'Becoming One Again': Music and Transnationalism in London's Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora

Jasmine Hornabrook
Goldsmiths, University of London,
PhD Music

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2016

I declare that, unless otherwise stated, all the work presented in this thesis is my own.

May 2016

Acknowledgements

There have been many people who have helped to me to complete this project. In no order, I would to particularly thank: Manipallavam K. Sarangan, Sami Dhandapani, Parasamy Kirupakaran, Siva Pillai, Sivasakthi Sivanesan, Sivatharini Sahathevan, Gohila Rhaasa, Kiruthika Nadarajah, Manickam Yogeswaran, Bremakumar, Jegatheeswaran, the Pannisai group at London Sivan Temple and the Pannisai group at Wimbledon Ganapathy Temple. There are many more who have welcomed and helped me to learn about the London music scene. Thanks to Dr. John Marr for his help with Carnatic music theory.

In Chennai, I would like to thank T. V. Gopalakrishnan, Dharani, Keerthana and Bharat Bachala, Sushma Somasekaran, Subbashini Parthasarhy and all the artists who allowed me to film their performances. I would also like to thank Ravichandhira and Balaskandan for a number of insightful conversations. Arunthathy, Kavinaly, Jambunathan, Dr. Dharshanan and others were particularly helpful in Sri Lanka.

Many thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Barley Norton, for all his help and patience. Thanks to the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award, I have been able to do this research. Also, my thanks to the Asian Music Circuit for their contribution to this project. The Gerry Farrell Travel Scholarship contributed to my field trip to India and Sri Lanka between December 2012 and February 2013. Many thanks to my examiners Prof. Tina K. Ramnarine and Dr. Byron Dueck for their many useful comments and questions.

Finally, my thanks to Esbjörn Wettermark, Andrea Kempson, Bridget Hornabrook and Pearl and Dennis Retter for all their support.

'Becoming One Again':
Music and Transnational Networks in London's Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora

Thesis Abstract

The Carnatic and Tamil music scene in London is the result of the migration and diasporic formation of a displaced Sri Lankan Tamil demographic. From the 'scattering' of displaced people and culture to various localities around the world, diasporic 'regatherings' – understood as 'becoming one again' - are facilitated by musical learning, performance and transnational interactions. Through the process of 'becoming one again' and the on-going connections between South Asia and the diaspora, a musical scene has emerged, which relies on various transnational networks and constructions of collective identity.

The thesis examines the transnational networks and identities in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, focusing on musicians, music students and audiences based in London, and their connections with South Asia and other parts of the world. Drawing on detailed ethnographic research in the UK, South India and Sri Lanka, it considers how music enables deep connections to be formed within a diasporic group, both in terms of physical networks and within the imaginations of musicians. The relevance of the terms 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' are examined in relation to the musical networks and processes in the Carnatic music scene in chapter one, before considering the historical trajectory of cultural identity, migration and the emergence of the music scene in London in chapter two. Chapter three identifies the scope of transnational networks at three different levels – the macro-level transnational networks, mid-level local manifestations of these networks and finally the micro-level interactions between individuals and within a performance. These levels ground broader globalising processes in localised ethnography. Across the multiple levels explored in the third chapter it is clear that the connections with Chennai in South India create a cultural centre and alternative homeland for displaced Sri Lankan Tamil musicians. Chapter four positions Chennai as the centre of this musical network from where aesthetics are negotiated and projected outwards into diasporic localities. Chapter five considers the London locality and the performance contexts, conventions and audiences within the city. In London, there are two clear spheres of local engagement – the diasporic and multicultural mainstream, contrasting in contexts, publics and functions. Chapters six and seven reflect on connectivity through historically situated narratives and transnational synchrony. These issues are ethnographically explored through the *arangetram* music graduation ceremony and through embodied experiences of transnational musical learning and performance. It is argued that transnational connectivity - with the cultural centre, other diasporic sites and the transnational carnatic music world - is maintained through ritualised practices of musical learning and performance.

The thesis highlights the ways in which connectivity is maintained through the construction of an essentialised, yet empowered, transnational cultural identity in which South Indian classical music is a key component. It aims to contribute to the study of diasporas and musical transnationalism through shifting the focus from the 'homeland' to other cultural centres, and by emphasising the importance of ritualised musical practice in attaining diasporic connectivity.

List of Figures

Chapter Two

Figure 2.1: Photograph of Jaffna Public library. Page 67.
Figure 2.2: Timeline of institutions in London. Page 75.

Chapter Three

Figure 3.1 Transnational socio-musical interaction between India and diasporic localities. Page 106.
Figure 3.2 Movement of performing musicians from London to other localities. Page 109.
Figure 3.3 Music example: *Alapana.* Page 130.
Figure 3.4 Music example: Song 'Shambho Mahadeva'. Page 133.
Figure 3.5 Music example: *Kalpana Swaram*. Page 135.

Chapter Four

Figure 4.1: Diagram showing the convergence and divergence of musicians from other parts of India and in the diaspora. Page 145.
Figure 4.2: Table of diasporic concerts in Chennai. Page 152.
Figure 4.3: Repertoire listed for the Music Academy performance. Page 158.
Figure 4.4: Photograph of Musicians Living Abroad concert, Chennai 2013. Page 160.
Figure 4.5: Table of repertoire from Tamil Isai Sangam concert, Chennai 2013. Page 165.
Figure 4.6: Photograph outside the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai. Page 168.
Figure 4.7: Photograph of Kapaleeswarar Temple, Chennai. Page 168.
Figure 4.8: Photograph of NRI advertisement, Chennai 2013. Page 169.
Figure 4.9: Concert listing from the MLA concerts in December 2012. Page 169.

Chapter Five

Figure 5.1: Table of the *akam* and *puram* analogy. Page 188.
Figure 5.2: Photograph of London Sivan Kovil in Lewisham, South East London, September 2013. Page 192.
Figure 5.3: Photograph of *Oduvar* Dhandapani performing the *pannisai*, London Siva Temple, October 2013. Page 195.
Figure 5.3a: Table of *Oduvar* Dhandapani's song path. Page 198-199.
Figure 5.4: Poster for Highgate Concert. Page 202.
Figure 5.5: Photograph of a Carnatic concert held at Highgate Murugan, May 2013. Page 208.
Figure 5.6: Repertoire list and musical conventions employed in Sarangan's performance at Highgate Temple, London, May 2013. Page 210.
Figure 5.7- 8: Leaflet advertising The Great British Gharana at the Southbank Centre, London, November 2012. Page 221.

Chapter Six

Figure 6.1: Photograph of a shrine. Page 244.
Figure 6.2: Photograph of a *pooja* ritual. Page 246.
Figure 6.3: Photograph of an *arangetram* in London, September 2013. Page 249.

Figure 6.4: A large *kolam* decorating the foyer in front of the performance venue. Page 253.
Figure 6.5: A highly decorated *arangetram* stage. Page 254.
Figure 6.6: A highly decorated *arangetram* stage. Page 255.
Figure 6.7-8: *Arangetram* brochures. Page 257.

Chapter Seven

Figure 7.1-2: Online advertisements for live web telecasts of *arangetram* ceremonies in London in 2013. Page 272.
Figure 7.3: Advertisment from Global Tamil Vision featuring *bharatanatyam* dancers. Page 273.
Figure 7.4: E-advert for Maargazhi Isai, a live-streaming service of concerts from Chennai. Page 274.
Figure 7.5: A concert performed by visiting Chennai-based violinist, H. N. Bhaskar in Lewisham Temple Hall, January 2014. Page 288.
Figure 7.6: Sandeep Narayan's blogpost including information from his performance in the London Tamil Centre, 1st November 2013. Page 292.
Figure 7.7: The repertoire, concert path and musical conventions performed by Sandeep on 1st November 2013 in North Wembley. Page 293.
Figure 7.8: The repertoire, concert path and musical conventions performed by Sandeep on 3rd November 2013 in Lewisham. Page 293-294.
Figure 7.9: Table of 'Swara raga sudha' performed by Sandeep in Wembley, London, November 2013. Page 302.
Figure 7. 10: Table of 'Chinnan Chiru Killayae' performed by Sarangan in Pinner, London, January 2015. Page 302.

List of Audio and Video Examples

Chapter Three
Example 3.1: 'Om Guru Brahma'.
Example 3.2: *Alapana.*
Example 3.3: Song 'Shambho Mahadeva'.
Example 3.4: *Kalpana swaram.*

Chapter Four
Example 4.1: Kirupakaran performing Musicians Living Abroad Concert – *Pallavi.*

Chapter Five
Example 5.1: *Oduvar* Dhanapani singing in Lewisham temple.

Chapter Seven
Example 7.1: Sandeep performing a 'heavy' song, 'Swara Raga Sudha'.
Example 7.2: Sarangan performing a 'light' song, 'Chinnan Chiru Killayae'.

Glossary of Terms[1]

Adhara shruti – (Sanskrit), fundamental note chosen by a musician, the pitch is always present through the drone of a *tambura* or *shruti* box.
Akam – (Tamil), the interior field of Tamil poetry.
Alankaram – (Tamil), or *alankara* (Sanskrit), a set of seven melodic exercises.
Alapana – (Sanskrit), the performance of a *raga* out of metre. Also referred as *ragam* or *alapanai* (Tamil).
Anupallavi – (Sanskrit), lit. 'following the *pallavi*', the second part, or second theme, of a *kriti* song.
Arangetram – the debut performance ceremony performed by a music or dance student.
Arohana – (Sanskrit), ascending notes of a *raga.*
Avarohana – (Sanskrit), descending notes of a *raga.*
Avarthanas – (Sanskrit), one complete metrical/*talam* cycle.
Bale – (Hindi), an exclamation of pleasure for musical performance.
Baila – Sri Lankan popular music genre, in both Singhalese and Tamil languages.
Bhajan – devotional songs written in verse form.
Bhakti – devotional practice to reach a shared space with God.
Bharatanatyam – South Indian classical dance form.
Bhavam – (Sanskrit), emotion of a *raga* and the expression of this emotion in performance.
Bols – rhythmic vocables.
Charanam – (Sanskrit), the third part, or theme, of a *kriti* song. The *charanam* is preceeded by the *pallavi* and the *anupallavi.*
Chinna melam – (Tamil), lit. 'small ensemble', referring to the music ensemble in Carnatic music performance.
Cilapattikaram – (Tamil), the Tamil epic poem written by Ilango Atikal. The poem depicts an *arangetram* performance.
Devadasi – (Tamil), temple courtesan.
Druta – (Sanskrit), a fixed section in some *talas.*
Gamakam – (Sanskrit), ornamentation.
Geetham – Beginner songs sung by students.
Ghana raga – (Sanskrit), a heavy and respectable *raga* for the first half of a concert.
Ghatam – clay pot percussion.
Gnanam – (Tamil from Sanskrit), 'knowledge'.
Gopuram – (Tamil), Intricately decorated temple tower.
Gurudarkshina – (Sanskrit), gift giving to a *guru.*
Gurushisyakurukulum, gurukul, gurukulam – (Sanskrit), living with the *guru.*
Isai – (Tamil), lit. 'music', referred as one part of the triple aspects of the ancient *muttamil* Tamil language. *Muttamil* also includes poetry (*iyal*) and dance (*nadakam*).

Javali – (Sanskrit), a 'light' song form using love poetry.

Kalpana swaram – (Sanskrit), improvised passages using the *solfege sargam* notes.
Kanakku – (Tamil), lit. 'calculations', refers to the musical formulae used to improvise in Carnatic music performance.
Kanjira – hand-held frame drum/tambourine.
Konnakol – (Tamil), vocalised rhythmic syllables performed in a virtuosic manner.
Korvai – (Tamil), lit. 'strung together', rhythmic patterns played three times as a cadential pattern.
Kovil – (Tamil), temple.
Kriti – (Sanskrit), lit. 'creation, work, composition', refers to a pre-composed 'classical' song

1For this glossary, I have referred to the extensive glossary of Pesch (2009) in addition to other sources included in the bibliography.

in three parts. The *kriti* is the most important form in Carnatic music.

Kriya – (Sanskrit), hand gestures showing place in the *talam* cycle.

Kurta – long South Asian shirt.

Kutcheri – (Sanskrit), lit. 'assembly', a concert or public performance.

Kutcheri dharma – (Sanskrit), lit. 'concert etiquette', informal code of roles and duties between musicians during a performance.

Kutcheri paddhati – (Sanskrit), *paddhati,* lit. 'path, way'. The *kutcheri paddhati* refers to the format and programme of Carnatic concerts.

Mangala isai – (Tamil), lit. 'auspicious music', performed by *nadaswaram* and *tavil* during *pooja* rituals and ceremonial occasions.

Mangalam – (Sanskrit), lit. 'auspicious, blessing, ceremony', a song performed as the concluding part of the concert.

Manodharma – (Sanskrit), lit. 'mental quality', referring to creativity, imagination and spontaneity. Refers to any type of improvised music, such as *alapana, niraval, thanam, kalpana swaram.*

Melkaddu – (Tamil), referring to the appropriate atmosphere for musical performance.

Morsing – Jew's harp.

Mridangam – (Sanskrit), double-barrelled drum.

Murthi – (Sanskrit), lit. 'manifestation, image', an idol, structure or image of a deity in temples and small shrines on stages.

Naadam – (Sanskrit/Tamil), lit. 'sound'.

Nadaswaram – (Tamil), double-reeded shawm played in temples and ceremonial occasions.

Niraval – (Tamil), improvised variations of notes based on rhythmic and syllabic structure of a theme within a pre-composed song.

Oduvar – (Tamil), temple singer specialising in the songs of *thevaram* (songs for Siva).

Padam – (Tamil), song, song about love.

Pallavi – (Sanskrit), the first melody in a three-part pre-composed *kriti* song.

Pannisai – (Tamil), lit. 'pann music'. *Pann* refers to the modal system preceding *ragas*, described in the Cilappatikaram. The devotional Tamil *thevaram* songs were written in *pann* and therefore are referred, in London, as *pannisai.*

Parai – (Tamil), a drum from Tamil Nadu.

Paraiyar – (Tamil), a drummer who plays the *parai* drum.

Periya melam – (Tamil), lit. 'big ensemble', referring to the *nadaswaram* double reeded wind instrument and *tavil* drum used for ritual and ceremonial music-making.

Periya puranam – (Tamil), a poetic account of the lives of the 63 *Nayanar* sages of Saivism.

Pooja – (Sanskrit), lit. 'worship', ritual worship in temples, homes and public events.

Pranam – (Sanskrit), a respectful salutation, from hands in a prayer pose greeting to prostration.

Pulampeyar – (Tamil), displaced people, Tamil word for diaspora.

Puram – (Tamil), the exterior field of Tamil poetry.

Raga/ragam – Indian 'mode'.

Ragam thanam pallavi – (Sanskrit), an opportunity for extended improvisation in performance.

Ragamalika – (Sanskrit), lit. 'garland of *ragas'*, arrangement of a number of *ragas* in one piece.

Rakti raga – (Sanskrit), lit. 'pleasing *raga*', suitable *raga* for the main composition in a concert.

Rasa – (Sanskrit), 'essence', aesthetic and emotional theme of a piece.

Rasika – (Sanskrit), music enthusiast.

Sa – tonic note.

Sabbash – (Hindi), an exclamation of pleasure for musical performance.

Sabha – (Sanskrit), lit. 'assembly, council, audience', refers to a cultural association and

venue for music and dance performance.

Saman – (Sanskrit), beginning of a *talam* cycle.

Sangati – (Sanskrit), pre-composed variations within a *kriti* song melody.

Sangeet, Sangeetam – (Sanskrit, Tamil), music. Refers particularly to 'classical' music.

Sargam – (Sanskrit), *solfege* notes, used as an aural and visual notation.

Sloka – (Sanskrit), Sanskrit verse, recited melodically in a musical performance.

Shruti – (Sanskrit), pitch; measure of interval.

Swaras/svaras – (Sanskrit), note, degree of a scale.

Talam - (Tamil), ***Tala*** (Sanskrit), referring to rhythm in music. A *talam* refers to the rhythmic cycle of a composition.

Tambura – long-necked lute that provides the *adhara shruti*, or the drone of the fundamental pitch.

Tamil Isai – (Tamil), lit. 'Tamil Music'. Referring to compositions in the Tamil language.

Tavil – loud temple drum used to accompany the *nadaswaram*.

Thanam – (Sanskrit), part of the *alapana* with a rhythmic pulse, not in metre.

Thani avarthanam – (Tamil), percussion solo.

Thervaram – (Tamil), lit. 'Adoration of the Lord' or songs to God, sung in Saivite temples.

Ther – (Tamil), temple chariot used to transport the temple's deity in festivals.

Therukoothu – (Tamil), folk theatre.

Thevasam – (Tamil), the anniversary of a death.

Thillana – song based on rhythmic passages, performed towards the end of a concert.

Thirupukkal – (Tamil), ancient songs for Murugan written by Arunagirinatar.

Thiruvasakkam – (Tamil), Tamil hymns written by Manikkavasagar. They are performed in *ragam mohanam*.

Tosam – (Tamil), afflictions of the body, or social disconnection, as a result of breaking ritual rules.

Tukkada – (Tamil), 'ordinary, inferior', refers to the repertoire in the second half of a concert.

Varnam – (Sanskrit), lit. 'colour', a song composed to show characteristics of a *raga*, usually performed at the beginning of a concert.

Vastu – (Sanskrit), system of architecture to ensure a good flow of energy.

Vedic – (Sanskrit), referring to the *Vedas,* the body of Sanskrit texts on the basis of Hinduism.

Veena – (Sanskrit), long-necked lute in South Indian music. *Veena* can connote any string instrument.

Virutham – (Tamil), Tamil prayer, recited melodically and non-metrically in a musical performance.

Contents

Abstract

List of Figures

List of Audio and Video Examples

Glossary of Terms

Introduction

Pages 1 - 31

Chapter One: Key Theoretical Concepts in Diaspora, Transnationalism and Tamil Transnational Music Networks

Pages 32 - 56

Chapter Two: The Emergence of Tamil Diasporic Music Learning and Performance in London

Pages 57 - 90

Chapter Three: Multi-leveled Diasporic Networks in Musical Performance and Learning

Pages 91 - 138

Chapter Four: The City of Chennai as Cultural Centre

Pages 139 - 180

Chapter Five: The Inner and Outer Fields of Diasporic Music Performance in London

Pages 181 - 230

Chapter Six: Ascending the (Diasporic) Stage: London's Music *Arangetram,* the Mythical Past and Transnational Present

Pages 231 - 268

Chapter Seven: Transnational Networks and Embodied Musical Experiences

Pages 269 - 308

Conclusion

Pages 309 - 329

Bibliography

Pages 330 - 339

Introduction

On New Year's Eve 2012, I sat in the audience of the Tamil Isai Sangam, or 'Tamil Music Institution', auditorium in Chennai, waiting for a performance by the vocalist, 'London' M. Yogeswaran. The 'London' part of Yogeswaran's name complied with the tradition of preceding a musician's name with their place of origin or residence. 'London' was added by the Sangam who organised the concert, and in subsequent conversations I have had with the artist he said he could just as well be called 'Jaffna' Yogeswaran to indicate his homeland, or 'London' or 'Berlin' Yogeswaran, to reflect his mobility. I arrived at his afternoon concert by auto-rickshaw, having hurtled through the dusty and crowded streets of Chennai in South India to reach the venue in time for the start of the performance. I got out at Parry's Corner junction; to one side of me was a usual Chennai scene, a road lined with three-sided concrete-walled shops selling pirated DVDs and women sitting cross-legged selling garlands of jasmine flowers on a small piece of broken pavement. I was in close vicinity of the colonial Central railway station - a constant reminder of the British administration in India – and a number of Hindu temples, mosques and churches indicating South India's multi-faith society.

In contrast to the DVD stalls on the other side of the street, the Tamil Isai Sangam is a prominent and grand building with Roman-style columns and marble interior. The auditorium inside was one of Chennai's large concert halls, and on this occasion it was far from full. I sat together with Yogeswaran's family, his former music teacher who had moved to Chennai from Jaffna, North Sri Lanka, and other musical colleagues who migrated across the world. Every year in Chennai, a group of UK-based and other diasporic musicians come together with Indian resident artists, converging to discuss, learn and perform together. 'London' M. Yogeswaran regularly performed at the Tamil Isai Sangam in Chennai as part of the music season in the city which took place over the Tamil month of *maargazhi* (December – January).

That day, Yogeswaran performed an hour long set, a very short concert by Indian standards. The performance was part of the Chennai music season and schedules were tight due to the prestige and popularity of performing in the city at this time of year. Unlike his performances at other music organisations (*sabhas*) in Chennai, Yogeswaran could only sing compositions in the Tamil language at the Sangam. As a native Tamil-speaker and advocate of Tamil *Isai*, or Tamil Music, this was not an imposition for the artist. He performed his all-Tamil-language set with local Indian artists, and their collective adherence to the strict conventions of the South Indian Carnatic[1] music system ensured a successful performance without a prior rehearsal. The audience responded to the performance through applause and exclamatory praise in Hindi ('*sabbash*', '*bale*'),[2] whilst they tapped the *talam* rhythmic cycle with their hands along with the performance. The musicians fulfilled their expected musical roles to enhance the compositions Yogeswaran selected through rhythmic and melodic accompaniment, and created a dynamic performance which ended with an appreciated rendition of the popular song 'Tamil Isai Paadhu' ('Sing Tamil Music').

'Manipallavam' K. Sarangan sang the same song on a swelteringly hot Sunday in July 2013, in the Enfield Nagapooshani Ambaal temple on the periphery of Greater London. Like 'London' M. Yogeswaran, 'Manipallavam' refers to K. Sarangan's home island in the Sri Lankan Jaffna peninsula. As I approached the Enfield temple on Church Lane, I saw all the signs of the *ther* chariot festival – men, women and children in colourful silks woven with golden thread walking towards the tall, intricately carved wooden chariot, which encased the brass statue of the temple's deity, Goddess Ambaal. The gold-coloured pinnacle of the tall chariot glistened in the sun, and I could hear the double-reeded *nadaswaram* and *tavil* drum ahead of the deity,

[1]I use the anglicised spelling of 'Carnatic', as opposed to 'Karnatic' or 'Karnatak', as this is the most commonly used spelling of the genre within the music scene in London.

[2]Despite the use of Tamil and the propagation of the Tamil language at musical performances, audience exclamations tend to be in Hindi. The use of Hindi exclamations is part of the conventional participation of audiences across India. The terms have become somewhat naturalised in the multilingual Carnatic music scene in Chennai, much like the term 'bravo' in Europe.

which was being displayed around the vicinity of the temple. Once inside the temple complex, I sat on the floor of a temporary hall – a large tent to accommodate devotees during the temple festival - with local musicians setting up to perform a concert whilst devotees waited for the return of the deity. Once the musicians set up on the small makeshift stage, they proceeded according to the same musical conventions that Yogeswaran adhered to in Chennai, unravelling melodic *ragas* before embarking on devotional compositions with extended improvisations. 'Manipallavam' K. Sarangan led the performance with a combination of Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu language songs of the Carnatic and Tamil music repertoire. After fifteen years of learning and performance experience in India, including performances in the Tamil Isai Sangam, Sarangan migrated to London and performed alongside other resettled musicians. Local London-based artists, students and music enthusiasts - many of whom I met and attended concerts with in Chennai - sat with the devotees to form the audience. The musicians performed many of the same compositions that I listened to in the concert halls of Chennai. Again, the musicians performed together to present interesting melodic and rhythmic ideas through improvisation based on pre-composed songs. Towards the end of the performance, the audience and musicians stood up suddenly and looked behind me towards the opening of the hall: the deity had arrived back at the temple. Eight men adorned with coconut ash on their faces and chests carried the deity on a platform which was vigorously swayed from side to side, whilst the surrounding devotees showered the deity with water and jasmine flowers. The amount of water and the bustle of the crowd stopped me from my video recording; I was eager to put my equipment away without any damage. The *nadaswaram* and *tavil* musicians circled the deity to encase the Goddess in auspicious music during the ritualised entrance. K. Sarangan and his accompanying musicians, as well as the audience, prayed to the deity on its arrival and participated in the subsequent *pooja* worship ritual. With the crowd, the musicians raised their hands and exclaimed the *vedic* chant of everything and

oneness - 'om' - in unison with the rising of the sacred flame around the Goddess.

Both Yogeswaran and Sarangan sang in front of banners in the Tamil script, both promoting 'Tamil' culture in India and in London. Their presence in both cities was the result of their commitment to musical performance as well as the ethnic tensions in, and subsequent migration from, Sri Lanka. The size and legacy of the Tamil ethno-linguistic group, originally descended from Tamil Nadu in South India, has contributed to ethno-nationalist sentiments in India and Sri Lanka. These sentiments have at best resulted in institutions such as the Tamil Isai Sangam where Yogeswaran performed, and, at worst, led to civil war and the mass forced migration of Sri Lankan diasporic musicians and devotees to London. Musical learning, listening and performing of South Indian Carnatic, devotional and Tamil music are iconic features of self-projected 'Tamilness' in Sri Lanka, India[3] and the diaspora, and the continuation of such art forms symbolises the continuation of the Tamil people despite discrimination, ethnic persecution and physical dispersal.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the wider Tamil demographic has become highly dispersed as the result of colonialism, conflict and economy. Some musicians described this fate to me as pre-destined, or 'God's will'. Further, they suggested that musical performance and other cultural practices are ways of 'becoming one again' after the scattering of migration. Gohila, a Sri Lankan music teacher based in London, for instance, reasoned that the ethnic persecution, forced migration and dispersed resettlement that she and hundreds of thousands of others have endured have provided the opportunity for a new age of Tamil culture:

> It will be a golden age to spread our culture, our religion, our civilization, everything, I've come to the conclusion that though at that time ... during the troubles [anti-Tamil riots, the civil war in Sri Lanka and forced migration] ... we thought everything had finished, everything had gone, but it has actually given us a new hope, a new life. The world has been one, then it has been scattered, now it is becoming one again, it's becoming one world (Gohila, pers. comm., September 2013).[4]

[3]Classical arts are an iconic symbol of South Indian cultural identity, for Tamils as well as other ethno-linguistic groups. This is reflected in the multiple languages used for song lyrics in Carnatic music.
[4] I will return to Gohila's words throughout the thesis.

Gohila comments refer to the mass worldwide migration, of the dispersal and 'scattering' characteristic of diasporas. The possibilities of travel, technology and the circulation of goods and knowledge has enabled a unification of the 'world' to which Gohila refers. 'Becoming one again', I suggest, is a useful metaphor for thinking about the convergence of complex transnational networks and interactions taking place across the highly-dispersed Carnatic and Tamil music scene. This scene is a product of high levels of mass migration from South India, Sri Lanka and other diasporic localities around the world. Whilst musical discourse indicates South India as 'the root of the culture', many sites around the world have adapted to comply with the rituals, practices and conventions of 'back home' in order to remain connected and to 'spread the culture' beyond South Asia. Through the evolved practice of face-to-face, embodied and grounded musical practices in multiple localities, transnational networks have been constructed and maintained as a result of demand from the diaspora. Such transnational networks, which are grounded in local diasporic performances, contribute to a process of 'non-totalising globalisation from below' (Clifford 1994). As a means to frame this concept of 'becoming one' through musical learning and performance, I argue that it is necessary to consider transnational interactions at varying scales - from the global down to localised interactions in musical practice - to understand individuals' musical interactions in relation to the larger processes which enable them to perform and teach within this scene. The multi-sited methodology of my local-level research in Chennai and London aimed to explore transnational interactions, the mobility of music and diasporic musicians and their multilocality, thereby contributing to ideas surrounding music, transnationalism and diaspora.

The South Indian music scene in London has arisen from the forced migration and resettlement of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. From the late 1970s onwards, there was first an influx of students to the UK as a result of ethnic discrimination in the education system,

followed by refugees with the outbreak of civil war in 1983. The Sri Lankan civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), better known as the 'Tamil Tigers', and the Sri Lankan government lasted for 26 years. Its length, human rights violations and the trauma experienced meant that it was not an option to return for many of the refugees who settled in the UK and around the world. In London and elsewhere in the diaspora, there has been an on-going polar divide of political support for the LTTE and tensions have brought about intra-diasporic conflict, particularly during the war. Artists such as Sarangan, Yogeswaran and most of the music scene do not want to mix music and politics and this thesis does not deal with explicit politics, such as explicitly supporting the LTTE, in relation to musical practices.

The timing of the beginning of my fieldwork was significant. Just six months after the end of the Sri Lankan civil war (and demilitarisation of the LTTE) I started exploring this field in November 2009. During the length of my fieldwork, I rarely encountered explicit political support within the music scene or at events. In contrast to the Carnatic and Tamil music scene in London, there are *parai* drummers, players of the Tamil *parai* drum associated with the low, "untouchable" *paraiyar* caste (Pillay 2007). The drum symbolises caste and social struggle (Sherinian 2014), and is used in London by the *parai* drummers to accompany protests. The group explicitly mix politics and music and show support for the LTTE through their protests for the independent Tamil Eelam and their attire of 'I love Tamil Eelam' scarves and 'leader' Prabakharan t-shirts. Socially and politically, the *parai* drummers are largely disconnected from the Carnatic and Tamil music scene.

The heterogeneity of participants in cultural and religious practices is an on-going feature in the London South Indian music scene. London is home to approximately 200,000 Sri Lankan Tamils,[5] but as a global city it has attracted students and economic migrants from

[5] This number is generally considered in discourse surrounding the Sri Lankan diaspora in London. It is difficult to access statistics based on Tamil ethnicity and Sri Lankan nationality, particularly that include the second generation. A Human Rights Watch report suggested that 110,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are resident in the UK

South India and South Indian backgrounds who similarly participate in music and Hindu religious practices as a means of cultural maintenance.[6] The multitude of cultural, social and national backgrounds and migratory experiences of participants results in the heterogeneity of values and expectations of common diasporic cultural practices, such as musical learning and performance.

Similar to the complexity of ascertaining population statistics in the UK, it is difficult to provide population statistics for the number of Tamil people in the world. As 'Tamil' refers to a ethno-linguistic group, rather than a nationality, census' like those in the UK do not ask exact ethnicity or ethno-linguitsic group. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* suggests that there are 57 million people originally from South India who speak Tamil in the late twentieth century, of which with 3,200,000 are in Sri Lanka (www.britannica.com/topic/Tamil, accessed 16th December 2015). In terms of worldwide Tamil-speakers, *Britannica* suggests 66 million people speak Tamil, mostly in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Fiji and Burma (Krishnamurthi, website).[7] In India, the 2001 census states that 60,793,814 people responded that Tamil is their mother tongue, equating to 5.91% of Indians (Census Data 2001 [India]). The 2012 Sri Lankan census states that Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils equate to 3,108,770 in a population of 20,359,431 (Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka, 2012). However, Nicholas Van Hear states that "[s]ince the conflict has been cast in terms of ethnicity, Sri Lanka's population figures are controversial" (2013: 236). Outside of Tamil Nadu, India[8] and Northeast Sri Lanka, the largest centres of Tamil populations are Malaysia and Singapore. Tamil is an official language in all of these centres except Malaysia, where it remains a significant language of Malaysian multicultural society.

(Becker 2006: 10) whereas later reports suggest 180,000 (International Crisis Group 2010 cited in Home Office report 2014: 27).

[6]The majority of participants of Carnatic and Tamil music are devotees of Hinduism. However, Sri Lanka is home to Christian and Muslim Tamil-speakers, but their participation in the transnational music scene is rare.

[7] Tamil-speakers may not be from the Tamil ethno-linguistic group. For instance, many non-ethnic Tamil musicians speak Tamil as this is the majority language in Chennai.

[8] Tamil Nadu literally means 'Tamil Country', the Southeast state of India of which Chennai is the capital.

In terms of the Tamil diaspora, there are particular centres for Indian Tamils and Sri Lankan Tamils. For Indian Tamils, Malaysia, Singapore, and the United States are centres with high Tamil populations. For Sri Lankan Tamils, Canada is home to the largest population of diasporic Sri Lankan Tamils (Amarasingam 2015: 3).[9] The UK is the next largest, with Australia, Switzerland, Norway, Germany and Denmark having significant populations (see Fuglerud 1999: 2). Most musicians and members of the community regularly visit relatives in these localities, and it is very normal for Sri Lankan Tamil families to be widely dispersed across continents. Whether inside or outside South Asia, Tamil demographics consistently constitute a minority group. As I will discuss in chapter two, it is argued that the Tamil ethno-nationalism that evolved in Sri Lanka was influenced by the rise of Tamil nationalist movements taking place in early twentieth century Tamil Nadu (formerly Madras presidency) (Reed 2010). An initial renaissance of Tamil literature at the beginning of the twentieth century led to the emergence of the Justice Party and non-Brahmin movement from 1917, the Self-Respect movement and anti-Hindi sentiments in the 1930s and 1940s (Krishna 1999: 78). The Dravidian[10] movement was particularly against caste, Sanskritic culture, the imposition of Hindi language and North Indian domination of Indian society (Krishna 1999: 80). Tamil Nadu has continued to resist the imposition of the Hindi language. With the Tamil cultural renaissance and Dravidian nationalism movements in the Madras presidency, many Sri Lankan literature scholars studied in Chennai and took cultural ideals back to the island (see chapter two). With ethnic discrimination in Sri Lanka, many of Sri Lanka's Tamils looked to India as their spiritual home and the country was referred to as 'Mother India' in speeches and writings on the island (Russell 1982: 136). Chennai, as the capital of Tamil Nadu, therefore became a significant centre of Tamil politics, culture and music from the early twentieth

[9]Like in the UK, official census statistics and community estimates in Canada are inconsistent. The Official number of 'Tamil' or 'Sri Lankan' people in Canada in 2006 is 138,000, whereas community estimates range between 200,000 to 300,000 Tamils in Canada (Amarasingam 2015: 79).
[10]Dravidian refers to the language group of South India, including Telugu, Kaanada, Malayalam and Tamil.

century. The linguistic, political, and musical resistance movements in Tamil Nadu in the early twentieth century were not only important factors in the state being an important 'capital'. In terms of religion, Tamil Nadu is a vital place for pilgrimage, particularly to Saiva temples in Chindambaram. The *thirumurai* verses that form the beginnings of Tamil music have been largely written about pilgrimages to temples around Tamil Nadu, and the state was significantly emplaced in the imaginations of the singers of *pannisai* temple songs in Sri Lanka.

Despite the influence and importance of Chennai and Tamil Nadu as a capital, Sri Lankan Tamil ethno-nationalism is articulated as distinct from that of Dravidian nationalism in India (see Krishna 1999, Sivathamby 2005: 69), reflecting the different societal and political contexts in Sri Lanka and India. Whilst Chennai acts as a capital for Tamil classical culture and music, Sri Lankan Tamil politics are distinct and resulted in the very different political outcome of civil war and mass migration.

In the years after initial forced mass migration from Sri Lanka, a musical community infrastructure was constructed by the Sri Lankan Tamils in London and continues to perpetuate and grow with the inclusion of artists from Sri Lanka, India and other diasporic localities. Following practices from Sri Lanka, the few temples in London became sites for musical performance. For newly arrived refugees and migrants, temples were a place to worship, readjust after the trauma of forced migration and to map spiritual and cultural life in a foreign society. Temples in London that follow Saivaite Hinduism - the strand of Hinduism placing Siva as the Supreme Being - have been vital in generating musical interaction, learning and performance. These include the Ambaal temple which Sarangan performed in during the temple festival in 2013. Musical performance began as devotional practice in the temples, leading to Carnatic and Tamil music lessons and eventually professional and semi-professional performances. Transnational networks have enabled elaborate *arangetrams*, or

student performance ceremonies, festivals and regular performances by Indian visiting artists and these performances are broadcast via the Internet back out to the homelands and other diasporic sites. Participation in Carnatic and Tamil music is instrumental in constructing an iconic transnational diasporic identity amongst Sri Lankan Tamils and South Indians in the diaspora, with the vision of 'becoming one again' after the displacement and dispersal of migration.

Despite my emphasis on 'becoming one', I do not intend to homogenise musical experiences and ethnicities across the Sri Lankan Tamil and other South Indian diasporas. Instead, I focus on individuals within the musical community, especially those with active involvement or patronage of musical learning and performance in London. Even within this musical community, participants are plural in terms of nationality, ethnicity and migratory experience, and deep divisions exist within the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. These intra-ethno-nationalist distinctions include the polarity in political views towards the LTTE, socio-economic background, caste, religion, region of origin,[11] gender and generation. These differences are in addition to attitudes, values and expectations ascribed to musical learning and performance.

A great deal of scholarship has been conducted on South Indian music, focusing on its history (Subramanian 2011), the complexity of the musical system (Pesch 2009; Sambamoorthy 1983; Wolff 2009), its composers (Jackson 1993) and the negotiation of colonial influences (Weidmann 2006). These works are based on research conducted in South India, however, the transnationality and expectations of cultural authenticity of diasporic artists and enthusiasts has resulted in a number of the India-based issues to be expressed in London. Lakshmi Subramanian's work explores the transition of Carnatic music from the

[11]Valentine Daniel writes about differences in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, particularly referring to the division between Jaffna Tamils over Tamils from other parts of Sri Lanka (1996).

courts of Tanjore to Madras and its concert halls. In doing so, it details the 'construction' of the modern 'classical tradition' of Carnatic music in Chennai. This construction was the result of portraying Carnatic music as an iconic symbol of Indian nationalism and identity in colonial India in the early twentieth century, merging Indian traditions with Western modernity through the arrival of institutions such as the Music Academy, its journal and annual conference displaying the intellectualisation of the 'classical' tradition, the arrival of concert halls, radio broadcasting and print, whilst maintaining the spiritual integrity of the music and its ritualised performance (Subramanian 2011: 110). Subramanian also details the *Tamil Isai Iyakkam* (Tamil music movement) and the development of the Tamil Isai Sangam, where Yogeswaran sings annually (described at the beginning of this introduction).

Lakshmi Subramanian's and Amanda Weidman's works overlap in a number of ways, particularly with regards to discussing twentieth century Carnatic music as a negotiation between tradition and modernity. Amanda Weidman's work similarly focuses on the renegotiation of Carnatic music in the early twentieth century and considers the ways the Indian classical tradition was based on Western classical music. Despite the integration of the system of notation, the composers, compositions, conservatoires and concerts, Weidman argues that it is the voice which symbolises 'authenticity and Indianess' in this renegotiation. Weidman discusses the politics of language and music in Chennai throughout the twentieth century. In particular, she discusses the attitude that Sanskrit and Telugu are considered suitable for Carnatic compositions in terms of aesthetics and the 'divinity' associated with Sanskrit. Tamil, however, was considered an 'everyday' language and not suitable for the high arts (Weidman 2006: 152). Such attitudes have travelled to the musical community in London, particularly with artists enculturated in the Chennai scene.

Subramanian and Weidman are in the minority in their critical approaches to the study of South Indian music history. Most scholarship surrounding the music culture focuses on the

theoretical complexity of the genre. Sambamoorty (1969; 1983) has published numerous volumes on Carnatic music theory, whilst Walter Kaufmann (1991) published an extensive volume of Carnatic *ragas* and their *lakshanas* (theories for rendition). Referring to these volumes, Ludwig Pesch's *Companion to South Indian Classical Music* (2009) provides an accessible cross-cultural reference to the complexity of the musical system and its theory.

Gerry Farrell identifies the Tamil community and their organisation of South Indian classical music performance in London. Farrell focuses predominantly on the more visible and higher profile Hindustani music in the capital, particularly in terms of musical learning (1994). However, he refers to the Tamil community and its South Indian music-making, and suggests it is more organised than its Hindustani counterpart, although the community lack the outward visibility and profile of Hindustani music (2005: 115). The differing levels of visibility and profile will be discussed throughout the thesis.

Oriented in a different direction to this previous literature, this thesis focuses on the function of South Indian music in diaspora, and considers how and why transnational links are so prevalent within this musical practice. As a result, the thesis discusses ideas of music, diaspora and transnationalism with reference to South Indian music, rather than focusing on South Indian music *per se.* By transnationalism, I refer to the regular interactions across nation-state borders and their subsequent connections and relationships, which are particularly prevalent in highly-dispersed South Asian diasporas. Su Zheng notes that transnationalism and diaspora share the "consciousness of multilocality, their involvement in global culture traffics, and their challenge and subversion to national territories and interests" (2010: 12). Due to its ease of circulation across borders, music is a key cultural practice in maintaining transnational diasporic connectivity.

Despite the richness of the diasporic music scene, little research has been conducted with regards to the Sri Lankan refugee population in the UK. Studies have been carried out in

South Indian diasporas in the USA (Shukla 2005; Srinivasan 2012), but the transnational interactions and the London locale has not been an area of focus previously. Aside from issues of diaspora, transnational musical networks and multilocality, the function of music amongst displaced Sri Lankan musicians and audiences is interesting as it highlights the complexities in identifying with an Indian nationalist icon to convey Sri Lankan Tamil identity in the homeland and diaspora. Such a study of inter- and intra-diasporic interactions contributes towards the de-homogenisation of the constructed 'South Asian diaspora' which has glossed over differences of region, location, generation, caste, gender and socio-economic backgrounds (see Shukla 2001). Other complexities and functions include: tensions between Sri Lankan, South Indian and British-born musicians, who ascribe to the music in different ways and harbour conflicting musical expectations; the cultivation of 'Tamil' identity in reference to Sri Lanka and British mainstream, multicultural society to demarcate difference; the continuation of 'Tamil' identity into future generations; and the cultural continuation of musical learning and performance. The transnational networks which contribute to this particular identity construction and musical connectivity have not been previously studied, and this thesis contributes to the understanding of transnational diasporic musical interaction and collective experiences of 'becoming one'.

My main aims in this thesis are to understand the processes of diasporic musical learning and performance in London, to investigate how other sites impact local musical practices, and to explore the existence and convergence of transnational networks. I also aim to understand the motivation and function of the intense transnational musical interactions that constitute this diasporic music scene. I investigate the importance of transnational connectivity in these diasporic music practices. I question why transnationally synchronised and connected musical practices are valued more highly than local musical influence as the result of culture contact. Is transnational musical connectivity and synchrony an integral part

of being a successful diasporic formation? What is the broader outcome of such connectivity? In addition to this focus on transnationality, I reflect on cultural identity and citizenship relating to diasporic musicians. The concept of 'Tamilness' is constructed to fit an iconically transnational ideal, a type of self-essentialism despite the heterogeneity of the diasporic population. I argue that the maintenance of such a collective cultural identity is a consequence of the impetus to forge and maintain transnational connectivity. The character of this identity is transnationally iconic within Tamil and other South Asian diasporas. Going beyond ideas of merely retaining homeland musical traditions, the thesis assesses how diasporas interact and construct themselves in a globalising world and the impact of transnational networks and connectivity on diasporic musical practices.

