Composers, Five Perspectives

This section outlines the biographies of five prominent contemporary composers, each of whom blends traditional and modern elements through a distinct musical approach. They view music as both personal expression and a universal means of communication.

Ali Turgay Erdener (b. 1957, Gümüşhane) is a prominent figure in contemporary Turkish music. Known for his stage compositions-including works for theatre, ballet, and operettas-he integrates cultural heritage with an innovative instrumental style (A. T. Erdener, personal communication, May 26, 2025).

Önder Özkoç (b. 1978, Konya) focuses on modal geography, pre-Baroque, and contemporary music. His compositions synthesize Anatolian traditions with Western elements, often incorporating traditional instruments into orchestral works (Ö. Özkoç, personal communication, June 7, 2025).

Erberk Eryılmaz (b. 1989, Samsun) brings the energy of folk music to the stage. Awarded a Grammy in 2022 for Dance of the Yoğurt Maker, his work blends European and Turkish instruments, drawing inspiration from diverse musical traditions (E. Eryılmaz, personal communication, June 1, 2025).

Eylem Atalay (b. 1992, Ankara) began composing in 2020-2021. She embraces a pluralistic approach and has developed a distinctive use of motifs and limited materials. Her work spans various instruments and has been recognized with multiple awards (E. Atalay, personal communication, May 25, 2025).

Aleksandra Nadin Bolşen (b. 1996, Mersin) is a multi-instrumentalist, especially active on piano and accordion. Her award-winning compositions span classical, film, fusion, and ethnic music, and have been performed nationally and internationally (A. N. Bolşen, personal communication, May 27, 2025).

These composers, distinguished by their unique artistic approaches within the landscape of 21st-century Turkish music, reflect a multifaceted perspective by focusing on areas such as traditional music, contemporary composition, electronic and stage music, modal music, polyphony, and folk traditions. This diversity also contributes to shaping the definition of composition itself, as well as the qualities expected of a composer today.

Who is a Composer?

This section explores how the five interviewed composers define the concept of a "composer." The perceptions of these individuals are of particular importance, as they may influence the broader discussion on whether AI can be regarded as a composer.

Erdener (2025) posits that the composition of music requires the establishment of a personal and original musical language, and therefore, artificial intelligence cannot be considered a composer. According to Erdener, the potency of art lies in its capacity to evoke different emotions in individuals. While AI may facilitate various functions in music composition, requiring originality and individual expression, such capabilities are only possible through human intuition and emotional depth.

Özkoç (2025) defines an artist as "someone with an inner struggle," thereby emphasizing that artistic creation emerges from an emotional and personal need. From this perspective, art is not merely optional, but rather the manifestation of an inner compulsion or necessity.

Eryılmaz (2025) posits that an artist is not only a conduit for personal expression but also bears a responsibility to contribute to the public good as a social leader. He believes that artists should convey their ideas and worldviews through music and perceive art as a tool for change. He also underscores the importance of learning from historical musical traditions while simultaneously addressing the demands of the present and the opportunities presented by modern technology.

Atalay (2025), defines composition as the process through which a composer reflects their situation and ideas most appropriately, within the constraints of their circumstances and available materials. Conversely, Bolşen emphasizes that composition is a process that demands meticulous labor and effort, positioning the composer as a researcher.

The definitions provided by the composers highlight several shared elements, including the importance of originality, sustained effort and dedication, a research-oriented mindset, and a sense of artistic and social responsibility. These perspectives suggest that composition is a multifaceted and deeply personal experience, extending beyond technical skill and functioning as a human and cultural form of expression.

Artificial Intelligence and Music Composition

Although music and computing seem compatible, the intricacy of composition long appeared unsuited to mathematical modelling, so science and music evolved on separate tracks (Dannenberg, 2006, p. 1219). This divide was first challenged in 1957, when Lejaren Hiller and Leonard Isaacson premiered the Illiac Suite-four movements generated with hand-coded rules and Markov chains-marking the birth of AI-assisted composition (Nilson, 2010; as cited in Steels, 2021, p. V; Bown, 2021, p. 2). Early computer-music research then gravitated toward sound synthesis and control rather than full compositional autonomy, yet the Illiac techniques still underpin many present-day experiments (Bown 2021, p. 2).

Rapid progress since the mid-2010s has altered the landscape. DeepBach (2016) produced convincing Bach-style chorales (Hadjeres et al., 2016; Arielli& Manovich 2023, p. 215). Projects such as the AI-completed Unfinished Symphony (2019) and Beethoven X (premièred 9 Oct 2021, Bonn) exemplify what Arielli and Manovich call "computational mannerism," in which algorithms craft variants of established styles (2023, p. 215). David Cope's systems likewise model Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, yet push beyond imitation toward novel creative strategies (Dannenberg 2006, pp. 1218-1221).

Today, AI composes film scores from keywords and even entire pop albums. This burgeoning arena-labelled "Musical Metacreativity" (MuMe)-ranges from assistive software to fully autonomous generators

(Musical Metacreation, 2025; Zlatkov; Ens; Pasquier, 2023, pp. 308-309). AI-authored pieces now appear in major venues and commercial catalogues, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Steels, 2021, p. VII).

These advances fuel debate. Some composers view AI as a productive tool; others insist human intent and emotional nuance remain irreplaceable. The present study therefore asks: What are your thoughts on composing music with artificial intelligence? -probing both the promise and the perceived limits of AI-driven creativity. Erdener's (2025) perspective on the use of artificial intelligence in music composition appears to be grounded in concerns, particularly regarding fairness and originality. "When I think about its being the composer's assistant, I feel like it is not fair. Because once you call it assistance, AI rushes in with everything- both positive and negative. However, I think there are quite a few negative aspects, and I'm not sure that these can be entirely eliminated." These remarks underscore concerns regarding AI's role in the creative process, while also emphasizing the importance of individual creativity.

Önder's (2025) reflections on music production with AI reveal a conflicted perspective concerning the impact of this technology on creativity: "I've never tried it, and I don't want to. It does scary things. I don't see myself as either completely negative or positive; I think I'm neutral." However, upon listening to music composed by his friends using AI, he expressed astonishment at the capabilities of technology: "After feeding it a lot of data, they told it to 'Compose a symphony like Tchaikovsky.' And it did. I listened to it me, but they didn't tell me what it was. They just played it. They said, 'Tchaikovsky' and then they explained it to me, and I was scared." Following this experience, Önder added: "You naturally look for mistakes, but you look for mistakes that a human can do. After a minute or two, I said, 'Please turn it off." This response illustrates Önder's simultaneous feelings of astonishment and unease regarding AI-generated compositions.

In contrast, Eryılmaz's (2025) response presents a more open and competitive stance about the role of AI in music production: "AI might be able to compose music. I don't see a problem with that. Maybe coon, AI-generated music will compete with human compositions in the capitalist music industry." While Eryılmaz perceives AI as a potential rival to human creativity, he remains uncertain about whether such a degree of technological advancement is truly feasible and achievable: "If it composes better than I do, why shouldn't it get more attention? But I don't know how that would be possible." Rather than viewing AI's presence in the music domain as a threat, Eryılmaz conceptualizes it as an opportunity and adopts a pragmatic attitude toward its potential ramifications.

Atalay (2025) acknowledges the potential of AI to serve as a catalyst for creativity in music and composition, while also noting that it may not be the preferred method for every composer: "Just like in many other areas, I believe AI can be a source of inspiration in music and composition too; however, I also think it may or may not be the best tool for every composer." With regard to her own creative process, she explains her personal decision not to use AI: "I think that trying to express my own ideas without using AI helps me grow more as a composer."

In contrast, Bolşen (2025) posits that AI is incapable of reflecting human emotions and the personal touch inherent in music production. She also emphasizes the potentially manipulative nature of AI during the compositional process: "AI cannot encode the human touch of emotions. You might think it is producing the style of music you desire, but it may actually be convincing you that its own style is what you wanted in the first place."

Composers present a range of perspectives on the role of AI in music production. While there is broad agreement on AI's potential within creative processes, concerns persist regarding its inability to replicate the emotional depth and personal expression central to human composition. Many view AI as a valuable tool for information processing and technical assistance yet underscore that originality remains essential to artistic creation. Opinions differ: some see AI as part of an emerging creative competition, while others are

wary of its imitative nature. These contrasting views highlight AI's dual position in music-as both a source of inspiration and a point of contention.

Following the responses related to AI-generated compositions, a question was posed to composers: "How do you perceive the role and impact of AI in the field of music production?" This inquiry was designed to facilitate an in-depth exploration of their views on the subject.