Music, Connectivity and Spirituality

Music, connectivity and spirituality are highly integrated topics, rooted in the fundamentals of the Hindu religion. Such fundamental concepts within a demographic with high levels of religious and spiritual practice should be addressed before more tangible networks are discussed, thereby grounding these physical, social and digital interactions within a broader 'way of being'. *Naadam* – sound – itself is considered to have power in the world. *Naadam* is "a term... to designate the absolute – the power underlying creation – manifested as audible sound" (Johnson 2009: 212), whilst music "is a means of acquiring and expressing power; it is a method for achieving Supreme Bliss" (Neumann 1980: 60). The importance of sound is evident in the *pooja* worship rituals that take place in London's Saivite temples. The ordered, yet cacophonous, layers of sound, which are vital for completing the ritual and consist of Sanskrit Vedic chant, ringing bells to dispel evil spirits, ritual music-making, singing and the collective exclamation of 'om' – "the mantra of all ... the entire universe" (Johnson 2009: 226). Similarly, listening to and performing music is considered to be a vital means of *bhakti* -

devotion and attaining a shared space with God (Neumann 1980). Devotional songs are regularly sung during *poojas* and in the temple, as a means of religious devotion and connection and to experience shared space with the "Divine" (Rajagopal 2009). The practice of *bhakti* extends beyond the temple into musical performances in secular spaces, as devotional songs are incorporated into Carnatic concerts. The Carnatic repertoire also reflects the spiritual character of music through devotional lyrics. Both Yogeswaran and Sarangan began their performances in Chennai and London respectively with Tamil and Sanskrit intoned poetry, as an invocation to become one with the drone of the *tambura* lute, with the musicians, audience, performance space, the cosmos and God. Such invocations highlight the ritualised conventions of musical performance and their spiritual connections.

Listening to and performing music are effective means of practicing *bhakti* which can result in an experience of connecting with God. Musicians have reflected on and described this embodied experience as feeling a sense of 'oneness' with God, their surrounding environment, people, and the cosmos through musical performance. At times, the 'oneness' experienced borders on *paravasa nilai,* or trance. Such experiences resonate with what Anna Schultz describes as 'devotional embodiment', a place between 'trance' and 'drama' where the performer may feel a "merging with the divine" (2013: 166).

Despite the physical distance created by transnational dispersion, I argue that participation in musical learning and performance is 'tuned in' to attain a sense of oneness through the practice of music experienced by individuals and groups transnationally. I mean this in three ways. First, 'tuning in' relates to Schutz's concept (1964) of communal musical experience. Second, 'tuning in' refers to the literal tuning to the *shruti* at the commencement of any musical practice. Finally, 'tuning in' reflects the Hindu concept of *naadam* and cosmic connectivity. I mean this in both metaphorical and literal senses; to connect with God and the cosmos, and to perform ritualised actions to maintain a sense of contact with 'homeland'

customs and practices shared across continents. 'Tuning in' and 'becoming one' through performance reflects Gohila's idea of 'becoming one world again' through cultural and spiritual practice.

Religious rituals are performed, along with vital musical performance which completes the ritual by providing power through sound - *naadam*, and musical performances are ritualised in order to 'tune in' and connect with a sociocosmic network. Through the ritual of performance and the performance of ritual (see Turner 1986, Wong 2001), the rituals and performances of spirituality and music maintain significant roles. Fred Clothey emphasises that ritual is a means of 'emplacement' in the Tamil diaspora, to become placed in the context of the entire and mapping one's place in life and cosmos, despite the diasporic condition of "being out of place" (Clothey 2006: 20). He goes on to say that "'[v]irtual spaces' - that is, imagined space that embodies one's sense of the world and one's place in it - … replicate, at least mythically, something of one's lineage and identity and embody both one's connections to a past and to the realities of the present living circumstances" (2006: 20). Through the virtual spaces attained through musical and ritual practice, devotees 'tune in' to a spiritual connection. I argue that through conventional performed practices, such as ritual music-making, learning, listening and performing music, individuals gain access to virtual spaces and the cosmos. In addition to the generation and circulation of musical knowledge, economies and opportunities, this spiritual dimension must be understood as a driving force behind the synchrony and connectivity sought after within the Tamil diaspora.

Methodology

'Transnational networks' is a broad and abstract concept to research through ethnographic research, particularly in a widely-dispersed diaspora which spans the world. In her critique of globalisation theory within anthropology and its tendency towards ambiguity and abstraction,

Anna Tsing emphasises the importance of ethnographic information in theories involving overwhelming scale. Grounding globalising processes in smaller ethnographic studies shows "a commitment to localization" (Tsing 2008: 85). Following Tsing, I have focused on the manifestation of this interaction in London's musical community, to understand the transnational lives of musicians in the city and how these networks and flows shape music in this locale. As a result, I aim to contribute to ideas of music and diaspora, 'non-totalising globalisation' and transnationalism.

The vignettes at the beginning of this introduction are set in two different locations, but they are connected through the same network. In a study about transnational networks, multilocality and musical learning and performance, methodologies begin to reflect the complexity and dispersal of the topic being studied. My methodology has reflected my theoretical angle on the study of this diaspora, particularly in terms of transnational networks and the multilocality of diasporic musicians. I have therefore essentially relied on a multi-sited approach to the research. The sites are connected through a number of networks and, in order to gain ethnographic information, I have followed subjects and their networks within these sites. Further consideration into my methodology is required as my methodology and theoretical stance reflect one another, particularly in how I make sense of the transnational interactions and the diasporic music world as a whole.

As George E. Marcus reflects on the changed experiences of cultural processes, "the emergence of multi-sited ethnography ... arises in response to empirical changes in the world and therefore to transformed locations of cultural production ... Empirically following the thread of cultural process itself impels the move toward multi-sited ethnography" (Marcus 1995: 97). As a result of this changed experience, Marcus therefore suggests that ethnographers must respond accordingly in their research of contemporary cultural practices. Marcus suggests a number of pragmatic ways to conduct multi-sited work to consider

macrotheoretical issues of the world system in contrast to the holistic accounts of localised life worlds that are characteristic of traditional ethnography. However, he goes on to argue that the boundaries between the system and life worlds are beginning to blur (1995: 96).[12] Initially, the points of particular interest to me were "follow the people ... to follow and stay with the movements of a particular group of initial subjects" and "follow the thing ... tracing the circulation through different contexts of a manifestly material object of study" (1995: 106). However, towards the end of Marcus's review, he suggests a single site can be multiply located in terms of its geography. Marcus refers to multi-sited work as those without an explicit previous connection – as the connections are essentially constructed by the researcher. However, my study looks at the very real connections that exist transnationally between sites and subjects. Both the literature on multi-sited fieldwork and my theory-informed methodology questioned whether this approach was multi-sited in its traditional sense. The connectivity and focus on networks is at the crux of considering whether this is multi-sited fieldwork, and in fact questions if sites can be demarcated in the first instance in a world which is multiply situated and experienced, particularly for transnational diasporic musicians. However, to deny the grounded experiences of the local would, in part, deny the importance or 'commitment to localization' that ethnography brings (Tsing 2001). In many ways, it is the network of connections between people and places that is my research 'site', in particular the local manifestations of such macro-level interactions. Considering this with Kiwan and Meinhof's argument that the researcher's own network should be included in studying migrant networks among Moroccan and Malagasy musicians – categorised as the "accidental networks" (2011: 6) – I came to identify my project as methodologically 'following the network'.

[12]He claims: "mobile ethnography takes unexpected trajectories in tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity that destabilize the distinction, for example, between lifeworld and system, by which much ethnography has been conceived. Just as this mode investigates and ethnographically constructs the lifeworlds of variously situated subjects, it also ethnographically constructs aspects of the system itself through the associations and connections it suggests among sites" (Marcus 1995: 96).

Although multi-sited fieldwork can be critiqued as 'thin' ethnography, however, it is the most suitable method of fieldwork in order to understand transnational networks and the multilocality of diasporic musicians' lifeworlds, particularly in a diasporic group which considers all things connected and as 'one'. Conducting fieldwork in multiple sites inevitably leads to variability of quality from site to site (Marcus 1995), but it is a reflection of musicians who spend variable amounts of time in different geographical locations. Although my research has been conducted in multiple sites, it has been an ethnography of musical transnational networks, thereby signalling to a singular metaphorical 'site' in multiple locations or a 'geographically discontinuous site' (Hage 2005). In a similar vain, Lakshmi Subramanian considers the Cleveland Thyagaraja *aradhana* performance in the USA as an 'extension' of an Indian nationalist project rather than a separate site of activity (2006). The musical content, its ritualised performance and its participants (many of whom are highly connected to Chennai through kin or musical education) have physical and familial links with Chennai and Tamil Nadu. Due to the high levels of connectivity between the event and its participants in the United States and Chennai, it contributes to the portrayal of India abroad rather than a separate entity. Similarly, Jane Sugarman (1997) and Adaleida Reyes (1999) do not critically consider their multi-sited approach in their work on Albanian songs in Albania and Canada and Vietnamese refugee music in Vietnam, the Philippines and the United States, as they follow the lifeworlds of their physical mobile refugee and diasporic informants. The borders of nation-states do not necessarily create multiple sites in these studies or that of Ghassan Hage's study on the Lebanese diaspora (2005). Hage suggests that the Lebanese migrants he worked with share a unifying culture across a number of global locations and, therefore, he engaged with what he describes as a "globally spread, geographically non-contiguous site" (2005: 456).

For Tamil diasporic musicians in London, their lifeworlds are transnational and

multilocal, and a geographically-bounded single-sited ethnography would not facilitate the exploration of the multiple experiences or reveal the strength of music and its conventions across different locations. In this case, a singular sited project would be more fragmentary and 'thin' than one in multiple localities.

Aside from questioning whether an ethnography of mobile diasporic musicians is singularly or multiply situated, multi-sited fieldwork within ethnomusicology has been vital in gaining understandings of music's functions, meanings, and practices in the postcolonial world. Work by Jane Sugarman (1997), John Baily (2005, 2007) and others show the musical relations across diasporas. Referring to her short, multi-sited fieldwork trips between the Caribbean Islands, London, Toronto and New York, Tina K. Ramnarine refers to multi-sited field research as “one of the new methodologies developed within ethnographic-based disciplines in trying to understand processes that take us beyond clearly demarcated field sites. Multi-sited empirical methods have become essential to reach understandings of how people and places are connected” (2007: 14). Ramnarine goes on to advocate the multi-sited approach as being “invaluable in highlighting the circulation of musicians and repertoires”, in following performance trends and exploring networks between the Caribbean Islands and its diasporas at various levels between performers, audiences, policy-makers and performance organisers (2007: 15). With this in mind, it is possible to understand music within the 'diasporic world', instead of through 'mere migratory flows' (Rouse 1991). Therefore, in the case of the complex and highly-dispersed Tamil diaspora, we can learn about the ways a sense of 'becoming one' and 'oneness' is experienced.

When designing my methodology, I envisaged my fieldwork to start as tangled “[s]trategies of quite literally following connections, associations and putative relationships” which Marcus argues are “at the very heart of designing multi-sited ethnographic research” (1995: 97). This strategy led me to focus on London as the main site of research, thereby

grounding the macrotheoretical processes and shared musical practices I wanted to study, but it also took me to Chennai and Sri Lanka. Following the 'putative' connections which informed this multi-sited strategy actually soon led to very real and physical connections, associations and relationships which were revealed to me shortly after my arrival in Chennai.

However, the anxieties of multi-sited, or network-based, research often led to thoughts and discussions about what and how ethnomusicological fieldwork is today, particularly in the early stages of my own fieldwork. I often questioned how fragmentary, superficial and disconnected my ethnography would be, being both multiply located and network-driven. During my first weeks of being in Chennai, I considered this a great deal whilst I waited for the imminent arrival of musicians from the UK, Australia, Germany, USA, Singapore and Canada. I knew musicians would arrive as the concert schedules had been sent to me personally via email and were confirmed by the concert schedules published in the local daily newspapers, I knew I would be able to observe and record a good number of concerts and meet musicians. However, most musicians and students were in Chennai for a limited period, due to their commitments and work schedules back in their countries of residence. I often considered the 'variability of quality' in multi-sited work (Marcus 1995: 100), resulting from less familiarity with the local site and scene, brief meetings with musicians, and interviews being fit into small windows between concerts or at other times before the musicians or I left again. However, three trips to Chennai totalling six months (June – August 2012, December – February 2012/2013 and December – January 2013/2014) provided me with a good level of familiarity with the city. Soon I came to realise the 'migration' to Chennai is another locality embedded in diasporic musicians' lifeworlds. Once the diasporic artists arrived in Chennai, I attended, filmed and recorded their performances and undertook participant observation as well as I could in an urban environment. I got to know the diasporic local scene, that which is known, experienced and participated in by these mobile musicians.

Most importantly, I interviewed diasporic artists in Chennai as well as Indian resident artists with experiences and connections to London and other sites in the transnational scene. I spent less time in Sri Lanka, reflecting the proportion of musical interaction between London and the island. A total of just over a month over two trips was spent on the island. The first trip was between January and February 2013, just after the 2012-2013 music season in Chennai. My second trip was in December 2013, just before I went to Chennai for the 2013-2014 music season. Whilst I was in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, and the Tamil centre, Jaffna, I met relatives, colleagues and ex-students of musicians in London, attended music performances and conducted interviews. Interviews became a vital means of engaging with the field in India, Sri Lanka and the UK, which can feel disassociated with the field and artificial in comparison with long-term participant observation. However, in urban situations, “the interview comes closer to the occasional and disembodied partial presences that are the reality of modern urban life”, rather than being conceived as a second best to participant observation or a microcosm of society as a bounded unit (Hockey 2002 cited in Miller 2009: 120).

In contrast to Chennai, my research in London focused heavily on my own participation in learning and attending performances, festivals and religious rituals and being with, and in, the world of musicians, students, community members and devotees from a broad range of migratory experiences, backgrounds, and generations. I started fieldwork in November 2009 for my Masters dissertation, and since then I have kept in touch with musicians, Tamil schools and institutions in the city to varying degrees of intensity. My PhD 'fieldwork year' was technically in 2012-2013, however, my visits to temples, music lessons, conversations and attendance at concerts have been ongoing before and after this official fieldwork period. In addition to these physical sites, I have also engaged with the Internet a great deal, particularly with social media (YouTube, Facebook, Skype), email, mailing lists and Tamil diasporic websites.

Music and language learning constituted part of my methodology in Chennai and London. Learning music and language was not only practical for my fieldwork, but also constituted part of my research methodology. I received intensive music and music theory lessons from T. V. Gopalakrishnan in Chennai between June – August 2012. Later in my fieldwork year, I took basic Carnatic music lessons from K. Sarangan through the medium of Skype. In addition to my virtual lessons, I took face-to-face lessons in Tamil *pannisai* temple music from Sami Dhandapani at London Sivan Kovil in Lewisham. Whilst my technical abilities in the virtuosic Carnatic music performance tradition are limited, I regularly performed *pannisai* in Lewisham temple, including an individual performance that contributed to a *pooja* during the temple's festival in September 2014. In addition to my practical learning, I attended Carnatic music theory classes at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London between September 2013 and July 2014, and gained a significant amount of theoretical and historical knowledge about South Indian art and devotional music. Through experiential music learning and music theory classes, I grasped the complex musical system and its theory. I did not attain a virtuosic level of performance, however, I was afforded a role and status in the community (Baily 2008: 125).

I also undertook a number of courses and lessons in different contexts to learn the Tamil language. The first also doubled as fieldwork as I took language lessons in a Tamil School between September 2010 and December 2012. In addition to the lessons, I practised my spoken Tamil with many of the parents waiting for their children to complete their music and dance lessons. In exchange, they practised their English with me. I took a Tamil language course at SOAS in autumn 2011 followed by individual lessons until summer 2012 when I travelled to Chennai. The preliminary field trip to Chennai, between June and August 2012, was taken to gain knowledge of the city and the music scene, and importantly to take classes in Tamil at the Mozhi Trust in the Thiruvanmiyur district of Chennai. The level of Tamil I

achieved proved helpful to communicate with some musicians, to understand commentary at concerts and to read. However, in Chennai, Sri Lanka and London, the musicians I largely worked with were fluent English speakers, therefore my interviews were conducted in English.

My trips to South India and, in particular, Sri Lanka impacted my research once back in London. A revelation of the importance of having been there came when I reinterviewed a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee musician. The first interview I conducted with her was very informative, however, when she learned I had been to Jaffna, she opened up much more to me about her life in Sri Lanka and her migration and resettlement in London. This was a common reaction with musicians from the region. Having travelled to the until recently inaccessible homeland showed commitment to my project, but also insight into the musical network and migratory path. My first trip to Jaffna coincided with the lifting of legislation that foreign visitors could only travel to the Northern province with a government-approved permit. I stayed in a small village three kilometres outside Jaffna town on the Point Pedro road, with the relatives of a London Tamil School principal. I visited the iconic Nallur Temple, Jaffna's public library and the Ragunathan Music College where many of London's Sri Lankan Tamil musicians had learned and taught before forced migration. I saw the destruction of war – bullet holes in the walls of my bedroom, shelled neighbouring houses and temples, scorched trees and fields of landmines. I also noted the difference of life in the small Sri Lankan village, meeting residents several times a day at the village temple, walking into each other's houses for a chat, hearing the *parai* drums announcing a funeral and the *nadaswaram tavil* performed through the village loudspeaker indicating the *pooja* taking place. From this type of close community living, I felt the contrast of arriving back into the anonymity of urban Chennai and London.

Within such a transnational diaspora, I consider that the diaspora is made up of the

multiple sites of home in addition to the multiple places of resettlement, therefore to gain a holistic view of transnational life and multilocality, it is vital to do multi-sited fieldwork. Together, this methodological approach and immersion in the local scene contributed towards, what I believe, was a rich experiential way of 'knowing' and, like many musicians reiterate regularly, an appreciation of how much more there is to know. The vast majority of my fieldwork has taken place in face-to-face, embodied situations. The embodiment of knowledge is significant and my extensive, multi-sited and immersive fieldwork experiences became my own type of *gnanam* or way of knowing that I will discuss in the next section.

Gnanam, immersion and holistic 'knowing'

> The wisdom of music's art and science is the bestower of the ecstasy of sharing in the beloved's divinity ... It gives *prema* (elated love) and *bhakti* (devotion), affection to the virtuous ... It gives self-control, peace of mind, and the wealth which is fame. That wisdom ... is the bestower of the ecstasy of coming face to face with divinity.
>
> From 'Sangita Sastrajnanamu' by Thyagaraja, translated by William J. Jackson (1993: 315)

In Thyagajaraja's song, 'Sangita Sastrajnamu', the saint-composer discusses musical knowledge – *sangita jnamu* in Telugu - as an experience of sharing in a Supreme Being's divinity, and coming face-to-face with that divinity. It also discusses the emotions experienced through knowing music, in addition to positive states of well-being (self-control, peace of mind and wealth through reputation). This knowledge is called *gnanam*, to which I relate the acquisition of my knowledge through my fieldwork.

Gnanam (Tamil) or *jñāna* (Sanskrit) is a term referring to the holistic knowledge which is inseparable from the total experience of reality. Within Hindu religion, it is considered as a spiritual 'realisation', linked with gnosis (Flood 1996; Johnson 2009). The term is used in a number of different ways, particularly with regards to religion and the arts. With regards to music, *sangeetha gnanam* is considered highly important and touches on elements of the kind of musicality that cannot be taught, and is present either as a 'gift from

God' or 'in one's blood'. The concept is also a way of knowing and feeling music in its totality, to be able to know, understand, feel and experience the musical moment in its physical and metaphysical entirety. However, the term is regularly used by musicians to constitute a good, well-rounded knowledge of music – 'to know' music, its systems and intricacies, its socio-cultural background, its performance conventions and how it is positioned in society in Sri Lanka, India and the diaspora. Such knowledge is gained through experience. Although I would not consider having a spiritual realisation in the traditional meaning of the *gnanam* concept, my experience of gaining understanding was through acquiring a holistic knowledge. This knowledge included both discursive education and total experiences, as I attempted to immerse myself within the musical community and participate in musical and spiritual events as part of the network.

The Sanskrit concept of *gnanam* can be related to the "phenomenological turn" (Titon 1997) within ethnomusicology. Considering experience as knowledge and the use of our total experience as ethnomusicologists as data, Jeff Todd Titon suggests "[f]ieldwork is no longer viewed principally as observing and collecting (although it surely involves that) but as experiencing and understanding music. The new fieldwork leads us to ask what it is like for a person (ourselves included) to make and to know music as lived experience" (1997: 87). In the case of this research, the understanding and experience of music in multiple locations - along with my understanding of music's spiritual function, the migration experienced by musical participants, and the realisation of the highly entangled world of music, religion, societal politics and language - have contributed to my knowledge of the diasporic music scene. In addition, my experiences of learning, listening and performing together with diasporic musicians enabled me to forge my own path within the whole network. The immersive nature of my fieldwork within the 'site' led to a total, although highly subjective, experience of knowing - a type of *gnanam* – understood as a methodological way of

'becoming one'.

Structure of the Thesis

In each of the chapters in this thesis, I attempt to demonstrate the transnational networks and their local manifestations in London and the impact of Chennai on Carnatic and Tamil diasporic musicians. The inclusion of a chapter about the Chennai music scenes reflects the importance of music 'there' on the localised music 'here' in London. Each chapter contributes to the representation of diasporic musical performance and learning as a cultural practice of 'becoming one'.

In chapter one I review key interdisciplinary literature on diaspora, globalisation, transnationalism and music. I refer to the work of Clifford (1994), Cohen (2008), Sökefeld (2006), Vertovec (1997) and Zheng (2010) and others to interrogate the meaning of 'diaspora' in diaspora studies and how this fits with the musical community in focus in this thesis. Appadurai (1995), Slobin (1992), Clifford (1994) have influenced my conception of globalism and transnationalism. Using this literature as a foundation, I go on to discuss diaspora studies within ethnomusicology, whilst engaging with ethnographic examples. The chapter questions the usefulness of current understandings of terms diaspora, transnationalism and globalisation for reflecting on the interactions and practices taking place within South Indian music-making in London.

With the key framing concepts outlined, in chapter two I move onto situating the historical and contextual background of South Indian music in London. Here I draw on individual oral histories in addition to literature about Sri Lankan and Dravidian nationalism, before assessing the primary functions of musical learning and performance in London. Migratory experiences and the historical function of music in Sri Lanka have informed musical practices in London, so it is important to explore the historical musical meanings and functions in order to understand the meanings and functions of musical performance and

learning in London. Historical aspects also inform some of the tensions between Sri Lankan and Indian artists and their musical expectations within the scene in London. Chapter two also explores the relationship between music and identity, particularly the use of Carnatic music as a means of constructing and perpetuating an essentialised transnational identity amongst Sri Lankan Tamil refugee musicians. Here I focus on the work of Stuart Hall in relation to the construction of diasporic cultural identity (1990) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with regards to strategic essentialism (1996) to represent, what I consider, a transnationally empowered identity.

In the third chapter I go on to suggest a model for conceiving transnational networks in a highly-dispersed diaspora in order to understand diasporic musical interaction and transnational networks. The heterogeneity of musical practice requires a model which allows for overlaps with a number of other South Asian 'transnational imagined communities' (Sökefeld 2006). I suggest that the overarching music scene scene is an assemblage; “being wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts” (DeLanda 2006: 5-6) which attains stability through 'territorialisation' and 'coding' (DeLanda 2006: 17). With this encompassing meaning, the overlapping parts within the assemblage can be explored. I do this by considering this musical scene from three different levels - from the macro 'global' scope, to mid level and to micro individual levels - to understand transnational musical interactions and highlight what musical features enable such interactions. Drawing on the work of Howard Becker (2008), Benjamin Brinner (1995, 2009) and Manuel Tironi (2010), I highlight the importance of conventions to sustain the mobility of musical interactions taking place. Through such theorising of diasporic music-making in terms of its transnational interactions, I aim to contribute to understandings of music, diasporas and transnationalism.

In chapter four, I situate transnational interactions within the cultural centre of Chennai and explore the importance of the city in diasporic musicians' lifeworlds. I discuss

the interaction of diasporic musicians in South India, the types of performances they participate in and the extent to which they can access a scene heavily reliant on Indian Brahmin custodians. Here I highlight some of the discriminatory attitudes given to diasporic artists and Sri Lankans, relating to nationality, politics, generation and caste, that arise as the result of multicultural convergence in the city during the music season. Despite this discrimination, strong musical, emotional and spiritual connections are felt by Sri Lankan musicians towards South India and the region is regarded as a 'second home' or 'original homeland' for the Tamil people. These connections signal to the importance of a mythical homeland and history in constructing diasporic identity and belonging, which I refer to throughout the thesis. The account of diasporic musicians' participation and connection with the cultural centre is particularly important in an ethnography of diasporic musical performance and learning as music is disseminated outwards from the centre into diasporic sites.

In contrast to performance and learning in the cultural centre, in chapter five I consider the musical practices, audiences and locations of South Indian music in London. From performances of ritual music directed towards God to performances showcasing Indian music to mainstream British audiences, I suggest that despite conceptions of 'multicultural' London, cultural boundaries are largely maintained. The musical practices I will explore are largely directed towards the expectations of the diasporic community and the cultural centre and this highlights how transnational connectivity is the priority within musical performance and learning in London. Assessing the position of the musical community within the wider artistic landscape in London is important as it demonstrates the engagement with local arts and the transnational music scene. Such an assessment also takes into account the different audiences and locations of South Indian music, focusing on some of the underlying politics. Partha Chatterjee's distinction between the material and spiritual spheres in the negotiation of Indian

nationalism during colonialism (1993) reflects the *akam* inside and *puram* outside spheres I suggest characterise musical performances and their wider engagement in London. *Akam* and *puram* are categories used in Tamil poetry and ritual to distinguish inner and outer fields (Clothey 2006; Fuglerud 1999; Parthasarathy 2004).

The last two chapters are concerned with the key music practices in London, which synchronise London with other sites in the larger music scene. Chapter six deals specifically with the music of the *arangetram* ceremony, a performance which sees senior music students cross over from 'student' to 'musician' status through their first full public performance. Musical participation in London is characterised by the *arangetram.* Many performers and teachers rely on the ceremony to bring in a large proportion of their annual income, and students regard the performance as a means of displaying their Tamil cultural citizenship. The diasporic *arangetram* is also a local manifestation of the convergence of transnational networks, which is particularly evident in the interactions of transnational performers and the circulation of material goods. The *arangetram* also highlights the importance of historicity and mythical history in this largely refugee musical community. As Fugerlund suggests, the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora draw on their past in order to make sense of their present diasporic situation (1999). The *arangetram,* I suggest, connects the present with the 'glorious Tamil past' (Clothey 2006) and the “golden years of Tamil music in Sri Lanka” (Arunthathy, pers. comm., January 2013) thereby selectively leaving out the trauma of conflict and mass forced migration of the late twentieth century.

Chapter seven discusses the localised manifestations of the transnational music networks in London. In particular, I explore transnational performance and Internet learning, and highlight broader musical attitudes towards grounded, connected and embodied musical experiences. I also address the issues faced by London-based diasporic artists who experience music in London as part of a multilocal scene. Finally, I conclude the thesis by summarising

the broader points brought up by the chapters and interrogate ideas about transnational connectivity, globalisation from below and the use of diasporic cultural practices to 'become one'.

This thesis is an ethnography of the rich musical culture taking place in London's Tamil musical community. Little has been written about this music culture, except fleeting mentions in Gerry Farrell's work on South Asian music education in London (1994; 2005) and Ann David's work on *bharatanatyam* dance within the same participating community (2008; 2012). Although a number of studies focus on South Asian diasporas and new musical projects in London, I consider the importance of transnational connectivity through musical learning and performance. As a result, I position the study of diaspora to reflect the increasing physical mobility of diasporic musicians' lifeworlds through localised ethnography. Ultimately, I aim to highlight the importance of diasporic groups as significant actors in musical and cultural globalisation.

Chapter One

Key Theoretical Concepts in Diaspora, Transnationalism and Music Networks

The metaphor of 'becoming one again' refers to the imagined process of feeling 'oneness' after the highly-dispersed 'scattering' of mass forced migration. Musical performance and learning in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora is a key part of the 'becoming one' process. Flows of shared icons and musical aesthetics, in addition to communication between sites of dispersed peoples with shared cultural and/or historical backgrounds, have resulted in layers of networks and connections have developed as a result of musical interaction. Such interactions include: high profile musicians in India travelling to perform to diasporic audiences; second generation diasporic musicians travelling to Tamil Nadu to develop their art; and London-based musicians travelling to other locales of the diaspora to perform. Aside from flows of musicians, networks are evident in Skype music classes from virtuosos in India and they develop through listening to recordings from the subcontinent and elsewhere in the diaspora. All the while, such interactions and resulting networks contribute to the spread of Tamil culture around the world. 'Becoming one again' through the convergence of these transnational networks implies a number of key theoretical concepts that need to be clarified in the context of this study. These concepts relate to diaspora, transnationalism, networks and globalisation, which are addressed in this chapter. In the following section I will examine literature in the field of diaspora studies and ethnomusicology in order to provide a theoretical framework for understanding 'diaspora'. By exploring interdisciplinary literature on diaspora studies in reference to ethnography, I also aim to clarify my own interdisciplinary application of 'diaspora' in the specific context of music, transnationalism and the displaced Sri Lankan Tamil demographic.

The 'Diaspora'

Often when I attended Tamil diasporic cultural events, my presence attracted a certain amount of curiosity. Audience members regularly asked me what had brought me to this 'place'. After I received some puzzled looks when I told them I was studying the Tamil diaspora, I reverted to saying something to the effect of "studying music in displaced Tamil communities in London". I have also used the Tamil word *pulampeyar* in order to describe 'diaspora' in these situations. *Pulampeyar* means 'displaced people' and is the equivalent of 'diaspora' in the Tamil language. This second explanation was met with understanding. There is a discrepancy between academic definitions of diaspora, the Tamil meaning of *pulampeyar* and how 'diaspora' is manifested in a tangible form beyond academic discourse. 'Diaspora' is problematic and is often used as a catch-all term for groups of people who have settled away from their country of birth. 'Diaspora' has multiple meanings for communities of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others living away from their place of birth and due to its popularisation some have argued that the term has lost much of its meaning and analytical power (e.g. Brubaker 2005).

Dictionary definitions of diaspora typically refer to the history and dispersion of the Jews living outside Israel, which has then been widened out to the dispersion of any people from their country of origin.[1] The undefined use of 'diaspora' is problematic as it implies a tangible place of belonging for anyone living away from their country of origin. Often discussed in an over-celebratory manner, uses of the term 'diaspora' in academic studies have the potential to disregard the reality of living overseas. Stéphane Dufoix provides a critical example of the imposition of 'diaspora' on everyday life by referring to a passage from a Nigerian blogger living 'abroad':

> I have been away from Nigeria for 30 years ... In all these 30 years I have been convinced that I

[1] For example, 'Diaspora' in the New Oxford Dictionary, accessed 2nd February 2012.

> was living abroad and, at a push, overseas. It now turns out, however, that I have actually been living in the diaspora. This sounds like a very lovely place, with flora and fauna, nubile virgins, blue skies and a certain *je ne sais quoi.* The sort of place where you can tiptoe through the tulips, stopping every so often to smell Rose, her friends Chantelle, Angel, Tiffany and any other delicacies that take your fancy ... All this time I have been 'abroad' studying and working my ass off, sitting in dull offices, with dull people, doing dull things to pay off dull bills, when I could have been in the diaspora with nubile virgins with understanding ways. I am so mad' (cited in Dufoix 2008: vii).

The example reflects how the concept of diaspora is far removed from the reality of the everyday lives of many displaced people living away from their country of origin.

Scholars have made attempts to go beyond discussing 'diaspora' as simply a group of migrants or refugees living outside their country of origin. Safran's model of diaspora, which is still a key point of reference, has contributed to the idea of a community of people who uphold emotional ties with others from a shared 'homeland' (1991). The model comprises of six often cited features (Safran 1991: 83-84):

1. Dispersal from an original 'centre' to at least two or more 'peripheral' places.
2. A maintenance of collective memory, vision and myth about the original homeland.
3. A feeling of non-acceptance by their host country/society.
4. The ancestral home is seen as a place of eventual return.
5. A commitment to the maintenance and restoration of the original homeland.
6. Collective consciousness and solidarity are defined by the continuing relationship with the homeland.

Whilst Safran's model helps to clarify the term, it also implies an ideal type of 'diaspora'. In order to consider the multiple historical circumstances, migratory experiences and relationships with the 'homeland', Robin Cohen (2008) constructed a series of diasporic categories. By distinguishing a set of Weberian ideal types as an analytical tool to grasp the reality of diasporas, Cohen's categories highlight important common features and provide a tool “to aid delineation of diaspora” (2008: 16) at a global level. In doing so, Cohen attempts to break away from classical notions of diaspora linked with the dispersed Jewish community. In particular, Cohen's distinctions of 'victim', 'labour and imperial' and 'trade and business'

diasporas are useful for highlighting the differences in diasporic formation and migratory experience. In regard to the community involved in Carnatic and Tamil music in London, musicians with different backgrounds interact through musical practices. The majority of musicians and participants in the Carnatic and Tamil music network in London were forcibly displaced from Sri Lanka and might be categorised as 'victim diasporas'. London-based descendants of indentured South Indian workers in Malaysia and Singapore, who in Cohen's terms would be understood as 'labour and imperial diasporas', also participate in musical and religious practices. Finally, 'trade and business diasporas' might be applied to South Indian musicians migrating to the UK in response to the financial security of living as a musician and music teacher. Whilst the 'victim diaspora' that emerged in the 1980s remains the largest in London, members from all of these 'diasporas' come together to maintain cultural and religious practices. The acknowledgment of different migratory experiences, which are explored further in Chapter two, is significant as attitudes towards musical practices and functions are informed by migratory experiences and relationships with homelands.

Overlapping migratory and diasporic experiences inform levels of engagement in music scenes and functions of music in diaspora. Su Zheng (1990) has discussed how different migratory experiences affect musical performance in diasporas in the same locality. Zheng identified two distinct attitudes towards musical performance as a result of dissimilarities in migratory experience in the Chinese diaspora in New York (1990: 57). Two primary diasporic groups are identified as distinct in terms of voluntary and involuntary migration, education, work, integration in wider society and language backgrounds. The 'inward directing' group migrated voluntarily and were subjected to racial discrimination on their arrival to the USA in the early to mid twentieth century. This group performs music privately and has little contact with wider cultural organisations. In contrast, the 'outward directing' group were involuntary migrants, consisting mainly of students stranded in the US

during the Cultural Revolution in China. During this time, they received aid from the US government and have integrated into wider US society. They organise public performances of Chinese music for multicultural audiences, for which they receive funding from government cultural organisations. The important factors highlighted in Zheng's article are the different spheres of engagement in diasporic musical performance. Sri Lankan and South Indian diasporic musicians participate in a range of inward and outward performances that highlight differing attitudes towards cultural maintenance. Importantly, these spheres of engagement are notably different in terms of their contexts, practices, locations and 'publics'. Amongst diasporic musicians from South Asia in London, the limited publicity of inward-facing diasporic performances compared with the much wider publicity of mainstream performances is particularly noticeable, and I relate these diaporic and mainstream publics to Byron Dueck's consideration of different publics and publicities (Dueck 2013). Migratory experiences and relationships to 'homelands' are significant in informing diasporic performance contexts, locations and publics. The musicians and audiences who cannot return to Sri Lanka have lost a sense of home and belonging and therefore use inward-facing performances to create their own intimate and familiar space, as I will explore in chapter five.

The consideration of multiple experiences in Cohen's types of diasporas go beyond Safran's model to include multiplicity at the 'global' level. James Clifford warns against the perils of constructing a definition that alludes to an 'ideal type'. Rather than locating these prescribed and idealised features in a group, Clifford argues that we should explore the 'diaspora's borders' (1994: 307). The borders of the diaspora are the particular boundaries against which the group defines itself, rather than defining diasporas according to 'essential features' such as Safran's model (1991). Clifford goes on to say “[i]t is important to stress the relational positioning at issue here is not a process of absolute othering, but rather of entangled tension” (1994: 307). These borders are both aligned with and defined against: 1)

the norms of the nation-states and 2) indigenous and autochthonous claims by “tribal” (those who claim natural or *first-nation* sovereignty) peoples (Clifford 1994: 307). Rather than utilising ideal types, Clifford shows that communities of migrants, refugees, and exiles must be defined by their own historical basis, migration and resettlement experiences in relation to the borders with other groups.

'Becoming one' and the connectivity amongst displaced Sri Lankan musicians is a significant characteristic of my ethnography. Importantly, the metaphor shifts the importance of diasporic experience from the homeland to exile and reemphasises the point that we should consider the multiple sites of exile and the connections between these in diasporas (Mohan and Zack-Williams 2002: 6). Martin Sökefeld (2006) defines diasporas as 'imagined transnational communities', a concept which is particularly useful in this study. Of particular importance in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and its musical networks is the imagined transnational collective that is frequently referred to by as 'our Tamil community'. Inspired by Benedict Anderson's 'imagined communities' (1991), Sökefeld's understanding of diaspora is based on the “imaginations of community” that unite groups of people living in territorially separated locations (Sökefeld 2006: 267). Such an imagination relates to Clifford's assertion that “[t]he empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling *here* assumes a solidarity and connection *there*. But *there* is not necessarily a single place or an exclusivist nation … [it is] the connection (elsewhere) that makes a difference (here)” (Clifford 1994: 22; see also Vertovec 2000: 147).

Sökefeld argues that migration does not automatically form a diaspora, rather the self-imaginations of a transnational community in addition to “mobilizing structures and practices” need to be implemented for a diaspora to come into being (2006: 270). 'Mobilizing structures' are networks of people bound to the same issues or formal organisations mobilised in collective action, and the resulting 'mobilizing practices' are organised by such networks,

which enable individuals to participate and become part of the movement (2006: 269). Sökefeld's understanding of the term therefore combines the two perspectives of social formation and type of consciousness. He states:

> The quite simple definition I suggest ... clearly combines an 'objective' and 'subjective' criterion, both of which have to be fulfilled in order that a given collectivity is categorized as a diaspora. It has to be a transnationally dispersed collectivity that distinguishes itself by clear self-imaginations as community (Sökefeld 2006: 267).

In suggesting this definition, Sökefeld critiques the view of diaspora as associated only with dislocation from the homeland and transnational migration. Although 'community' itself is a problematic term (Baumann 1996), the self-imagination of collectivity and connectivity beyond nation-state borders is important. By having both objective and subjective criterion, an understanding can be attained between academic discourse, consciousness and the group's specific historical circumstances of migration and resettlement. He highlights that diaspora identity is not a natural outcome of migration, but a product of the mobilisation process. The defining feature of diaspora is the assumed shared identity uniting people living in transnational space (2006: 280), and I reflect further on this in chapter two. The 'Tamil community' to which musicians and musical participants regularly refer is situated locally in London and dispersed across the world. The 'mobilising structures' are the networks of musicians and community members who organise gatherings through musical, or 'mobilising', practices in order to reinstate a transnational collective sense of 'Tamilness'.

Whilst defining the Tamil diaspora according to its specific historical and circumstantial characteristics has strengths, these definitions do not cover all the multiple manifestations and meanings of diaspora. In questioning the manifestation of diaspora, Steven Vertovec (1997) offers three distinct, yet complimentary, meanings of the term that accommodate difference in specific groups. These are:

1. **'diaspora'** ***as social form*****;** referring to the classic meaning of diaspora, associated with the Jewish transnational community and referring to persecution and dispersal.

2. **'diaspora'** ***as type of consciousness*****;** suggesting that more focus has been placed upon the variety of experience, state of mind and sense of identity, referring to Du Bois's (1903) and Paul Gilroy's (1993) use of the 'double consciousness' concept.
3. **'diaspora'** ***as mode of cultural production*****;** referring to the transnational media and communications linking locales within global diasporas.

Vertovec concludes by stressing that diasporic phenomena must be considered in terms of historical conditions, such as patterns of migration and policies of 'host' states, Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, the conscious intervention of social actors and, importantly, the outcomes of mediation, negotiation, and contestation within, and between, self-defined social groups (Vertovec 1997: 28). Throughout this thesis, attention is paid to intra- and inter-diasporic attitudes, which raise questions about internal politics and divisions, and affect the meaning-making and participation in diasporic musical activities.

Su Zheng (2010) goes beyond Vertovec's three meanings and grounds what she refers to as the 'diasporic interpretative concept' in the distinct context of specific historical, cultural and social conditions. Such grounding, Zheng argues, is the only way to ensure the insightfulness and power of 'diaspora' as a concept (Zheng 2010: 11). Therefore, Zheng contextualises her meanings specifically within the Chinese American demographic that is the focus of her research. Her first meaning of diaspora is as a descriptive term, much like many definitions from the body of diaspora studies, and her second is diaspora as an analytical category aimed at understanding and examining the meanings and conditions of cultural expression. Zheng's third meaning of diaspora refers to diaspora as a mode of awareness in order "to critique and problematise the notion of the bipolar order of the totalising global system and fragmented local responses" (2010: 11). Finally, Zheng refers to diaspora as a means of oppositional politics against oppressive, hegemonic nation-states and cultural formations (2010: 11). Zheng's acknowledgement of these different meanings results in

greater clarity in the use of the term, particularly within ethnomusicology and the study of diasporic music-making.

With this literature in mind, I refer to 'diaspora' as a case-specific social formation, in which elements of a shared identity are transnationally imagined in a self-defined community. Participation in social and cultural practices involving members of the 'imagined transnational community' is needed in order to define a group as a 'diaspora'. I consider the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, represented by the musical community, as a self-empowered transnational community, drawing on common historical and cultural experiences in order to mobilise through shared identity both locally and across nation-state borders. Although emphasis on the group, or community, at large is given, it is important to consider differences within and between diasporas, in order to avoid homogenisation and to understand the multiple facets of such complex social formations (Brah 1996; Shukla 2001).