In his response, Erdener (2025) approaches the role of music in our lives through two fundamental categories: "One is music made as an art form; the other refers to music produced for commercial purposes (like pop music, advertising music, etc.)." This distinction underscores the idea that the function of music can vary depending on the context, and thus, AI's influence might be evaluated differently across these domains. Erdener does not explicitly oppose the integration of AI in commercial music. However, he firmly asserts that AI "should never be involved" in music created as an art form-an area he associates with human creativity and emotional depth. Nevertheless, his remark, "This may change or evolve over time. There's nothing in my life I see as set in stone," suggests an openness to technological and societal transformations. Nevertheless, Erdener's present position remains clearly negative, as evidenced by his statement: "Right now, I do not believe that using AI in serious, artistic music would be a good idea."

Özkoç's (2025) response highlights that the impact of AI in music production mostly depends on the user and how the technology is employed. He remarks, "Like any other form of technology, if used for good, it's good; if used for bad, it's bad-that's the classic take I'm going to give." Özkoç acknowledges the potential of AI to serve as a useful tool, particularly in facilitating the process of album production or in the domain of technologically-driven electronic music: "It can certainly make many aspects of the process easier. But it is more likely to ease things when it comes to making an album." However, according to Özkoç, AI cannot and should not interfere with the compositional process itself, as it cannot replace human creativity in this regard. He posits that while it may be possible to release a piece composed with the help of AI under one's name, and this may not be immediately discernible, such a form of production would not contribute to a creatively sustainable future: "In ten years, you'll see that you've created nothing of value, and you will give up."

Eryılmaz (2025) acknowledges that he lacks sufficient knowledge regarding the current state of AI development in the music production domain. He further states that he is unaware of where and how AI is currently being applied. Nevertheless, his reflections on AI's future potential center around its capacity to alleviate the workload within creative processes. He envisions a scenario in which AI could be integrated into a composer's creative workflow: "I think the main issue is reducing the workload. I would imagine of it as a system that analyses how I compose and checks out my past works-how I orchestrate, for example. If you ask me, it's really about reducing the workload. And that means more time for creativity, which in turn leads to increased productivity."

Atalay (2025) distinguishes between information gathering and genuine creativity in music production, arguing that while AI can assist in the former, true creative output still demands a human touch. She acknowledges AI's potential in commercial contexts but believes it lacks the depth and originality required for more exploratory forms of composition. "When it comes to niche compositional areas, I don't think today's AI-generated music is good enough or that it directly reflects the perspective of a deep-thinking, exploratory composer," she explains. Based on her own experience, Atalay notes that she would likely need to revise any AI-generated work: "I'd probably want to make at least one or more changes somewhere." In her view, AI may be a useful tool, but the essence of creativity remains inherently human.

In contrast, Bolşen (2025) does not regard AI as a "creator" but rather as a vast database capable of generating combinations of alternatives through numerous permutations. She suggests that while AI can

offer quick solutions for simple tasks, such as jingles, advertising music, or holding music, it lacks the capacity to produce creative and original compositions.

Among composers, AI is largely seen as a supportive tool in music production, especially appreciated for its ability to offer rapid solutions in commercial and technical contexts. However, when it comes to the creation of innovative and emotionally rich works, the prevailing view is that AI cannot substitute for human creativity.

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Composition

The advancement of AI in the field of music gives rise to contemplations regarding its potential to reshape compositional practice and methodologies and the future of the profession itself. To gain a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon, composers were invited to share their perspectives on how AI might influence the profession of composing. These responses were then analyzed.

The question, "Have you ever used any AI tools in your compositions?" was initially posed to explore composers' tendencies to use AI and their attitudes toward such technologies. Erdener's (2025) response reflects a traditional viewpoint that firmly opposes the integration of AI tools into the compositional process: "I have not used it, and I am totally against its use." His emphasis on the year "Before 1995, I'm giving a very specific date here, computers were not a part of our lives," is particularly noteworthy. Erdener refers to a time when composers would write music by hand and consider the adoption of computers in mechanical processes a convenience. While he acknowledges the use of digital tools in technical stages, such as formatting and organizing parts, he draws a firm line in the domain of creativity: "Trying to benefit from it for creativity makes people think of cheating."

On the other hand, Özkoç and Bolşen have never employed AI for music composition, and Eryılmaz similarly asserts that he has not worked with any AI-assisted system. Atalay, however, mentions that while she has used AI to refresh his orchestration knowledge, she has not employed it within her creative process. These responses indicate that AI is generally accepted among the interviewed composers as a means for accessing information and providing technical support. However, its direct involvement in the creative process is largely disapproved of and not preferred.

In response to the query "If you compare your own compositions with those generated by AI, what differences do you notice?" Erdener (2025) makes his disinterest and rejection of AI-generated compositions explicitly clear: "I don't really know much about this, because I'm not interested. I am not into compositions made with AI, and I am not interested in using it myself." He finds it meaningless to compare such works with "real human compositions" and critiques projects like the AI-generated version of Beethoven's 10th Symphony as "nonsense." Erdener's response reflects an evident position that AI cannot contribute meaningfully to the realm of artistic creativity.

Özkoç (2025) asserts that, in order to compare AI-generated compositions with his own works, he would first need to listen to such music in a detailed and analytical manner. However, his statement, "I haven't done that. And to be honest, I don't really want to. I'm avoiding it..." suggests a lack of interest and a deliberate distancing from critically engaging with AI-generated music.

Eryılmaz (2025) similarly notes that he lacks sufficient knowledge to make such a comparison: "I don't know enough. I've never really listened to any. I might have heard a few things, but only briefly."

Atalay (2025) emphasizes that what most clearly separates AI-generated music from her own is the flexibility and spontaneity of human creativity. In her compositions, she can introduce changes at will, making intentional and original decisions: "I can make any change I want, whenever I want." In contrast, she argues

that AI lacks the ability to surprise or deviate at the right moment, remaining bound by predetermined patterns.

In contrast to the direct comparison of AI-generated compositions with her own oeuvre, Bolşen (2025) offers a perspective that underscores the lack of emotional and artistic depth in AI-produced music. Referencing a scene from the film Understanding Beethoven, she recalls the composer's criticism of a structure as having "no soul", and adds, "I feel exactly the same. It's completely made up-there is nothing natural about it."

A general skepticism persists toward AI-generated works, which are often perceived as lacking the symbolic depth, emotional resonance, and cultural references that characterize human-created art. As Arielli and Manovich (2023, p. 223) argue, such qualities are only meaningfully interpreted when attributed to a human creator. As a result, algorithmically produced music is frequently described as "soulless," making it difficult for audiences to ascribe artistic value.

Beyond aesthetic concerns, ethical and professional issues also arise in AI-assisted music composition. Although AI plays an increasingly significant role in creative production, the legal and ethical frameworks surrounding its use remain underdeveloped (Reje, 2022, p. 2). Debates around authorship, ownership, and originality are ongoing, with originality standing out as a central issue (Caramiaux, 2020, p. 6). Reje (2022, pp. 2-19) outlines several ethical risks associated with creative AI, yet acknowledges that clear solutions have not been reached.

The question of whether training AI models on copyrighted music constitutes infringement remains unresolved. Caramiaux (2020, p. 5) notes that proving deliberate imitation through unauthorized data is legally challenging. In response, Zorluel (2019, p. 352) suggests that the individuals who revise and finalize AI-generated compositions should be acknowledged as the legal authors of such works.

Erdener (2025) focuses on the ethical responsibilities involved in composing with AI, posing the question, "What is compositional ethics? For instance, not plagiarizing." However, he also notes that "The algorithms already include works created by previous composers. This is direct plagiarism. Even if they have good ethical intentions behind them, such considerations are often irrelevant when it comes to how AI is actually used," implying that these systems may inherently lead to ethical violations.

Özkoç (2025) also addresses the ethical responsibilities of individuals who compose music using AI, stating: "They should say, 'I didn't make this, it did,' but I guess they probably won't." He posits that over time, AI-assisted compositions will become identifiable, which will ultimately prove unsustainable: "In five or ten years, it'll be obvious anyway. If you're going to put your name on it, that's fine, but if you're not, it'll be completely useless-a silly way to delude yourself."

Eryılmaz (2025) emphasizes that the primary ethical obligation in AI-based composition is to avoid plagiarism: "It's really important that it's not plagiarism. As long as that's made clear, I don't think there are other responsibilities. But a lot of is generated by AI, so we need to specify how much." He further asserts, "Intellectual theft should be our red line," arguing that protecting originality and intellectual property rights must be the preliminary ethical obligation.