To consider 'diaspora' as a multi-dimensional term is useful when representing diasporic lived experiences, particularly when exploring music and the transnational networks that contribute to the global interconnectedness of a diasporic group. In addition to the familial and social connections across nation-states, the Tamil diaspora maintain the 'imagined transnational community' through language, cultural (music and dance) practices and transnational politics. Although a shared cultural background and transnational community is imagined, individual attitudes can be oppositional and differences such as region of origin, political views, values, and generation can also be divisive. For example, many Sri Lankan Tamils have polar opposite stances on the LTTE and the interactions between Sri Lankan and Indian musicians complicate attitudes and values in the musical community. Therefore, diasporic musicians and audiences engage in shared cultural practices, but also possess distinctions which feed into other collective imaginations. This relates to Avtar Brah's ideas of heterogeneity in collective identity (1996). She suggests that rather than a static identity,

certain discourses, matrices of meaning and historical memories form the "basis of *identification*" (Brah 1996: 123, emphasis in original). Such ideas rely on the co-presence of the multiplicity of 'identities' that assume patterns against sets of personal, social and historical circumstances. Collective identity is the process of "signification where commonalities of experience around specific axis of differentiation … are invested with particular meanings" (1996: 123). Importantly in this case, Brah suggests that the heightened awareness of one construction of identity entails a partial erasure of the memory or subjective sense of internal heterogeneity of a group (1996: 123). Following Brah, I suggest that 'Tamilness' through musical experiences in London is part of this basis of identification away from the heterogeneity of the group.

'Homeland' in Diaspora

The homeland is a complex concept within the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. Although North Sri Lanka is regarded as the place of origin, relationships, memories and access to the region have been problematic. North Sri Lanka is remembered both nostalgically as a place of idyllic village life and belonging as well as a site of conflict, trauma and internal displacement. Heavy fighting and rebel control of the Northern province resulted in the inaccessibility of the region for nearly two decades, and therefore many of those who were displaced became disconnected from the region before mass migration. Even from within Sri Lanka, Tamils looked to 'Mother India' as the spiritual home (Russell 1982: 136). In terms of cultural, musical and religious importance, India is the site of return for many displaced Sri Lankan Tamils. Chennai, in particular, has become an important site for those who cannot return 'home'. I am, therefore, influenced by work by Mark-Anthony Falzon (2003) which suggests that other sites decentre the importance afforded to the 'homeland' in studies of diaspora. Referring to the Sindhi diaspora, Falzon argues that despite Sind - now in post-partition

Pakistan - being the primordial homeland of the Sindhi people, Mumbai is positioned as the significant point of convergence of the global diaspora in terms of family, business networks and politics of collective identity. Falzon suggests that Mumbai is the 'cultural heart' of the Sindhi people, and is therefore an “important nodal point in a transnational network of social relations” (2003: 679). Cultural hearts are vital in asserting the “aesthetic traditions … symbolically used as a basis of self and social identity of transnational community” (Um 2005: 6) that are usually afforded to the 'homeland'.

Whilst I refer to Chennai as the cultural centre in terms of musical practices and the transnational Carnatic and Tamil music scene in chapter four, I acknowledge the everyday multilocal feeling of home in diaspora. The theoretical decentring of 'homeland' in diaspora has been discussed by Avtar Brah, who points out the distinction between the 'homing desire' and 'desire for the homeland' (1996: 16). Brah's 'concept of diaspora' “signals processes of *multi-locationality across geographical*, *cultural and psychic boundaries*” (Brah 1996: 194, emphasis in original).

Tina K. Ramnarine's exploration of the concept of 'multi-local belonging' in the context of the Indian diaspora (1996) is useful here and holds several similarities with the Tamil diaspora in London. Discussing Indian-Caribbean Chutney, a music genre articulating Indian heritage and Caribbean belonging based on Indian folk, devotional and film music as well as calypso, soca and rap, Ramnarine suggests “the relationship between tradition and place is questioned when a single tradition is maintained, developed and changed by people in several different geographic contexts” (1996: 133). Indian cultural elements are retained in the Caribbean, including kinship systems, village structures, religious rituals, clothing, food and language. Chutney on the other hand, refers to a sense of belonging in the Caribbean, and elsewhere with Indian-Caribbean populations (Ramnarine 1996: 143). Chutney is performed in numerous geographical locations, and the performance spaces in Trinidad and London and

their ties to different places gives "... expression to a sense of multi-local belonging. While Chutney contributes to diaspora discourse, it does so by providing a sense of the place of home … in Trinidad or in London" (Ramnarine 2001: 98-99). The performance of Carnatic and Tamil music in different Tamil diasporic locations around the world creates a broad, multiply-located sense of belonging and indicates that there are multiple sites of relatedness and home aside from Sri Lanka. In the context of Chutney and the Indian diaspora, Ramnarine states that "[e]ven if members of that community remain unknown to each other, they share a common inheritance. This is a sense of relatedness which is expressed by men as well as women, and which encompasses the Indian-Caribbean community around the world" (Ramnarine 1996: 151). The significance of music in creating a 'common inheritance', 'sense of relatedness' and transnational identity is apparent both in the Chutney case and in the case of diasporic Carnatic and Tamil music.

In attempts to deconstruct meanings of diaspora with relationships between countries of resettlement and homelands, Ramnarine's work (2007a) suggests looking at 'homelands' or 'home' as being something developed in diaspora. Building on the concept of 'multi-local belonging', Ramnarine emphasises the permeability of boundaries and identities and draws attention to the connections between people across geographic and temporal distances (2007a: 9). She highlights the importance of the home beyond borders, and aims "to think about home in the global space: to feel connected with people and places elsewhere" (Ramnarine 2007a: 22). In the case of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, musical practices are vital in regaining a place of belonging as the geographical homeland has been lost through ethnic discrimination and conflict, and therefore the transnational localities of belonging outside the 'homeland' are often conditioned by shared identities.

These concepts resonate with the displaced Sri Lankan Tamil musicians who have rebuilt homes, and senses of home, in the diaspora through ritualised musical practices.

Chennai as 'the important nodal point' in transnational networks, and the high levels of physical dispersal and resettlement, creates belonging in, and as, diaspora.

Diaspora and ethnomusicology

With regards to the study of music in diaspora, John Baily suggests that music can tell us about social, economic and political factors which other paths of study may not produce (1995: 77). The focus on Carnatic and Tamil music in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, in addition to the intense musical connections with Chennai, is telling of issues relating to society, politics and spirituality. Rather than develop an explicit hybrid genre reflecting an 'in-between' diasporic experience and the culture contact experienced in London, the musical community have developed a sustainable Carnatic and Tamil music scene linking with Chennai and Sri Lankan and South Indian diasporic music scenes.

Ramnarine (2007b) highlights the polarities in the discourse of musical performance and diaspora, such as the dichotomy of history, musical memory and the preservation of tradition opposing musical creativities, new performance spaces and new musical sounds. Similarly, the dichotomy within multiculturalism is the exploration of cultural exchanges which produce the 'fusions' that characterise global cities against the multiculturalism of different cultural groups maintaining their distinct traditions (2007b: 6). Instead of selecting a polar perspective, Ramnarine argues that the ethnomusicological study of music in diasporic groups should focus on the everyday creative decisions and musical behaviours of musicians practicing in the diaspora:

> Diasporic music-making should not be understood as merely the result of population movements, the settlement of diasporic groups and cultural contact in the multicultural society. Rather, diasporic music-making can be understood in the ordinariness of creative production, as musicians working as agents in their everyday environments, making choices that suit them and their audiences. In moving beyond simple understandings of hybridity as musical cultures in contact that result in 'new' musical expressions we move towards politically articulated readings of social relations and creative processes (Ramnarine 2007b: 7).

In agreement with Ramnarine, I consider that the study of music in this diaspora should

reflect the ordinariness and everyday environments of working as a diasporic musician. The adaptations to suit different audiences, learning and teaching, creative decisions about style and the organisation of events, self-representation and economic sustainability of professional musicians in the diaspora are important points of focus. Such points provide insight into diasporic music-making, aside from fusion projects and the maintenance of cultural heritage. With this in mind, this thesis foregrounds the lived experiences of diasporic musicians in London. Musical practices are varied in London and they extend to other localities. For example, most musicians teach at Tamil Schools and they also perform local concerts and choose repertoire, which they know appeals specifically to the London audience. Similarly, their repertoire choices in Chennai are made in relation to the expectations of the local audience and in order to develop their transnational reputations. Conversely, some artists also perform at well-known, Arts Council England funded cultural institutions, such as the Southbank Centre, within a format familiar to 'multicultural' mainstream audiences. These varied performances represent the everyday lives of individual musicians and their participation in a diasporic music scene. The next section explores diaspora and transnationalism in order to further understand the musical interactions and lifeworlds of musicians in the Tamil musical community.

Diasporic Transnationalism

Having watched Sudha Ragunathan – the high-profile Carnatic music vocalist – perform at Lewisham temple in July 2010, just hours after she arrived into Heathrow from a performance in Dubai, I began to think about the transnational nature of Carnatic and Tamil music. Sudha performed in an ensemble of fellow India-based musicians in addition to artists resident in London. Her audience included musicians who had recently arrived from performing to Tamil diasporic audiences in Malaysia and Denmark, and others who were undertaking long-distance musical learning with *gurus* in India. The flows of music, musical knowledge,

musicians, recordings and instruments between the many sites of Carnatic and Tamil music are part of the reality of diasporic musical learning and performance.

With the use of communication and travel in the highly-dispersed Sri Lankan and South Indian diasporas, transnationalism is a vital part of diasporic musical learning and performance. Beyond ideas of hybridity and culture contact, musical interactions across nation-state boundaries are an everyday occurrence. Transnationalism enables an understanding of the London scene as socio-musically connected to other sites in the transnational scene and how these connections impact local musical practices. Musical decision making, attitudes and expectations in London are often made in reference to the Chennai aesthetic, whilst simultaneously encompassing the local expectations of diasporic audiences. However, associations of authenticity within the Carnatic and Tamil music scene in Chennai are problematic and are projected into the diaspora as a result of intense musical interactions across borders. Whilst John Baily and Michael Collyer argue that a transnational perspective unloads associations that only 'homeland' representations of culture are authentic (2006: 171), transnational networks carry ideas of authenticity from other sites into London. As local musical and contextual adaptations are made, there are overlapping attitudes towards music in London that result in 'competing ideologies of authenticity' (Bigenho 2002) amongst musicians and participants. This will be discussed in chapter seven.

Importantly, the study of transnationalism in music has added to the consideration of the multilocality of diasporic musicians and their lifeworlds beyond hybridity, creolisation, new performance contexts and cultural contact. I am influenced by Su Zheng (2010) who refers to the everyday lives of individuals and institutions in the Asian/Chinese American diaspora to explore transnationalism and diasporic music (2010: 12). She says the study of transnationalism in diasporic cultural identity “has brought a sense of emancipation from the normalizing process of immigration, a temporary break from exclusive domestic racial

politics and minority discourse, and an intellectual justification for the state of exile and homelessness" (Zheng 2010: 28). The multi-levelled interactions and negotiations, Zheng contends, between the host country, the homeland(s), internal cultural conflicts, historical consciousness, and the aspirations of the individual musicians condition the transnational Chinese American experience and its musical expression (2010: 14). Zheng argues:

> At the present-day crossroads of old paradigms and new theories, localization and globalization, rooted and uprooted, musical construction and *de*construction of place, and 'intercultural fusion' and indigenous musics, the study of cultural displacement and diasporic existence in the form of music transnationalism can provide an intriguing site of mediation and negotiation between 'out there' and 'in here', between authenticity and hybridity, and between exclusively localized analysis and the 'overly global vision' (Clifford 1992: 108) of a totalizing music industry and media system (2010: 18).

From micro-musical detail to contributions to globalising processes, I am interested in the musical interactions in London that have resonance in, and are informed by, other localities. Enquiry into music transnationalism provides information about the values of diasporas whilst gaining understanding of musical interaction and circulation from global to local perspectives.

Zheng usefully points out that transnationalism and diaspora overlap in terms of their consciousness of multilocality, involvement in global cultural traffics, and their challenge and subversion to national territories (Zheng 2010: 11-12). Whilst the term 'transnationalism' refers to cultural production, performance and consumption (Zheng 2010: 12), it also connotes the intensity and simultaneity of multiple ties and interactions of individuals or institutions across nation-states (Vertovec 1999: 447-8). Transnationalism in the context of diaspora, or 'diasporic transnationalism', is importantly informed by "the embodied experiences of transnational movement" (Zheng 2010: 27). These meanings of transnationalism influence my conceptualisation of the term. However, Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc's (1994) definition of transnationalism particularly suits the cross-border interactions displayed by Carnatic and Tamil musical learning and performance in London. The authors argue that 'transnationalism' is "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and

settlement" (Basch et al 1994: 8). According to Basch et al, these processes are termed transnationalism in order to emphasise the social fields built across geographic, cultural, and political borders (1994: 8). This concept of transnationalism allows us to think beyond previous categorical ideas of geographic space and social identity and importantly relates to the interactions of diasporic musicians. Working towards the development and sustainability of their art, transnational diasporic musicians "take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationships that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states" (Basch et al 1994: 7). The networks of relations are particularly important in this study and influence how I consider transnational and local interactions.

Connectivity and the Tamil Diaspora

The concept of connectivity is particularly important in studies of Tamil diasporas. As diaspora implies 'being out of place', Fred Clothey considers that processes of emplacement through religious ritual are vital to remap one's place in life and cosmos (2006: 20). Having studied Tamil diasporic groups in Singapore, Malaysia, the USA and India, Clothey explores how rituals conjure real or imagined pasts whilst reflecting present circumstances (2006). Clothey states:

> Tamil exile life exacerbates the possibility that the individual will be disconnected. Ritualizing helps to reinforce the sense of community and of being connected to the sociocosmic network of which each individual is thought to be a part (2006: 213).

The sociocosmic network, I argue, is an integral part to the 'transnational imagined community' and spirituality, which attains greater importance in diaspora. In addition to attitudes towards ethnicity, politics, culture, language and religion, Clothey (2006) and Fuglerud (1999) both argue that 'integration' is not as important for Tamil diasporas as remaining in touch with their place, or culture, of origin. A fundamental reason for this is the

Tamil concept of *tosam*. *Tosam* is the "deep, afflicting disorders of the body's natural harmony" which is caused by an individual distancing themselves from the reach of the rituals which maintain social and divine order (Fuglerud 1999: 78). In his work within the displaced Sri Lankan Tamil community in Norway, Fuglerud emphasises that the inherent social, rather than physical, character of *tosam* is particularly relevant. Individuals attempt to remain connected for fear of disconnection and the resulting afflictions of 'aloneness' (Fuglerud 1999: 79; see also Daniel 1989). Fuglerud explains "[t]he breaking or circumventing of ritual rules is not a question between a person and divine forces alone. It is by putting oneself outside the social context in which cosmological principles are embedded that one may inflict *tosam* upon oneself" (Fuglerud 1999: 78-79). Disconnection from the sociocosmic network in exile is avoided through regular worship and, I suggest, ritualised practices of musical learning and performance.

My work on music and transnationalism in the diaspora contributes to Clothey and Fuglerud's work about the fundamental importance of connectivity in Tamil diasporas. I argue that musical practices and the connections achieved through such ritualised practices are vital in maintaining a sense of connectivity with the transnational imagined community and to the sociocosmic network. As a reaction to day-to-day life in multicultural London and the possibilities of disconnection, connectivity is re-established through Carnatic and Tamil musical learning and performance. To further understand the manifestation of connectivity through music, I will now consider the concept of networks.

Transnational Networks and Diasporic Musical Practices

Socio-musical networks and network theory is a relatively little explored area in ethnomusicology. Benjamin Brinner (2009) explores networks within Israeli - Palestinian 'ethnic' music-making, providing an insight into the way of applying network theories to a

music scene. He argues that the study of networks in ethnomusicology are little theorised, particularly on things such as structure, dynamics, intersections, change over time, impacts on musical knowledge, values and production. Brinner uses network theory and a series of different positions, links and network types in order to theorise the ethnic music scene. The benefit from studying interactions and music scenes in the form of networks, and through the lens of network theory, is that a number of levels can be assessed. He argues that mapping relationships as networks enables us to talk about individual agency "in relation to larger forces and structures by moving from a middle level toward both the micro and macro. We can trace the formation of institutions, the emergence and reinforcement of a network, and individual trajectories while highlighting the key roles played by hubs, gate keepers, and other types of mediators" (Brinner 2009: 164). Brinner also acknowledges heterogeneity within and between networks as a result of individuality, the network structure, and interactions internal and external to the network (2009: 168). Drawing from network theory and Howard Becker's concept of 'art worlds' as cooperative and conventional networks contributing to the production of art work (1982), Brinner suggests we look at musical networks – including institutions, venues and market situations growing around key musicians – in terms of an emergent art world:

> The value for ethnomusicologists of this particular configuration of network theory lies in its aim for comprehensiveness in understanding the layout and dynamics of a complex social and cultural nexus. It enables us to think about this phenomenon both as self-contained and as engaged in numerous types of connections that link people, institutions, things, and concepts (2009: 164).

Through examining diasporic musical interactions as a network, individuals' activities and practices can be considered in relation to the emergence and enactment of the larger scene. Within localised ethnography in London, I have explored the music scene in relation to Manuel Tironi's (2010) emphasis on the 'mobility' of networks, informed by actor-network theory and the inclusion of objects as part of social networks. Objects and people are heterogeneous and can be considered as networked assemblages themselves, therefore "when

a (network) object is performed, so, too, a (network) world is being enacted" (Law 2000: 6). In the context of music, P. Allen Roda reflects on actor-network theory in Hindustani music (2015). He says the "Hindustani music scene of New York city consists of countless concerts, musicians, enthusiasts, venues, instruments, classrooms, etc. all of which contribute to the production of a thing or network, that we refer to as Hindustani music in New York, which is itself part of a larger, global phenomenon called Hindustani music" (Roda 2015: 333). Roda's example is reflected in the South Indian music scene in London.

To understand the 'global phenomenon' of Carnatic and Tamil music, I suggest that heterogeneous and multi-levelled networks enact and link Carnatic and Tamil musical practices across the world. These come together to form a whole as an 'assemblage' (DeLanda 2006) through the common adherence to transnationally understood musical conventions. By considering the connections and hubs of musical practice locally in London with other sites, I intend to show the impact of individual musicians in the transnational connectivity of Carnatic and Tamil music. Therefore, I believe that networks emphasise the agency of groups and individuals in creating and maintaining large-scale inter-connectedness through musical interactions and shared identities.

A pragmatic approach to studying transnational music networks is proposed by Nadia Kiwan and Ulrike Meinhof (2011). In researching cultural globalisation and African artists in transnational networks, the authors map four "interconnecting, multi-dimensional parameters" which, they argue, go beyond existing network models (2011: 1). These four parameters are:

1. **Human Hubs –** studying key individuals as the main agents of networks across different locales and spaces of engagement and interaction. These locales can be cultural, institutional and professional.
2. **Spatial Hubs –** the locales in which networks and flows intercept, such as global and metropolitan cities. Significant locales of interception in the Tamil diaspora would

include London as the base for many transnational diasporic musicians and Chennai as the major site of transnational socio-musical convergence.

3. **Institutional Hubs –** referring to key institutions which are involved in transnational networks, which help organise, or are integrated in, artist's networks. In London, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, along with community music organisations and Tamil schools, are important institutional hubs for local and transnational networks.
4. **Accidental Hubs –** finally, the space that the researcher is responsible for in constructing a network whilst researching transnational networks.

Using case studies from key musicians in Morocco and Madagascar, the authors explore translocal and transnational networks. These networks involve the translocal migration from rural regions to metropolitan cities in the musicians' country of origin, the roles of capital cities as global hubs, the connections across Europe and Africa, and, finally, the involvement of European and African organisations in the creation and dissemination of music by African artists.

My exploration of transnational networks include the first and second generation musicians who are trained in the tradition of Carnatic and Tamil music and travel to perform in diasporic sites around the world. These musicians, and others from different sites, converge in the 'spatial hub' of Chennai for the annual music season in the city. These diasporic musicians also invite Indian virtuoso musicians from Chennai to teach and perform in the UK, therefore flows are multi-directional. The music scene in London utilises the transnational flow of recordings, teaching materials, compositions and instruments either imported or accessed via the Internet in order to maintain a sense of the wider scene, or assemblage. For the wider Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in London, these transnational networks contribute to the demand for cultural practices that maintain connectivity with the 'root' of their culture in South India. The network and assemblage theories discussed here have influenced my way of

thinking about musical interactions and connectivity at macro-, mid- and micro-levels and I will explore these further in chapter three.

The transnational diasporic networks, however, are not only a series of physical hubs and links between nation-states, institutions, families and individuals. They are also imagined connections through shared backgrounds, cultural symbols, behaviours and values. As Sökefeld (2006) argues, diaspora itself is a product of a "shared imagination of a transnational community". Therefore, I suggest that transnational diasporic networks are enacted, mediated, and imagined through connections with people across space.

Mark Slobin's term 'diasporic interculture' is useful in thinking about the musical interaction and mediation that takes place around, between and inside diasporic music scenes (1992: 49) and their part in the process of globalisation. Diasporic interculture is part of Slobin's model for considering music across super, inter and sub-cultures and the term refers to the interactions that emerge from "the linkages which subcultures set up across nation-states" (1992: 44). The 'global' and 'local' merge and everyday interactions take place across, or between, this dichotomy, through communication, mediation, musical interaction, material culture and religion. In thinking about the linkage that subcultures set up, Slobin refers to Arjun Appadurai's (1990) concept of 'scapes'. Appadurai argues that the global cultural economy, in its current overlapping, complex and disjunctive state, must not be studied in the binaries of centre and periphery, 'push and pull' or consumer and producer. Instead, Appadurai considers the disjunctures and differences in global cultural economy through a number of 'scapes'. Of importance here are: *ethnoscapes* which refer to the movement of people – "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" (Appadurai 2008: 52); *technoscapes* - the high speed movement of technology around the world despite nation-state boundaries; *mediascapes* - the distribution of electrical technologies to produce and distribute information and the images of the world create by such media (2008: 53); and

ideoscapes - political and ideological ideas, motives and images distributed globally. Whilst I develop my own thoughts on transnational networks and their flows in chapter three, Appadurai's 'scapes' provide a framework to order, describe and grasp the nebulous flows of culture at a global level. Appadurai states that the world is a transnational construction of imagined landscapes; our imaginations perform a new role in social life and imagination itself is a social practice (2008: 50). The emphasis on imagination in transnational networks and flows is reflected in the significance of the imagination within diaspora studies (Sökefeld 2006; Vertovec 1997) and the imagination as the basis of 'becoming one again'.

Music, Diaspora and Globalisation

Through my discussion of transnational networks, I have already hinted at my suggestion that diasporic transnational networks play a role in globalisation. In a general sense, globalisation is "a matter of increasing long-distance interconnectedness" (Hannerz 1996: 17). Naming mass migration, in addition to mass media, as central features of the globalisation of cultural flows, Appadurai considers that "diasporic public spheres … are no longer small, marginal, or exceptional. They are part of the cultural dynamic of urban life in most countries and continents, in which migration and mass mediation co-constitute a new sense of the global as modern and the modern as global" (1996: 10). Whilst Appadurai refers to the over-arching global importance of mass migration, I consider that the transnational networks at play in the Tamil and other South Asian diasporas, and their participation in Carnatic and Tamil music, contribute to a process of "non-totalising globalisation from below" (Clifford 1994). 'Globalisation from below' refers to the diasporas, migrant groups and cosmopolitans who contribute to intense transnational interactions. Taking the term from Brecher et al (1993), globalisation from below refers to transregional social movements that both resist and use hegemonic communications and technologies, and Clifford argues that it is this entanglement

that characterises modern diaspora networks (1994: 327). The historical transnational connections between Sri Lanka and India and their post-migration diasporic and musical networks relate to Clifford's assertion that there are alternate cosmopolitans and transregional networks "not produced by/or resisting the hegemony of Western techoindustrial society" (1994: 327). He goes on to say that "[t]hese histories of alternate cosmopolitanisms and diasporic networks are redeemable … as crucial political visions: worlds 'after' Jews and Arabs, 'after' the West and the 'Rest', and 'after' natives and immigrants" (Clifford 1994: 327). Referring to histories of alternate cosmopolitans and diasporic networks, Clifford argues that such visions and counterhistories support strategies of non-totalising globalisation from below (1994: 327). Such a concept affords the agency of diasporic networks in globalising processes and acknowledge the spread of culture through highly-dispersed and diasporically connected groups. I suggest, therefore, that Sri Lankan and Indian diasporic musicians contribute to such globalising processes through transnational musical learning and performance.

With this in mind, I subscribe to Mark Slobin's (1992) liberal optimistic stance of music and globalisation. Highlighting the agency of the individual in globalising processes, Slobin argues that globalisation does not have an overarching system or hidden agency controlling flows of culture (1992: 5). I suggest that music practices in particular contribute to these processes from below. Rather than fitting into spaces created by other factors, Martin Stokes argues that music performs an active role in forging global spaces that may not otherwise have 'happened' (2004: 68). In this case, music has a unique way of connecting the highly-dispersed Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, mediating in its own space between diasporic localities, the homelands and beyond.

For music impacted and enabled by globalisation, Stokes (2004) claims that it is important to specify between aesthetic strategies; those of 'world music' production and the strategies of everyday life; i.e. those living in diasporas in which cultural fragmentation and

hybridity is not an aesthetic choice. Stokes stresses that the artistic production of migrant and diasporic communities must be considered as everyday life, not that of privileged spaces and art producers (2004: 62). As a result of the increased long-distance interconnectedness of globalisation, diasporic musicians in London have a choice to subscribe to the Carnatic music aesthetic of South India, its diasporas and, increasingly, affinity interest groups. Such a choice, however, is often informed by the demand for Carnatic music tuition in London in addition to the development of musical aesthetics within the genre itself. Involvement in the 'world music' industry and cross-cultural creative collaborations, however, remains to be rare. Although cross-cultural musical projects are coveted by some professional musicians, such projects do not provide the stable income earned by teaching and performing within the local diasporic music scene. In this way, aesthetic strategies remain within a position of privilege.

Through establishing these key concepts, I have provided a theoretical basis for my ethnographic fieldwork. This thesis focuses on the transnational networks within musical learning and performance, in order to understand the lives, experiences and realities of musicians who continue their art in the diaspora. I consider the lives of diasporic musicians and from this position I explore numerous musical practices. These include the manifestation of transnational musical networks, performing to contribute to the diasporic community-level cultural maintenance, and traveling to India to further their art. The concepts of diaspora, transnationalism, transnational networks and globalisation are integral to the understanding of music and transnationalism in London's Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora.

Chapter Two

The Emergence of Tamil Diasporic Music Learning and Performance in London

> Fieldnotes, 23rd September 2012: The stage in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan was brimming with vocalists, percussionists, several *veenas* – South Indian long-necked lutes - and a senior student tapping the *talam* beat cycle to the right of the stage, close to the shrine for Ganesh laid out for the occasion. It was a blustering, raining, and cold September evening, yet all the musicians, and most of the audience, were wearing brightly coloured silk *saris* and *kurtas*. The local Tamil television channel had set up its cameras, and slowly the hall filled. I was one of two non-South Asians audience members present and the concert was presented in English. The performers were all Carnatic music students in the U.K, under the tutelage of the Bhavan's Carnatic vocal and veena teacher, Sivashakti Sivanesan, and other first generation Sri Lankan and Indian music teachers. The performed repertoire ranged from pieces by the eighteenth century Indian 'musical trinity' composers, with pieces written by the well-known contemporary Indian musician, T.V.Gopalakrishnan and the songs of the late Sri Lankan composer, Yalpanam, or Jaffna, N Veeramani Iyer. Songs in the Tamil language dominated the evening's repertoire. The concert had been organised to raise money for a charity based in Northeastern Sri Lanka, for 'back home', as many of the participants referred to that region of the island. A chief guest addressed the audience and reminisced about London in the 1980s, showing how far diasporic musical learning and performance had come from that point of initial resettlement. She reflected how cultural practice in the Tamil demographic was extremely difficult – she had to travel long distances to have music classes due to the very disparate nature of the population and the lack of teachers at that time. As a result, she stopped learning music.

This performance in September 2012 highlighted the contrast with Tamil music-making in London in the 1980s about which the chief guest spoke. Mass forced migration to the UK began as a result of the civil war in Sri Lanka and was at its height in the 1980s. From a newly resettled and 'scattered' Sri Lankan Tamil demographic struggling to facilitate the musical practices learned in the 'homeland', the concert showed the successful gathering of the diaspora through musical performance in 2012. It was one of many similar events I attended during my fieldwork in London. Diasporic musical performances like this one bring together actors across London's anonymous environment. They create a space for the 'scattered' elements of the adapted 'homeland' culture to converge with displays of iconic symbols of Tamil diasporic culture.

In this chapter, I examine the history and context of the 'scattering' and 'becoming one' of the diasporic musical community. I first consider how Carnatic music featured in pre-migratory Sri Lankan life in order to understand the historical context that informs music's function in the London locality. I trace the trajectory of Tamil diasporic music-making in the UK in order to understand how a 'Tamil' cultural identity has been constructed in the diaspora. As the Tamil diaspora is characterised by its high-dispersal - its 'scattering' - I suggest that the diasporic music scene is rooted in the construction of a collective cultural identity, relating to music's function in Sri Lanka and providing an iconic, transnational coherency between diasporic sites and the homeland. South Indian music is a fundamental cultural practice in London's diaspora, and the emergence of musical learning and performance has been the key means for the construction and maintenance of collective cultural identity. Through examining the key migratory processes that have led to the development of a musical community in London, I suggest that music has been vital to regather the displaced and is essential for this diasporic group to metaphorically 'become one again'. The subtitles of the following sections – 'the world has been one', 'the scattering' and 'the regathering' – refer to musical practices in the homeland, the mass migration faced by diasporic musicians, and the emergence of a musical scene upon resettlement in London.

'The World has Been One': Music, Tamil Nationalism and Politics in Sri Lanka

Music and Tamil nationalism have been highly entwined in South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan diaspora. Participation in certain kinds of music demarcates social, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Within Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan diaspora, South Indian music is a strong marker of collective Tamil identity and connectivity. This

section discusses the function of music in Sri Lanka and music's function in projecting a sense of Tamil 'oneness' before the scattering of forced migration.

In a number of conversations I had with first generation Sri Lankan musicians, they reflected on the music scene in North Sri Lanka. They painted a picture of musical abundance including descriptions of Carnatic music lessons in mainstream education, Indian teachers visiting their homes to give one-to-one music lessons, singing *thevaram* songs in temple festivals around the Jaffna peninsula, and performing for broadcasts on Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation radio. Music and/or dance was highlighted in such descriptions as an essential part of 'Tamil' life in Sri Lanka, as a means to display the participants' cultured, artistic, and spiritual personalities. Music was also used to portray a specific idea of 'Tamilness'.

'Tamil identity' and 'Tamilness' are terms with myriad meanings in South Asia and South Asian diasporas, and such meanings largely depend on individuals' social, national and religious background. From my ethnographic work in London, it became clear that diasporic 'Tamilness' has different meanings depending on social and political background and country of origin. During a visit to a Saturday Tamil school in London, I overheard an argument between two first-generation adults with opposing political views and ideas of 'Tamilness', which highlighted the heterogeneity of self-conceptions within the ethno-linguistic group. The argument was about the appropriateness of holding a vigil for the LTTE rebel leader Vellupillai Prabakaran and the soldiers who died fighting for the independent state of Tamil Eelam in Northeastern Sri Lanka. One stated to the other that "you are not Tamil if you don't support the fight for Tamil Eelam". The statement highlighted to me the polarity of political views within the Sri Lankan Tamil demographic and the different conceptions of what it is to be Sri Lankan 'Tamil' in particular. Both were, however, attending the Tamil school to

develop 'Tamilness' through language, music and dance.

The fight for 'Tamil Eelam' – the LTTE's coveted independent state – is considered an essential feature of 'Tamilness' for some in London. Despite the defeat of the LTTE in 2009, the control of Tamil Eelam remains an ambition for some individuals and groups in the Sri Lankan diaspora. The competing conceptions of 'Tamilness' are further complicated with the associations of the term in South India. 'Tamilness' in South India has connotations with the promotion of Dravidian languages and politics as part of the 'self-respect' movement which has strived to lift oppression from the lower castes since 1925 (see Hodges 2005). Sakaran Krishna warns against the reference to 'Tamil identity' as a homogenising label referring to a "primordial ethnic identity" (1999: 98) of Sri Lankan and South Indian Tamils. He argues that Tamil ethnic identity, as a unifying identity marker, may disregard indigenous characters or specificities of South Indian and Sri Lankan Tamils. Krishna discerns two types of divergent Tamil national narratives, the first relating to Dravidianism in Southern India – originally a linguistic category and Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu, and the second relating to Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka and the cultural and political autonomy sought by Sri Lankan Tamils (1999: 65). Despite the two regions being strongly linked through language, religion, ethnicity and culture, 'Tamilness' has a different focus in South India compared with Sri Lanka and it is important to acknowledge these divergent narratives. As a result of shared ethnicity, language and culture, these two distinct nationalisms could become essentialised, and may deny "Sri Lankan cultural originality and autonomy by seeing them as derivative appendages of a larger cultural and intellectual formation in Tamil Nadu" (Krishna 1999: 65).

In the diaspora 'Tamilness' has multiple political meanings and affiliations. The music scene in London was largely forged by resettled Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and therefore I focus on the historical trajectory and concepts of 'Tamilness' of the Sri Lankan Tamil

diaspora. Although Krishna cautions against the category of 'Tamilness' and negative essentialism, I argue that an iconic, essentialised and transnationally recognisable 'Tamil' diasporic cultural identity has been constructed with musical practice as a fundamental part. Based on homeland practices and associations, music has been vital in constructing a transnational diasporic identity and providing a space for dispersed Tamils to become one again through multilocal, but synchronised, musical and spiritual practice.

Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a distinct Tamil national identity developed in, what was then, Ceylon. The beginnings of Sri Lankan Tamil cultural distinction has its roots in a Hindu revival amongst Tamils in Ceylon in the 1850s and the establishment of the first Saivaite Hindu school, which defined difference between Tamil Hindus and the Sinhalese Buddhists (Reed 2011: 131). Religion, in addition to music and language, has been a strong marker of ethnicity in Sri Lanka and continues to be in the diaspora. According to Reed (2010) and Russell (1982), Sri Lankan Tamil and South Indian arts have been closely connected throughout the twentieth century and highlight the long history of transnationality between Tamil Nadu in southern India and Sri Lanka. Transnational musical networks were, therefore, in place well before mass migration and the formation of the transnational diaspora. The onset of Tamil ethnic demarcation was, in part, a response to the Tamil renaissance movement in South India between the 1880s and 1950s, which included the Tamil literary nationalist movement (late 1880s), Tamil music movement (1930s) and the formation, in 1949, of the Tamil nationalist political party, the 'Dravida Munnetra Kazagham', or Dravidian Progress Federation (hereafter DMK).

The Tamil literary nationalist movement reflected a defining stage in the construction of Tamil nationalism in Ceylon. A significant figure in the movement, Tamotheram Pillai,

was a Sri Lankan Tamil literature scholar educated in Jaffna and Chennai (Wilson 2011: 461). In his publication on Tamil literary nationalism, *Kalikotai* (1887), Pillai referred to the key features of the movement as '*thesabimanam'* (love of country), '*natabimanam*' (love of classical dance – inseparable from classical music), and '*bashabimanam*' (love of language) (Pillai cited in Wilson 2011: 461; see also Fernando 2013: 165). According to Wilson, the love of country, classical arts and language were later interpreted as:

> the basic ingredients of a nationalism which had its roots not only in South India but in ... Jaffna, the heartland of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. *Country, language and religion (inclusive of classical dance) became inextricably a part of the Sri Lankan Tamil worldview wherever the people went, whether to the Sinhalese south, the Malayan peninsula or other parts of the British empire* (2011: 461, my emphases).

These 'basic ingredients' of Tamil nationalism have been vital facets in the construction of Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic identity in London. The love of language and religion in particular has informed the inward and outward projections of cultural 'Tamilness' in London, forging connections between ancestral South India, the North Sri Lankan homeland and the diaspora.

The 1920s saw the beginnings of a shift towards cultural and political autonomy in the Sri Lankan Tamil population. Influenced by the cultural revivals in India, the increased interest in Tamil literature and the classical arts in Ceylon resulted in the establishment of several arts institutions in Jaffna. The Ramanathan Academy of Fine Arts was founded in the 1920s by the Tamil political leader, Ponnambalam Ramanathan (Reed 2010: 131), and has been a key institution. This institution, which has continued to exist to the present day, facilitates Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* dance tuition. The Ramanathan Academy remains a key institution which has strengthened the socio-musical networks between North Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu through its employment of Indian and India-trained teachers. Many of London's Sri Lankan musicians studied or taught at the institution before their migration.

In conjunction with the development of 'Tamil' classical arts, the political situation began to turn as Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic tensions rose and distinct cultural and national sentiments were developed. Before the 1920s, social and political divisions were determined on socio-economic backgrounds and caste, with Sinhalese and Tamil elite politicians dividing the country between the Sinhalese and Tamil majorities. It was common for divisions to occur among the Sinhalese themselves, and to affiliate with similar castes from other ethnicities, rather than ethnicity itself acting as the boundary (de Silva 1981: 369). In the 1920s, the Council of the Tamil People 'Thamilar Maha Jana Sabhai' and the Jaffna Youth Congress were established (Wilson 2011: 463-4); the latter was the first to explicitly articulate the desire for full self-government in the Tamil regions of Ceylon. After 1922, the Tamils regarded themselves as a minority community against the Sinhalese majority (de Silva 1981: 387) and thus divisions in terms of ethnicity became prevalent and ethnic tensions began to rise.

The connections between music and Tamil nationalism rose in South India with the 'Tamil Music Movement' in the 1930s, which advocated the inclusion of Tamil language songs in the repertoire of Carnatic concerts (Subramanian 2011; Terada 2008; Weidman 2006). In Sri Lanka the beginnings of a 'cultural movement' (Wilson 2011: 467) or 'cultural renaissance' (Reed 2011) within both Tamil and Sinhalese populations also became evident around that time. Sparked by the ethnic tensions, interest in traditional, or 'puranic Tamil' (Russell 1982: 120 cited in Reed 2011: 131),[1] forms of music and dance increased among the middle and upper-middle classes within Tamil society. The interest in the development of Tamil cultural practice and national identity predominantly arose from a minority's fear of

[1]"The one aspect of their culture to which the Ceylon Tamils seem particularly attached, and which played an important part in the renaissance of Tamil culture in Ceylon, was the puranic Tamil forms of music and dance" (Russell 1982: 120 cited in Reed 2011: 131). These constitute ancient *pannisai* temple music in addition to Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* based on descriptions in *purana* texts.

domination and assimilation by the Sinhalese majority (Reed 2011).[2]

During this 'cultural renaissance', Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* were signifiers of both social status and Tamil ethnic identity (Wilson 2011: 467). Music and dance were taught in Ceylon as a distinctly Tamil activity and it became standard practice for promising students to travel to Chennai to master their art under Indian teachers (Russell 1982: 122). This educational link has continued to the present day, thus maintaining important cultural networks with India. Many Sri Lankan Tamil musicians based in London trained under their *guru* in Sri Lanka, as well as attending the Ramanathan Academy, before furthering their training in Chennai. This was the normal trajectory for any Sri Lankan Carnatic musician up until, and even during, the civil war in 1983. The established educational link paved the way for strong musical connections between the present-day London diasporic locality and Chennai.

Reflecting the increasing interest in Carnatic music, the Jaffna Oriental Music Society - an organisation offering Carnatic musical training - was established in 1931. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Tamil politician, Nevins Selvadurai, highlighted the cultural links between North Sri Lanka and South India. Significantly, he referred to Carnatic music as Tamil 'national culture':

> In literature and music, the Tamil people of North Ceylon, who are culturally one with the people of South India, have a rich heritage. National culture should form the basis of instruction in our schools. Tamil boys and girls should be instructed in the Tamil language, literature and Indian music (Selvadurai cited in Reed 2011: 131-2).

These 'essences' of Tamil national culture have been significant in asserting a strong cultural identity, and through Tamil community schools – grassroots institutions promoting Tamil

[2]Although Reed's monograph is about Sinhalese nationalism, she remarks that her study has to include Tamil national sentiments, to the extent that the distinct nationalist sentiments are entwined. In order to examine this, however, she considers Tamil culture – mostly music and dance – as the Sinhalese interest in national culture was a reaction to the Tamil cultural revival (Reed 2010: 129). According to Reed, the roots of dance as a symbol of Sinhalese ethnicity can only understood when considering the politics between the Sinhalese and Tamils (2010: 128-9).

language and culture - this 'national culture' is at the core of what is taught as 'Tamil culture' in the diaspora. With the increase in institutional establishment and support in the 1930s, Sri Lankan Tamil society developed a strong interest in Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam,* strengthening the sense of autonomous cultural and national identity (Reed 2011: 132). The interest in South Indian music, dance and literature also represented the ancestral, cultural, linguistic and religious connectivity with Tamil Nadu over the island's Sinhalese majority.

The significance of cultural and national distinction from the Sinhalese gained traction among Sri Lankan Tamils after the island's independence from British administration in 1948. The rise in the significance of cultural identity and politics during the 1950s rose to the point that K. Kailaspathy, a Sri Lankan Tamil literature scholar based in Jaffna at the time, noted that “the cultural nationalism of the Tamils is today at the crossroads. It is no more a mere question of linguistic and cultural identities. It is the basic question of nationality” (K. Kailasapathy in Wilson 2011: 466). Although the increased popularity of the classical arts had strong ties with cultural nationalism and politics at the time, Kailaspathy notes that classical dance and music were “carefully cushioned against any political intrusion especially of any ideas tinged with social reform or change” (K.Kailaspathy cited in Wilson 2011: 468). Such a stance towards the classical arts and the exclusion of explicit politics has been echoed by the diasporic Sri Lankan musicians I have worked with in London.