Atalay (2025) addresses the legal and ethical dimensions of composing with AI, stating: "As far as I know, AI-generated works are subject to a kind of copyright. I believe that whatever requirements are in place should be met, and just as we cite human sources, we should also cite these programs." She highlights the key difference between her own music and that produced by AI as the human ability to introduce variation and spontaneity: "I can make any change I want, whenever I want."

Conversely, she argues that AI compositions lack the ability to surprise or deviate at the right moment, suggesting they remain confined within predetermined patterns. By addressing these issues, she underscores the importance of legal clarity in AI-generated works and highlights transparency as a key aspect of AI-assisted creation.

In contrast to the prevailing view, Bolşen (2025) contends that those who compose music using AI do not bear any real responsibility: "Honestly, I don't think they have much responsibility. They just make choices. Composers produce through selection."

Similar debates are occurring among composers themselves. Despite the proposal of various solutions, the question of whether individuals who create AI-assisted compositions truly assume ethical responsibility remains a significant point of concern.

In response to the question, "What do you think AI will be like for composers in the future?" composers shared their predictions regarding AI's role in music production. Erdener (2025) foresees that AI will not establish a lasting presence in the domain of creative music: "I think it'll end up being trash." While acknowledging the potential utility of AI-based systems in other areas of music, he identifies challenges with their use in digital music production. Drawing from his experience as a competition jury member, he observes that the MIDI recordings he encountered were "not human" and "produced awful sounds," emphasizing that human touch and the possibility of error carry an aesthetic value in music.

Özkoç (2025) posits that AI will become increasingly widespread among composers, associating this phenomenon with the younger generation's interest in technology. He states, "It's the same in every field, and I think music is no different. So, it'll become very popular," expressing his prediction that AI will play a significant role in the future of compositional practice.

Eryılmaz (2025) conceptualizes AI as a tool that will function similarly to existing digital music technologies: "It'll be as important as notation software or recording programs are today. They are all designed to reduce labor. AI could find a place similar to those."

Atalay (2025) believes that AI will increasingly serve as a supportive tool in composition. She explains, "It's not just about composing with AI alone; it can also help you complete your compositions," referring to tasks like filling rhythmic gaps or adding instrumental melodies. Her comment, "If it helps you meet a deadline, you will certainly use it," highlights AI's practical benefits in terms of speed and efficiency. However, she also states, "I don't think AI-generated compositions are suitable for me," making it clear that she does not favor replacing the creative process with AI entirely.

Bolşen (2025) expresses skepticism about the growing role of AI in music composition: "To be honest, I don't have many positive thoughts about it. People today prefer convenience." Still, she believes the difference between AI and human-made music will remain clear: "You can program AI to press the right notes on a cello, but playing the cello requires soul-and so does composing." For her, the essence of music will always come from human expression.

Finally, composers were asked the question, "What are your thoughts on AI's impact on the profession of composing? Could it be a threat to the profession?" to explore their views on the potential risks and implications of AI for the field of composition.

Erdener (2025) argues that AI may threaten the profession of composing due to its speed advantage: "It can write a symphony in a second." While he does not see this as a danger for listeners who value artistic depth, he warns that the general public might favor quickly produced, easily accessible AI music. In his view, this could lead to a loss in artistic quality: "It's not a threat to serious ears. But real art could get damaged."

Özkoç (2025), on the other hand, contends that AI does not pose a threat to the profession: "I don't think it does. It's because it doesn't suddenly get emotional and decides to create something." Through this statement, he emphasizes that AI lacks emotional depth and conscious creativity that define human composition.

Eryılmaz (2025) argues that AI may significantly influence industrial and commercial music production, particularly in recording contexts: "If it's making recordings, it could have a big impact on functional music." However, he maintains that AI does not threaten concert music, emphasizing the irreplaceable human element in live performance: "When it comes to concert experiences and the energy that humans transmit to the audience, I think AI is at a disadvantage."

Atalay (2025) believes AI will increasingly serve as a supportive tool in composition. She explains that AI can help complete pieces by filling rhythmic gaps or adding instrumental parts: "It's not just about composing with AI alone; it's also possible to find materials to help you complete your compositions." Her comment, "If it helps you meet a deadline, you will certainly use it," highlights AI's practical benefits, a view shared by Eryılmaz. Still, she emphasizes that AI-generated music is not suitable for her, underscoring her preference for preserving human creativity in the compositional process.

In contrast, Bolşen (2025) argues that AI could indeed pose a threat to professions based on creative production, including composition: "Yes, it could-just like it has in other production-oriented fields."

Composers hold varied views on AI's role in composition. While some see it as a useful tool, others view it as a creative and ethical threat. Still, there is general agreement that AI may expand in commercial music but cannot replace human creativity in artistic contexts.

Beyond individual perspectives, AI is also seen as a force for structural transformation in the music sector. As noted, "The greatest threat posed by the spread of AI techniques can be seen as the digitalization of the workforce... This should not be seen as a threat but as a transformation." This view suggests that AI's impact reaches beyond composition, influencing production, education, therapy, copyright, and new business models (Yavuz et al., 2025, p. 64).

From a broader perspective, it is anticipated that AI systems may produce more commercially successful works within the cultural industry, particularly due to favorable cost-to-revenue ratios and the lack of protection for individual artistic styles (Arielli & Manovich, 2023, p. 219). Algorithms capable of generating melodies and lyrics are thus expected to economically surpass human-created content. At the same time, AI is recognized for its creative potential in specific contexts-such as music therapy-and for supporting artistic production by offering new ideas to musicians (Zlatkov; Ens; Pasquier., 2023, p. 321). Moreover, AI models are considered valuable for addressing problems in music technology and for exploring the origins and development of music (Balaban et al., 1992; Miranda, 2000; as cited in Miranda, 2022, p. 116). While Steels (2021, pp. XVI-XVII) suggests that AI may not fully realize these goals in the near term, he acknowledges its potential to enhance musical practice, preserve musical heritage, and assist in producing more sophisticated works.

In addition to these general evaluations, a study on the Automatic Turkish Makam Music Composer (ATMMC) suggests that the system may assist composers in creating new Turkish Makam Music works. It is also noted that it may help overcome writer's block by providing rapid drafts (Parlak, 2021, p. 73).

Compositions Generated by Artificial Intelligence: "Art?"

Recent advancements in AI have reignited discussions about its capacity to produce art (Privato, Rampado, Novello, 2022, p. 244). Central to these debates is the philosophical question of whether AI can truly be considered creative (Zlatkov et al., 2023, p. 309). Creativity remains a complex and contested concept in philosophy and cognitive science (Arielli & Manovich, 2023:, p. 219). Although AI-generated compositions

increasingly resemble human-made works, concerns persist about their lack of emotional depth and underlying artistic intent. In this context, some scholars propose a human-machine interaction model, where humans provide emotional input that AI translates into artistic output (Privato et al., 2022, p. 244). However, many MuMe systems are trained on human-made databases, leading critics to argue that their outputs are imitative rather than genuinely creative (Jennings, 2010; as cited in Zlatkov et al., 2023, p. 309).

A human-centered perspective further challenges AI's cultural legitimacy. According to Bown (2021, p. 5), human creativity involves reflection and iteration-qualities AI lacks. While AI-generated music may sound convincing, it often lacks narrative structure and emotional resonance (Steels, 2021, pp. IX-X). Bown (2021, p. 17) also argues that many AI music projects remain conceptual and lack practical artistic depth. Yet empirical studies show no conclusive evidence of listener bias against AI-generated music (Zlatkov et al., 2023, p. 309). Musical "Turing Tests" on platforms like YouTube suggest that trained musicians can distinguish AI compositions more easily than untrained listeners (Arielli & Manovich, 2023, pp. 215-216).

David Cope challenges the notion that creativity requires complete novelty. Instead, he defines it as forming new connections between existing ideas, noting that many critics have deemed his AI-assisted pastiches creative despite their stylistic imitation (Dannenberg, 2006, pp. 1218-1221). Since judgments about creativity are subjective, Arielli and Manovich (2023, pp. 220-226) suggest that AI may only be accepted as creative if society moves beyond its human-centered definitions. Once emotional connection is established, the origin of the work-human or machine-may become less important.

These debates are mirrored in the perspectives of composers interviewed in this study. While some recognize AI's technical advancements, others emphasize its inability to replicate the emotional and original qualities of human expression. The question thus remains: is AI merely a tool, or could it become an autonomous creative agent? To explore this, composers were asked, "Can AI approach human creativity?" Erdener (2025) asserts that while AI is "certainly approaching" human creativity, it will "always remain distant." According to him, there is no possibility of AI ever "replacing" human creativity. He elucidates this position by stating, "When it replaces us, humanity is lost."