With more shifts in Ceylonese Tamil politics, Wilson states that a Tamil 'culture of resistance' against the Sinhalese came about between 1965-1970 (2011: 468-469) in response to the Sinhalese construction of national and cultural identity (Reed 2010). Despite the turbulent political situation, musicians have described this period as the “golden years of Tamil music” on the island (Arunthathy, pers. comm., January 2013), with musical learning integrated into mainstream education, extra-curricular music schools, radio and *sabhas*

promoting Carnatic music on the Jaffna peninsula. Musicians from Chennai were brought to Jaffna to perform and teach, and these transnational links expanded with young musicians like Sivasakthi Sivanesan and Sivatharini Sahathevan travelling to Chennai for further musical education. Upon the completion of their music degrees, both Sivasakthi and Sivatharini travelled back to Sri Lanka to teach, perform and contribute to the increased musical activity on the island which, in 1972, was renamed Sri Lanka.

The 'culture of resistance' was heightened when the Jaffna Public Library was burned down by a Sinhalese mob in 1981 (see figure 2.1). This brutal and symbolic act was taken as a direct attack on the Tamil people and their culture,[3] as the library contained an impressive collection of rare Tamil manuscripts. In one of our conversations, Gohila reflected that she believed that the anti-Tamil Sinhalese were "trying to destroy our education, and slowly, calculatedly, trying to get rid of the Tamils, and their brains" (pers. comm., September 2013). Power and social mobility through knowledge and education was regarded as a risk by the Sinhalese majority and was made evident in the discriminatory education reforms of the 1970s (discussed later in the chapter). The 'golden years of Tamil music' were also severely impacted by the anti-Tamil pogrom and riots of 'Black July' in 1983. At the end of July that year, the ethnic tensions which had developed through cultural and national divisions since the beginning of the century escalated with the outbreak of civil war.

[3]This is particularly the case in Jaffna, which is named after the 'ancient' *Yaal* harp players considered synonymous with the Tamil people.



Figure 2.1: Jaffna Public Library in February 2013. The building was one of the first to be rebuilt in the region after its destruction in 1981. A sculpture of Swarasati – the Hindu Goddess of knowledge, music and creative arts – is placed at the library's entrance.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, Valentine Daniel describes Jaffna as "a relatively unmusical and unpoetic corner of the island", although he does not "deny the few extraordinarily talented artists and art-lovers their due" (1996: 145). According to first generation Sri Lankan musicians, the war, with its curfews and regular bomb blasts, affected the performance of Carnatic music, yet Carnatic and Tamil music was still learned as part of Tamil cultural education. Musicians also continued to learn and perform in the North of the island. For example, Yogeswaran travelled around the temples and temporary refugee camps singing Tamil devotional music before his migration to London in the mid 1980s (pers. comm., January 2013). More recent ethnographies have contradicted Daniel in his assertion that North Sri Lanka was "unmusical"(1996: 145), as have my own conversations with Sri

Lankan-resident musicians, suggesting the Northeast as not necessarily 'unmusical' in terms of performance, it had just been 'silenced' by the war (anon, pers. comm., January 2013, see also McGilvray 2008; Sykes 2011: 493). First generation Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in London reflect that music learning was impacted as they were forced to stop learning the classical arts in Sri Lanka due to the 'troubles'. Few have become motivated to learn music upon their resettlement in the UK, whilst large numbers encourage their children to learn music in the diasporic setting.

Despite the multitude of musical styles in Sri Lanka, such as *koothu* - folk theatre; *baila* – Sri Lankan popular music genre in Sinhala and Tamil; a regionalised style of *nagaswaram* (the auspicious double reeded wind instrument) performance in Hindu temples; and *Paraiyar* drumming, Carnatic music, with its strong connections with South India, as well as its associations of high art, high caste and social status, was selected over popular and folk styles to represent an overarching Tamil identity in Sri Lanka and the diaspora.

'The Scattering': Forced Migration and Resettlement in the United Kingdom

Each first generation Carnatic musician in London experienced migration in a different way, but the majority arrived in the UK as refugees from Sri Lanka. Due to extended political unrest, long civil war and ongoing human rights violations, Sri Lankan Tamil people have migrated to the UK throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Due to the time span of migration from the island to the UK, there are four main migratory phases which have impacted the development of music in London. The first three phases are distinguished by Valentine Daniel as 'Phase one: the elite', 'Phase two: the students' and 'Phase three: the refugees' (1996: 155). Whilst the three phases broadly summarise the migration patterns of

the displaced Sri Lankan demographic, I suggest there is a fourth phase of migration of significance to musical development in London. This fourth phase consists of India-trained musicians migrating to the UK in order to teach and perform music.

In the first of the four phases, the 'elite' migrated to the UK after independence in Sri Lanka. 'The elite' were from upper and upper-middle class backgrounds, migrating to the UK in order to study for professional and postgraduate degrees. Daniel suggests 'the elite' embraced the Westernised identities acquired through British colonial rule of Ceylon. According to Daniel, for many, permanent residency in Britain was not intended, as connections with Ceylon were strong (1996: 155-6), therefore any attempts to demarcate difference were unnecessary. During the 1950s, 'the elite' had little interest in Carnatic music and participation in Tamil nationalism in the UK, but affiliated with an upper class 'Ceylonese' identity and 'Westernised Ceylonese' music. *Baila,* the Sri Lankan popular genre, was more popular than noted classical singers from India, such as M.S. Subbulakshmi who is now celebrated amongst Tamil diasporic music circles. In the elite phase, Carnatic music was still associated with the derogatory name “thosai kade music [dosa shop music]” (1996: 157) as recordings were played in shops serving dosas, or South Indian pancakes made from rice and lentil flour. Daniel summarised that Tamil cultural heritage for the elite “tended to receive lip service rather than being 'transparently' incorporated into their background practices and habits” (1996: 157). Daniel's assertion was confirmed during my fieldwork in London, as I rarely met anyone from this generation at cultural events, Tamil schools or musical performances.

The second phase of migration became important to the development of a diasporic community and cultural infrastructure in London. 'The students' consisted of Tamil students migrating to the UK to undertake higher education studies during the 1960s and 1970s.

Contrasting with the first phase, the students represented a much wider group of Sri Lankan Tamils in terms of caste and class. Under British rule, higher education in Ceylon was taught in English therefore prospective students from urban areas and the Tamil North were favoured as these regions had access to English-taught secondary education and missionary schools. Due to concerns that Tamils were previously at an unfair advantage under the British, a quota of places and an exceptionally rigorous entry process for Tamils was introduced (see J. E. Jayasuriya 1981). With university places and opportunities within the civil services and armed forces being systematically closed to Tamils, Tamil students came to the UK (Daniel 1996: 160) and studied popular subjects such as medicine, engineering, law and accountancy which were no longer available to them in Sri Lanka. A large number of the students who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s were male as families were keen to send male relatives abroad; young male Tamils were treated as suspected LTTE cadres and often subjected to interrogation and torture by the Sri Lankan government. Many of these students, who were trained in Carnatic and Tamil music in Sri Lanka, had been exposed to the ethnic persecution and cultural of resistance on the island. I encountered a large number of community members and music participants from this second phase during my fieldwork. The long-established group contributed to the initial infrastructure of the scene, acting as concert organisers, members of temple boards, Tamil School administrators and musicians.

Music teacher, Gohila, was part of the third phase of migration, categorised by Daniel as the migration of 'the refugees'. Like 'the students', the discriminatory education reforms on the island had also severely impacted Gohila's career path. Having originally hoped to become a medical doctor, she decided to study music at Ramanathan Academy in order to become a music teacher. Having experienced internal displacement within Sri Lanka, trauma from frequent riots and institutional persecution, Gohila reasoned that her change in path was

destined. She told me “maybe God wanted me to learn music, that's how I took it” (pers. comm., September 2013). On the completion of her education at the academy, Gohila became a music teacher and taught the next generation of musicians despite the 'troubles'. The dangers of being a Tamil woman amidst ethnic civil war became too great, however, and she decided to join her sister who had already migrated to the UK. Gohila's decision to leave Sri Lanka was quick and she told me: “within two days - I will never forget it - it just happened, I just came to London with an empty suitcase. I only brought my music books and a couple of saris” (pers. comm., September 2013). Gohila referred to the importance of this continued idea of 'Tamilness' in London in the following terms:

> What we brought with us is what we learned, our education, our knowledge, because everything else was taken by the government and the Sri Lankan army. Our houses, land, money, everything is gone. The only thing we brought with us is what we learned. So we believe our wealth is our knowledge, our education (pers. comm., September 2013).

The 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom and riots of 'Black July' escalated into civil war in Sri Lanka and sparked the mass migration of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees to claim political asylum in the UK, Canada, Australia, India, Norway, Denmark and Malaysia. Many refugees travelled to the UK and, unlike the previous phases of migration, represented a wide group of Sri Lankan Tamils including, importantly, Carnatic musicians. Those who migrated in the early 1980s witnessed a lack of 'Tamil' cultural development in the UK. The rich cultural and spiritual life of the Jaffna peninsula had been dissipated with forced migration, though scattered individuals like Gohila and others brought music and musical knowledge to the London Tamil demographic. Like Gohila, Sivatharini arrived in London from Jaffna in 1982. Sivatharini, a Carnatic *veena* player, migrated to join her husband, a student in London from the previous phase of migration. Sivatharini graduated from her music degree in Chennai and developed her musical reputation through teaching and performing back in Sri

Lanka. Two years after she returned to the island she moved to the UK, where she is now a Carnatic music teacher in North West London. Sivatharini recalls that the Tamils who had settled in the UK were gradually assimilating into 'Western culture' (pers. comm., October 2012). As voluntary migrants, the students and professionals had come to the UK with the impression that it would be possible to return to Sri Lanka and "were mostly interested in their materialistic pursuits and acquiring wealth rather than developing the spiritual way of life, which they thought could be left until they returned to their Homeland" (Krishnamoorthy 1987). The opportunity to return became impossible due to the civil war and, with the arrival of thousands of refugees, the development of Tamil cultural practice in the UK became urgent. The increased interest in musical learning and performance in the UK reflects the influx of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka, and the realisation of the impossibilities of returning home for the students and upper classes, which in turn created the need for the development of a sense of cultural identity and demarcation of difference in the diaspora.

The Regathering: The Emergence of Musical Practices in London's Tamil Diaspora

When I interviewed Gohila in 2013, she was an established music teacher in South London, teaching private students and groups at Tamil schools, performing at ceremonies such as the annual Thyagaraja *aradhana* and guiding her students to perform *arangetrams.* From her arrival in the UK in 1985 to our interview in 2013, she had seen a process of 'scattering' and 'regathering'. In order to regather her cultural and spiritual life on her arrival in London, Gohila visited the Highgate Murugan temple every Sunday to sing and worship. As few musicians were in London, she became known for singing devotional *thevaram* songs for *pooja* rituals and spent hours sitting on the temple floor, singing these Tamil songs towards

the deities. Like other musicians, Gohila emphasised the importance of music in healing and overcoming the trauma of displacement. Referring to the Hindu belief of the inherent power of sound, or *nadam,* Gohila used her performance of Tamil devotional songs and chanting 'om' as a way to reach God and adjust to her new situation. Eventually, a priest at the temple suggested she give music lessons and provided Gohila with the facilities to teach. As more refugees arrived in London from Sri Lanka, Gohila met singers, *veena* players, violinists and mridangists “one by one” and they began to organise performances at the temple. Gohila said: “at that time, they [the musicians] were dying for a good music concert, or at least to hear some Carnatic singing ... so whatever we had [in terms of musicians and instruments], we managed – with a keyboard instead of a *shruti* box – and we would sing at the temple” (pers. comm., September 2013). As the circulation of material goods and musical instruments from India had not yet developed, individual musicians and small ensembles used a keyboard with the *shruti* pitch taped down in order to provide the drone for performances.

As emphasised in Gohila's narrative, the temple was essential for mapping her cultural and spiritual life as she adjusted to life in a foreign society. Hindu temples were the original hub for maintaining a sense of Tamil religious and cultural identity, and many later became venues for Tamil schools. Concepts of transnational Tamil solidarity have been prominent in the establishment of the Hindu temples in London in the 1960s and 1970s. 'The Hindu Association of Great Britain', for example, was set up to cater for the religious and cultural needs of all Tamil-speaking people from any part of the world, predominantly from Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and South Africa (Krishnamoorthy 1987). The religious institutions, therefore, recognised the transnationality of Hinduism and Tamil cultural identity. The facilitation of community cohesion by the few Hindu temples established in London at this time provided the backdrop for the beginnings of Tamil

diasporic cultural practice. With the arrival of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* became part of *pooja* rituals in London's temples (Krishnamoorthy 1987). Temples have provided the space for religious and cultural practice, ceremonies, musical performance and Tamil community cohesion in London.

With the increase in the Tamil-speaking demographic in London in the 1980s, Tamil community organisations and cultural practices began to emerge. Community-based organisations formed and most widely represented themselves as 'Tamil Schools', providing an extra-curricular education for Tamil cultural practices through music, language and dance. The main aim for these organisations has been to maintain a Tamil cultural identity for the second and subsequent generations in the diaspora and, consequently, Tamil schools have been key in the widespread practice of 'Tamil culture' in the UK. Importantly, the curriculum of music, language and dance reflect the ancient concept of *Muttamil* – the threefold Tamil language of literature/language, music and dance-drama as an integrated whole (Pesch 2009: 54).

Although musicians from South India very occasionally performed in the UK,[4] it was the influx of musicians and cultural activists from Sri Lanka in the 1980s, and the establishment of Tamil community centres, Tamil schools and arts organisations, that led to the generation of the South Indian music scene in London. The timeline below (figure 2.2) gives an indication of the rise in community cohesion and the development of Tamil cultural identity through teaching the Tamil language and classical arts.

[4] M. S. Subbulakshmi performed in the Edinburgh festival in 1963 and T.V.Gopalakrishnan's performed as part of Ravi Shankar's *Music festival from India* tour in 1974.

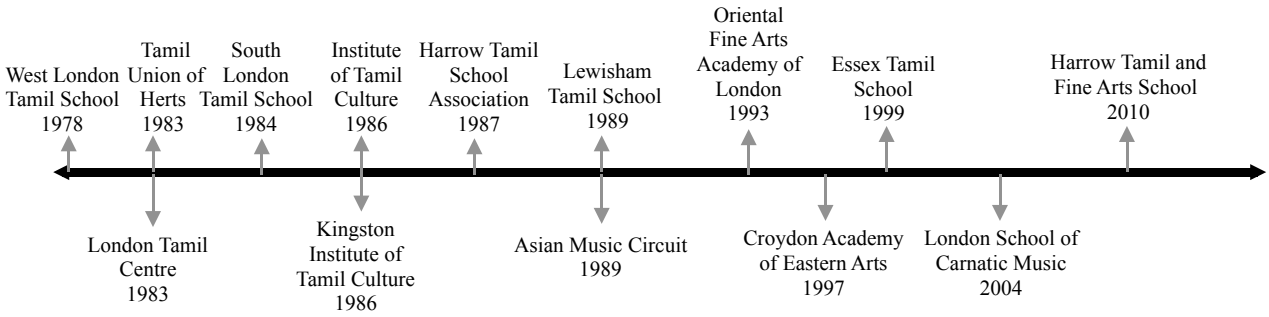


Figure 2.2: A timeline of selected institutions contributing to the development of the diasporic music scene in London. The greatest concentration of the establishment of these institutions is during the 1980s, when forced migration was at its height.

The first generation musicians arriving in London had trained in Carnatic music performance and music teaching in Jaffna and Chennai. Upon resettlement, musicians started working as music teachers and performers, and gradually set up their own arts organisations. Many Tamil arts organisations maintained links with musicians in India by inviting virtuosos to teach and perform in the UK. Although the late 1980s saw a significant development in musical practice, professional Carnatic musicians and music teachers did not start teaching and performing immediately upon their arrival in the early 1980s. Due to the non-existent musical scene, the Tamil population's lack of interest and facilities for Carnatic music, and the trauma of forced migration and resettlement, many musicians, such as Sivasakthi, Sivatharini and Gohila, had to develop a scene on their arrival.

Sivatharini arrived in the UK after many years of extensive musical training in Jaffna and Chennai. Like musicians showing promise in Sri Lanka, Sivatharini travelled to Chennai to study music at the Tamil Nadu Government music college, along with Sivasakthi Sivanesan and other UK-based musicians. Having performed a ceremonial debut performance – a *Samapanam*[5] – to the highly critical Chennai Carnatic crowd, Sivatharini

[5] A *samapanam* is similar to the *arangetram* debut performance. However, the emphasis in the *samapanam* is the devotional offering of the musical performance as a gift to God.

returned to Jaffna and built a reputation as a distinguished musician and teacher. As her musical accomplishment was growing in Sri Lanka, Sivatharini recalls her disappointment on leaving Jaffna and arriving in the UK: “for two years I was teaching in Sri Lanka ... so I just got to the top, just got famous ... so I didn't want to come here [to London] ... I wanted to teach here as soon as I came here but ...we didn't have many facilities, so I just worked at first in the tax office” (pers. comm., October 2012). Sivatharini put her musical career on hold and the following year she started teaching at the London Tamil Centre, Wembley. She established herself as a teacher for group *veena* lessons at the London Tamil Centre and was then able to teach individuals in a way more akin to the ritualised *guru-shishya* tradition common in Sri Lanka and India. *Guru-shishya* refers to the bond between the teacher and student, the teacher is responsible for the spiritual well-being and musical education of the student, and this is reciprocated with the student's commitment to the *guru*. Establishing musical learning through Tamil schools and private tuition was, and continues to be, essential to the development and sustainability of South Indian music in London and to the 'cultivation' and enculturation of Tamil diasporic identity.

The experience of hardship and disappointment in leaving an established musical career in Sri Lanka extends to a number of first generation musicians. Sivashakti Sivanesan, a Carnatic vocalist and *veena* artist, felt dejection from her difficulties in establishing herself as a Carnatic musician in 1980s' London. Originally from Jaffna, Sivashakti learned her art form from her *guru*, Veeramani Iyer, and, like many Tamil musicians from the Northeast of Sri Lanka, furthered her musical training in Chennai. Upon her return to Jaffna, Sivashakti taught at the Ramanathan Academy and performed for the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). As a result of the increasing political tensions, Sivashakti migrated to the UK in 1983. Upon her arrival to the UK, she struggled to find students and performance

opportunities. Despite securing the position of Carnatic music and *veena* teacher at the Indian arts institution, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan UK, in 1985, Sivashakti still struggled to attract long-term students. She remarked in one of our interviews, “I had been collecting students, 2 students, 3 students, then 1 student again ... it was a *real* fight to get people ... it was a really *hard, hard* time for me” (pers. comm., September 2012). Similarly, attracting Sri Lankan and South Indian audiences to her performances was difficult, due to the limited interest and dispersed population. She commented: “at first when I arrived, it was very hard to find people. When I was doing my programme, I had to ask people to buy a ticket, 'will you a buy ticket, will you come to my performance?' As a musician you feel *so* bad to ask anyone to come and attend your programme” (Sivasakthi, pers. comm., September 2012).

Sivasakthi chose to introduce the *arangetram* “to gather the scattered community” and to promote Carnatic musical learning and performance in the UK (pers. comm., September 2012). The *arangetram* - a ceremonial debut performance - is an opportunity for young musicians to display their musical knowledge, for the *guru* to give their blessings and as a ritual transformation from a music student to a musician in their own right. The ceremony originates from ancient Tamil Nadu and started to emerge in Sri Lanka before the escalation of ethnic tensions on the island. The ceremony, therefore, represented an emergent and familiar 'homeland' practice in resettlement. The first music *arangetram* ceremony in 1989 sparked a great deal of response, and musical learning and *arangetram* ceremonies became key points of gathering for Tamil refugees. With the demand for musicians, organisers and audience members in the *arangetram*, local networks were developed and extended through musical learning and performance. The *arangetram,* along with other student performances, has become one of the most frequent performances of Tamil diasporic music in the UK.

Musicians and community members consider that it was in the 1990s that they felt a music scene had established. Sivatharini was able to organise her first student's *arangetram* in the 1990s which, for her, signified that Carnatic music had become established in the UK: “From the 90s, it got really good, music came into good shape in London ... in the 1990s, 91, 92, everything started to build up, build up, and in 95, I started my *arangetrams”* (Sivatharini, pers. comm., October 2012).

During my fieldwork between 2009 - 2014, I encountered a network of professional and semi-professional Carnatic musicians clustered around Tamil Schools and community arts organisations, working as music teachers and performers in the UK and abroad. Sivatharini measures how much the local network has grown in the UK since the 1980s by demonstrating that she used to know all the musicians and music teachers in London. She says, “now, when I ask someone 'who is your guru?', they will tell me the guru's name and I don't know who they are, I really don't know” (pers. comm., October 2012). The development of the local scene and demand for music tuition resulted in, what I refer to as, the fourth phase of musicians migrating from India and Sri Lanka. The influx of musicians from India in the fourth phase of migration developed transnationally so that it would be in-sync with other localities and maintained the cultural connections with Chennai that had existed in Sri Lanka.

Martin Sökefeld (2006) explained that migration itself is not the catalyst in forming diasporic communities. It is 'mobilizing structures and practices' performed by a migrated group that forms a 'diaspora'. Despite the presence of a Tamil population in the UK since 1948, it was in the 1980s and 1990s that a cohesive social formation emerged. Mass migration as a result of the Sri Lankan civil war provided the catalyst for mobility, thereby creating the sense of an “imagined transnational community” (Sökefeld 2006: 280).

However, I suggest that participation in musical practices in London were an important part of the formation of the diaspora. The iconic identifiable features of the diaspora were heavily reliant on cultural practice and the distinct traditions which were associated with being 'Tamil' back in Sri Lanka, such as music, dance, religion and language. The construction of a 'Tamil' diasporic identity based on participation in Tamil Schools and cultural events has had a significant impact on musical practices in London's Tamil diaspora over the past thirty years. Forced migration, the impossibility of being able to return 'home', cultural connectivity and the demarcation of difference were key motivations for the development of 'Tamil' diasporic cultural identity.

Cultural Identity and Essentialism in the London's Tamil Diaspora

> Cultural identity ... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation (Hall 1990: 225).

Stuart Hall's point about cultural identity as a matter of 'becoming' resonates with Gohila's vision of 'becoming one again' after the scattering of mass migration. The quote emphases the inherently historical nature of identity. Hall argues that the diasporic experience is continually transformed and redefines 'identity' as living through difference (Hall 1990: 235). In the case of London's Tamil community, Gohila acknowledges the ongoing process of living in the diaspora and musicians' efforts to redefine a sense of collectivity and connectivity through musical learning and performance. Tamil diasporic identity and the cultural practices are embedded in a transnational historical context of migration and resettlement in the UK, along with ongoing negotiations of cultural encounters and difference in London.

Another type of cultural identity Hall refers to consists of the:

> … common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence (1990: 223).

He argues that such a conception of cultural identity has "played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world" (Hall 1990: 223). As I have explored in detail, such a cultural identity was constructed in Sri Lanka during the twentieth century in order to empower the Tamil minority in a Sinhalese majority. The 'essence' of this identity has informed diasporic cultural identity in London, which is projected inside and outside the diasporic network in order to maintain connectivity and assert difference. In this section, I will discuss how musical learning and performance have been positioned to construct an essentialised 'Tamil' diasporic identity in order to facilitate the regathering in a foreign, multicultural society. The previous section of the chapter provides the basis of the historical importance of music, diaspora and cultural identities, whereas here I attempt to understand its ongoing process of construction and performance.

'Tamil identity' is multifaceted and diverse. However, an overarching discourse that learning Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* dance, as well as practising Saiva Hinduism, perpetuates a specifically Tamil presence in London. Tamil identity has historically been built in conjunction with cultural revivals in South India and Sri Lanka and movements of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka and the diaspora. The historical contexts inform the construction of identity and musical practices in today's diaspora. Thomas Turino defines cultural nationalism as "the use of art and other cultural practices to develop or maintain national sentiment for political purposes" (2000: 14). Using Turino's definition, those who negotiate Tamil cultural identity are those who have greatest contact with the Other, such as

the cultural activists who arrived in London in the 1970s and set up Tamil Schools and temples. Throughout the twentieth century, Sri Lankan Tamils reinforced cultural links with South India to strengthen their sense of Self against the Sinhalese South and the colonial British, in addition to British multicultural society post-migration. These multiple encounters with the Other clarifies the significance of a distinct, clear and essentialised Tamil identity which is transnationally iconic. As Kailaspathy commented, the political dimension in regard to the classical arts in Sri Lanka's cultural renaissance and nationalism are not typically expressed explicitly (cited in Wilson 2011: 468), and this is prevalent in the music performed in London. Instead the diasporic *Parai* drummers symbolise the protest and struggle of the North Sri Lankan homeland and the explicit political sentiments of the LTTE are communicated through songs written in the Tamil film song aesthetic. Similarly Tamil Hip Hop in London and mainland Europe carries overt political messages. In this way, the diasporic musical learning of Carnatic and Tamil music acts as a symbol that transcends "all the other, more superficial differences" (Hall 1990: 223) of living in a heterogeneous, politically divided diaspora.[6]

Political sentiment is rarely manifested overtly in Carnatic and Tamil music, however, the participation in this distinctly Tamil diasporic construction of culture is itself a kind of political articulation of 'Tamilness'. There are number of reasons for the lack of explicit reference to political ideologies within this musical scene (although it is evident in the surrounding discourse). First, Carnatic music is considered a divine art, intertwined with Hindu religion, therefore explicit politics should not infringe or 'pollute' the devotional act of musical listening and performance (Daniel 1996; Neuman 1990; Subramanian 2011). Rather,

[6]I mean this from the perspective that Carnatic and Tamil music is performed from the view of the 'Self-respect' movement, therefore, people from all castes can participate in cultural and religious activities original limited by caste.

Carnatic and Tamil music is used to 'tune in' with the sociocosmic network and share space with God. A number of cultural events and performances of Carnatic and Tamil music I have attended in the UK and Sri Lanka have included the popular nationalist song 'Thamil Thai Vaalthu' (Invocation to Mother Tamil).[7] Although outside of the Carnatic tradition, the song proclaims the longevity of Tamil culture and the Tamil Nation and is taught and performed alongside Carnatic music. A second reason for the lack of explicit politics in Carnatic musical performance stems from the high sense of caution about expressing explicit support for Sri Lankan Tamil political movements. Such caution has been exercised widely as the UK declared the LTTE as a proscribed terrorist group in 2000. Finally, the early twentieth century nationalist motivations behind the adoption of Carnatic music into Sri Lankan Tamil society have dissipated. Although nationalism is not always explicitly articulated, there is frequently an element of cultural nationalism in diasporic engagement with 'Tamil culture'.

Despite the complexity of assessing the political motivations of some participants in musical learning and performance, the ideology of essentialised Tamilness to produce difference within multicultural society is clearly demonstrated in the discourse surrounding Tamil musical learning and performance. For instance, in one music *arangetram* ceremony I attended, a first generation Sri Lankan Tamil music *guru* gave his blessings and commended his student for "taking part in *our* [Tamil] cultural, social and religious practices in the West" (*arangetram* brochure, September 2010). The *guru* congratulated his student for growing up and being integrated in British society whilst "developing our own national identity". The development, or becoming, of a diasporic identity is a process facilitated, in part, by the ritualised actions of musical learning and performance. The ritualised musical learning and performance is particularly evident in the iconic *arangetram* ceremony. Whilst it is widely

[7] The version I heard is the anthem of Tamil Eelam. There is another version which is the anthem for the state of Tamil Nadu.

argued whether *Tamil Thai Nadu*, the Tamil motherland, is considered a nation in its own right, it is through events such as the diasporic *arangetram* that the 'scattered' diaspora can come together to experience a redefinition and reiteration of their constructed and performed identity. Such a collective identity is easily reconstructed through shared cultural codes and iconic actions, rituals and arts. As the *guru* highlighted, the student was integrated into everyday life as a British citizen, whereas the *arangetram* was an event holding the essence of Tamil space and identity.

From the early twentieth century Sri Lankan Tamil history through to the production of Tamil cultural identity in Britain, Carnatic music, *bharatanatyam*, religion (dominantly Hinduism) and the Tamil language have been the subjects of choice in order to promote a distinct, clear and socially mobile concept of 'Tamil' culture. Carnatic and Tamil music became the expression of a Tamil national identity in Sri Lanka from the 1920s to assert connections with Southern India, and the continued practice of this music in the diaspora displays a self-definition and self-representation of this demographic towards being distinctly Tamil, associating with the high art of Carnatic music, rather than the music of lower social castes of *Parai* drumming and *koothu* folk traditions. Thereby, a socially mobile identity had been presented to other South Asian communities, as well as to British mainstream society. By developing this clear, distinct Tamil-ness through community schools and performance, a strong identity is performed in the diaspora, against the Sinhalese government, Indian Brahmin custodians of Carnatic music and the total assimilation into 'Western culture'. The second generation have been enculturated in a diasporic Tamil identity stemming from the 'basic ingredients' of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism.

Inside/outside Identity and culture

In addition to ideologies of cultural nationalism, musical learning and performance within the Sri Lankan Tamil community is a means to demarcate difference in British multicultural society. As it is unlikely many will return to their Sri Lankan homeland, the maintenance of distinct arts and identities multiplies in its significance (see Zheng 1991). In an interview at her London home in 2012, Sivatharini said that the first generation in London participate in the Tamil Schools and other cultural practices in order to enculturate the second generation in Tamil culture and values (pers. comm., October 2012). Sivatharini referred to the 'dilution' of Tamil identity and culture amongst the second and subsequent generations as 'going out' of the culture of their parents. To actively avoid subsequent generations 'going out' of the culture, the Tamil schools provide an environment where "common historical experiences and shared cultural codes" (Hall 1990: 223) are constructed and enculturated through musical learning. She explains that the popularity of Tamil schools and musical learning in London is to ensure enculturation into Tamil culture and identity:

> the parents don't have a background in music, I mean the knowledge of music. They came here to study, to get a good job, and they have established themselves. So they just put their mind to that only. When their kids grow up they realise little by little 'oh yeah, they are going out of our culture, so we must do something about this.' They know to join the Tamil schools and [learn] music. Even if you ask my [students'] parents for an interview, they will definitely say 'our kids, no, we don't want them go out of our culture, that's why we are doing this'. You know, everyone will say that. That's the main reason. (Sivatharini, pers. comm., October 2012).

Many first and second generation music participants I have spoken with concur with Sivatharini and emphasise the importance of 'staying in Tamil culture'. 'Staying in Tamil culture' refers to the sense of shared 'Tamilness', 'roots' and 'heritage' through practicing 'Tamil' arts and culture and by socialising with others in London's Tamil demographic. London's Tamil schools, cultural events and religious practice have been vital in combining to construct an idealised conception of what it is to be 'Tamil' in diaspora. Constructed from

the negotiation of cultural nationalism in Sri Lanka, the scattering of forced migration and regathering of the diaspora, this conception has been projected and perpetuated through musical learning and performance in these specifically 'Tamil' environments by the first generation.

Kiruthika is a second generation violinist who regularly participates in musical performances within the Tamil musical community. Her parents are from Sri Lanka and are resettled in London. The family participate in the music scene by organising concerts and travelling to Chennai for the music season. Kiruthika, receives further training from the Chennai-based violinist H N Bhaskar, following her long-term music education in London. She reflected on how she started to learn Carnatic and Tamil music:

> I got into music in probably the same way as most … Sri Lankan born kids in the UK, you get introduced by your parents, they just put you into lessons. My parents really love Carnatic music and my dad really wanted me to play the violin, so my mum found my teacher, she thought she was a good teacher, she saw some of her students perform and thought 'yeah, let's go to her' and they just put me in lessons and it just grew from there. I think there came a point where I was just like 'I'm really into this, I want to take this further because so many people learn, I think pretty much *every* Sri Lankan child has learned an instrument or bharatanatyam at some point in their lives, and it's just how far do you take it. (Kiruthika, pers. comm., January 2013).

Although Kiruthika is in the minority in her ongoing musical training and performance, she emphasises how most Sri Lankan Tamil children in London learn music or dance. Such an incentive to enculturate the second generation through diasporic musical learning of Carnatic and Tamil music has combined to construct an iconic collective identity and generated a financial economy for musicians and music teachers in London. An essentialised Tamil identity and culture has been developed through musical learning and the Tamil schools, highlighting the importance of knowledge in the arts, language and religion. Classical music and/or dance is emphasised heavily in the Tamil diaspora in London as an iconic art form that, as Kiruthika asserts, 'every' second generation Sri Lankan child learns.

The discourse surrounding the function of musical learning amongst the first

generation repeatedly suggests that through learning Carnatic and Tamil music the second generation 'remain within' Tamil culture, rather than 'go out of it' and replace it with a 'diluted' or disconnected sense of self. This discourse reflects the Tamil concept of *akam* – 'inside' - and *puram* – 'outside' – within Tamil art and ritual, cosmology and classical Tamil Sangam literature[8] (Daniel 1989; Fuglerud 1999; Parthasarathy 2004). *Akam* is inside, the interior field, and strongly refers to home, kin, settlement and well-matchedness. In contrast, *puram*, the outside or exterior field, connotes the outside world, non-kin, uninhabited areas and ill-matchedness (Fuglerud 1999: 78). These two 'codes of conduct', also categorised as 'love' and 'war', are part of ritual practice. The ancient concept remains significant in representing the attitudes and discourse of post-colonial diasporic individuals and groups. Such a division between the constructed Tamil diasporic culture – the *akam* or inside - and mainstream British culture – the *puram* or outside – is reflected not only in the conceptualisation of identity but also in the performance contexts I discuss in chapter five.

In terms of music and diasporic identity, it is considered that musical practice is a ritualised means to remain 'inside' Tamil culture, and thereby becoming enculturated *within* the social codes and behaviours portraying Tamil diasporic identity. Taking part in too many *puram* outside activities and breaking the rules of ritualised practice disconnects individuals and groups and puts them at risk of aloneness, affliction and disconnection. The concept of *tosam* – disorders of the body's natural harmony - or *tanimai tosam* – aloneness disorder – suggest a fundamental fear of disconnection. *Tosam* is the result of breaking ritual rules or self-distancing from rituals which maintain social and divine order (Fuglerud 1999: 78). I argue that such primordial, yet fundamental concepts, remain significant in the construction and development of cultural identity and connectivity of the South Indian music scene in

[8] The classical Tamil Sangam literature refers to a large body of poems written between 300BCE and 300CE.

London.

In order to resist the cultural hegemony of the UK, to retain connectivity with the transnationally dispersed Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils, and to avoid cultural disconnectivity by breaking the rules of ritualised practice, an essentialised means of identification has been constructed to assert 'Tamilness' inside and outside the diasporic formation. Selvy Thiruchandran argues that the construction of Sri Lankan Tamil collective identity has always been constructed through "being excluded as the 'other', the inferior who is not entitled to full citizenship" in Sri Lanka and in the diaspora (2006: 11). However, I suggest that a position of power and agency is asserted through this essentialised identity, as an alternative transnational collective identity to that suggested by Thiruchandran. Reflecting the construction of Tamil cultural nationalism in Sri Lanka throughout the twentieth century, the transnationally recognisable Tamil identity in the UK is taught through language, music and dance. The 'basic ingredients' used to distinguish 'Tamil' collective identity is suggestive of positive self-essentialism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has notably referred to this type of essentialism as 'strategic essentialism'; "a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest" (1996: 214), turning identity into a social construction which is effective in particular social contexts. The use of cultural practice to portray Tamil identity as a means of transnational empowerment reflects 'strategic essentialism' and the use of essentialised cultural identities to overcome the struggles of the post-colonial world (Hall 1990: 223). The construction of such a self-essentialised collective cultural identity provides the second generation a clear means to 'stay within Tamil culture', and is also portrayed as a form of self-empowerment within the diasporic network and multicultural British society. With regards to diasporic identities, Aihwa Ong comments that such diasporic discourses do not reflect something that already exists, rather they fulfil a specific political purpose and

project an empowered transnational ethnic identity:

> I would consider discourses of diaspora not as descriptions of already formed social entities, but rather as specific political practices projected on a global scale. Ironically, then, diaspora politics describe not an already existing social phenomenon, but rather a social category called into being by newly empowered transnational subjects. The contemporary transnationalization of ethnic groups has engendered a yearning for a new kind of global ethnic identification. The proliferation of discourses of diaspora is part of a political project which aims to weave together diverse populations who can be ethnicized as a single worldwide entity. In other words, diaspora becomes the framing device for contemporary forms of mass customization of global ethnic identities (Ong 2003: 88).

The 'mass customization' of ethnic identities in the Tamil diaspora is based on a long negotiation of colonial and post-colonial experiences. Through the use of Carnatic and Tamil music in portraying Tamil cultural identity in the UK, this essentialised 'Tamilness' is iconic for diasporic members and 'outsiders' in multiple diasporic and homeland locations. As I will explore throughout the thesis, music learning and performance is a vital means to perpetuate this essentialised and empowered transnational identity.

Carnatic music as an essential symbol of Tamil diasporic identity is not unproblematic, particularly as this identity is positioned within a global city home to overlapping South Asian diasporas and in a transnational music scene. The economic migration of South Indians to London and the demand for 'authentic' musicians from Chennai to teach Carnatic music in London has resulted in a music scene with overlapping nationalities, ethno-linguistic groups and migratory backgrounds. Carnatic music and Tamil diasporic identity is a contested point with other participating non-Tamil South Asian diasporic musicians who similarly ascribe to Carnatic music as an iconic cultural practice in demonstrating their own cultural background. In conversations I have had with non-Tamil Carnatic musicians active in the music scene in London, they refer to a type of 'Tamilification' of Carnatic music in the diaspora.

The contestation of Carnatic music becoming a symbol of 'Tamil' identity usually

comes from non-Tamil musicians who are heavily invested in Carnatic music. They insist that Carnatic music is *South Indian*; it is not *Tamil* music. This 'Tamilification' of Carnatic music, according to some musicians, is an obvious political act, even though they acknowledge the large contribution Tamil songs and musicians have made to the genre. Sri Lankan Tamil cultural nationalism and Carnatic music has become a particularly contested topic. The marketing of performances to Tamil audiences only, the use of the Tamil language both in the performance and the programme, and frequent references to symbols of Hinduism and Hindu ritual, suggest that Carnatic music has been fully adopted into Hindu Tamil cultural practice as an expression of 'Tamilness'. Nonetheless, the genre also features heavily in the diasporic events of London's Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam speakers reflecting its scope across Southern India. This reiterates that musical performance and identification is diverse, but the music scene in London is predominantly enacted by displaced Sri Lankan Tamil communities.

Conclusion

Through the experience of being 'scattered' as the result of migration and 'regathered' through participation in ritualised musical and spiritual practices, a transnationally empowered Tamil cultural identity has been constructed. From the ongoing process of developing and 'becoming', this identity construction is closely tied to a dynamic diasporic music scene. Within the broader complexity and heterogeneity of the construction of Tamil place and identity, Carnatic music is used in London to facilitate the generation of an empowered transnational and iconic identity. Identity politics is highly contested in both the academy and the field, but the projection of an essentialised identity has been a vital constituent of the empowerment and connectivity of the Tamil musical diaspora. The history of cultural

nationalism and ethnic persecution of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, and their ongoing networks with South India, has informed the music scene in London and the resultant diasporic identity. Grounded in this historical context, the subsequent chapters of the thesis will explore the contemporary networks, sites, practices and interactions which have been enabled by the historical process of migration and resettlement.

Chapter Three

Multi-leveled Diasporic Networks in Musical Performance and Learning

Om .... Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara, Guru Sakshath Parambrahma tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha.

Om … Guru is Brahma, guru is Vishnu, guru is Lord Maheswara [Siva], the true guru is the highest, formless God, to whom I bow down.

Sarangan starts all his concerts with this Sanskrit *sloka* verse, performed in a metreless, melodic recitation of the prayer to 'tune in' at the beginning of a musical performance. The Sanskrit benediction honours God as the absolute teacher. Clasping his hands with his thumbs pointed into his chest in the *pranam* prayer pose, Sarangan sings the *sloka* in the *raga hamsadhwani*: both the recitation and the *raga* create the suitable musical atmosphere, or *melkaddu*, for a concert according to Indian musical discourse (see Sambamoorty 1983). Despite the complexities of South Indian musical performance, I can sing along to the *sloka* having heard it sung so many times by Sarangan in the pentatonic *raga.* The performance of this *sloka* demonstrates two primary levels of interaction and connectivity. First, the performance 'tunes in' to the cosmos and the spiritual network by addressing God in the Sanskrit language. Second, it reflects performance conventions in India, Sri Lanka and the multiple diasporic locations that South Indian music is performed.

A complex and multileveled assemblage of interactions and networks feature beyond the spiritual connectivity attained in the invocatory performance. First, the musicians and audience cooperate and perform their ritualised roles according to the conventions of South Indian musical performance. Second, a local network of diasporic musicians, students, musical community, Tamil schools and temples are invited to attend the performance by the vocalist. Finally, the performance tunes in and converges musical networks through the *ragas*

and repertoire being performed, the performers themselves and their embodied knowledge of the South Indian music system.

In this chapter, I consider the various networks of musical interaction in the diaspora at three levels. The first is the macro-level transnational networks of musical connections, social interactions, and the connections of objects across the larger scene. These macro-level networks take into account the physical, virtual and material connections across nation-states. The second is the mid-level networks in the London locale, in order to understand the interaction and connectivity of a localised diasporic music scene. With regards to local scenes I will engage with ideas raised in work by Manuel Tironi (2010) and Benjamin Brinner (2009) to consider how the diasporic scene is organised and enacted, and how it manifests itself in fragmented transnational and urban environments. Finally, I consider the micro-level interactions in a musical performance by analysing performer networks in a concert performance in London. These micro-level networks will be discussed in terms of musical role, hierarchy and music structure within musical performance. By considering diasporic musical interactions in this three-tiered strata of networks I show the permeable nature between each level and how these impact the overall, worldwide practice of Carnatic and Tamil music.