Özkoç (2025) acknowledges that AI has the capacity to generate creative outputs: "I've listened to quite a bit of Tchaikovsky. It pulled it off." However, he underscores that AI is incapable of acting with internal motivation, as humans do: "It's not like, 'I'm feeling melancholy today, let me write a novel.'" Emphasizing AI's dependence on human input, he asserts that AI cannot initiate a creative process autonomously, concluding, "It doesn't kill creativity. I don't think it will replace humanity."

Eryılmaz (2025) posits that while AI may learn the technical aspects of music, composition is not merely a technical activity: "Five years ago, I was saying different things. Now I'm saying something else in my music." He emphasizes that composition is a subjective process shaped by lived experiences and expresses uncertainty as to "how much AI can truly touch that.

Atalay (2025) believes that it is indeed feasible for AI to reach the level of human creativity: "Absolutely, as the data increases and time passes, this will keep developing." Similarly, Bolşen (2025) acknowledges that AI "draws its data from compositions made by real people," and thus concludes, "Yes, it can get pretty creative." However, it is implied that AI lacks truly independent creative capacity.

The composers were then asked: "Is it possible for algorithms to understand human emotions and express them through music? How would you evaluate this in terms of emotional depth and originality?"

Erdener (2025) posits that it is not possible for AI to comprehend or express human emotions in a musical context. "After all, AI does not produce on its own. Humans are responsible for its production." As with other composers, he underscores the guiding role of humans in the creative process, underlining that AI functions

exclusively through data transferred from humans. He asserts that AI can only function within the framework of the data it is exposed to and therefore "cannot reach the level of human beings."

Özkoç (2025) ontends that AI lacks originality and should be regarded merely as a tool: "It is certainly not original. It's just a tool." From this perspective, since AI cannot act autonomously, it also lacks emotional depth. While acknowledging the potential for future development, he stresses that AI currently does not possess such capabilities: "Maybe in 50, 20, or 100 years... it'll compose music, sing songs, write novels on its own. But right now, that's not what we're seeing."

Eryılmaz (2025) articulates the possibility that AI may be capable of engendering originality and emotional depth: "I am not sure, but maybe we can come up with something original. Emotional depth too." In this case, he suggests that AI productions could be regarded similarly to the works of individuals, though he notes the difficulty of predicting the future: "Maybe we could one-day view AI productions the same way we view the works of individuals. I can't give a very logical answer because we don't know where this is going."

Atalay (2025) notes that musical emotions are conveyed through elements like nuance, texture, melody, harmony, instrumentation, and tempo. She believes that as AI is trained on more musical data, its ability to express emotion may improve: "I think emotional expression can be achieved as the pool of musical data becomes richer." Still, she admits this has not yet been fully realized: "I think it's still too early and I can see the need for more data." Bolşen (2025), on the other hand, is more skeptical, remarking that even humans struggle to understand each other's emotions: "I'm not even sure we humans truly understand each other's emotions. You can imagine the rest."

Finally, the composers were asked: "Do you think AI-generated compositions count as 'art'?" to evaluate their perspectives on this matter.

Erdener (2025) unequivocally states that he does not consider AI-generated compositions to be art: "Absolutely not!" He asserts that art is a human-centered process shaped by imperfection: "When there's a mistake in art, that's when beauty begins to blossom." Emphasizing that AI operates through data collection and algorithms rather than creativity, he clearly states, "I do not believe that art can be created like this."

In a similar vein, Özkoç (2025) asserts that AI-generated compositions do not meet the criteria for being considered art. Bolşen (2025) articulates the same view through a metaphor: "For me, music made by AI is like a plastic plate." However, he advances the proposition that perceptions of art can change over time: "If someone puts a banana on a plastic plate and calls it art, then it's a whole other story."

Atalay (2025) suggests that AI compositions can be considered art, but this depends on user satisfaction: "Art is all about belief, and if the user is happy, then you can call it art." Nevertheless, she also reflects critically on the idea of an AI being considered the artist in such a scenario. From a different perspective, only Eryılmaz (2025) has expressed that he could accept AI-generated compositions as art.