Towards a Theory of Transnational Diasporic Musical Interaction

Abstract conceptualisations of transnational networks can seem vague and far removed from the realities of diasporic musicians whose music mediates and interacts across nation-state borders as part of their everyday lifeworlds. As a result of the intense interactions across widely-dispersed geographical distance and nation-state borders, South Asian diasporas, I argue, contribute to processes of 'non-totalising globalization from below' (Clifford 1994,

Zheng 2010: 36-39). Su Zheng states that the task of ethnography in the cultural study of immigration should “explore the conjunctions of the global and the local in combination with the crossroads of the transnational routes and networks built between the globally dispersed diasporic communities” (2010: 39). A multileveled assessment of such routes and networks addresses these conjunctions. Zheng goes on to assert the role of diasporic actors contributing to global music accessibility; “all formations of local musical culture are becoming transnational” (2010: 39). I attempt to represent how transnational networks function and manifest themselves in 'local' and individual settings, whilst acknowledging that the musicians and the scene are highly transnational.

Music participants and the discourse surrounding music-making refer to the transnational South Indian music scene as 'the music world', or to distinguish from other genres 'our music world'. 'Our music world' signals to the imagined solidarity and togetherness of music participants and their contribution to music, rather than the common denominator being linguistically or ethnically based. It is an inclusive term, which is made up of a number of smaller parts. The 'music world' involves all those participating in and contributing to the performance and dissemination of music, much like Brinner's reading of Howard Becker's 'art world' (1982). Brinner (2009) refers to Becker's concept to describe the localised Israeli-Palestinian music scene. An 'art world' is the site of collective activity that works towards the creation of a work of art and gives them aesthetic value (Becker 2008: 39). Within the art world are actors who have specialist knowledge and competencies to produce art, including complimentary competencies, knowledge, and social networks. In the context of the diasporic music scene, these actors could range from performing musicians, the organisers generating an audience, and the graphic designers producing the marketing flyers. Brinner adapts Becker's term to a musical context, where the art world is the site of “the

production and consumption of music" (2009: 164) and further suggests that an art world's geographical extent is rarely congruent with political borders (2009: 206). Becker emphasises that art worlds are conventional and I argue that the transnational musical scene is enabled by a common musical system and set of known conventions. In the case of Tamil diasporic musical performance and learning, conventions are projected from India towards the diaspora. The direction of music and performers from India to London reflects ideas that India is the authority with regards to musical knowledge and performers. Although Sri Lanka is the place of origin for many in London, music is rarely directed from or towards the island and I have been frequently told that "India is the root of our culture". Therefore, overlapping diasporic groups subscribe and contribute to South Indian musical practices around the world in diasporic localities. The practices extend outside of these into local and transnational mainstream networks. However, this 'music world' differs somewhat from Becker's 'art world' because of its high level of transnationalism, diversity and inherent social hierarchies i.e. the caste system.

The scattering and reassembling of peoples into diasporas is the basis of the construction and ontology of the network on this scale. There are physical and virtual connections between people across nation-states which contribute towards a transnational social ontology. The multiple music scenes, overlapping diasporas and hubs of diasporic musical performance around the world suggest a 'togetherness' and synchrony in musical consumption and production. The heterogeneity of musical experiences, migratory backgrounds and diversity of the diasporas that constitute the transnational scene, I suggest, resembles that of an 'assemblage'. An 'assemblage' is the overall whole of the 'music world', that is, the 'becoming one' through multiple interactions and mediations taking place within and between overlapping South Asian diasporas, institutions and mainstream networks.

Manuel DeLanda refers to assemblages as

> being wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts, can be used to model any of these immediate entities: interpersonal networks and institutional organizations are assemblages of people; social justice movements are assemblages of several networked communities; central governments are assemblages of several organisations; cities are assemblages of people, networks, organisations, as well as a variety of infrastructural components, from buildings and streets to conduits for matter and energy flows; nation-states are assemblages of cities, the geographical regions organized by cities, and the provinces that several such regions form (2006: 5-6).

The scope of DeLanda's assemblage theory focuses on the continuum of scale, from personal networks to the culmination of a nation-state and therefore affords the importance of individuals in the 'whole'. 'Assemblage' connotes heterogeneity within a group, whilst 'territorialising' itself in order to create a stable identity. Territorialisation is a non-spatial process which increases the “internal homogeneity of an assemblage” (DeLanda 2006: 13) and this is further stabilised by 'coding' within the assemblage, i.e. hierarchical organisation, language, and in this case, music. It is the synthesis of the exercise of participants' capacities that create the assemblage, and therefore it cannot be reduced to its components alone (DeLanda 2006: 10-11). In this way, assemblages differ from totalities, in that they are not seamless wholes and actors can become part of other assemblages. DeLanda goes on to say that:

> The combination of recurrence of the same assembly process at any one spatial scale, and the recurrence of the same kind of assembly process (territorialization and coding) at successive scales, gives assemblage theory a unique way of approaching the problem of linking the micro- and macro-levels of social reality (2006: 17).

This approach is particularly helpful for a scene with large-scale transnational dispersal and diversity between and within the self-identified 'communities' that constitute the 'assemblage'. All the while, emphasis is placed on local interactions. With Delanda's points in mind, the Carnatic music 'assemblage' is made up of locales of musical participation, which contain individuals and institutions participating in musical learning and performance in the diaspora, cultural centres and homelands. The transnational musical assemblage takes into account

overlaps of contributing communities, localities around the world, as well as the cosmological power surrounding South Indian musical practice. Within this assemblage, a number of networks exist in order to maintain synchrony and a 'stable identity' of the assembled musical world.

"Scattering" and "becoming one"

My conception of the musical assemblage consisting of different scenes coming together to form a whole was borne out of the reflections told to me by two Sri Lankan diasporic musicians, Sivasakthi and Gohila. They both describe their narratives through a process of 'scattering' and 'becoming one again' despite different migratory experiences. In this section I discuss the experiences of the music teacher, Gohila, and the vocalist and teacher, Sivasakthi. The narratives of displaced Sri Lankan musicians are reflected in the multi-levelled networks that exist in musical learning and performance.

Today, South Asian diasporic arts are celebrated through cultural-diversity initiatives in multicultural cities like London, Melbourne and Toronto, however, the fragmentation of the community is discussed in a different tone in the conversations I have had with London's Sri Lankan Tamil musicians. The 1980s are often referred to as a time of trauma by first generation Sri Lankans who experienced ethnic persecution, civil war, forced migration and resettlement in London. Having arrived in the UK in 1983 after 'Black July'[1], Sivasakthi, the Carnatic vocal and *veena* teacher at the *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan* in London, recalled that there was very little Carnatic music performance or Sri Lankan Tamil community cohesion in the UK. Sivasakthi therefore performed a vital role in identifying the dispersed nature of the

1The month of 'Black July' saw anti-Tamil riots in which communal violence resulted in burning homes and shops around the country, and killing members of the Tamil minority as a reaction to an LTTE ambush on Sinhalese soldiers. It is considered that 'Black July' was the beginning of the Sri Lankan civil war and resulted in the first wave of mass migration of Tamil refugees.

displaced Sri Lankans and used musical performance to gather refugees from Sri Lanka. Discussing the dispersal from Sri Lanka, she said she was 'scattered' from her friends and family, who migrated to Canada, the UK and Australia. Sivasakthi has often referred to the 'scattered' nature of her family, and her 'community', across London and the world (pers. comm., September 2012). Having built a reputation for herself as a performing artist in dance and music in Sri Lanka, Sivasakthi studied music in Chennai at the Tamil Nadu Government College. During her time in Chennai, she studied under, and became acquainted with, many highly-respected Indian musicians. Returning to Jaffna to teach after graduation, she also became well-known in her home country through teaching at the Ramanathan Music Academy[2] and performing as a broadcasting artist for the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). Despite her resettlement in the UK, Sivasakthi has maintained these connections with India and Sri Lanka in order to propagate Carnatic music in the UK. Several times a year she invites India-based musicians to perform in London and organises workshops for her students with visiting artists. Musicians like Sivasakthi contribute to the transnational networks involved in the advocation of Carnatic music to diasporic and mainstream audiences. Diasporic hubs around the world have a number of such cultural activists who work towards the preservation of cultural traditions and identity amongst the local diasporic population. In some cases they also introduce music to mainstream multicultural audiences. Individuals, like Sivasakthi, play vital roles in connecting their own local networks to the bigger transnational scene.

Sivasakthi's use of the word 'scattered' is particularly interesting to me, as it suggests the network should not only represent the work involved to reconnect, but also the history which led to its dispersal and disconnection. Rather than a cosmopolitan aspiration to experience new cultures, most musicians did not want to leave Sri Lanka and their everyday

2See chapter two for information about the Ramanathan Music Academy.

lives. Forced migration and its 'transplanted music' (Reyes 1990) has resulted in musicians' interactions often being confined to teaching Tamil students, in Tamil, in parts of London with high demographics of Sri Lankan Tamils. Confirming this, Sarangan told me that life in the UK is just like that in Sri Lanka or India, in terms of working with Sri Lankan and South Indian communities, speaking Tamil, and teaching and performing South Indian classical music, with the main difference being the bad weather (pers. comm., March 2013). Religious practice, cultural symbols and Tamil values are upheld at the temple and in the home and in musical learning and performance.

The scattering and dispersal of people and cultural practices is also associated with the possibility of cultural and social disconnection. The importance of preventing social and cultural disconnection is pronounced in Tamil ideologies, particularly in the concept of *tosam* and *tanimai tosam,* or aloneness disorder. Valentine Daniel argues that "the person in South Asia, unlike the one idealized in the West, is loosely and openly constituted, a 'dividual' embedded in the flux of transactions and processes. To be bounded, to be static, and to be individuated is to be dead" (1989: 90). Therefore, to be disconnected from the transactions and processes that constituted peoples' lifeworlds in Sri Lanka on their arrival to London held risks such as 'aloneness disorder'. As Clothey states, "Tamil exile life exacerbates the possibility that the individual will be disconnected. Ritualizing helps to reinforce the sense of community and of being connected …" (2006: 213).

Sivasakthi's concern over the 'scattering', and potential disconnection of resettling Sri Lankan Tamils in London prompted her to introduce musical *arangetram* ceremony in London (see chapter six) that acted as a gathering and reaffirmation of cultural and ritual practices. Whereas Gohila initially thought "everything had finished" in terms of Tamil culture as a result of the civil war and forced migration, diasporic cultural activists worked towards

preventing cultural and religious disconnection, and therefore constructing cultural and ritual practices that prevent the possibility of collective *tosam* in the diaspora.

Like Sivasakthi, Gohila learned Carnatic and Tamil music in Jaffna. Since she resettled in London after her migration from the island in the 1980s, Gohila has been teaching Carnatic and Tamil vocal music in South London. In an interview with her in September 2013, she reflected on the dispersal caused by mass forced migration and the eventual regathering of the Tamil community. Gohila has made sense of the forced mass migration from Sri Lanka to locations around the world through the perspective that her culture is being spread around the world, and she, amongst other diasporic musicians and teachers, contribute to this propagation.

> It will be a golden age to spread our culture, our religion, our civilization, everything ... The world has been one, then it has been scattered, now it is becoming one again, it's becoming one world (Gohila, pers. comm., September 2013).

Gohila's comment can be read in two ways in reference to 'scattering' and 'becoming one'. First, she refers to Tamil culture and its historic legacy. After the scattering of the Tamil community through mass forced migration, communities resettled and Tamil culture started being rebuilt around the world. 'Becoming one again' refers to a process of dispersed parts coming together as a whole through musical practices, transnational flows, travel, and technology. Another level reflects Gohila's experience of resettling in multicultural London, in which she has gained a cosmopolitan worldview as a result of exposure to high levels of culture contact in the capital. 'Becoming one world' here refers to cultural globalisation and the destiny of diasporic cultures to become reassembled.

Both Sivasakthi's description of a 'scattered' community and Gohila's sense of 'becoming one' serve as powerful analogies for the dispersal of migration and the use of musical practices to bring people together. It is 'becoming one again' which is particularly important in this study and the process of 'becoming one' is explored through the

understanding of the transnational processes and interactions taking place.

Macro-level Transnational Networks

Exploring the tangible flows and networks of individuals, music and material objects give insight into how interactions between different localities and individuals take place and how a whole is manifested. In order to conceive macro-scale diasporic interactions, it is important to have a framework to imagine and make sense of the world, despite the danger of over-simplification and setting of 'ideal types' involved in such a theorisation of diasporas (Clifford 1994; Cohen 2008). Mapping the movements of Malagasy and Moroccan musicians between the 'South' and the 'North', Kiwan and Meinhof (2011) suggest a model that consists of four "multi-dimensional, multi-directional parameters", which are *human* hubs, *spatial* hubs, *institutional* hubs and *accidental* hubs (2011: 2-3). I take into account Kiwan and Meinhof's model, as they recognise the variability of hubs in a diasporic network and transnational music careers. Importantly, they represent the multiplicity of interaction from the grass-roots to nation-state level. Although the distinction of these hubs contributes to understandings of musicians' positions within the network, the model primarily addresses physical movements of individuals, thereby excluding flows of musical ideas and material and digital dimensions. Considering the importance of these physical and non-physical dimensions in transnational musical interactions and in the imaginations of diasporic communities, musical, material and digital flows are all vital in understanding diasporic musical networks and interculture. I suggest a number of networks which are utilised across the world and are locally manifested in London and Chennai. These networks exist as the hubs of musical activity and the links between them. For instance, where there is a Tamil or other South Asian community, there are religious sites and artistic institutions (Clothey 2006) of importance to these networks. The

sites and institutions in the London locality, therefore, benefit from high levels of transnational interaction with India, Sri Lanka and other Tamil diasporic hubs around the world. The ongoing participation in musical performance and learning generates transnational links which span Asia, Australia, Europe and North America.

The 'music world' assemblage is multi-levelled, cooperative and heterogeneous, and it is an overarching entity consisting of numerous networks of musical practice. To ethnographically ground the interactions within this larger assemblage, I will discuss networks directed primarily between Chennai and London although they stretch to many localities across the assemblage.

In order to sustain transnational musical connectivity, musicians rely on local and transnational networks. In order to ground the macro-processes of flows of people, ideas, music and objects in this assemblage, I explore how musical networks, performer networks, material networks, and digital networks are manifested in London. 'Musical networks' refer to the circulation of musical aesthetics, discourse, conventions and repertoire. 'Performer networks' are the flows of musicians and their embodied knowledge and competency between localities. 'Material networks' are transnational flows of material culture which aid the emplacement of diasporic performance. Finally, 'digital networks' represent the digital mediation of performances, recordings and musical knowledge. Interaction between individuals and institutions can be seen within each of these networks.[3]

Musical Networks

Diasporic musicians in London are active in maintaining musical connections between London and Chennai, particularly in terms of musical aesthetics, performance conventions

3The networks I refer to here are specific to the Carnatic music 'assemblage' and the interactions of individuals within the Sri Lankan Tamil music scene in London. They are therefore distinct from Appadurai's 'scapes' (1996) as they do not refer to wider global flows.

and repertoire. The homogenisation of the musical system and conventions, or 'codes' (DeLanda 2006), contributes to the 'territorialisation' and stability of the music world as an overarching assemblage. As a result, the music taught and performed in the diaspora is highly influenced by what is considered culturally authentic in India. Ideas are maintained in the diaspora through constant reference to the Chennai music scene. Due to the mobility of the music through transnational musicians and their embodied knowledge of music and performance formats, the conventional nature of South Indian music lends itself to being performed anywhere in the world by competent Carnatic musicians. The significant factor for successful transnational interactions is the adherence to well-known conventions negotiated from India. Howard Becker emphasises the importance of conventions in the production of an art work in a cooperative art world (Becker 2008: 29-33), and Brinner echoes the significance of set, and emergent, conventions in socio-musical networks and processes of music-making (Brinner 2009: 202). Diasporic performances resemble Indian-style performance, with conventional musical roles, interactions, improvisatory frameworks and repertoire, referred to as the concert path, or *kutcheri paddhati*. A concert performed according to the concert path to be transnationally recognised as a Carnatic performance. Performances rarely include innovative compositions, instead reflect the repertoire and performance conventions negotiated in Chennai. Some of these conventions will be discussed in greater detail in the micro-level interactions below in reference to a local performance by Sarangan in early 2014.

Sarangan is a key performer in the London scene and his performances reflect the connections he continues to have with India and other localities. In Sarangan's performances, he chooses repertoire from a commonly known canon. Selections from this repertoire are significant and reflect synchrony with the Indian scene. The inclusion of Telugu and Sanskrit

compositions of the 'musical trinity' – the highly revered eighteenth century Indian composers Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Thyagaraja and Syama Shastri are vital to maintain musical synchrony with scenes in India, Australia, the United States and elsewhere in the musical assemblage. The songs of the 'musical trinity' along with other revered Indian composers, appear in the first half of the concert. A selection of *kriti* songs composed by these composers are vital for a 'pure' classical performance. In accordance with conventions, the songs are extended through elaborate improvisatory treatment following the rules of the Carnatic music system. Regardless of the location of the performance, those within the musical assemblage would not recognise the concert as 'Carnatic' without satisfactory focus on these 'classical' songs elaborated through conventional improvisation techniques. Reiterating this point, another London-based musician, Kirupakaran, considers that it is vital for a performer's reputation to perform 'classical' songs of the trinity in order to be considered as a good singer and musician in any country (pers. comm., December 2012). The conventional *paddhati* path demonstrated in Sarangan's London concerts is reflected in the *arangetram* ceremonies of Sivasakthi's students and the concerts performed by visiting artists from India and other assemblage hubs.

In addition to the 'classical' songs and techniques, there is a common repertoire of 'light', semi-classical, film songs, and devotional songs. Popular Tamil songs, such as 'Chinnan Chiru Killiye', 'My Little Parrot [child]', written by Tamil poet Bharatiyar and 'Kurai Ondrum Illai', 'No Complaints I Have', by C. Rajagopalachari, are popular songs known throughout the assemblage. Sarangan values Tamil music - consisting of devotional *pannisai* temple songs and music by India and Sri Lanka's Tamil composers - and propagates it through his performances, teaching and commercial recordings. Musicians conclude concerts according to the conventional path with a *thillana* - a lively dance piece containing rhythmic

syllables - and a *mangalam,* performed in *raga madhyamavati* which is considered to resettle the various emotions evoked through the *ragas* performed in the concert (Pesch 2009: 272).

The performance of music in accordance with known conventions results in musical synchronicity and provides diasporic musicians access to perform in India and other parts of the world. In the assemblage, the London scene is known to have a preference for Tamil songs and it could be expected that the scene becomes independent through its own innovations and adaptations. The standard South Indian conventions are maintained in diasporic musical practice, however, revealing values and expectations beyond expressing a 'Tamil' identity. Too much deviation from the standard concert format and repertoire is not accepted. Similarly, explicit flavour from multicultural London is avoided in the music, rather it closely imitates the techniques and impressive improvisatory passages heard from Indian artists. The musical network is demonstrated by the rigidity of the material learned, the repertoire performed and the performance roles and conventions. In many ways, the musical network that enables performance without prior rehearsal relates to Byron Dueck's concept of 'musical imaginaries' (2013). Making reference to imaginaries - a "social formation that comes into being through the circulation of mass-mediated performances and publications" (Dueck 2013: 6), musical imaginaries result in musicians disciplining "their minds and bodies in ways that acknowledge and extend the embodied practices of other, imagined musicians … so, for instance, they [social and musical imaginaries] are established as musicians learn to replicate regular metrical patterns … with an eye to future public performances and collaborations with as-yet-unknown partners" (Dueck 2013: 58). The rigidity of the material learned and performed in the Tamil diaspora therefore reflects aspiration of 'future public performances' with other unknown musicians in the musical network.

The level of synchrony with the Indian model of performance is possible due to a

number of reasons. Music teachers often have a great deal of contact with Chennai at some point in their career, having studied there or visited during the music season. Regular visits to Chennai is a way in which musicians keep up-to-date with styles and repertoire in vogue. Visiting artists from India also provide this up-date through giving workshops to students and performing to diasporic audiences. Mridangist Kirupakaran comments on how connections between the localities build and reinforce the music scene in London: "there are so many artists coming from Chennai and they are performing here [in London]. The local students and musicians have the chance to sit and listen to the music, and are able to upgrade their music knowledge" (pers. comm., December 2012). These musical networks are enabled by the mobility of the music and musicians, particularly in the form of performer networks.

Performer Networks

Transnational human mobility has been key in shaping the Carnatic and Tamil musical world and the interactions that take place. The result of a long and diverse history of migration from South Asia has resulted in dispersal and travel between key diasporic localities. Diasporic musicians from North America, Europe, Australia and several Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, regularly travel to India – Tamil Nadu and Chennai in particular – to attend concerts, perform, learn and visit sites of religious importance (see figure 3.1).[4]

4 The religious sites commonly include Chindambaram and Madurai in Tamil Nadu, and Tirupati, Andra Pradesh.

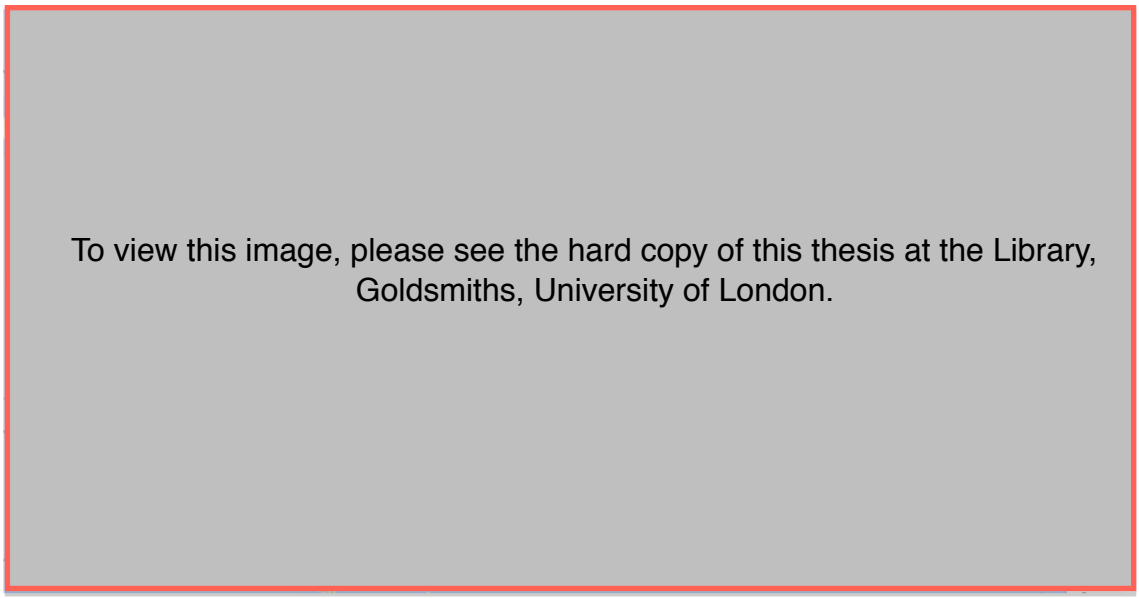


Figure 3.1: Transnational interaction between India and diasporic localities. The red arrows symbolise the movement of musicians from the diaspora to India, whilst the black arrows show the regular routes of India-based musicians to locales in the diaspora.

Many of London's musicians are transnationally mobile in order to participate in the music festival in Chennai and to perform in areas with large Sri Lankan and South Indian demographics. The annual December 'music season' in Chennai is the most evident manifestation of performer networks converging in one city for music. As long-term students of India-based teachers, Sivasakthi, Sarangan and Kirupakaran regularly travel to Chennai. In 2013, Sivasakthi travelled with her students to attend a festival in her former college, the Tamil Nadu Government Music College. Sivasakthi introduced her students to performing in the cultural centre, and in doing so nurtured the performer networks between London and Chennai for second generation diasporic musicians. Her students performed short concerts, showcasing their knowledge of the genre and their technical ability harnessed in London. Close by in the T. N. Rajarathinam Hall,[5] other London-based musicians gathered with artists from India, Australia, Germany and Sri Lanka. *Mridangist* Kirupakaran performed with Bharat Sundar – a Chennai-based vocalist who regularly travels to different diasporic sites to

5The T. N. Rajaratinam Hall is the Tamil Nadu Government concert hall named after the legendary *nadaswaram* player.

perform concerts, *arangetrams* and workshops. Other local Indian artists accompanied the concert providing melodic and rhythmic support. The same musical conventions discussed above were evident in Kirupakaran's concert in Chennai, as they were in Sarangan's concert in London. Kirupakaran, along with Yogeswaran[6] and others, are dedicated to travelling to Chennai every December to perform in the festival and learn from their *gurus.*

The mobility of diasporic artists is reflected by India-based musicians, who regularly travel to diasporic locales to teach and perform to diasporic audiences. As well as maintaining their own profiles through regular visits to Chennai, Sivasakthi and Kirupakaran are key actors in inviting these Indian artists to the UK. Diasporic musicians thus maintain performer networks in both directions. In October 2012, Kirupakaran organised a concert in which his *guru* Karaikudi Mani performed with Chennai-based Abhishek Raghuram. The entire ensemble travelled from India to the UK to perform the concert in a Hertfordshire theatre to an audience of local diasporic students, parents and musicians. Though regular transnational performance may appear beyond nation-state borders, local musicians and organisations have a great deal of bureaucratic preparation to enable these transnational musical interactions. The organiser must have a license in order to sponsor an Indian or Sri Lankan artist for a work permit in the UK. This is a long and costly process, however, it is justified as the visiting artist provides an inspirational performance for local students and diasporic musicians are exposed to new musical 'ideas' from the subcontinent. Such musical 'ideas' can range from melodic and rhythmic patterns, motifs, and ways of performing a *ragam*, *talam* or song. Kirupakaran states that he wishes to learn new rhythmic combinations, variations and *korvais*, or rhythmic cadences, from such visiting artists, so he, and other diasporic musicians and students can gain exposure to new musical ideas. However, having been a part of London's music scene since the 1980s when he migrated from Sri Lanka, Kirupakaran is

6 Introduced in the introduction.

conscientious to sustain local musicians in addition to visiting artists from India. He remarks with regards to hiring India-based and local artists for *arangetram* performances:

> I strike a balance, I organise two *arangetrams* every year, one artist I choose locally, one artist I choose from abroad. When we use artists from abroad, from Chennai, then the [students] can learn and we can learn as well, we can update our knowledge. Chennai is [more] advanced than London, musically they are more advanced than us. When they come and perform we can also learn, we can learn new things from Chennai. That's one of the reasons why I call them to London. But I strike a balance, one artist locally, one from Chennai, this is how I work (Kirupakaran, pers. comm., December 2012).

As a result of the sustained link between performers, musical knowledge flows from India to the UK. Visiting musicians offer improvisatory ideas, rhythmic calculations, or *kanakku*, and repertoire in vogue in Chennai. This musical inspiration is considered highly valuable to London-based musicians, who gain less exposure to current Indian music trends than their visiting colleagues. Similar to Kirupakaran, Sivasakthi organises performances and workshops by Chennai-based visiting artists, and commented that she prioritises these events in order to inspire her students and younger generations. Recalling the first music concerts she attended in Chennai, Sivasakthi experienced such inspiration in the city in her formative years that it has motivated her throughout her career and she believes this type of exposure is necessary to sustain musical interest in the diaspora (pers.comm., September 2012).

As well as the interaction between the homeland, cultural 'centre' and diasporic locality, a large amount of interaction takes place between the diasporic localities themselves. This is particularly evident between the London scene and Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic hubs in Europe, Canada, Malaysia and Australia (see figure 3.2). For instance, Sarangan and Kirupakaran are regularly invited to perform for concerts and arangetrams in Norway, Germany and Canada. Their professional reputations are known in many diasporic locales, where they maintain familial and social diasporic connections. London acts as a hub for musical communities in Europe and Canada, in which London has the biggest performer hub

and maintains strong musical and performer networks with Chennai.[7]

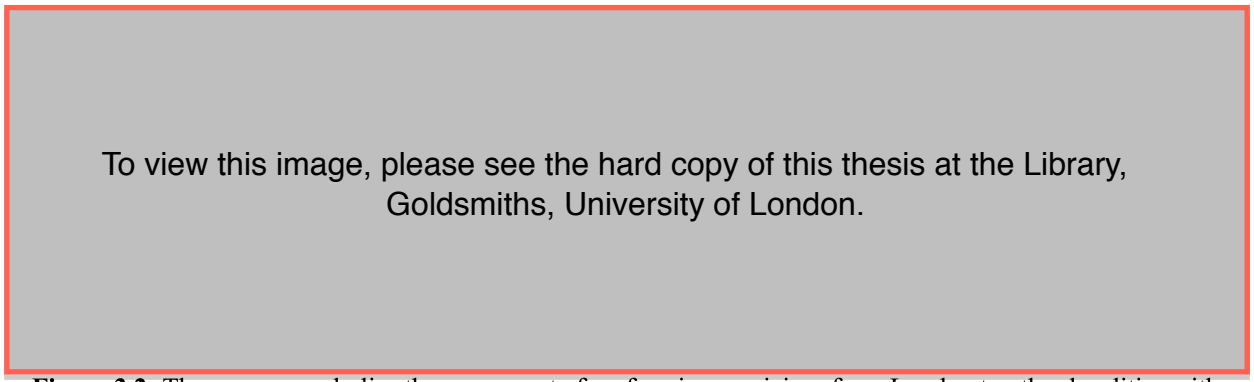


Figure 3.2: The arrows symbolise the movement of performing musicians from London to other localities with Sri Lankan Tamil communities.

Digital Networks

Contributing to the musical and performer networks, digital networks have been key in exposing London's artists to the musical conventions that are being continually negotiated in Chennai. Digital networks create the possibility of shared simultaneous experiences across long distances in the transnational scene. Skype, and other Internet video calling, has become a standardised means of transnational teaching in the music world, used by advanced diasporic students to develop their performance style from India-based artists. However, established artists like Sarangan, who has been a permanent part of the Indian scene prior to relocating to London, also uses Skype to maintain connections with students in Tamil Nadu. Having met one of Sarangan's long-term students in Chennai, she said that she continues her tuition with him at a long-distance in order to learn his compositions in particular. Specialist knowledge is embodied by transnationally mobile musicians and digital connections enable access to such specialist knowledge despite the geographical distance. Whilst it is generally considered that students should look to India for specialist musical knowledge, Sarangan is a

7Connections are maintained particularly with Canada as there is a significant Sri Lankan Tamil demographic resident in the country. The United States, on the other hand, is home to a large number of South Indians who maintain intense contact with South India.

good example of the diasporic musicians who move away from South Asia who embody such desirable knowledge.

In addition to online lessons, music students use the Internet to gain inspiration and musical ideas for their own musical performance. Videos of Carnatic music performance on YouTube are often used as a resource to hear musical performances by esteemed Chennai based artists, indicating that the Internet is used as a resource as well as a medium. Sivatharini often refers her *veena* students to YouTube when she is teaching them a new song. Having gone through the composition in the class using traditional demonstration and imitation methods, she then asks her students to go home and find a version of the song on YouTube. She instructs them to listen to the rendition, write down the lyrics and learn it by heart using the online video so that they can perform the song at their next lesson. This method has proved successful for Sivatharini and is reminiscent of the first generation's contact with Chennai performances via the radio when they were learning in Sri Lanka. The website is celebrated by musicians and students, and 'authentic' recitations of repertoire from India have become easily accessible to the musical community in London, as they were on the radio in North Sri Lanka. In this way, the Internet, and especially YouTube, acts as a source of musical inspiration and guidance from the cultural centre and is integrated into the diasporic learning process.

Digital networks are also evident in the live broadcasting of performances worldwide via the Internet. *Arangetram* ceremonies are popular in diasporic localities and in September 2013, Sarangan's senior student performed his vocal arangetram which was broadcast live to several diasporic localities. Leading up to the performance, adverts were placed on Vanakkamlondon.com, a website for London's Tamil diaspora, announcing that the ceremony was going to be broadcast live via the Internet. At the ceremony, cameras were dispersed

around the hall to capture the performance and the 'online' audience was greeted in the welcome speech along with those physically present. Live broadcasting permits the widely-dispersed family members and friends access to the event. In addition to Vanakkamlondon.com, a number of private access sites also broadcast performances and *arangetrams* online for an invited online audience. The live broadcast of important diasporic and homeland *poojas,* temple festivals and musical performances in Chennai via the Internet is also a growing phenomenon. The use of digital technology has enabled the music assemblage to develop across highly-dispersed diasporas and provides diasporas with shared multi-local musical experiences.

Material Networks

Material networks are the flow of things in the musical assemblage and, as in many other diasporas, material culture contributes towards creating strong 'homeland' and cultural 'centre' connections in the Sri Lankan diaspora (see Crang 2010). Whilst musical learning and performance takes place in London, it is learned and performed to a backdrop of iconic objects from South Asia that create recognisable conditions. The significant material culture in this scene includes musical instruments, books, recordings, clothes, food, and statues and images of gods. These objects contribute towards the construction of familiar settings and the emplacement of diasporic cultural practices within the larger socio-cosmic network. The objects that have travelled from the cultural centre and homeland symbolise tangible transnational connections to these localities.

The most significant event which involves a great deal of material culture is the *arangetram* ceremony. In order to create the appearance of a musical ritual originally held in South Indian temples, secular venues are decorated to look like temples with religious

paraphernalia and temple-like backdrops. The homeland connections are created through Sri Lankan and South Indian food, flowers, and clothes. The presence of 'authentic' material culture enables the continuity of the ceremony from the homelands to the diaspora and, as such objects function as common cultural symbols, the ceremony is therefore recognised transnationally as an *arangetram.* Although the musical performance is the focus of the ceremony, material culture plays a large role in creating the correct setting for the arangetram.

Objects, such as recordings, are also a means of retaining a musical profile and connection in the 'homelands'. In February 2013, in a CD shop in Wellawatte (or 'Little Jaffna') in Colombo, I asked for recordings by Sri Lankan Carnatic artists. I was handed a bundle by Manipallavam K. Sarangan, who I met later that month in London at an *arangetram*. The CDs were recorded and produced in Chennai, and were distributed by the artist in Chennai, Colombo and London. Through objects, Sarangan was able to have a material presence in Sri Lanka, in addition to his physical presence in London.

The accessibility of such materials has come about from increasing globalisation. Easy shipping, cheap flights and flows of Indian goods into the UK allow for material culture that tangibly connects places through its own mobility. Through these objects, the subcontinent is reconstructed and recognised transnationally due to the presence of iconic, or 'codified', objects and their common functions.

Through the convergence of these four multi-layered networks, the music scene in London becomes part of the larger assemblage that is the transnational music scene. The transnational interaction amongst music scenes in these countries is highly centred around, and directed towards, India, using codes which originate from South Asia and are emulated in the London diaspora and elsewhere. London's participation in this transnational interaction indicates that

the compliance, influence and networks within the larger musical assemblage is an act of synchrony. Despite the dispersal of mass migration, the scattered musical community can 'become one world' again with the homelands, cultural centre and diasporic localities through these transnational networks. Therefore, the heterogeneous diasporic parts come together as an assemblage of musical interaction and oneness.

From the macro-level networks that spread across dispersed nation-states, I now explore the local mid-level networks that constitute the music scene in London.

Mid-level Networks

Developed by a grass-roots diasporic music community, the music scene in London is scattered across the city and is enacted through the convergence of individuals, organisations and events. The mid-level networks are characterised by the mobility of actors and temporality of events, with musical performances and Tamil schools taking place in multiple locations around Greater London, in borrowed sites such as mainstream school buildings, suburban theatres, temples and multi-purpose community halls. There are a number of institutional hubs – the temple, Tamil schools and South Asian arts organisations - which provide spatial consistency. In this section, I will first outline some institutions that contribute to the scene, before discussing how the scene is manifested through mobile enactments around the city.

The Temple

Across London, both the musical community and Sri Lankan and South Indian devotees tend to cluster around Hindu temples. The organisation of the musical community and diasporic life around the temple is considered a Tamil tradition, a custom from life in North Sri Lanka

and Tamil Nadu. According to Fred Clothey "[the shrine in the diaspora] serves to center one's lifespace, as in Tamil Nadu, where the temple centers the village and makes it habitable" (2006: 21).[8] Although daily visits to the temple are prevented by commitments to modern urban life, temples still provide a central space for musical performance and are a permanent site of religious ritual and worship in London. There are a number of institutional hubs which provide some spatial consistency that also serve as permanent markers of diasporic culture and the musical assemblage.

One of my initial challenges in starting fieldwork in Tamil diasporic music-making was finding a site or permanent space of musical activity. Finding such a site proved difficult in a scattered scene around Greater London. The temple was how I 'gained entry' into the local network. After a visit to the Tamil Relief Centre in North London in November 2009, I was advised to visit Lewisham temple, a key site in diasporic spiritual and cultural life. Whenever I visit the temple, devotees of all ages spend time in the temple, chatting, learning and worshipping in the temple complex, much like the activity in the village temple in North Sri Lanka or the Kapaleeswarar temple in Chennai. Tamil schools and grass-roots arts organisations use Lewisham temple as their venue, temporarily filling temple complexes one day a week on a Saturday or Sunday between September and July. As an important cultural space, the temple complex is regularly used for large scale transnational concerts, music lessons, *arangetrams,* weddings and other cultural events. Hindu temples, such as Lewisham temple and others in Highgate, East Ham and Harrow, provide a significant space at the centre of everyday Tamil life and are, by far, the most important permanent sites for diasporic cultural and religious practices.

8 This centring of the village around the temple was affirmed from my own experience of staying in a small village three kilometres outside of Jaffna town. The temple was the central point of the village, and my hosts and I visited at least once a day to take flowers and fruit for *pooja* rituals.

Local Tamil Organisations

Tamil schools are local grass-roots institutional hubs located around the periphery of Greater London. These schools function as temporary enactments of Tamil space in the decentred local scene and are a means of centring Tamil diasporic and musical life. One of London's largest Tamil schools, the London Tamil Centre based in North Wembley, is well-established and has a permanent site devoted to music, dance and community events. Music and dance classes, rehearsals, meetings and community events are regularly held at the centre, housed in a residential building along a busy North London road. The space, referred to as “253” (the building's street number), provides a dedicated Tamil community space in London and contributes a permanent place for Tamil cultural practices in the capital. Unlike most Tamil schools which only have temporary sites, the London Tamil Centre is a rare permanent spatial marker in London's diasporic music scene.

South Asian Arts Organisations

South Asian arts institutions are institutional hubs in London and around the UK, and contribute to the maintenance of transnational performer networks within the greater South Asian diaspora. These organisations - such as Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Milapfest, Asian Music Circuit, Darbar and South Asian Arts UK (SAA-UK) – largely function outside of the Tamil diasporic network and engage few first generation Sri Lankan Tamil musicians. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, however, is a significant institutional hub of South Indian musical learning and performance in London. The institution is situated in a permanent site in West London and the institutional building is well-known by the majority of the diasporic network. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan itself is a transnational Indian arts institution, originally established on the subcontinent to promote Indian arts around the world. Sandhya Shukla

explains that the centre in London is “very much a diasporic organization, with links to Indian communities all around the world” (2003: 186).[9] The Bhavan receives a great deal more state support than community endeavours and grass-roots organisations, through significant Arts Council England public funding and corporate sponsorship.[10] The *Bhavan* serves to sustain Indian arts abroad and is frequented by families from all parts of South Asia unlike the Tamil schools which focus primarily on 'Tamil culture'. Sivasakthi teaches at the Bhavan throughout the week and weekend. Unlike the rest of London's musicians, for whom mobility is a characteristic and major part of everyday life, Sivasakthi teaches from this one, permanent site in London. Although the Bhavan is an exception in this scene, it is a widely recognised hub for local and transnational musicians and contributes to the local spatial coherency.

The Mobility of the Local Scene

Having worked with Carnatic musicians in London for a number of years, I have come to know that the time for lengthy phone calls, lessons, and interviews is on a weekday before 3pm during British school term-time (between September and July). During these hours, musicians and music teachers spend time at home, go shopping, or practise. Some musicians work their day job, although a large number of musicians are professional artists and teachers. It is during the first half of the weekday that I have spent time with the vocalist Sarangan, visiting his home in Wembley, learning and discussing music, religion, migration and related topics. Having migrated to Tamil Nadu from Northern Sri Lanka during the civil

9 Sandhya Shukla refers to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan as a “perfect manifestation of the efforts of middle-class Indians to promote a glorified vision of India in the West” (2003: 186). The popularity of Sri Lankan-run Tamil schools over the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan reflects, in part, complex relationships between the nation-states as a result of India's violent, and failed, peace-keeping attempt in the Sri Lankan war.

10 In addition to Arts Council England funding, Air India have been an ongoing corporate sponsor of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The airline's support has enabled performer networks, as sponsorship takes the form of free air tickets for artists to visit London.

war, Sarangan was immersed in the Indian scene and has experienced learning, living, studying and teaching music in Sri Lanka, South India and London. Aside from our discussions, my visits were punctuated with leisurely lunches, either Sri Lankan rice and curry made by his generous landlady or visiting a nearby franchise of Saravana Bhavan, the famous Chennai restaurant popular among Sri Lankan Tamils and South Indians in London. As mid-afternoon approached, Sarangan got ready to travel around all corners of North London to give lessons at his students' homes, travelling on the tube and buses around Rayner's Lane, Wembley and further out towards Hertfordshire. During the weekend, he teaches group vocal classes at the London Tamil Centre and Harrow Tamil School, and participates in concerts at various locations around the capital. This everyday pattern of mobility is characteristic of Carnatic musicians' lives around London. It is during the weekends particularly that the music scene enacts itself and manifests in physical locations around London. Musicians from all corners of Greater London, and beyond, cluster in the Tamil schools around the capital.[11]

The gathering from a scattered urban setting to perform and emplace the diaspora, and reestablish its networks and space, occurs at least weekly in London's Tamil schools. Tamil schools consist of clusters of students from the surrounding areas; Kingston Tamil school caters for those in South West London, Lewisham Tamil school attracts those from the South East, and the London Tamil Centre for those in Wembley and North London. Music teachers spend their weekends travelling between Tamil schools and the homes of their private students. For instance, *mridangam* teacher Kirupakaran teaches on Saturday mornings in Kingston, Wimbledon, Tolworth and Sutton, and at the London Tamil Centre in Wembley on Sundays. In addition to being involved in transnational performer networks, Kirupakaran and

11 It is important to make the distinction of around the city, rather than across, as the scene takes place in hubs around the periphery of the city and very rarely in central locations.

other musicians are highly mobile even in mid-level local networks.

On Saturdays and Sundays, mainstream school buildings in Greater London become filled with cultural symbols that contribute to the construction of an essentialised Tamil diasporic identity. Students and teachers wear imported Indian attire in order to create the atmosphere of learning in South Asia, although jeans often hide under *kurtas* as they do in middle-class Chennai.[12] Tamil schools represent both a diasporic gathering and an enactment of the music scene, although there is little distinction between the two as both are defined and dependent on each other. In the clinical corridors and classrooms, students arrive from their suburban homes and sit cross-legged on the harsh, grey-carpeted floors. Here they learn *veena*, violin, vocal or *mridangam* in Tamil and English from their first generation Indian and Sri Lankan teachers. Students greet their *gurus* with the highly respectful *pranam* gesture, before being guided by the *guru* to 'tune in' to the *shruti* pitch linking themselves with the sound and the socio-cosmic network. The performance of ritualised musical behaviours frame the lessons and set the tone required for the transfer of musical knowledge.

Endless passages of *svaras* (combinations of solfège notes)*, Geetham* (beginner's songs dedivated to Ganesh), *varnams* (compositions demonstrating characteristics of a *raga*), and *korvais* (rhythmic cadences) echo from the classrooms and fill the corridors of Greater London schools and temple complexes.[13] The parents of the music students gather together, drink tea and coffee, share snacks and catch up on the weeks' events. Such gatherings are popular as the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has not only experienced dispersal from Sri Lanka, a large number have also been scattered from their close village communities to the anonymous life of London. Such gatherings are important to the first, as well as the second,

12In terms of attire, there is a large gender imbalance. Girls and women largely wear 'traditional' South Asian attire, and are expected to do so, whilst boys and men wear trousers, jeans, and hoodies. This gendered division reflects Pratha Chatterjee's (1989) exertion that women are the purveyors of South Asian tradition.

13 Due to high demand, Tamil schools are often held in mainstream school buildings to accommodate the high numbers of enrolled students.

generation. Hours pass as students go from their music class, to learn the Tamil language and *bharatanatyam* dance.

From the scattered individual actors in London's diasporic community, the scene gathers through temporary enactments such as music lessons in Tamil schools and musical performances. The mobility of participants and events in a dispersed scene that lacks dedicated spaces for musical practices reflects the concept within actor network theory that a 'network world' is enacted by performing objects (Law 2000: 6). Therefore, objects do not move in space but *create* space and the space of the music scene in London is created by its participants. Tironi states "since objects are networked entities whose elements include spatiality, spaces create, too, what an object *is"* (2010: 37). According to this concept, the mobility of actors across space in London impacts and creates the scene itself. Thus, the mobility of actors and events around the city are enactments of the scene, and these enactments are highly conventional in order to sustain future enactments of this scene. Ritualised practices within music lessons and performances are therefore highly conventional, reflecting the musical system itself. The space is similarly created as musicians and students perform their roles in a ritualised, or 'codified' (DeLanda 2006), manner, thereby creating the identifiable network through adhering to expectations and conventions through their own collective presence and performance of ritualised roles and practices. The diasporic scene does not need to have a fixed space in the city as musicians, students, cultural activists, organisers and the temporary space are co-constitutive in enacting and emplacing the scene. Tamil diasporic space is therefore created when musicians, students and community members converge, perform, 'tune in' and connect to each other and their surroundings.

Once the last classes have finished at the Tamil Schools or performances come to an end, students, parents and teachers leave the space and the diasporic gathering dissolves.

From the creation and dissolution of gathering and dismantling the Tamil school and its constituent parts, musicians, students and their families move on to another temporary gathering, often an *arangetram,* student cultural event, or a concert by visiting Indian artists. During my fieldwork, Saturdays and Sundays were often spent in three different sites around the capital, converging and diverging with the same, or closely connected, people. For instance, on a Sunday in September 2013, I went from the *ther* temple festival in Lewisham, to a small concert by local musicians in Pinner Village Hall, to an *arangetram* with a number of visiting artists performing in a suburban theatre in Hayes. In the same way the Tamil schools create the Tamil diasporic space in London by the convergence of its actors, cultural practices, symbols and objects. Like the schools, musical performances take place in different venues around London and are enacted by changing combinations of musicians for each event. Suburban theatres, community spaces and temple halls around Greater London are employed temporarily as sites for musical performance, depending on availability and conditions. Conditions such as the affordability of a venue, the available funding, the organiser, the local community cluster,[14] and the possibility to perform *pooja* with incense, open flames and oil lamps (often limited by health and safety restrictions).

Mobility around the city, as well as around the multiple transnational localities, is characteristic of the Tamil diasporic music scene in London, reflected in the multiple sites of my local, and transnational, fieldwork. In order to describe a spatially un-fixed music scene, Tironi uses the term 'mobile' to represent the temporary sites in which the Santiago experiemental music scene is organised and enacted: “the scene is deployed by and actualized in a network of sites, places, and venues that are in constant movement” (2010: 40). The

14To clarify, the 'cluster' to which Tironi refers and this community cluster are different. Tironi's 'cluster' refers to cluster theory and a number of qualifying conditions. The community cluster I refer to is often centred around a temple and/or an area with a substantial Sri Lankan Tamil, South Indian and/or South Asian population, such as Lewisham, Tooting and Harrow.

'constant movement' of musicians between sites and between ensembles in London's Carnatic music scene is not extreme as in the Santiago scene Tironi discusses, but it does have relatively few, if any, places where it is permanently, physically actualised. Therefore, the concept of the 'mobile' is fitting, as the scene not only moves itself around the city, the musicians who represent the scene are also transnationally and locally mobile. The shared diasporic imagination, the concept of spiritual connectivity and the performance of ritual grounds a scene that is physically mobile. By ritualising the space through *pooja* and/or 'tuning in' to musical performance, the space and its objects become 'emplaced' through ritual (Clothey 2006) within and as the local scene. Like the concept of socio-cosmic networks in the transnational scene, the local scene is perpetuated by these motivating factors and further motivates musical continuation and adherence to conventions.

In summary, at the mid (local)-level, London's scene is decentred, and therefore the mid-level networks and the music scene depends on enactments through Tamil schools, music classes and musical performances. The macro- and mid-level networks are highly reliant on the embodied knowledge, the skill of individuals and their micro-level interactions. Mid-level network interactions reiterate the importance of individuals, the musical system and its conventions and iconic, ritualised practices. Micro-level networks reveal these interactions and enactments through musical performance which will be discussed in the next section.

Micro-level networks in musical performance

Cutting across all three of my analytical levels are the individuals that interact, organise, learn and perform. As a result, individuals act as hubs within the macro-, mid- and micro-levels, embodying musical knowledge and competencies. Each individual is simultaneously a local

and transnational actor as a result of the permeability of diasporic individuals and networks. Individuals are the smallest entity in social assemblages, therefore the individual is a hub of embodied knowledge, competency, and advocacy. Such hubs include musicians, music teachers, students, organisers, cultural activists, parents, religious figures and community members. These roles frequently overlap, as I will discuss in terms of multitasking musicians – diasporic musicians who fulfil a number of roles who would be overseen by multiple people in the Chennai or homeland scene.

Musicians are mobile both in the venues they perform and with the ensembles they perform. The constant mobility between performance groups and collaborations provides artists with the possibility of different performance experiences and styles without prior rehearsal, enabled by the 'coded' conventions of the musical assemblage. The mobility of the assemblage's networks and actors result in multiplied possibilities and "a highly complex and interlinked ecology of mergers, alliances and temporary collaborations" (Tironi 2010: 44). The music scene in London is performed by different combinations of musicians and participants, reflecting what Tironi says "counts as a 'project or as a 'band' is the performative effect of a momentary association that has 'gelled' into a unitary agent" (2010: 44). The established diasporic scene is not, however, dependent on 'momentary associations', rather mobile actors who re-encounter each other due to proximity in the network and/or as a result of their reputation. Concert organiser, Bremakumar,[15] refers to his system of selecting different artists to perform in each of his events as "mix and match" (pers. comm., November 2013). Bremakumar emphasises the importance of developing local talent in order to create a sustainable music scene in London and, therefore, chooses senior first generation and junior

15 Bremakumar is a first generation Sri Lankan who resettled in London in the 1980s. He has been a 'cultural activist' in the capital for the past fifteen years, and established his official organisation *Anantham Creations* in 2010. Although Bremakumar is not an artist himself, he took a great interest in *nadaswaram* and *tavil* music in North Sri Lanka, and studied music to GCSE-level on the island. Under his organisation, Bremakumar organises ensembles for weddings, budget *arangetrams*, temple programmes, concerts and dance productions.

second generation musicians to perform together. He employs a rotation of different artists, thereby giving opportunities to a number of those interested in the continuation of their art after their *arangetram*. As a result of this 'mix and match' system, local professional musicians are financially supported and second generation musicians are given the opportunity to perform and learn from the senior musicians with whom they perform (Bremakumar, pers.comm., November 2013). This type of intervention from an organiser role helps to develop future individual hubs and competencies in the local London network as well as local participation in transnational diasporic performance and the wider musical assemblage.

The scene is enacted through learning and performance, and it is through the performance of the actors that enact the conventions, competencies, repertoire, and skills that realise the music. Each musician embodies the knowledge and competency they have acquired through their own learning and performance experience, the musical style of their *guru* and an extensive bank of repertoire. They possess knowledge of specific ragas, compositions, and rhythmic patterns, in addition to their individual musical specialities (i.e. good drumming style for dance performances, good ability to perform *kalpana swaram* improvised exchanges, a beautiful voice). The styles, knowledge and competencies are again codes which territorialise the assemblage, whilst being vital elements which sustain the music scene in London.

Musical performance in London is a gathering of musicians and organisers. The conventions and ritualised practices at the micro-level of musical performance enable macro- and mid-level interactions within this assembled musical world. I will now explore musical performance and the interactions and networks that take place between performing musicians.

Interactions and micro-level networks in musical performance

> The first ten to fifteen minutes onstage are difficult, you must settle your mind. You must get a feeling for the stage, the venue and its vibrations, for the musicians and for the audience. After this time and once you have settled these things ... then it will be a calm, or even divine, experience (Sarangan, pers. comm., September 2014).

Sarangan's quote above describes his experience in musical performance and his embodied feeling of 'oneness' with the musicians, audience, surroundings, God and the cosmos. The micro-level networks allow for this sense of spiritual, cultural, social and musical oneness in diasporic performances. Sarangan also commented that issues with the musical, environmental, or organisational elements of the performance can impact the chance of attaining this state and therefore these factors need to come together successfully as 'one' (pers. comm., September 2014). To achieve a heightened sense of consciousness through successful performance, the group of musicians, audience and space must come together in the performance and create the correct musical atmosphere. The roles and conventions learned from Indian *gurus* are practised by musicians and contribute to the micro-level performance network.

The temporary collaboration between mobile diasporic musicians during a performance becomes a multifaceted micro-level network of socio-musical interaction, displaying hierarchies, competition, cooperation and conventions. Benjamin Brinner describes how "[m]usical ensembles are richly entwined, multifaceted networks in which interaction of various sorts flows among the members" (2009: 131). Conventions are a particularly important aspect of the Carnatic musical system and I argue that it is these conventions and performer roles that create the possibility of transnational musical performance in the form it currently takes. Although the Carnatic genre is highly conventional, the musicians have a significant level of agency in the musical choices to enhance the performance.

Performer roles and hierarchies are transnationally recognised in India and in local London concerts. Brinner refers to these understood roles and hierarchies as the 'interactive network', which, as an analytical concept, refers to the "roles assumed by performers and the relationships or links between them" (1995: 169). Performer roles within a Carnatic ensemble adhere to a clear hierarchy and function. The vocalist, *veena*, or flautist assumes the role of the 'main artist', and is therefore the highest in the musical hierarchy. The main artist has authority in musical decision-making and musical content. These understood roles are also referred to as *kutcheri dharma*, or "an informal code regulating the roles and duties of soloist and accompanists during a performance" (Pesch 2009: 432). This clear, conventional hierarchy is evident in most concert situations and is set out below from highest to the lowest.

1. The main artist is at the top of the performance hierarchy, in all matters such as consulting with the venue and organisers, deciding repertoire, musical ideas, musical direction and the length of the accompanists' improvisations.
2. The violinist – both the violinist and mridangist perform differing musical roles but their common task is to accompany the main artist and enhance what is being performed through their musical accompaniment and embellishments. The violinist offers melodic accompaniment, providing countermelodies and participating in melodic exchanges with the main artist.
2. The mridangist - the *mridangam* provides the rhythmic accompaniment, maintains the *talam* rhythmic cycle and provides rhythmic elaboration in relation to the music performed by the main artist and violinist. The mridangist enhances and emphasises the rhythmic elements of the main artist's extemporisations.
A performance often takes place with only a main artist, violinist and mridangist; the drone being provided by an electronic *shruti* box. Additional instruments are not required but create a dynamic performance. In a larger performance, the hierarchy continues as:
4. *Ghatam*, *Kanjira*, *Morsing* – secondary percussionists provide rhythmic contrast to the mridangist, and perform exchanges with the main artist and violinist during the improvised *kalpana swaram* passages.
5. *Tambura* - The *tambura* provides the constant drone of the *adhara sruti,* the pitch chosen by the main artist as the fundamental reference note or tonic. Despite the importance of this fundamental pitch to which the whole ensemble 'tune in', the *tambura* is can be easily replaced by a *shruti* drone box.

Although the hierarchy is set, it is sometimes adapted in transnational diasporic

performances. A visiting India-based artist assumes a higher stake in the hierarchy if performing with local diasporic artists, even in an accompanying role. This was made evident in a solo violin concert I attended in 2012 in London, where the visiting *mridangam* player was allotted nearly an hour for their solo, or *thaniavartanam*, whilst all other musicians (including the main artist) performed much shorter improvisations. Had this been an ensemble of local musicians, the main artist would have used signals – for instance, body language or singing/playing over the solo to bring it to an end - to communicate to the drummer to draw the solo to an end. In the violin concert, the hierarchy was challenged due to the prestige of an India-based artist performing in London.

To further demonstrate how hierarchies and musical conventions are vital to the local and transnational networks, I will discuss some key points from a concert held in March 2014 by Sarangan (vocalist), Kirupakaran (mridangist) and London-based Indian violinist Sivaganeshan.[16] The performance was held in London Tamil Centre's '253' building by the local diasporic artists, and was organised by Sarangan to commemorate his *gurus'* memory on the *thevasam,* the anniversary of his death. With the help of community members, students and their parents, the hall was set up for the intimate concert. The positioning of the *pooja* table in the hall was decided according to the correct *vastu*, or space design, to ensure good energy flows in the cosmos between human dwellings and nature.[17] Connection with the cosmic network through ritualised actions and preparations contribute towards the suitable environment for musical performance and emplacement of the event. Using the compass on his smartphone, the *vastu* was checked by a senior student and the altar for the *guru pooja* was placed towards to the northeast - the preferred directional alignment for a *pooja* space.

16 Sivaganeshan teaches in Tamil schools around London. He also regularly performs for *arangetrams* and concerts in London. In December, he participates in the Chennai music season, where he has many familial and musical connections.

17 The *vastu sastra,* or 'science of architecture', is a Sanskrit doctrine for construction and architecture, outlining the complimentary construction of buildings and rooms to ensure good energy flows in the cosmos between human dwellings and nature.

The space to the left of the *pooja* table was prepared for the performers. Once the space was set up, the musicians arrived and Sarangan placed photographs of his *guru* next to images of Gods, Sai Baba[18] and offerings of flowers, fruit, milk and the ritual oil lamp. The musicians sat down on the rugs laid out on the floor in front of their microphones. The audience sat directly opposite them in the intimate space, yet amplification was still used. The first musical interaction between the musicians was to tune to the fundamental pitch, or *adhara shruti,* decided by Sarangan as the main artist.

A small *pooja* was then performed first by Sarangan's senior student to invoke the metaphysical presence of God and 'tune in' to the socio-cosmic network for the performance. Sarangan started with his usual benediction: 'Om', then the Sanskrit 'Guru Brahma' *sloka* discussed at the beginning of this chapter, followed by another Sanskrit 'Gayanam Bhutha' invocatory verse to Ganesh (see video example 3.1). The pentatonic *hamsadhwani raga* used to recite the improvisatory melody was quickly recognised by the violinist, Sivaganeshan. Repertoire is not discussed prior to concerts, and the accompanying musicians had to quickly recognise the correct *ragam* and *talam* in order to perform effectively. In this case, the character of the *raga* and its appropriate placement at the opening of the performance whittled down the possibilities,[19] but such recognition also demonstrates Sivaganeshan's musical knowledge. With the authority to decide on the musical direction of the performance, Sarangan directed the melodic contour and Sivaganeshan used this statement to provide a counter melody on his violin. As the video example illustrates, the main artist's musical 'ideas' were used as a basis for the violinist's response (see video example 3.1 from 0'30").

There are three points of particular interest in this performance for assessing the

18 Sai Baba was a spiritual leader in India. The teachings of Sai Baba are very popular amongst the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in London.

19 *Raga hamsadhwani* is recognisable by its pentatonic nature and its inclusion/exclusion of various degrees of a scale. It is also a suitable *raga* to be performed at the beginning of a concert in order to establish a suitable musical atmosphere (Sambamoorty 1983: 105).

micro-level musical networks that also display embodied musical knowledge, roles and conventions. These are the *alapana* – the non-metrical improvised introduction to the *raga*; the song composition – where the musicians perform a set piece together; and the *kalpana swaram* – highly conventional, structural and dynamic exchanges of improvised passages by the musicians based on the *raga* and *talam* of the song. These three parts exemplify the oneness with God and the cosmos experienced by the main artist during the *alapana,* after which the musicians converge to present the song. The song is then extended through improvisation. Finally, the musicians converge again at the end of the piece on the *sa* fundamental note and the rhythmic *saman.*

The Alapana (see video example 3.2)

The *alapana* – a metreless exploration of a chosen raga – is performed to introduce a new *raga.* In his *guru pooja* performance, Sarangan started out by singing an ascending musical idea in *raga kamavardani*. *Raga kamavardani* is categorised in a group of *rakthi* - pleasing and emotive – *ragas* considered suitable for extended improvisation. Ludwig Pesch points out that in India "[a] congenial rendition of a *rakthi raga* by way of improvised exposition, especially *ālāpana* and *niraval*, is regarded as the hallmark of a musician" (2009: 196). Sarangan adheres to the Chennai-based musical expectations and conventions, despite the physical distance from the city and its musical scene. As a result, Sivaganeshan is able to recognise and accompany the *alapana* as Sarangan unfolds the notes and musical features of the *raga*. *Kamavardani* is identifiable by its symmetrical ascending *arohana* and descending *avarohana* scales, consisting of seven *swaras* (notes): *sa, shuddha ri, antara ga, prati ma, pa, shuddha dha and kakali ni* (C♯, D, F, G, G♯, A, C and C♯).

In this performance, Sarangan began by singing three phrases stating the characteristic

notes of the *raga,* before Sivaganeshan imitated Sarangan's cadential motif - A G♯ F C♯ A G♯ – dha pa ga sa dha pa (see figure 3.3 and video example 3.2, 0'00" – 0'04"). As Sarangan sang another two phrases based on the same notes, Sivaganeshan began to imitate the passages of the vocalist's *alapana* (video example 0'30"). As his violin imitated and supported Sarangan's musical idea, he was also given an opportunity to explore the intricacies of the *raga* without the rhythmic responsibilities and demands of musical interplay once in the *talam* rhythmic cycle. Sarangan continued to elaborate on this melodic idea, and the violinist imitated with a few seconds delay, giving room for the vocalist's ideas to resonate. Whilst the vocalist and violinist constructed the *alapana*, the mridangist, Kirupakaran, listened to the improvisations and, upon his realisation that this was an extended alapana, he checked the tuning of the drum. From 1'00" in the video example, Sarangan started to extend the range of his improvisation, unfolding the whole raga and Sivaganeshan gave him space, but still quoting from Sarangan's melodies and introducing a few new ideas. Motifs or passages of beauty were highlighted by co-musicians and audience members, and Sarangan exclaimed "sabbash!" to an ascending passage and *gamaka* played by Sivaganeshan. Similarly, if the performers display particular skill or *bhavam* (emotion) in their *alapana* rendition, the audience responds with applause or exclamations of "sabbash!" or "bale!".

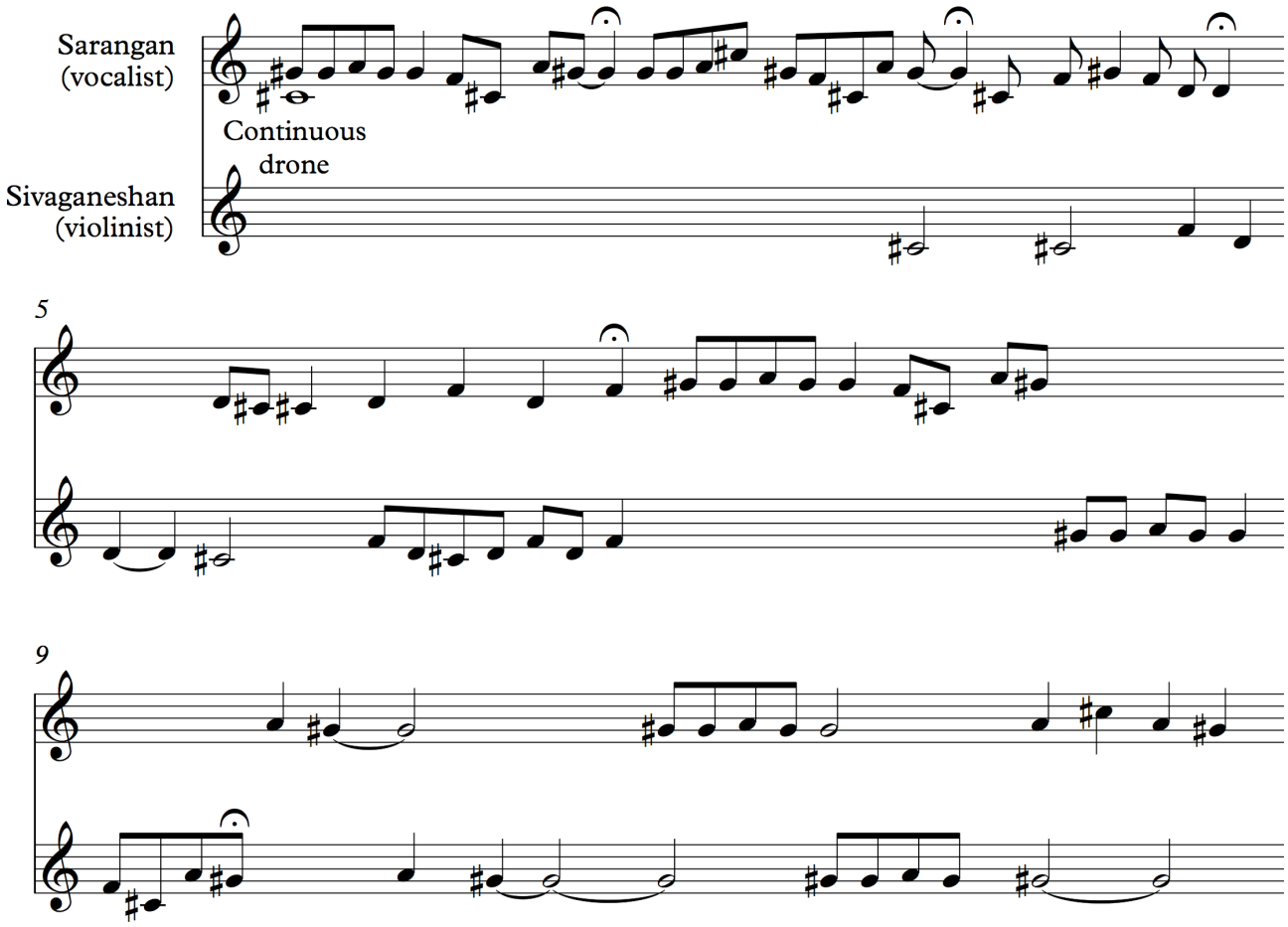


Figure 3.3: Example of the *alapana* interaction between the vocalist and violinist. See video example 3.2 from 0'00 – 0'46".

The *alapana* is one of Sarangan's favourite parts of a performance. It is during this improvised exploration of a *raga* that the artist feels he can achieve oneness with God, the cosmos and his surroundings. In conversations I have had with Sarangan about his performance, he discusses how performing is an opportunity to 'meet with God'. There is a point at which he becomes fully 'tuned in' with the performance space, the audience and the accompanying musicians and he experiences what he describes as *paravasa nilai* (trance/transcendental state, condition): a divine feeling in a space shared space with God (pers. comm., June 2013). He suggests this can occur 45 minutes to an hour into the concert,

and is a fleeting 15 seconds to one minute of calmness, oneness and connectivity. The *alapana* is a prime point in musical performance where this 'divine feeling' can be experienced. The music in the *alapana* is created in the moment and the pressure of the technically demanding *niraval,* improvised variations of the lyrics and melody, and extended *kalpana swaram* improvised interaction has not yet been encountered. Sarangan states that in order to achieve this state, there should be no rehearsal, the music and the moment should be unexpected and on the spot, therefore concerts should not be rehearsed in their entirety (pers. comm., March 2013). He says music that is highly rehearsed and precomposed, such as Indian film and European popular and classical music, does not have the same potential for attaining this state. The connectivity borne out of this spontaneous creativity is the main priority, rather than pre-planning and musical perfection (Sarangan, pers. comm., March 2013). The *alapana* has additional connectivity through musical convergence beyond the spiritual networks with God and the cosmos. It aligns with the conventions of the cultural centre as the artist unveils the nuances of the *raga* giving the accompanying musicians and audience the opportunity to identify the melodic form. It is a moment for the main artist to demonstrate musical creativity, range and style.

The Song (see video example 3.3)

The end of Sivaganeshan's *alapana* was highlighted by the winding down in musical statements, extended, unornamented notes and descending the *raga* towards the fundamental *sa,* or the tonic. At this point, Sarangan signalled to Kirupakaran to prepare for the start of the composition by affirmatively shaking his head and making eye contact. As the main artist, it is at Sarangan's discretion when the *alapana* should end and when the composition should begin. It took some time between the end of the *alapana* and the beginning of the

composition, and, as the *mridangam* is sensitive to temperature change and atmosphere, the drum had to be retuned. Once all the musicians were prepared to come together for the composition, Sarangan restated a short *alapana* to smoothly transition into the song (see video example 3.3, 0'03" - 0'36"). Sarangan then began to sing the main, precomposed *pallavi* melody of the pre-composed song 'Shambho Mahadeva', 'Benevolent Siva, Great Lord', by saint composer Thyagaraja (see video example 3.3 at 0'42"). Whilst singing, Sarangan used hand gestures – two taps on the palm followed by a tap of an upturned palm - to indicate the *talam* he was singing in and to measure his place in the rhythmic cycle. These hand gestures, or *kriya,* are vital in any performance of South Indian music to ensure the rhythmic synchrony of the ensemble. Having recognised the six beat *rupaka talam* tapped by Sarangan, Kirupakaran added his rhythmic accompaniment after the first statement of the *pallavi* melody*,* four cycles (*avarthanas*) of the six beat *talam* into the composition and adding his full accompaniment in the sixth cycle (from 0'53" in video 3.3). The violinist allowed space for the vocalist to sing the *pallavi* melody once and, having recognised the well-known song, added some subtle drone notes (see figure 3.4 and video example 3.3, 0'51"). The inclusion of a Thyagaraja composition in a *rakthi raga* in the first half of the concert is considered an appropriate choice according to the concert conventions and concert path which are transnationally followed. As Sarangan directed when the *alapana* would end and the composition begin, he also directed when to start the performance of the *anupallavi*, the second section of the song. The end of the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* is demonstrated by a *korvai* by the mridangist, a rhythmic cadence highlighting the end of a section or piece. After this, the musicians move onto the *charanam* (verse) of the composition (3'07" in video example 3.3) and then the improvisations.

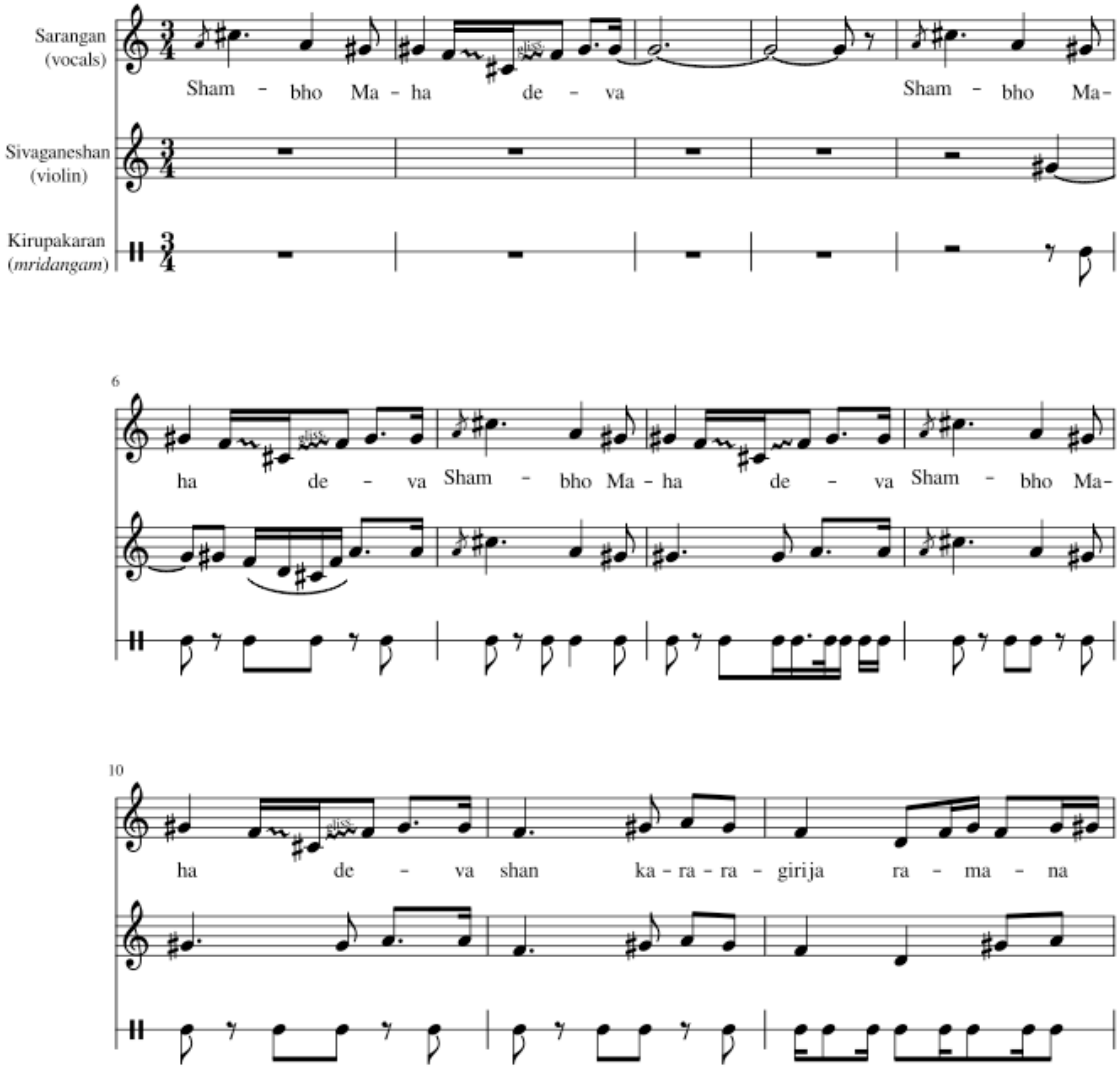


Figure 3.4: Example of the beginning of the song 'Shambho Mahadeva' showing the vocal and violin lines, and the predominant rhythm of the *mridangam*. See video example 3.3 from 0'42" – 1'06".

The Kalpana Swaram (see video example 3.4)

The *kalpana swaram* are interactive, technically demanding improvised passages between the musicians, using sargam notes to construct virtuosic extemporisations within the *raga* and *talam.* The *kalpana swaram* are used to compete within the musical ensemble and to challenge each other through the statement and restatement of complex melodic and rhythmic

passages. The main artist and violinist exchange passages, often with the violinist using the main artists' musical ideas as a point of departure for their own improvisations. The end of the passage is marked by returning to the *pallavi* melody which coincides with the first beat of the *talam* cycle.

Having built musical intensity with the improvisations based on the song melody (*niraval*), Sarangan clearly signalled the beginning of the *kalpana swaram* by exchanging the words of the song with *sargam* notes in addition to musical deviation from the precomposed melody to improvised sequences (see video example 3.4 at 0'18"). The statement of the *pallavi* lyrics 'Shambho Mahadeva' was followed by the main artist swapping the lyrics of the song for solfège *sargam* - 'sa ni dha pa ma Shambho Maha Deva' - over three *talam* cycles. The motif is used thereafter as a cadential code between the vocalist and violinist, signalling for the other musician to enter into the exchange (see figure 3.5). Like performances in India, the transition into the *kalpana swaram* is widely understood and practiced transnationally by Carnatic music artists. As such, the violinist imitates what the main artist has sung, playing back the passage according to its melodic shape, rhythm and *gamakas.* Sarangan exclaims during the violinist's passages with conventional Hindi compliments 'sabbash' and 'bale' used amongst musicians and music enthusiasts. Kirupakaran, the mridangist, similarly emphasises the rhythmic patterns sung by Sarangan, closely following and anticipating the singer's improvisations and emphasising the rhythm of the *pallavi* at the end of each passage. The hierarchy is evident in the performance of the *kalpana swaram*; Sarangan, as the main artist, directs when to move into each section of the piece, his improvisations are also longer than Sivaganeshan's and his musical ideas dominate. Elements of competition come into the *kalpana swaram*, with the vocalist performing complex passages for the violinist and mridangist to play back to recreate. Towards the end of the *kalpana swaram,* Sarangan sings

an extended passage, with repetition between 'ni' and 'sa' (from 3'13" in video example 3.4) and making use of longer notes (from 4'15" in video example 3.4), building intensity at the top end of the *raga* and signalling to Kirupakaran through eye contact to perform a rhythmic cadence to end the improvisation section, heading back into the song (4'51" in video example 3.4). The improvisation is greeted with an applause by the audience, and again just after the last *saman*. Eye contact is used between Sarangan and Kirupakaran to bring the composition to a close through another *korvai.* The vocalist and violinist return to the *shruti* pitch to end the piece and once again converge with the fundamental pitch, or *adhara shruti*.

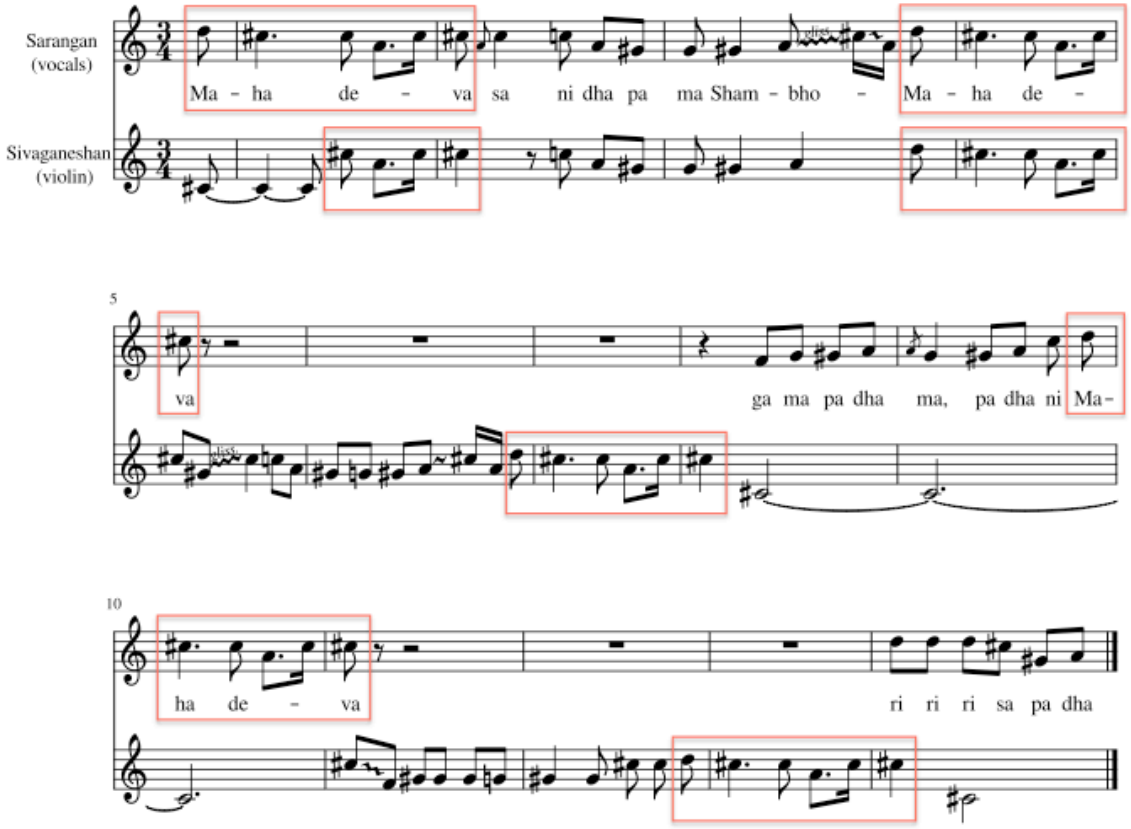


Figure 3.5: Example of the *kalpana swaram* exchange between the vocalist and violinist. The *pallavi* motif used as a cadential code is highlighted in the boxes. See video example 3.4 from 0'16" – 0'43".

These commonly understood structures and patterns of performance allow for the exploration of each musician's creativity whilst conforming to the strict boundaries of

Carnatic music performance. There is a clear motivation in performance to bring out the *bhavam* of the music, to affect the musicians and the audience through the *rasa* sentiments of the *raga*, to challenge their own musical abilities through virtuosic passages, to construct and enhance the musical choices of the main artist and to inspire the students in the audience to perform. Through the adherence to these intrinsic performance conventions and systems, the network of musicians and audience are able to come together to create the performance and contribute to classical music performance in the diaspora. On a personal level, musicians such as Sarangan and others attempt to achieve a divine experience and connectivity during the performance, or a 'oneness' with the music, God and their surroundings, reflecting the *bhakti* (devotion and oneness with God) motivation of musical performance.

The micro-level network similarly has a great deal of directed links, which accounts for the musical manifestations of the group's hierarchy. Musical decisions and dominant ideas (such as motifs, rhythmic patterns, melodic contours and repetitions) are directed from the main artist to the violinist and mridangist. These ideas are embodied into the accompanists' own performance and improvisations, such as in the improvisations between the vocalist and violinist and vocalist and mridangist in the *kalpana swaram*. The performance is directed both to the audience, and metaphysically towards the *guru* and God, whilst the audiences' reaction is assessed by the performer's to shape their performance.

The performing artists use the conventions of the genre in addition to more idiosyncratic means of communicating during performances. Musical signals include cadential patterns such as the *korvais,* beginning the *kalpana swaram* improvisations by merging the *pallavi* and incorporating *swaras* (discussed above), repetition of a musical idea and types of improvisation. These micro-level conventions are an additional 'code' in the musical assemblage, enabling all actors to perform and understand the performance. Such

intrinsic coding enables transnational performance, and perpetuates the continuation of such conventions in order to retain synchrony and stability across the musical assemblage.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, I referred to the Sanskrit *sloka* performed by Sarangan at the beginning of his concerts. The performance of the *sloka* was enabled by the macro-, mid- and micro-levels explored in this chapter, and through these levels I have shown how performances such as Sarangan's are connected with a larger set of interactions and networks through following musical and social conventions. I have argued that there is a South Indian musical assemblage consisting of a number of localities and that this assemblage functions through multileveled diasporic networks and interactions. I have referred to four key macro-level networks – musical, performer, digital and material – which connect smaller local hubs. Within the local hub of London, I have explored how the dispersed musical community comes together in order to create the scene at each event. Organisations and individuals are key in the local musical network and are vital in maintaining transnational connections. The transnationality of people, music and objects, along with the mobility and temporality of events and the consistency of conventions and musical roles, enables synchrony in the musical assemblage in its numerous localities. The musical and ritual conventions stabilise the musical interactions and territorialise the assemblage. The music, its system, its conventions and its micro-level interactions inherently enable competent Carnatic musicians from any part of the world to come together and create a successful performance without rehearsals or previous musical consultation. Across the three levels of networks, the musical conventions and ritualised practices are key elements to facilitate transnational musical interaction.

Ultimately, the various levels of networks and interactions referred to in this chapter reveal the importance of connectivity in this musical diaspora. Musical synchrony, cultural continuation and identity construction are all key motivating factors for this commitment to connectivity.

Whilst this chapter demonstrated what macro, mid, and micro-level networks are at play in the diasporic music scene, subsequent chapters will explore in more detail how these connections manifest themselves and how the scene is constructed as a result. Following ideas of mobility, connectivity and transnational performance, the next chapter will consider diasporic musicians participation in Chennai's 'music season', the cultural centre, and how significant this 'centre' is in diasporic learning and performance.

Chapter Four

The City of Chennai as Cultural Centre

For several weeks in late December 2012 and 2013, I raced around Chennai in auto-rickshaws attending two or three concerts a day. After a week of gently settling in to the South Indian city - getting accustomed to its heat, its crowds and its conservative customs - I was thrown into intense fieldwork. With the arrival of numerous diasporic musicians in mid December, Chennai provided ample opportunities to watch performances and interview transnational artists who converged in the city. The music season in Chennai is officially known as the 'Margazhi music festival', referring to the name of the Tamil month of Margazhi between mid-December and mid-January. In addition to this official title, the music season is known as the 'December Music Festival' or the 'Madras music season', making reference to the city's colonial name.

Once teaching commitments have drawn to an end for the Christmas break in London, artists travel to Chennai and perform a number of booked performances as part of the music season. Music students and music enthusiasts also fly to the 'mecca of Carnatic music' to expose themselves to the intense musical experience; many have commented how their time in Chennai during the season is unlike anything else in the world. The musicians I met in Chennai spent their time travelling between *sabhas* – music societies and their venues - across the city to perform and watch concerts by high profile artists, which according to several of the London musicians “just aren't the same as back in London”. The small amount of time musicians have left between concerts is spent learning from Chennai-based *gurus*, visiting friends and family, repairing instruments and shopping. My intense fieldwork over the Christmas period was necessary because as soon as New Year approached, musicians

scattered from the city and travelled back to London and elsewhere to attend to their musical and everyday commitments.