Overall, while composers recognize AI's ability to generate music, they largely agree that it cannot replicate the emotional depth and creativity of human expression. Some emphasize the role of lived experience and imperfection in artistic creation, while others note that AI is limited to data processing. Despite differing views on the definition of art, most agree that AI-generated works do not qualify as genuine artistic creations.

Discussion and Conclusion

The analysis of the interview data reveals that composition is conceptualized not merely as a technical process but as a multifaceted practice that integrates personal expression, social responsibility, intensive labor, and cultural depth. Composers are viewed as individuals who articulate emotions and ideas through distinctive musical languages, while simultaneously reflecting their cultural heritage and the spirit of their

time. In this sense, composition encompasses aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual dimensions, and the role of AI within it becomes part of a broader discussion on the meaning, value, and future of art.

In the current era of rapid technological advancement, AI raises fundamental questions in music related to ethics, aesthetics, originality, and authorship. While academic literature frequently highlights AI's potential in areas such as commercial music production, film scoring, and music education, the composers in this study positioned AI primarily as a supportive tool for technical aspects such as data analysis, orchestration, or rhythmic-harmonic structuring-rather than as a fully autonomous creative agent. They emphasized that the core of composition lies in emotional expression, intuitive decision-making, and individual creativity, elements that AI, at its present stage of development, cannot fully emulate. This finding is consistent with scholarly perspectives that frame AI as "assistive technology" rather than an independent creative force.

Although the composers expressed skepticism about AI's capacity for originality and emotional depth, their perspectives diverged in meaningful ways. Some, like Erdener and Özkoç, firmly rejected AI as a creative partner, describing it as either ethically problematic or emotionally insufficient, while others such as Atalay and Eryılmaz allowed for more nuanced views, acknowledging AI's potential as a supportive or inspirational resource under certain circumstances. Bolşen, meanwhile, underscored the risk of manipulation and the loss of authenticity. These diverse perspectives highlight a spectrum of attitudes toward AI-ranging from rejection to cautious acceptance-which mirrors broader debates within the international literature.

The ethical dimension also occupies a central place in this debate. Issues such as plagiarism, copyright, and authorship were frequently raised by participants, who stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and establishing clear authorship guidelines for AI-assisted works. While some considered the use of AI to be ethically problematic and creatively superficial, others advocated for explicit acknowledgment of AI's contribution as a means of safeguarding intellectual property and artistic integrity. This reflects a broader need, both in Turkey and internationally, to clarify the legal and ethical frameworks surrounding AI-supported music production.

Predictions about AI's future role in composition varied among the participants. Erdener foresaw AI as a passing trend that could never substitute for the "soul" of human creativity, while Özkoç and Atalay imagined its increasing utility in technical or commercial contexts. Eryılmaz approached AI with pragmatic openness, envisioning it as a labor-saving tool akin to notation software, whereas Bolşen remained skeptical, pointing to the irreplaceable role of human emotion. These differing stances underline the tension between optimism about efficiency and deep-seated concerns over authenticity, originality, and cultural continuity.

From a cultural perspective, the findings also emphasize that Turkish composers approach AI not in isolation but through the lens of their own artistic traditions and responsibilities. Their definitions of the "composer" consistently invoked originality, emotional depth, and social responsibility-values that resist being reduced to algorithmic processes. This suggests that the debate over AI in composition is not merely technological but also deeply cultural, reflecting anxieties about preserving heritage while adapting to global digital transformations.

In conclusion, although AI is becoming increasingly integrated into music production, it continues to be regarded more as a technological assistant than as a source of genuine artistic creation. The general trend observed in this study is to view AI as a facilitator that saves time and effort in technical processes, rather than as an autonomous creator. Nevertheless, as the literature suggests, AI's potential advantages in efficiency-particularly in commercial and technical contexts-should not be overlooked. This study thus contributes a culturally grounded perspective to the ongoing "technology-creativity" debate by revealing how composers in Turkey perceive and engage with AI.

The future of AI in composition remains uncertain, while questions about the evolution of the composer's role and the creative status of AI-generated works are likely to remain central to artistic discourse in the coming years. Future research should examine the aesthetic potential of AI-generated music through qualitative and process-oriented approaches. In particular, investigating the implications of composer-AI collaboration across different musical genres could provide valuable insights into the changing nature of creativity in the digital age. Such work would allow for an assessment of technology's impact on art not only from a technical standpoint but also in its cultural and emotional dimensions.

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