During my time in Chennai, I met musicians who are based in the UK, the USA, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, Dubai, Canada and Malaysia. Despite the musical convergence the city offers during the music season, the demarcation of difference within the music scene is retained. Reflecting the social categorisation of people in South Asia, a common sentiment for musicians is that they are branded as 'outside' musicians. Diasporic musicians feel as they are not 'in' the scene in Chennai, as institutions and musicians in Chennai position the diaspora as outside of the local Chennai scene.

Chennai is a transnational musical hub for Carnatic music, Tamil music, Tamil film music and popular music. This chapter situates Chennai as the major hub in the transnational interactions that take place through macro-level networks. I do this through localised ethnography in Chennai and diasporic musicians' involvement in the musical interactions that result in transnational convergence. This convergence is clear in the amount of musical production, negotiation, and performance taking place in the city. It is also reflected in the conceptualisation of Chennai as the centre of Carnatic and Tamil music performance, as well as the city being the site of religious and cultural importance.

This chapter discusses the significance of Chennai in the transnational Carnatic musical assemblage and the performance contexts, conventions and interactions which diasporic musicians experience. It situates Chennai as the cultural centre of the vast transnational music assemblage, namely as a site of socio-musical convergence during the annual music season and in terms of the musical conventions and aesthetics projected from the city to the diaspora. The music season is of particular importance as South India, and Chennai in particular, becomes a site of transnational music interaction, with musicians travelling from around the world to meet, learn and perform according to Chennai's musical

aesthetics and conventions. A centre – periphery relationship exists between Chennai and the musical diaspora and I examine how the Chennai scene projects this power structure towards diasporic musicians. This will include discussion about the contradictory feelings of diasporic artists, many of whom simultaneously feel Chennai is an alternative homeland and a site of discrimination based on social and national background. Discourse emanating from the local Chennai scene during the music season both celebrates and brackets diasporic musicians and their accessibility to the scene remains limited. This chapter will contribute to my argument that, within the study of music in this diaspora, other sites significantly inform diasporic musical practices in addition to those of the homeland and places of resettlement.

"It draws you like a magnet": Chennai as a transnational hub

In an increasingly globalised India, Chennai's attraction lies in "its perceived traditionalism, most evident in religion and cultural activity" which contributes to the association of the city as "India's 'cultural capital' in the face of other cities, such as Bangalore and Mumbai, exuding modernity and Westernisation" (Fuller & Narasimhan 2014: 163). For Carnatic musicians and *bharatanatyam* dancers inside India, "Chennai is the city where everyone with ambition wants to appear on stage" (Fuller & Narasimhan 2014: 201). For those outside India, Chennai is the place where the diasporic musical community repeatedly participate in the scene in order to 'top-up', 'up-date' and challenge their musicianship and musical lives back in their diasporic locale. Visits to Chennai act as a validation and authentication of musicians' participation in the transnational South Indian music scene.

The city's importance has increased throughout the twentieth century. Madras – Chennai's colonial name - was conceived as the centre for Carnatic music in India after the urbanisation of classical music performance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Subramanian 2011; Viswanathan and Harp Allen 2004). Chennai harboured a great

deal of musical and spiritual significance prior to mass migration from South Asia during the later half of the twentieth century, especially for Sri Lankan Carnatic musicians before migration from the island. Musicians active in the Chennai scene were hired to teach in North Sri Lanka whilst cultural and political rhetoric from Tamil Nadu was being infiltrated into Sri Lankan Tamil society (Reed 2010: 131-132). Kirupakaran's first music teacher in Jaffna was from Chennai, reflecting the flows of musical knowledge from the 'cultural capital' to North Sri Lanka. In an interview in Chennai in 2012, Kirupakaran reflected that the conceptualisation of Chennai as the cultural centre was made evident in the Jaffna music scene by previous generations before mass migration from the island. He recalled: “my father used to say back home [in North Sri Lanka] ... 'if we want to learn more and more in this music, we *have* to go to Chennai'” (Kirupakaran, pers. comm., December 2012). In the 1970s and 1980s, this attitude was adopted by young Sri Lankan artists, like Sivatharini and Sivasakthi, who travelled to India to study at the Tamil Nadu Government Music College in Chennai. The two-way link between Sri Lanka and Chennai was fully established before the war and mass migration, and the musical and social connectivity with Chennai was already integrated into the established 'homeland' musical practice.

The musical and cultural importance of Chennai has intensified post-migration. As Kirupakaran's father suggested back in Sri Lanka, musicians in London believe that you can only really 'know' music if you have been to Chennai. This 'knowledge' refers to the experiential knowledge of *gnanam*, therefore musicians should experience the Chennai scene in order to attain this level of knowledge. Attitudes and the value given to travelling to the city have indicated that to 'know', understand and experience music *there* in Chennai, one can begin to understand the scene *here* in diasporic London. This, again, reflects the importance of the city and the diasporic transnational mobility between their community, their locale and the musical and ancestral homelands (see Zheng 2010: 14). Travelling, listening, and

performing in Chennai is a means of authentication as a music enthusiast, musician, and researcher, acting as an initiation into the transnational musical assemblage.

Like the transnational networks that have been established to maintain connectivity and synchrony in the highly-dispersed diasporas, physical convergence is particularly important to musicians who feel disconnected in the diaspora. Such physical convergences in Chennai are important for attaining and maintaining 'oneness' in diasporic socio-musical life. Yogeswaran illustrated this point in a discussion I had with him in Chennai in 2013. Yogeswaran is a vocalist of Carnatic and Tamil music. Originally from Jaffna, he migrated to London as conflict escalated on the island in the 1980s, and has worked as a musician in the UK, Germany and India. He regularly attends the Chennai music festival and performs in the city's *sabhas*. When reflecting on the scattered environment of musicians and musical performance around the world, and his own physical mobility in his musical career, Yogeswaran suggested that Chennai acts as the world's musical centre for Carnatic and Tamil music:

> I think being a musician I have a drawing there [Chennai]. Because I'm doing something which is part of a big pool of things, so it [Chennai] is like a magnet which draws you (pers. comm., January 2013).

As Yogeswaran suggests, a sense of connectivity, convergence and musical belonging is palpable in the city during the music season. Musicians who migrated from South Asia reconnect and networks are extended as musicians meet and connect through the exchange of musical ideas. The 'drawing' Yogeswaran experiences with regards to Chennai through his magnet analogy also suggests the positioning of Chennai as the central point surrounded by peripheral musical activity. The Chennai music season therefore provides a key site of convergence for the transnational musical scene and can be understood as a tangible manifestation of the overarching musical assemblage.

Due to its central position in the transnational music assemblage, Chennai is a constant reference point in the London musical community. In the diasporic music scene in

London, Chennai is held up as a benchmark for musical standards, concert formats and customs. Cultural geography manifests itself in everyday musical lives, references, and discourse. Chennai's position relates to Kiwan and Meinhof's (2011) definition of a 'metropolitan hub' in the global South that draws local India-based and transnational diasporic musicians from the assemblage. Such a metropolitan hub is a layering of spatial, institutional and human hubs, which overlap and interact with one another. In this way, the metropolitan hub performs a "vital role in cultural globalization and transnational networks" (Kiwan and Meinhof 2011: 52). Chennai as a human hub is represented by the key, influential individuals within the music scene based in the city. Diasporic musicians, such as Kirupakaran, are taught by eminent gurus living in the city. These *gurus* have major roles and authority in the local and transnational scene, which is manifest through organisations, performances, collaborations, and tuition. For example, Kirupakaran's *guru*, Karaikudi Mani, exerts his musical style and authority through his numerous schools and students in India and the diaspora. The city also functions as a spatial hub as it is a place of convergence, where flows of Indian, Sri Lankan, and diasporic musicians and music enthusiasts meet, largely as the result of the many human hubs residing in the city. Finally, the institutional hubs ensures the city is a place of return. Important institutions like the Madras Music Academy, Tamil Isai Sangam, Kalakshetra arts institution, the city's universities, colleges and many *sabhas* are key institutions in the negotiation, performance and tuition of Carnatic and Tamil music (see figure 4.1).

The importance of the city as a transnational hub is particularly visible in the annual migration of music enthusiasts and cultural activists for the music season. The city as a metropolitan hub draws musicians in three main ways: 1. networking i.e. the music industry, promoters, media and recording projects, recognition and authentication, 2. artistic development: namely concerts, performance opportunities, exposure and collection of ideas,

inspiration, and 3. a homecoming for diasporic citizens from a South Asian background.

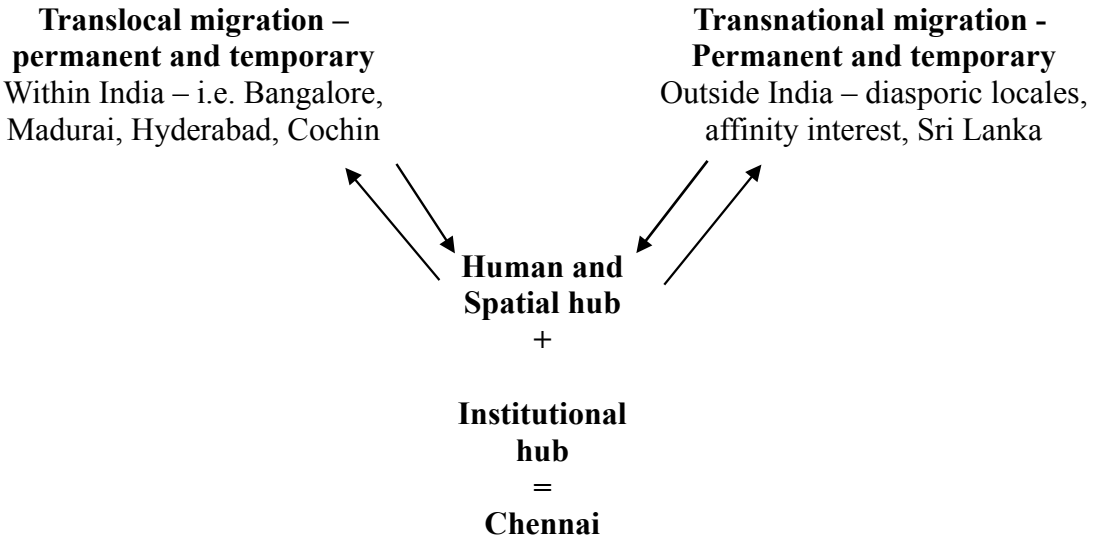


Figure 4.1: Showing the convergence and divergence of musicians from other parts of India and in the diaspora, revealing Chennai as a human and spatial hub due to permanent and temporary translocal and transnational migrations to the city.

The layering of spatial, human and institutional hubs within Chennai cannot be matched elsewhere, and therefore positions the city as a vital, central point of cultural globalisation and transnational networks. Aside from this theoretical perspective of the city, Chennai is conceived beyond a major transnational hub or centre in diasporic imaginations. I will now discuss the sentimental connections musicians have with the city that reinforce its central position.

Chennai as an alternative homeland and cultural centre

I first met Balaskandan – a mridangist and violinist – during the music season in 2012. Balaskandan left Sri Lanka in his late teens and migrated to Canada. Now based in New York, he lived and performed in the London scene during the 1990s. We met for our interview in the leafy Adyar district of South Chennai. It was early January, and most music performances had finished by the new year. Balaskandan's familiarity with the area was noticeable as we walked down the relatively calm Kasturbai Nagar street. As we walked, he

pointed out a small temple he visits regularly when he is in Chennai. Set against the side of the road, I could see the cross-legged Brahmin priest occupying most of the tiny space inside the temple as he performed a *pooja* ritual. Balaskandan also pointed to the restaurant he likes to eat at and where we later went to have our 'meals' – numerous small metal pots of vegetarian curries positioned on a banana leaf covered in rice and crackers. He commented that staying in this area allowed good access to his *gurus* and the concert halls, whilst at the same time providing sufficient distance from the crowds of busy Mylapore and T. Nagar districts. We stopped an outlet of Cafe Coffee Day, India's biggest coffee chain. The coffee shop was full of young, middle-class Indians and non-Indian students drinking espresso. As we sat down, Balaskandan took out his smartphone and quickly emailed his students back in New York, rescheduling their Skype music class with them for later that day. Despite his trip to reconnect with South Asia, he maintained his connections with his diasporic students through digital networks so they could also 'stay in touch' with their art form despite their current physical distance. Over coffee, we then spoke at length about his annual trips to Chennai.

Like many displaced Sri Lankan Tamils in Chennai, Balaskandan regularly visits Chennai for the music season. Despite the very close proximity of Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu, he does not feel comfortable to return to the island. While in the city, he takes advanced music classes, performs and attends concerts, eats South Indian food, and visits friends and temples. Towards the end of our interview, Balaskandan reflected that when he comes to Chennai he experiences a pre-migration nostalgia through the similar culture, climate, language, and religion. He likens the cultural make-up in Chennai to North Sri Lanka, commenting that “when I come here and when I go to people's houses ... it kind of reminds me of my childhood and it's from that perspective that I am able to relate to it ... there's a larger connection [than simply the music]” (pers. comm., January 2013). Referring back to

the conceived initial migration of Tamil people from Southern India to Sri Lanka from the third century BCE,[1] Balaskandan went on to say:

> [This is] where I come from, where my ancestors came from a long time ago and moved to Sri Lanka, so I feel like this is my original, original homeland. So that connectivity is there, so it's nice to come here and feel like I'm being part of that (pers. comm., January 2013).

Aside from the musical and social networks, Balaskandan draws on a historical connectivity provided by Chennai to the diaspora. The ancestral homeland and mythical historical narrative is an important part of Tamil diasporic life and culture. Connecting to such a historical narrative is a driving force behind the ritualised musical activity in London and synchrony with India. Reiterating the experience of returning to an ancestral homeland when he visits Chennai, Yogeswaran reflects Balaskandan's sentiments about Southern India being the original homeland of the Tamil people. Yogeswaran emphasises the point that, as a Sri Lankan Tamil, he has lost his 'homeland'. The conception of Jaffna being his *home* has been taken away from him as the result of conflict:

> I lost my home, I don't have any home. I mean, we lost our country. The Tamils lost their country ... we don't have a place to go back ... And you read about people's hardships there. So when you come here [to Chennai] you don't have that hardship but you can come here to a similar place, where our ancestors lived, spoke and sang, and created the culture. This culture is not 300 years old, this culture is much older than that. That's where my drawing comes from ... what music they sang in the *Cilappatikaram*, for example, what kind of food they ate, what kind of dance they danced, that's where my connection comes ... So my interest is far deeper (Yogeswaran, pers. comm., January 2013).

Yogeswaran refers to his Tamil ancestry in India in connection with the Tamil epic, *Cilappatikaram*. Thought to have been written in the second century CE (Parthasarathy 2004: 7), the epic depicts Tamil civilization including music and dance practices. Yogeswaran's reference to the *Cilappatikaram* and his connection to Chennai and Tamil Nadu highlights a significant diasporic connection to this mythical historical narrative. Drawing themselves back to the time before the earliest migrations to Sri Lanka, Balaskandan and Yogeswaran react to losing the place where they grew up by claiming Chennai and India as the primordial homeland of the Sri Lankan Tamil people. Like Yogeswaran, many Tamil musicians who live

[1] The initial migration of Tamil people to Sri Lanka is not known. There is, however, evidence of Tamils in Sri Lanka from the third century BCE (Palanithurai and Mohanasundaram 1993: 8).

in the diaspora feel a rootedness and connectivity to Chennai and their presence at the music festival provides them with nostalgic experiences of their formative years. It is the music season which brings them to Chennai year after year, and it is through musical participation that they experience a closeness and connectivity with the alternative homeland and cultural centre. Although the war has ended in Sri Lanka, the musicians' Tamil ethnicity puts them at risk of being stopped and interrogated by the security services. Southern India, however, provides an environment that is culturally-close to North Sri Lanka without such fears or 'hardships'. These sentiments are also reflected amongst many second musicians who have little connection with Sri Lanka and who consider Chennai as a 'second home', with London being the first, due to their musical connections with the city (Kiruthika, pers. comm., January 2013).

The adoption of Chennai as an alternative homeland and its position as the cultural centre resonates with Mark-Anthony Falzon's research on Mumbai as the 'cultural heart' of the Sindhi diaspora (2003). Whilst Sind was the primordial homeland of the Sindhi people, Mumbai is positioned as the centre of the diaspora as an “important nodal point in a transnational network of social relations” (Falzon 2003: 679). Mumbai sees an influx of members of the Sindhi diaspora for the Sindhi 'wedding season' each April, just as Chennai acts a point of convergence for musical performance in December. Like the Sindhi's who travel from all over the world to attend weddings and arrange future marriages from the central point of Mumbai, Carnatic musicians travel to Chennai for the music season. Chennai acts as the transnational musical communities' hub for musical networks and negotiation. It is in Chennai where the highly-dispersed musicians can display and regenerate their translocal and transnational performance profiles, in a similar way that Mumbai is the site for Sindhi identity and cultural practices. Falzon addresses how Safran's definition of diaspora, and the emphasis on the homeland in his definition, may not be as important as a 'cultural heart' in

the construction and recreation of a people in diaspora (2003: 662-63). As is the case in a number of definitions in diaspora studies, the homeland is given a great deal of importance in defining diasporic people. Falzon, however, suggests this notion be both geographically and analytically decentred to allow for the exploration of cultural centres and 'hearts'. Such cultural 'hearts' are "constructed and represented as a result of the diasporic process" (2003: 665), and therefore may be of greater importance to the dispersed community than the 'homeland'.

The notion of decentring the homeland is useful when thinking about diasporic music networks as it enables the importance of Chennai to the musical diaspora to come through. Although Sri Lanka is still conceived as the 'homeland' by many first and second generation Sri Lankans, traumatic experiences during the civil war as well as ongoing reports of interrogation, torture and rape, have prevented return to the 'homeland'. Subsequently, disassociation and, to an extent, disconnection with the island is common. Like Mumbai and the pre-migration Sindhis, Chennai and the pre-migration Sri Lankan Tamils have built on previous connections, particularly in terms of the arts, religion, literature and education. Chennai is now the site of an annual convergence to participate in the festival: it is the place to be exposed to 'Tamil culture' from its source and to meet Sri Lankan and Indian friends, family and colleagues from other diasporic locales.

Departing from Falzon's decentring of the homeland, musicians' conceive Tamil Nadu as their ancestral, or 'original, original homeland', despite being of Sri Lankan origin. The shared ethnicity, and Tamil Nadu as the homeland of Tamil diasporic people, has been described as personal philosophical reflections on ancestral roots and routes, though it could also be considered as a sign of modern political leanings of ethnonationalism (see Krishna 1999). As musical connections with Sri Lanka and the scene on the island are limited with the diaspora,[2] conceptualising Chennai as an alternative homeland creates a sustainable way for

[2] In 2014, the Ramanathan Academy of Arts in Jaffna celebrated its 100 year anniversary, and as part of the

the diasporic music scene to function. As returning to Sri Lanka is highly unlikely for many in the diaspora, Sri Lankan musicians are ensuring strong cultural ties and conceptualisations of Chennai being the centre for the continuation of music, and/or 'Tamil culture', in the diaspora.

From this positioning of Chennai in the broader transnational scene and diasporic imagination, I now take a closer look at the musical interactions of diasporic musicians in Chennai.

Diasporic Performance in Chennai

The Krishna Gana Sabha in T. Nagar, Chennai, is one of the most established *sabha* music societies in the city. It is located on a street just off the busy Usman Road, Chennai's bustling shopping district which is lined with shop exteriors covered in cheap, colourful, and sequined fabric next to multi-floor *sari* emporiums. Turning down the small, dusty street towards the Krishna Gana Sabha, my auto-rickshaw halted abruptly between the Muppathamman temple and the *sabha*. The sounds of *pooja* emanated from the temple – the bells, exclamations of 'om' by devotees and the Vedic chant of priests, against the background of auspicious music of the *nadaswaram* and *tavil.* The *peryia melam* ensemble were present to ensure the powerful sounds of the ritual were not disturbed by undesired noises during vital points of the *pooja,* such as the incessant traffic horns outside. The sound of the temple's ritual and the street receded as I walked into the peaceful *sabha* complex. The *sabha* consisted of several bamboo buildings positioned around a central square of grass and water fountains. The space smelled of the open-air canteen serving paper-thin *dosai* (rice and lentil flour pancakes) and strong, sweet filter coffee.

During the afternoon, people wandered around the Krishna Gana Sabha complex as

event invited alumni diasporic musicians to perform at the campus in Jaffna. However, a number declined the invitation due to security concerns.

they waited for performances to commence. I came to the *sabha* to attend a 'Musicians Living Abroad' concert, organised by one of Chennai's iconic *mridangam* players, Karaikudi Mani, and a number of his diasporic students. As the time approached for the concert, I noticed Kirupakaran gathering with some other *mridangam* players. These musicians – all percussionists and students of the organiser – had converged at this concert from distant cities such as London, New York and Melbourne, as well as from different parts of India. After a year apart since the last music season, the musicians eagerly caught up on each others' news, shared their Chennai performance schedules, and evaluated the up-coming artists that music season. They also discussed the interesting rhythmic patterns they had heard so far in the festival, which they sometimes demonstrated with precise, mid-air hand movements. Kirupakaran, and other diasporic musicians, attend these concerts equipped with video cameras and notebooks in order to pick up new musical 'ideas' to integrate into their own performance and teaching repertoire once back in London.

As 3:30pm approached, audience members and musicians from a previous concert flooded out of the smaller of two bamboo constructions and we entered in time for the next performance 'slot'. Walking into the air-conditioned hall provided welcome relief from the heat of the day, especially for myself and the musicians who had recently arrived from wintery London. I walked down the slight descent towards the stage, and took a seat in a row of cushioned, bamboo chairs. The musicians had been eagerly waiting at the side of the stage for the previous performance to finish, so they could set up, 'tune in' and make the most of their strictly allocated 1 hour 45 minute set. The popularity of performing as part of the music season has resulted in a strict schedule of performances and musicians are compelled by the *sabhas* to stick to the time allocations they are given. Eager musicians were waiting in the audience and in the eaves of the small stage to take the place of the ensemble from the previous 'slot'. The musicians took to the stage and performed the first concert of the

Musicians Living Abroad concert series. Although some sections of the series consisted of entirely diasporic artists, a combination of local and transnational musicians were billed together for this concert. That day, artists from Singapore, Australia and the UK performed together with local musicians.

'Musicians Living Abroad' or 'M.L.A Concerts' is a diasporic music festival, which provides diasporic musicians with the opportunity to perform as part of the Chennai music season. This is one of a number of festivals and concert series which were set up to address the difficulties 'outside' musicians have in securing performance slots in the highly competitive music scene. During my fieldwork in 2012 and 2013, I attended a large number of diasporic musician concerts at festivals such as the M.L.A concerts. I also attended diasporic performances at local Chennai *sabhas*, and *sabhas* set up by diasporic musicians and organisers themselves; these are outlined below (see figure 4.2) and represent only part of the large number of such events happening throughout the music season.

Number of concerts attended performed by a diasporic musician	Year	Diasporic Festival	Local Sabha	Long-distance Sabha
	2012-13	11	18	1
	2013-14	6	10	2

Figure 4.2: The table indicates the number of concerts I attended in which at least one musician travelled from the diaspora. The categories include: Diasporic festival, which refers to festivals specifically organised for diasporic musicians as part of the music season; Local Sabhas, in which diasporic musicians perform as part of a local sabhas festival; and long-distance sabhas, which are sabhas organised by musicians outside of India.[3]

The Hamsadhwani Sabha's 'NRI Fest' (NRI refers to non-resident Indian) is a key festival that gives performance slots to diasporic musicians. It is a 15-day festival held at a youth centre, in a covered, outdoor space in Adyar. Two concerts are held each day with diasporic musicians accompanied by local artists. Most of the musicians who perform at this festival

[3] During my fieldtrips in 2012 and 2013, I attended ten concerts performed solely by India-based, non-diasporic artists. However, the concerts I attended by diasporic musicians often consisted of a mostly local ensemble.

are based in the United States, but artists from Australia, UK, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Middle East also participate. The function of the festival is to provide performance opportunities for musicians outside of India, but Indian performance conventions and repertoire are expected to be upheld. Although diasporic difference is highlighted in the title of the event, difference is not reflected in the musical content of concerts. As a result of the low profile of visiting musicians, audience sizes are often small and concerts are free to attend. Due to the small audiences, some of the cities *sabhas* request a 'performance fee' from performing diasporic artists as a means to capitalise on the transnational demand for performance opportunities.

In addition to my attendance at diasporic festivals, my fieldwork was characterised by travelling around the cities *sabhas*. The *sabhas* provided new patronage for classical artists as a result of the urbanisation of the arts from the courts and temples of Southern India in the late nineteenth century (see Pesch 2009; Subramanian 2011; Weidman 2006). Originally, *sabhas* depended on an audience who considered music as a leisure activity and could afford to patronise performances through ticket sales (Weidman 2006: 80). As a result, audiences tended to be Brahmin and the term *sabha* gained connotations of a middle-class, urban, and Brahmin-caste exclusivity (Weidman 2006: 80). The passing of nearly a century, the illegality of caste discrimination and the apparent opening up of the institutions has not changed the conception, or audience demographic, of the *sabha* as an exclusively Brahmin cultural institution within wider society. This caste barrier was made particularly noticeable to me as a middle-class friend of mine was not willing to attend a concert at a particular *sabha* as she belonged to a low, 'scheduled caste' background - the collective legal term given to the lowest status communities in India - and felt unwelcome and self-conscious in the Brahmin institution.

Each *sabha* has an organisation committee and a *sabha* secretary who deals with the

applications of local and transnational musicians trying to get a performance 'slot' for the December season. Performing at established *sabhas* has resonance within South Indian music circles and contributes to the artists' reputation and performance profile in the city and in the larger scene. A bulk of covering letters, CVs of their musical career, information about their *guru*, recordings, and videos are sent out to *sabhas* halfway through the year from locales around the world via post and email, whilst high-profile local artists receive invitations to perform. Invitations are rarely sent to diasporic musicians who initially learned outside of India and who have come into the scene from the 'outside'. The lack of invitations and the competition from local musicians wanting to perform at prestigious *sabhas* creates difficulties for diasporic musicians to get performance opportunities in the city during the festival. Diasporic musicians persevere, however, and hope most of all for the opportunity to perform at the Madras Music Academy, or Chennai's musical centre.

Chennai's Musical Centre

Chennai has a long-standing dominance in the negotiation of musical conventions and aesthetics for Carnatic music inside and outside India. The Madras Music Academy is the key institution in negotiating Carnatic musical practices. Set in a corner of a criss-crossed, concrete junction of roads and flyovers, the Madras Music Academy has dominated the Chennai scene since the 1930s with the advent of its annual festival and conference series. Located close to to the city's *sabhas* on the edge of the Mylapore district, the Academy worked towards establishing a standardised and 'purified' Indian music (Weidman 2006: 82). The Academy was responsible for constructing, and maintaining, a 'modern' aesthetic, performance conventions, concert format, and repertoire (see Subramanian 2011; 85-114). Subramanian outlines how the Music Academy in Chennai 'consolidated the tradition' during a time of educational and technological change. It was during this time when music education

became integrated into mainstream higher education institutions such as Madras University. Coinciding with technological developments of the time, the Music Academy informed All India Radio of its standardised 'correct version of traditional music' and worked together with the corporation to mass-mediate this aesthetic in their concert broadcasts (2011: 108). Such concerts aired on All India Radio were heard in North Sri Lanka, and were influential for young musicians on the island (Yogeswaran, pers.comm, December 2013). Deviations from the conventions projected out from the Madras Music Academy are still considered to be 'diluted' by outside influence as a result of culture contact. Unsurprisingly, the institution has a complex history with regards to custodianship, caste, class, gender and ethnolinguistic politics still affecting the Carnatic music scene (see Krishna 2013; Subramanian 2011; Terada 2008; Weidman 2006).

Before the institutionalisation and reformation of Carnatic music, *devadasis*, or female artisans, *nadaswaram* and *tavil* temple musicians and court musicians were the custodians of the tradition in regions around South India. The disrepute and eventual abolishment of the *devadasi* system and the dissolution of the courts resulted in Carnatic music moving to the city in the early twentieth century. The current aesthetic was developed due to the development of Carnatic music into a 'classical art' and it contributed to the construction of nationalist discourse in the face of British colonialism (Subramanian 2011: 72). Subramanian states that as the art form recontextualised and renegotiated social meaning and status in South India, it became alienated from its original performers in the process:

> … the Academy had been able to develop both a compelling nationalist narrative of the arts and an aesthetic conception with powerful hegemonic claims. The inner logic of the new aesthetics, necessarily marginalized those performing communities whose social identity and functions were no longer compatible with the sensibilities of middle-class actors and social engineers, who through a network of nationalist institutions such as the Madras Music Academy in music … effectively constructed the 'classical' canon and defended it in the successive decades (2011: 110).

The 'classical' canon which was 'constructed' during this time - and is reinstated with each annual conference and concert series at the Academy - has become the standardised aesthetic

for Carnatic musicians. As Subramanian highlights, repertoire and concert format is a major part of this constructed canon (2011: 103). As the site of the construction of the contemporary Carnatic aesthetic, the Madras Music Academy has become the place to perform as a Carnatic musician. A performance 'slot' at the Academy is highly-coveted by musicians inside and outside India. Kirupakaran has wanted to perform at the Academy since his first visit to Chennai in 1997 and finally he secured a performance slot in December 2013. I attended his concert at the Academy along with his musical colleagues, Ravichandira and Yogeswaran, and his musician sister and niece who had travelled from Sri Lanka. Although Kirupakaran had not performed at the Academy before, he knew the musical conventions expected by the Academy and duly followed them. His performance at the Music Academy symbolised a number of things: the strong participation of diasporic musicians in the cultural centre, the achievement of Sri Lankan musicians, and the quality of musicianship being cultivated in the London locale.

For Kirupakaran and others, a performance at the Academy is seen as the pinnacle of a Carnatic music career and the musical expectations established at the Academy are a model for other music institutions in Chennai and beyond. The following sections discuss how the *kutcheri paddhati*, the formalised concert 'path' that has emanated from the renegotiation of Carnatic music in the twentieth century, has become a significant element in the possibility for transnational interaction and diasporic convergence in Chennai during the music season.

The Chennai 'Concert Path'

In Chennai, audience members attend a musical performance with clear expectations about the musical direction of the concert. Types of compositions, improvisation, the attention to the *raga* and *talam,* indicate where the musicians are in the concert's path. For instance, towards the end of my first visit to Chennai, I became aware that the performance would

soon come to an end when I heard the vibrant performance of a *thillana* song, a dance piece that integrates intoned rhythmic syllables into the lyrics.

The concert path consists of two distinct halves, and musicians in London refer to these as 'the music', or *sangeetham,* followed by 'light songs', or *tukkada*.[4] The first half is understood to be 'deep and heavy' in contrast to the second half of 'light' music. These halves are defined by the grouping of repertoire, the manner in which the repertoire is rendered, the language of the compositions, the melodic and rhythmic content and improvisational possibilities. The concert path was demonstrated in all the transnational and translocal performances I attended in Chennai, including the concert Kirupakaran performed at the Madras Music Academy.

The "Sangeetham"

Kirupakaran's concert at the Academy opened with 'classical' *kriti* compositions in Sanskrit and Telugu, outlined in repertoire table figure 4.3. These compositions took up the majority of the concert, highlighting their importance in the Chennai concert path. In this first half of the concert, most compositions were written in these two languages. Despite being widely spoken in the Carnatic music scene, the Tamil language has been regarded as too 'everyday' for a 'divine' art form that requires an aestheticised language such as Sanskrit (Weidman 2006: 152).

[4]Ludwig Pesch, however, refers to three phases within the concert format (2009: 233). These segments consist of *kritis* (classical compositions), *manodharma sangeet* (lit. creative music, extended improvisation), and the *tukkada* (ordinary songs). Musicians in London, however, refer the *kritis* and *manodharma sangeet* as the 'music' section.

Composition	Ragam	Talam (beats)	Composer	Language
Sangeetham				
Sri Mahaganapatim	Atana	Adi (8)	Jayachamaraja Wodeyar	Sanskrit
Baagayanayya	Chandarajothi	Adi (8)	Thyagaraja	Telugu
Shankari	Begada	Rupakam (6)	Subbaraya Sastri	Telugu
Bala Gopala	Bhairavi	Adi (8)	Muthuswami Dikshitar	Sanskrit
Ragam Thanam Pallavi	Mohana Kalyani	K. triputa (9)	V. K. Raman	
Tukkada				
Listed as 'Miscellaneous'				

Figure 4.3: Repertoire listed for the Music Academy performance by V.K. Raman (flute), C.N. Thayaraju (violin), P. Kirupakaran UK (mridangam) and T.A. Ramanujan (morsing) on 31st December 2013 at 1.45pm. Kirupakaran – listed as P. Kirupakaran UK - performed with the USA-based V.K.Raman.

The *kriti* form songs are vital in the performance of Carnatic music and consist of three parts: the *pallavi* – an initial main melody; the *anupallavi* – a secondary melody; and the *charanam* - verse (as presented in video example 3.3). Artists elaborate on these compositions with *sangatis* (melodic variations), *niraval* (improvised treatment of the composed melody and words), and *kalpana swaram* (improvised passages using *sargam* syllables to coincide with the talam) to demonstrate their creativity and technical ability within the *ragam, talam* and song form. The *sangeetham* section is typically concluded by a main composition and/or a *ragam thanam pallavi*, an extended improvisatory piece, which each lasts between 30 minutes and one hour. It is within these pieces that in the artists can demonstrate their individual skills in *manodharma sangeetham* – improvised music. The musical interactions that took place in the *sangeetham* in Chennai reflected the mirco-level networks explored in Sarangan's concert in chapter three.

The 'Musical Challenge'

At the point of the *ragam thanam pallavi* in the concert path, diasporic musicians experience

'the challenge' they seek when performing in the city's local scene. As the concert is not rehearsed before the performance, competent accompanying artists are expected to identify the *ragam*, *talam* and composition to successfully accompany the main artist as Sarangan and Sivaganeshan demonstrated in the previous chapter. The Chennai concert experience challenges the musicians' quality of performance, listening, recognition and interaction skills. Such a musical challenge was demonstrated when Kirupakaran had to accompany a *ragam thanam pallavi* in *kanda triputa* - a nine-beat talam cycle – in a 'Musicians Living Abroad' concert (see video example 4.1).[5] *Kanda triputa* is an uncommon *talam* to perform unrehearsed in the London scene. As is customary in Chennai, there was no preceding conversation about the repertoire, therefore the mridangist was presented with the *talam* on-stage. After the extended non-metrical *alapana* and in-pulse *thanam* improvisations performed by the main artist and violinist, Kirupakaran was presented with the *talam.* The flautist sang the one-line main melody, or *pallavi*, whilst tapping the *talam* for the first time. This functioned as an indication for Kirupakaran to start performing, and the drummer followed the melody and *talam*, beginning on the fifth beat of the first cycle, or the first *druta* of the *talam* (see video example 4.1, 1'32"). He gradually added rhythmic complexity to his accompaniment, leading to the *saman* at the end of the cycle. Kirupakaran went on to layer, enhance, and complicate the *talam*, leading to the percussion solo, or *thaniavartanam,* where he further exhibited his technical and improvisatory skills. After the performance, Kirupakaran told me he had felt nervous on-stage as a result of the nine-beat *talam*. He said “no-one ever plays this in London” and, as a result, he “had to really think on-stage” (pers. comm., December 2013) in order to revise his knowledge in the moment of the performance.

[5] I refer to another performance by Kirupakaran and the flautist, V. K. Raman, in this section as recording is not allowed in the Music Academy. The 'Musicians Living Abroad' concert took place five days before the Music Academy concert.



Figure 4.4: Kirupakaran (*mridangam*) performing with V.K.Raman (flute) and Parthiv Mohan (violin) at the M.L.A Concerts (Musicians Living Abroad), Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai, 26th December 2013.

Kirupakaran's colleague, Melbourne-based mridangist Ravichandira, was present at the concert. He described the process and challenge of accompanying artists in this spontaneous manner:

> It's what the concert experience is all about. You have to follow the music step by step, step by step, concentrate and then gradually elevate the music overall by your accompaniment. That's the role of a mridangist. So you don't go bang bang bang. So you just follow it closely, the lines, the delineations, close as possible, then start to add layers and layers and layers to lift the whole music up. That's the role of an accompanist, you don't just start playing something, whilst the musician is doing something else, on a tangent ... Sometimes it can disturb [the principle artist], if you do a cross rhythm or something. If that happens you need to step back. So it's a trade off. You need to judge whether that person is feeling comfortable or not. Because at the end of the day, if that person is not feeling comfortable then it will bring the whole performance down (Ravichandhira, pers. comm., January 2013).

For many diasporic musicians, this type of musical challenge is only available in Chennai. In contrast to their experiences during the music season, their local diasporic scenes are small and over-familiarity is considered detrimental to the spontaneity and musical challenge of performances. Outside of Chennai, diasporic musicians often discuss the repertoire or have opportunity to run through some of the more complex rhythmic sections before the concert. Even if repertoire is not discussed prior to the concert, musicians are able to predict which

compositions will be performed due to their deep familiarity with the small number of musicians in the diaspora. Ravichandhira, for instance, discussed how he is often able to make an educated guess when performing with artists in Melbourne, whereas the situation in Chennai was completely different:

> [In a diasporic performance] [i]t would be 1 out of 50 [compositions], here [in Chennai] I wouldn't know their repertoire at all so they would pick something totally different to what I'm expecting. I can't make a second guess. I have no idea how many compositions they have learned. So that is the big experience here (pers. comm., January 2013).

This challenge of musical competency and knowledge is considered a fulfilling and exciting experience and the musical synchrony achieved by the ensemble is the measure of a successful performance. The convergence of translocal and transnational artists in Chennai creates the environment for spontaneous and unexplored musical territory in terms of repertoire, style and musical 'ideas' and patterns. It is the experience and synchrony of the on-stage 'musical challenge' that diasporic musicians highly prize when participating in the music season in Chennai.

The 'Light Songs'

The second half of the concert path consists of 'light', 'semi-classical' and popular pieces. The light songs possess a different musical character in their form and in their manner of delivery from the *kritis* in the first half. The songs have clear, catchy melodies, in popular *ragas* and are not used as a point of departure for extensive improvisation. Prominence is given to the first half of the concert, and in the Music Academy repertoire lists,[6] the second half is listed as 'miscellaneous' (see figure 4.3). Pesch discusses how this 'phase' has been historically described as *tukkaḍā* – "'ordinary' if not 'inferior'" (2009: 235), because it is not considered to create the same type of intellectual stimulation or technical demands as the 'classical' or 'orthodox' compositions of the first half. Songs in the second half tend to be in *bhajan*, or

[6] Unlike all other *sabhas* in Chennai, the Music Academy publish repertoire lists in their annual music season brochure.

verse, form, more akin to devotional and film songs rather than the high classical compositions (see Viswanathan and Harp Allen 2004).

Due to time restrictions, little attention is given to light songs in Chennai as the first half of the concert gives the opportunity to demonstrate technical ability and creativity to other musicians and a highly-informed audience. To comply with the concert path, however, one or two 'light songs' are typically performed. These compositions can be devotional forms such as devotional *bhajans, thevaram* (Tamil hymns sung for Lord Siva)*,* or love songs such as *javalis* and *padams.* These songs are performed in a straight delivery with light ornamentation and with little improvisation or exemplification of technical difficulty. Instead of demonstrating the 'deep' or 'real' music, the second half is considered as a duty to please the crowd and complete the concert path (Sivasakthi, pers. comm., July 2013).[7] The concert path concludes with a *thillana* – a dance piece combining vocalised rhythmic syllables with song lyrics. An alternative piece is an upbeat *thirupukkal,* a Tamil devotional song for Lord Muruga (the son of the Supreme Being, Siva). A short musical statement of a *mangalam,* specifically in raga *madhyamavati*, is considered to reset the emotions, stabilise the listeners (Pesch 2009: 235) and indicates the end of the concert.

The standardised concert path enables participation of musicians from inside and outside India. Kirupakaran and other diasporic artists are able to perform at the Music Academy without any prior rehearsal due to the shared knowledge of this concert path appropriate to the Academy and Chennai's *sabhas*. Classical music is inclusive in terms of standardised and widely-practised conventions, yet social circumstances can result in exclusion for some musicians. In addition to the musical challenges and the development of competencies, performing in Chennai provides an authentication and validation of

[7] Despite the lack of attention given to the *tukkada* in performances during the music season – a result of the convergence of musicians and specialists – Sivasakthi recalled being taught in Chennai the importance of the *tukkada* pieces and pleasing an audience through popular and familiar tunes after the deep musical exploration of *raga* and *talam* (Sivasakthi, pers. comm., July 2013).

musicianship and greatly enhances musicians' artistic reputations both in South Asia and in the diaspora. Participation in the cultural centre is therefore vital for the sustainability of transnational networks.

Tamil Music in Chennai

The Tamil Isai Sangam, or the Tamil Music Society, a twenty minute rickshaw ride north of the Music Academy, is another central institution in the cultural centre. Despite the proximity of the institutions, the Tamil Isai Sangam provides an alternative to the Music Academy's transnationally prescribed aesthetic. Founded as a reaction against the dominance of the Music Academy, with its Brahmin elite custodianship and the preference for Telugu and Sanskrit repertoire, the Tamil Isai Sangam was founded in 1943 to propagate Tamil compositions and non-Brahmin Tamil artists (see Subramanian 2011; Terada 2008; Weidman 2006).

The institution's hall, Raja Annamalai Mandram, is a large, marble building, with its name set out in a Tamil script neon sign above its entrance next to a small garden entwined with fairy lights. Banners outside the building advertised the institution's 12 day festival, running in parallel with other festivals during the music season in the city. The signs were all in Tamil whilst other *sabhas* use English to promote performances. At the Tamil Music Society, artists are requested to perform only Tamil compositions as the Society strongly advocates the performance of Tamil Music in contrast to the prevailing aesthetic of the music season performances, which favour Telugu and Sanskrit compositions. Although the repertoire differs, many performance conventions and aspects of the concert path comply with the standardised format.

In 2012 and 2013, I saw Yogeswaran perform at the Tamil Isai Sangam as part of their festival shortly before the new year. The hall was large and air conditioned, with a small

crowd of listeners, including Yoga's immediate family, his first *guru* from Jaffna (now resident in Chennai), and friends and acquaintances from Sri Lanka, India and London. As I walked in to set up my camera, I was quickly shooed away from the front row and asked to sit at least three rows back. Like other *sabhas,* the front row was reserved for important male *rasika* music enthusiasts, with the second row reserved for their wives. The musicians were ready and waiting on-stage for the curtain to be drawn back to start the concert. In this, and many other, performances I attended in Chennai, I saw audience members identifying *ragas*, *talam* and songs, writing notes, while tapping along to the *talam* and reacting on the musicians' rendering of the composition and improvisatory 'ideas'. This attention to the musical detail is appreciated by diasporic musicians who pointed out that the audience's' focus is encouraging, if a little unnerving, and they contrasted their reception in Chennai with often less well-versed diasporic audiences.

Having travelled around the Hindu temples of Sri Lanka performing Tamil devotional music, the mission of Tamil Isai Sangam reflects Yogeswaran's interests in Tamil music and its propagation. He therefore regularly performs at the Sangam's annual music festival. As a vocalist, and therefore the main artist in an ensemble, Yogeswaran has the authority to choose the repertoire for his performances (see figure 4.5). He performs compositions which he feels have particular interest, as well as rarer Tamil pieces, and, in 2013, he even performed his own *varnam* composition – 'Iyarriyavar'.

Composition	Ragam	Talam	Composer	Language	Musical Convention
Sangeetham					
Iyarriyavar	Maari	Adi (8 beats)	Manickam Yogeswaran	Tamil	Swaras
Pirai aniyum peruman	Hamsadhwani	Adi (8 beats)	Balamuralikrishna	Tamil	Niraval, Kalpana swaram
Kanaka sabhapathikku	Athana	Roopakam (6 beats)	Gopalakrishna Bharathi	Tamil	Played 'straight'.
Thiruvadi charanam	Kambhoji	Adi	Gopalakrishna Bharathi	Tamil	Extended alapana, niraval, kalpana swaram, thani avarthanam
Tukkada					
Muruga bhajan	-	Adi	-	Tamil	Played 'straight'.

Figure 4.5: Yogeswaran's repertoire from the concert performed at the Tamil Isai Sangam, 28th December 2013.

Despite the exclusion of Sanskrit, Telugu and other Dravidian languages, the repertoire and performance retained the Carnatic musical conventions and concert path performed in the city's *sabhas*. In any other *sabha* in the city, however, artists cannot perform a fully Tamil repertoire "if you want to be taken seriously" (Yogeswaran, pers. comm., January 2013) and develop a sustainable presence, good reputation, and artistic identity.

Historically, the Music Academy's prescribed musical aesthetic, which favours compositions in Telugu and Sanskrit and excludes Tamil compositions, resulted in the Indian Tamil Music Movement of the 1930s and 1940s (Subramanian 2011; Terada 2008; Weidman 2006). The main exponent of this movement, M. M. Dhandapani Desigar, was the *guru* of Yogeswaran's first *guru* in Jaffna. This lineage has resulted in Yogeswaran propagating Tamil music in the diaspora. Whilst Tamil music in London is popular, the divide in Chennai has impacted attitudes towards performance practices in London. The divide in Chennai towards Tamil music and Carnatic music is reflected by some musicians in the diaspora as well as in the musical centre, which will be discussed in chapter seven.

Although Yogeswaran propagates Tamil music through his performances at the Tamil

Isai Sangam and back in Europe through his 'Tamil Classics' project,[8] when performing at other *sabhas* in Chennai he adheres to the conventions and the aesthetic originally prescribed by the Music Academy. There is a disjuncture between Brahmin custodianship and the perceived 'purity' of classical Carnatic music in contrast to 'devotional' Tamil isai (Fuller and Harasimhan 2014; Subramanian 2011; Weidman 2006). The attitude that Tamil music is not 'high art' and should therefore not dominate Carnatic performances emanates outwards to the diaspora. These attitudes are largely carried by those who have considerable proximity to the Chennai music scene. Speaking about the on-going debate about the inclusion of Tamil Isai in Carnatic music repertoire, Yogeswaran states that as he is not living, working and performing in Chennai throughout the year, he does not have to be involved with such negotiations or adhere to such rigidities:

> … you can't perform Tamil Isai fully in a concert here [in Chennai], if you want to be taken seriously, that is the present situation. There were very mixed views though [in Tamil Nadu], some people say 'okay, that [Tamil music] is not music', other people say 'you cannot make it into proper Carnatic music', some people say 'you can sing more of these compositions' but that's a debate for people here. Luckily I don't have to be driven by this kind of notion because I don't live here, so I'm free to do whatever I like to do (pers. comm., January 2013).

As a result, Yogeswaran performs many Tamil compositions in Europe, and often chooses to start concerts with a Tamil *virutham*, a metreless, melodically improvised verse, which other musicians have been rebuked for in Chennai.[9] Although some local alterations are made to the concert path in the diaspora, they are made in reference to Chennai musical conventions in order to maintain musical connectivity and transnational synchrony.

[8] Yogeswaran produced a CD called 'Tamil Classics' (1997) and propagates Tamil songs through this on-going recording and performance project.

[9] Singaporean Carnatic vocalist, Sushma Somasekaran, for instance, was criticised for performing a Tamil *virutham* before the main composition in a concert. The vocalist recalled that a member of the audience told her that she had ruined the concert as a result of the placement of the Tamil 'prayer' in the concert path (Sushma, pers. comm., January 2013).

Transnational Musicians in the Cultural Centre

The centre of Mylapore, Chennai, is a place of cultural and religious convergence. The impressive *gopuram* tower of the Kapaleeswarar temple protrudes into the skyline, towering above the market surrounding the parameter of the temple complex. Outside the temple's entrance, stalls sell fresh flower garlands for *pooja*. To the left, there is a vegetable market and to the right, small stalls sell jewellery, mobile phones, shoes and images of Hindu deities. Walking away from the temple, I passed four-floored stores selling everything needed for devotional Saiva Hindu worship and *arangetram* ceremonies - brass lamps, bells, artificial flower garlands, small metal *murthis* (deity statues), devotional music CDs, and *bharatanatyam* ankle bells. On the corner of the street, there is the renowned Rasi Sari House that is popular with London-based Tamil women. Mylapore is a convergence point in Chennai, where devotees, auto-rickshaw drivers, flower women, beggars, musicians, and tourists come together. It is a place where I have often unexpectedly bumped into familiar faces from London's diasporic community going into the temple, eating at restaurants and shopping.

During the music season in 2013, I was on my way to another Musicians Living Abroad concert, this time across town from the Krishna Gana Sabha at the transnational Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan institution. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is set against this backdrop of translocal and transnational convergence. Trying to get into the institution complex is always tricky, weaving around the speeding auto-rickshaws and fully-dressed dancers and musicians piling out of air-conditioned cars outside the entrance (see figures 4.6 and 4.7).





Figures 4.6 and 4.7: Left – the outside of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai. Right – A few buildings down from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the street opens up to reveal the iconic Kapaleeswarar Temple.[10]

At the entrance I saw advertisements of the institution's sponsors including one targeting the return of diasporic Indian citizens to the cultural centre during the month of *maagazhi* (see figure 4.8). With two lines of male drummers, the advertisement contained the slogan "Welcome NRIs". NRI, or 'non-Indian resident', is the bureaucratic acronym used to categorise India citizens abroad. The presence of the advert symbolised the annual convergence of transnational musicians and NRIs in the area during the music season.

As a result of the varied history of mass migration from South Asia, diasporic artists are placed into the category of 'NRI', or non-resident Indian, musician.[11] Despite religious, social and musical convergence through the music season, the distinction of those living outside India is also evident when looking through the music festival listings in newspapers and programmes, where a diasporic artist is listed with their country of residence bracketed after their name (see figure 4.9). Similarly, Kirupakaran was listed as 'Sri P. Kirupakaran –

[10] Priya Srinivasan uses this part of Mylapore as a basis for her chapter 'The Manufacturing of the Indian Dancer through Offshore Labor'. Her own experiences of preparing for an *arangetram* by shopping in Mylapore and then attending the ceremony in the States are used to reveal transnationality between India and Indian dancers abroad (2011).

[11] NRI musicians are generally considered to be the South Indian musicians from the United States, themselves or their parents with Indian citizenship, but bureaucratically includes any Indian citizen living overseas.

mridangam (UK) for his 'Musicians Living Abroad' concert.

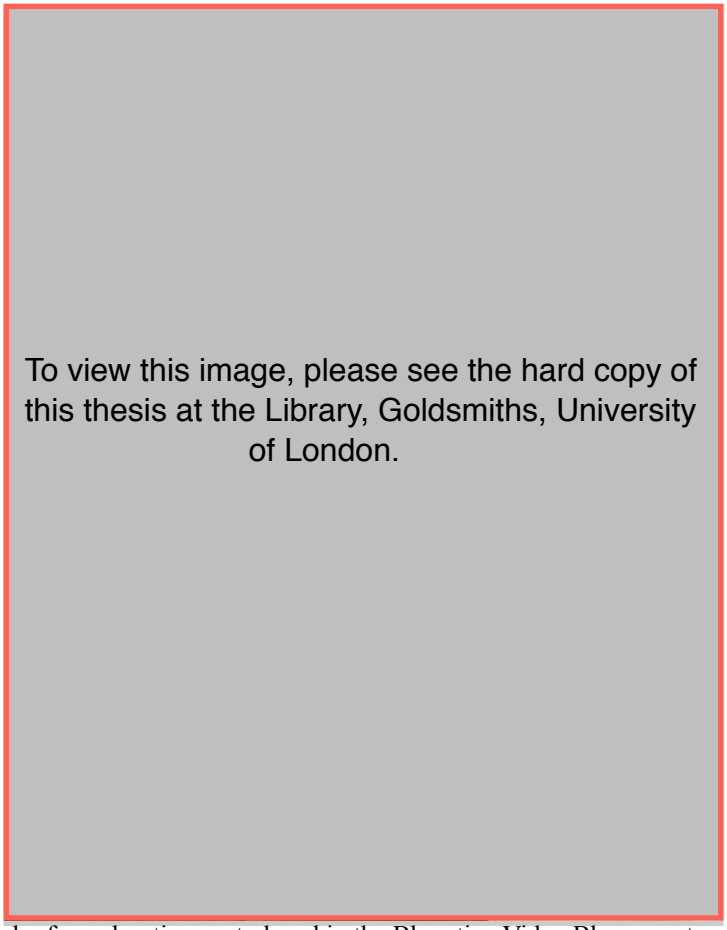


Figure 4.8: Photograph of an advertisement placed in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan entrance, Mylapore, Chennai, December 2013.

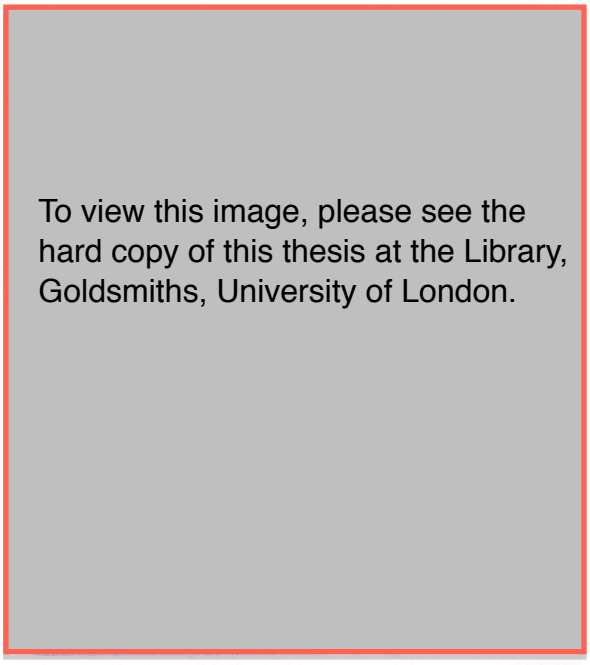


Figure 4.9: Diasporic musicians are publicised along with their country of residence bracketed after their name. The image is a concert listing from the M.L.A concerts in December 2012.

The 'NRI branding' musicians receive is often felt as derogatory as it positions musicians as 'outsiders' by default. This labelling is carried out by *sabha* organisational staff, adhering to a South Indian custom and to "ease the curiosity of the audience" (R. Sundar, pers. comm., July 2012). Geographical place is constantly referred to in Carnatic music in relation to artists' stage names and in compositions dedicated to deities in particular locations in South India. It is customary in India to associate musicians with their, or their families, place of origin inside and, since mass migration, outside India.[12] However, the diasporic musicians I spoke to typically find the label restrictive as it tended to limit their participation in the scene and recognition from the audience. Diasporic musicians told me that the label served to create a 'second class citizenship' in the music scene, in comparison to their locally-based counterparts.

As a result of labelling artists' country of residence outside India, the centre : periphery relationship within the transnational musical scene is reinstated, creating a clear insider : outsider dichotomy. The differencing instigated by the cultural centre towards the conceived rootlessness and displacement of diasporic life signals to the concept of disconnectivity from the subcontinent. The disjuncture of living overseas from the subcontinent reflects the Hindu concept of the impurity of crossing the 'black waters' beyond ritually pure India, or *Bharat*, the land purified by the Brahmin (Knott 2000: 94). Refugees are particularly associated with this rootlessness, disconnectivity and under-education having fled and resettled in fragmentary societies (Kirupakaran, pers. comm., December 2012).

The outsider bracketing goes beyond the representation of diasporic artists in the music season. The positive connotations of connectivity with the cultural centre within a transnational network, rather than the 'homeland', are countered by a number of issues linked with custodianship, caste and nationality. To claim that diasporic musicians easily immerse

[12] For example, Bombay Jeyashree is from Mumbai, and Lalgudi Jayaraman was from Lalgudi, Trichy district in Tamil Nadu.

themselves into the Chennai scene would not be representative of the diasporic experience, despite the strong connections musicians develop in the city. An eminent India-based artist once told me they felt it was 'not right' for artists to come to Chennai for a month, perform and leave again for the rest of the year as it showed minimum commitment and contribution to the everyday running of the music scene in the city. In contrast, others told me that they appreciate the input from diasporic artists and enjoy coming together and performing with them during the music season. The Chennai-based vocalist, Subashini Parthasarthy, reflected that there should be an exchange of hospitality between India-based and diasporic artists. Like many other artists, Subashini is often invited to perform in diasporic locales and is treated very well, and reciprocally she thinks that diasporic artists should be welcomed in Chennai.

The lack of exchange is the biggest point of discontentment for diasporic musicians. Whilst diasporic musicians make up a small minority of those participating in the Chennai music season, there is discontentment amongst Sri Lankan musicians who perform in Chennai and receive little exposure. These musicians represent a very small proportion of Carnatic and Tamil musicians around the world, however, they also create opportunities for Chennai-based artists in the diaspora. Chennai-based musicians are invited by diasporic musicians to participate in *arangetrams* or concerts in London. The bureaucracy of these transnational performances is organised by the diasporic musicians and the performance fees for the Chennai-based artists in London are extremely high in relation to India-based fees. Such diasporic musicians are committed to contributing to the scene in Chennai, and raising the profile of Carnatic music abroad. Similarly, diasporic musicians have felt that the lack of exposure is also the result of caste and nationality discrimination.

Caste and Nationality

Prejudice relating to caste and nationality is experienced by diasporic musicians in Chennai. Caste has been a major issue in the Chennai music scene in the past, particularly as the twentieth century has seen Brahmin custodianship of the classical arts (see Subramanian 2011; Terada 2008). Currently, caste discrimination is slowly being confronted but it remains an issue. During the music season in 2013, diasporic musicians welcomed the publication of T. M. Krishna's latest book *A Southern Music* (2013) which details Carnatic music and its contexts. The Sri Lankan musicians I was spending time with were eagerly anticipating the book as it included a chapter about the Chennai music scene and its caste inequality.[13] Like Terada's (2008) article on Brahmin custodianship and the Tamil music movement, Krishna calls for a more encompassing scene and explicitly highlights the exclusion of non-Brahmin musicians and their musical contribution to a Brahmin dominated scene. Music was performed in the cultural space of rural temples by the original custodians of Carnatic music – the *devadasis, nadaswaram* and *tavil* musicians – who were not Brahmin, but *isai vellalas* (music cultivators), a catch-all term for non-Brahmin musicians. Music was accessible to anyone who happened to be in the temple, therefore the music and its performance was not aimed at one caste community as it is today in Chennai. According to Krishna, this caste elitism, or "serious social issue surrounding music", is neglected to be recognised by artists when it is in fact a musician's role to address such issues (2013: 335). Krishna calls for collective action by high-ranking musicians and a government-driven reform to "change the caste biases and injustices that are an embarrassing backdrop to karnatik music today" (2013: 357). The release of *A Southern Music* was particularly welcomed by my informants as the majority of Sri Lankans living in the diaspora are non-Brahmin, some of whom have experienced exclusion and prejudice from the Brahmin-dominated Carnatic music scene in

[13] T. M. Krishna, a classical vocalist, is known for being a maverick and is active in broadening the accessibility of Carnatic music within South Asian society. He has demonstrated this public engagement in his free concert pledge during the music season and organised a music festival in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, shortly after the war.

Chennai.

In Sri Lanka and its Tamil diaspora, people of the Vellala caste community are prominent. Sri Lankan Tamil Brahmins are largely associated with temples and religious practice rather than musical performance and therefore occupy a different position in society than Indian Brahmins in Chennai. Although the Vellala caste is "an influential community of the non-Brahmins" (Pillay 2007: 45) in India and Sri Lanka, being non-Brahmin holds stigma in a contemporary music scene constructed by a Brahmin-dominated society (see Subramanian 2011: Weidman 2006). Despite the visibility of artists such as M. S. Subbulakshmi – a high profile non-Brahmin Tamil singer, Brahmin artists still lay claim to Carnatic music:

> … the received wisdom that Brahman artists are the most numerous and distinguished enables all Tamil Brahmans … to claim Carnatic music ... as their own esteemed cultural preserve, and to interpret their virtuosity in the arts … as a sign of moral and cultural eminence (Fuller & Narasimhan 2014: 209).

Caste issues are being addressed and Brahmin musical custodianship is being challenged, however, the discrimination felt amongst specifically Sri Lankan diasporic musicians in India is not confronted in Krishna's book. Although caste discrimination affects South Asians in general, Sri Lankan musicians feel it is a combination of their caste and nationality that causes this prejudice.

Indian and Sri Lankan artists regularly interact in the transnational music scene, and Sri Lankan communities often participate in South Indian music performance in various locales around the world. Despite the contribution of Sri Lankans to Carnatic music promotion outside of India, diasporic Sri Lankan artists comment on the discrimination they feel as a result of their nationality. Although their cultural and religious connections with India are considered more 'ancient' than nation-state borders, Sri Lankan musicians find it difficult to be accepted into the Indian scene. Their 'non-Indianess' and non-Brahmin caste, in an iconically Indian and Brahmin dominated art form, causes prejudices associated with

ethno-nationalism and their perceived quality of musicianship.

Sri Lankan Tamil musicians participating in the music season experience this ethno-nationalist prejudice before they have boarded their Chennai-bound flight. Even with British citizenship, first and second generation diasporic Sri Lankans are only permitted to three month, single entry Indian visas. The standard visa issued for British citizens is at least six months long and often multiple entry. This bureaucratic ruling was sparked by the assassination of Rajiv Ghandi by the LTTE in 1991, as a reaction to the intervention of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Northern Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990.[14] The assassination has been retained in the Indian national mindset and reflected in its bureaucracy as Sri Lankan Tamils continue to be associated with terrorism.

In some cases, Sri Lankan musicians travelling to India from Sri Lanka have hidden their nationality as they believed it would impede their progress in the music scene. One diasporic Sri Lankan musician, for instance, told me he hid his non-Indian and non-Brahmin identity on arrival in India. Having fled Sri Lanka as a result of the war, he applied for a student visa to study music in Tamil Nadu. Upon his arrival in India, he was given advice from a non-Brahmin vocalist – who was successful in the music scene - to learn 'perfect' Sanskrit. By learning Sanskrit, the hope was that questions about his caste and nationality would be subverted, as it is often asserted that only Indian Brahmins have the ability to pronounce Sanskrit correctly (Fuller & Harasimhan 2014; Subramanian 2011; Weidman 2006). Therefore the vocalist's correct pronunciation might help avert the dismissal he expected to face if he was immediately recognised as non-Brahmin and non-Indian. He also attempted to subvert his nationality, and as a result he integrated the old place name of his home village in the Jaffna Peninsula to precede his name. He used this name, he told me, because it "is hard to tell if it is in India or Sri Lanka", and the name harks back to the time of

[14] The intervention of the IPKF has been reported to have been particularly violent in the North of the island, and Tamil civilians from the North have described that the IPKF were 'worse than the Sri Lankan army' during that time.

early migration of Tamil people India to Sri Lanka (Hudson 2008: 110-111).[15] Through his attempts to subvert his nationality, he admitted he tried to forget he was Sri Lankan due to the fact his efforts to fit into Indian artistic society were so great.[16]

Sri Lankan Musicianship

Many Sri Lankan diasporic musicians feel the stigmatisation of their nationality overshadows the recognition and acceptance of their musical competency in the Chennai scene.[17] Despite travelling, practising and performing in their place of settlement – often where they have lived most of their lives – they feel they are still judged on their Sri Lankan background. In a conversation with Ravichandhira, the Sri Lankan-Australian mridangist, I brought up the subject of how it is to be non-Indian in an iconically Indian music scene. He answered by referring to a type of alienation linked with his national background. Within the Chennai music circuit, he initially felt as though he was looked at as a different person, a "second class citizen" and someone "from *that* land [Sri Lanka]" (Ravichandhira, pers. comm., January 2014, his emphasis). Ravichandhira has spent most of his life outside Sri Lanka having lived and studied in London in the 1970s before settling in Melbourne. Distinguished first as an 'outsider' before being accepted as a competent musician in Chennai,

[15]At that time the ancestral links with India were particularly strong and it is commonly believed by musicians that the island was attached to mainland India.

[16]The prejudice of Sri Lankan nationality and musical performance was not only evident post-1991. Having had the opportunity to look through a private collection of letters from the 1970s, it is clear that the prejudice linking to the quality of musicianship from outside India is questioned. In a letter to a Sri Lankan musician, now a performer and teacher in London, an Indian musician considered it 'a unique feat for a Ceylon girl' to attain a first class grade in a music degree in Chennai (in 1978). This prejudice against Sri Lankan musicians was in place before the strained political relations between India, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, and reflects issues of Indian nationalism and custodianship surrounding Carnatic music.

[17]Writing about musicians from Sri Lanka who have tried to make it in Chennai, Karthigesu Sivathamby contemplates if the correct amount of recognition has been given to Sri Lankan artists, and refers to the Chennai music scene being at a level to which Sri Lankans cannot attain: "It is true that we cannot compete with Chennai, but have had great artistes and music scholars who have commanded attention and sometimes recognition from the music establishments in Chennai" (Sivathamby 2005: 289). The occasional recognition granted to Sri Lankan artists in Chennai's institutions, according to Sivathamby, reflects the feelings of the unsatisfactory attention and recognition of many Sri Lankan diasporic artists, both in Chennai and with regards to their musical work outside of South Asia. Sivathamby also indicates the widespread acceptance of other places, and musicians from these places, not being able to 'compete with Chennai'. Such is the city's positioning and reputation of being the place for music and musicians, demonstrated by the high demand of visits, tuition, and performances by Chennai-based musicians in the diaspora.

Ravichandhira suggested that it is the quality of musicianship rather than caste that is questioned when matters of Sri Lankan origin arise. This is the result of the recent history of Carnatic music in Sri Lanka. Unlike the musical lineage in the families of Indian musicians which often go back for many generations, Sri Lankan musicians can pinpoint the generation when Carnatic music knowledge came into their family. This reflects the limited historical narrative in Sri Lanka compared with the 'root' of the culture in India where long lineages are highly valued. British Sri Lankan, Kirupakaran noted how Indian families - even those in the diaspora – have 'known music' through the generations. In contrast, Kirupakaran's father 'knew music' in Sri Lanka but his knowledge and participation did not extend to his grandparents (pers. comm., January 2013; see also Reed 2010; Sykes 2011, 2013). The relatively recent popularity of Carnatic music in Sri Lanka reflects the adoption of the art form on the island in the early to mid-twentieth century, which went in tandem with the rise of ethno-nationalism and efforts to develop a distinct Tamil cultural identity. The connotations of ethno-nationalism within Carnatic music in Sri Lankan communities, largely associated with non-Brahmin Tamil identity, had the potential to overshadow the emphasis on musical aesthetics and the devotional act of musical performance. As Subramanian comments about the construction of a 'classical tradition' in Chennai in the early twentieth century, “[l]ike religion, music was sacred and therefore had to be divested of all accretions of sensuality and corrupt usage” (2011: 17). Explicit ethnonationalist symbolism in Sri Lanka would qualify as 'corrupt usage' of a 'sacred' art form such as Carnatic music.

In the interviews and discussions I have had with Sri Lanka musicians about the subject, a clear distinction between music, art, nationality, and politics is made and is often suggested that 'the music' is ultimately beyond expressions of national or ethnic identity. Paradoxically, it is their being Sri Lankan which impacts on the authenticity and 'Indianess' of Carnatic music that is portrayed as part of Indian nationalist discourse. Sri Lankan

musicians say that as a result of their 'non-Indianess', they have to work especially hard to gain recognition. Rather than forming another type of artistic community and rejecting the Chennai scene, however, these musicians continue to participate in the festival and retain synchrony with the transnational scene. Yogeswaran challenges the peripheral positioning of diasporic and Sri Lankan musicians in Chennai through his continued participation in the music scene, in addition to diasporic scenes in Europe and within other musical assemblages. Through his ongoing participation, he attempts to challenge the attitudes and divisions within the Chennai scene. Yogeswaran commented that:

> … if you are a performing artist you like to perform wherever the opportunity arises. I am a Sri Lankan. I am a Sri Lankan Tamil. So, it doesn't matter where we come from, we have something to offer, some speciality which can only enrich the whole situation ... I feel I have no barriers, music shouldn't have any barriers, people shouldn't have any barriers, people should not have any caste barriers, I am against all sorts of barriers, like many people. So I fight for the democratic values ... there might be certain prejudices in people, so I want to challenge that prejudice by performing wherever (pers.comm,. January 2013).

Yogeswaran's and others' participation in the centre implies a second 'culture of resistance' amongst Sri Lankan Tamil musicians. Rather than the first 'culture of resistance' in Sri Lanka against the Sinhalese government, this second challenges the caste, nationality and diasporic discrimination towards transnationally empowered diasporic musicians. Ravichandira and Yogeswaran concur that during their early years in Chennai, facing prejudice was hard. However, their commitment to the scene has resulted in recognition for their musical efforts, even though they feel the barriers remain in place. Yogeswaran claims that by performing in Chennai, as well as other venues around the world, he is able to be part of the whole musical assemblage and is able to challenge such attitudes through musical interaction.

Conclusion

Chennai is the cultural centre for India-based and diasporic musicians in the transnational music assemblage. Musicians regularly travel to be part of the manifested scene and participate in the music season. The city is vital for London-based musicians who apply the

conventions set in Chennai to their everyday musical practices. The annual convergence of musicians from the diaspora and the specific performances for those 'outside' the local scene strongly implies a centre - periphery relationship with the city and the rest of the musical network. Some musicians in the diaspora, like Balaskandan and Yogeswaran, view Tamil Nadu as a place of mythological return for Sri Lankan Tamil people. For them, nationality and modern nation-state boundaries are irrelevant in their emotional and spiritual connections with India, highlighting their cultural and religious kinship over nationality. For Sri Lankan artists in particular, travelling to Chennai reflects a feeling of oneness linked with their lives before migration – the climate, language, culture, religion, provide a connection to an imagined ancestral 'homeland'. By travelling to India, the musicians connect themselves to their mythical narrative of the Tamil diasporic people returning to their ancestral homeland.

The annual convergence of the music season in Chennai is part of the professional lifeworld of these musicians – to learn new melodic and rhythmic patterns, perform at *sabhas*, purchase and repair instruments, buy clothes, jewellery and *pooja* items for performances, and make and buy musical recordings. In essence, involvement in the Chennai scene facilitates their transnationally synchronised musical life back in the diaspora. Through regular attendance, diasporic musicians maintain connections with the cultural centre and with other transnational artists outside the UK, and contribute to the further synchrony of the scene and its music. The standardised conventions set out by the cultural centre have an impact on diasporic performance as transnational artists respond to the Chennai-based musical expectations. As a result, musical conventions spread throughout the transnational scene via diasporic musicians providing opportunities to 'become one' in the diaspora. The cultural centre and its position as both a physical and aesthetic central point is therefore vital for the sustainability of transnational networks and the musical assemblage.

This chapter has discussed Chennai as a transnational hub for South Indian and Sri

Lankan musical learning and performance, positioning it as the cultural centre of the transnational music scene and a place of return for displaced Sri Lankan Tamil musicians. It has explored the city as a transnational hub and cultural centre through its layering of human, spatial and institutional hubs and the translocal and transnational convergence each year. Within this central point of the transnational assemblage, a number of key institutions establish and sustain standardised musical aesthetics and expectations, which emanate within the city and beyond to diasporic localities through transnational musicians. Strict musical conventions and concert paths must be followed in order to access the scene and retain musical connectivity. Although the music season in Chennai is a time of convergence and coming together, a number of complexities arise from participating in a scene that is both locally and transnationally diverse. Reinstating the cultural centre and diasporic periphery power relation, a disconnection between caste and nationality affects the accessibility of the Indian Brahmin-dominated scene for Sri Lankan diasporic musicians.

My impression of Chennai during my fieldwork was contradictory: the city is a place of belonging but it is also a place that is not quite accessible for diasporic musicians. Musicians spend much of their annual income returning for the music season year after year, yet are frustrated by the prejudice they receive within the local music scene. Nonetheless, participating in an exclusive music scene contributes to a sense of transnational identity and empowerment of a displaced demographic.

Just as my 'being there' in Chennai has given me credibility in the diaspora, musicians' participation in the music season not only develops their musical competency, it also authenticates and validates their reputation. Visits to Chennai go beyond the advancement of musical career, however. For those who feel they have lost their homeland of Sri Lanka – or the second generation who have not had chance to emotionally connect with the island, Chennai has provided an alternative place of belonging. India is conceived as the 'original,

original homeland' and demonstrates the possibility that a cultural centre may occupy a more important position than the 'homeland' in the diasporic musical imagination.

My next chapter positions diasporic musical performance in London and highlights the impact of transnational connectivity with the 'cultural centre' of Chennai.

Chapter Five

The Inner and Outer Fields of Diasporic Music Performance in London.

Highgate Murugan temple is surrounded by the usual markings of any street in North London. Amongst vintage boutiques and coffee shops, there are indications of a Tamil community such as Tamil corner shops distinguished by the signs written in curvy Tamil script. A little further down the street, a large hall is being transformed with the front-facing details of a *gopuram,* a temple tower found in South India and Sri Lanka. As the Tamil community has become more established, symbols of their presence are becoming outward-facing towards London's multicultural society.

Once inside Highgate temple - the oldest Saiva Hindu temple in London - I walked passed building materials down to a hall in the basement. In addition to worship, the temple is the site of musical performance and learning, in particular ritual music-making such as *samaparnams*, or concerts offered as a gift to God, and temple festivals. On 11th May 2013, a Carnatic music concert was held to raise money for the temple's transformation. The music performed was vibrant, complex, and highly improvised, much like the concerts I had attended in Chennai. I received the promotional poster for the concert as a personal email from the concert organiser. As the poster was in Tamil, the small audience were almost exclusively Tamil-speakers, including the performers. Whilst Londoners passed by on the pavement above, classical and devotional songs in Sanskrit and Tamil languages filled the basement space.

A literal and metaphoric boundary existed here, which is evident in most Sri Lankan diasporic musical performances. In stark contrast to Chennai, where the city's musical scene

is palpable, the performance of South Indian music in London is only visible to certain pockets of the city. As I saw the shadows of passers-by projected from the window onto the temple hall wall, I sensed I was somehow 'inside', although not necessarily in the anthropological emic sense; rather I was inside a sphere of ritualised practice which was rarely directed outward. Although the performance was not technically hidden, it was only accessible to those culturally familiar with the ritualised musical practices in the Tamil and other Dravidian diapsoras.

In this chapter, I explore diasporic musical performance in London and position musical practices within the city. I refer to three different examples of musical performance in London and reflect on the contexts, locations and publics to which they are directed. These examples explore: devotional temple singing; a diasporic *kutcheri* concert performance directed towards the diasporic network audience; and the 'Great British Gharana', a showcase of 'British Indian classical music' for a multicultural, mainstream audience. All of these cases demonstrate the maintenance of boundaries between inner diasporic practice and outward displays of South Indian music to wider British society. In order to show that boundaries are being strategically maintained both musically and socially in London, I refer to the categories defined by the Tamil concept of *akam – puram*, or inside – outside fields. By examining these cases I question the position of Tamil diasporic musical practice in multicultural London. Cultural boundaries are strongly upheld within the diasporic network and this is particularly evident in diasporic musical performances which exhibit very limited engagement with mainstream society. Such boundaries highlight the importance of local connectivity with other diasporic sites, the sustainability of the local music scene and the generation of financial economy on which professional diasporic musicians rely. Divisions are constructed by organising inward-facing performances in order to meet the musical, social, and spiritual

expectations of local diasporic audiences and to reference practices in the cultural centre of Chennai and the Sri Lankan 'homeland'. These expectations remain the highest priority for diasporic musicians in London.

London is a city with a dynamic Indian classical and devotional music scene, yet much of this takes place beyond the scope of mainstream audiences. Many of London's British South Asian popular music scenes integrate aesthetics from London's vast multicultural music scene (Bakrania 2013; Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996; Shukla 2003), whereas Carnatic and devotional musicians largely look to India for musical influence. The lack of artistic assimilation, the strong upkeep of religious references and ritualised musical practices, and the low visibility of South Indian music compared to other South Asian musical diasporas (see Farrell et al 2005) requires further reflection and investigation. During my fieldwork, I experienced a range of performance contexts within Sri Lankan and South Indian music in London, with performances directed at different publics and intended for different functions. Such publics and functions are demonstrated in the three examples: the devotional singing for *pooja* rituals in Lewisham temple; a classical concert performed at the Highgate Hill temple directed specifically at the Tamil diasporic network; and the 'Great British Gharana' showcasing South Indian diasporic music to wide, multicultural audiences at central London's Southbank Centre. First, I consider the contexts of diasporic musical performances in London in relation to the Tamil concept of inner and outer fields.

The Inner and Outer Fields of Diasporic Muscial Performance

Performance contexts and socio-musical engagement of Carnatic and Tamil music in London reflect the fundamental concepts of the *akam* inner and *puram* outer fields in Tamil poetry and ritual. As I discussed in relation to Tamil diasporic identity in chapter two, the concept of

inner and outer worlds in relation to Tamil diasporic culture reflects the conceived division between *akam* and *puram*, or inside and outside fields. The established poetic and ritual meaning of *akam* and *puram* distinguish particular emotions, settings and foci of poetry. The *akam* and *puram*, however, extend "beyond poetry to permeate a whole way of life" (Parthasarathy 2004: 285) particularly between personal and public realms. *Akam* poetry focuses on the "matrix of familial relationships", whilst *puram* poems "are centred outside the matrix of familial relationships … they explore the relationship between man and the world around him" (Parthasarathy 2004: 285).

Within the diasporic context, the *akam* and *puram* categories are useful as analogies for the positioning and engagement of music inside the diasporic network. In this context, *akam* relates to the culturally familiar and the home, with familiar diasporic members, practices and contexts, and *puram* is associated with the culturally unfamiliar and the wider world, with unfamiliar members, practices and contexts. The division between *akam* and *puram* manifests itself in the conceptualisation of diasporic identity construction, the enculturation of the second generation 'inside' Tamil culture and the function of ritualised musical practices in London. The dichotomy reappears in contemporary performance contexts, their networks of engagement, locations and publics, thereby reflecting the importance of music and its context in collective identity construction. As I will discuss in three examples of diasporic musical performances, distinctions exist in the types of performances and the audiences they attract.

The *akam – puram* distinction is also reflected in the negotiation of British cultural influence in colonial South Asia. Considering South Asia's colonial past, methods for negotiating and maintaining a distinct and empowered 'self' have been a significant project even before the negotiation of post-colonial diasporic identities. In such a project, Partha

Chatterjee (1993) suggests another type of interior - exterior dichotomy negotiated during British colonialism. The dichotomy is similarly constructed of an outer and inner dimension that constitute the negotiation of selfhood in nineteenth century Indian nationalism (Chatterjee 1993). Chatterjee argues that in negotiating a nationalist discourse that was distinct from colonial rule, there was a separation of the cultural domain into two spheres – the material and spiritual (1989: 623). It was within the material sphere that Western hegemony had its greatest impact through science, technology, economics and statecraft. Such factors "had given the European countries the strength to subjugate the non-European people and to impose their dominance over the whole world. To overcome this domination, the colonized people had to learn those superior techniques of organizing material life and incorporate them within their own cultures" (Chatterjee 1989: 623). Though the incorporation of Western-influenced material life was essential, nationalists retained a distinction between the 'West' and 'East'. This distinction was significant as it was generally regarded that the East was superior in terms of its spiritual domain (Chatterjee 1989: 623). Therefore, the material elements of 'modern Western civilization' were combined with the distinct "spiritual essence of the national culture" (Chatterjee 1989: 623-4). Lakshmi Subramanian suggests that Carnatic music "lay at the very core of that inner domain which was not open to any negotiation and compromise" (2011: 17).[1] In a post-colonial setting, Falu Bakrania claims that Chatterjee's notions of cultural preservation remain applicable in contemporary South Asian diasporas in attempts to retain cultural authenticity (Bakrania 2013: 18).[2] Religion, caste, Carnatic music and the essentials of cultural identity were maintained as the inner self, that which "lies within, that is our true self", providing distinctiveness and difference within

1This is also evident in the renegotiation of Carnatic music and its discourse during colonialism in which elements of Western modernity were combined with Indian spirituality and authenticity (Weidman 2006).
2 Bakrania notes that it is particularly the gendered distinction of women as the purveyors of tradition which remains in the diaspora. Although this is the case in many aspects of diasporic life, musical learning and performance is more balanced in terms of gender.

colonial rule (Chatterjee 1993: 6) and in post-colonial, post-migratory resettlement. The spiritual domain bears the 'essential' marks of cultural identity (Chatterjee 1993: 6), in this case containing the essentialised identity in its strategy to sustain itself and resist cultural dominance. The outer self is open to outside influence and integration, it is something lying "outside us – a mere external, which influences us, conditions us, and to which we are forced to adjust" (Chatterjee 1989: 624). Chatterjee suggests this continues to be the "ideological justification for the selective appropriation of Western modernity" (1989: 623-24). Chatterjee's portrayal of these domains onto the social space of home, or spiritual, and the world, or material, again reflects the *akam – puram* concept; *akam* represents close, inhabited space, whilst *puram* connotes the distant, uninhabitable world.

Such a dichotomy does not reveal the many complexities of post-colonial diasporas, but they do provide a useful analogy when considering conceptions of Tamil diasporic identities, performance contexts, functions and visibility in London. They also reveal something about the overall engagement and interaction with mainstream multicultural society. Power relations in the post-colonial and post-modern world are different from those that existed during colonial rule in South Asia, and the anti-colonial, anti-Western strategies and their rationales have changed. However, the embedded colonial history, ethnic persecution, civil war, forced migration, and resettlement in a foreign multicultural society have resulted in another process of negotiation of selfhood in another forced encounter with the 'West', and the British in particular. Now positioned in multicultural British society, the post-colonised groups are negotiating their integration in the diverse global city of London.[3]

3 Referring to a dichotomy of constructing a colonised nationalist discourse to a post-colonial diasporic case is problematic. Firstly, Chatterjee's framework refers to India's nationalism under colonial rule. Carnatic music and Saiva Hinduism is regionalised to the South of India and Sri Lanka within South Asia. The idea of a singular nationalist discourse is further complicated as Tamil Nadu distanced itself from the post-colonial Indian nation-state in the twentieth century through Dravidian and Tamil nationalist movements (Clothey 2006; Krishna 1999). Similarly, nationalism is a contentious issue as the concept is complicated through ideas of Tamil nationalism within the Sri Lankan Tamil community, as well as the tensions between Indian and Sri Lankan musicians/communities (discussed in chapters two and four).

In terms of music and musical interaction with 'the West' – symbolised through multicultural arts and artistic engagement with broader society – diasporic musical performance signals to inner and outer domains. It is within the inner sanctum of *akam* or inner domain performances where constructed ideas of 'cultural authenticity' (Bakrania 2013) are maintained. Applied in a post-colonial diasporic negotiation of selfhood, the framework refers to the ongoing negotiation of traditions of the 'East' and the inner self - its 'ancient' traditions, historical narrative, customs and arts - and 'modernity', or influence of the West, and the outer compromised and influenced self – integration and citizenship in foreign multicultural society, hybridity and even loss of 'homeland' culture (see figure 5.1). This is a pertinent point particularly in the negotiation and cultivation of diasporic music and diasporic identities in foreign multicultural societies.

In contrast to the intimate, communal villages of North Sri Lanka, the fragmented urban life in wider British society has created a discourse surrounding musical learning and performance which has contributed to the maintenance of the collective 'inner self'. The first generation acknowledge that they have been through a process of adaptation to British society, whilst the second generation negotiate their Tamil-British lifeworld. The *akam* - *puram* concept is reflected in the thoughts of a first generation mother: “when you leave home and you shut the door and get out of the house then it’s English, so I thought, if you speak Tamil in the house, then you feel at home as a Tamil” (anon. pers. comm., May 2010). In many conversations I have had with first generation parents, they acknowledge that their diasporic children are 'British' and/or 'Western', however, they feel a part of them can be 'Tamil'. It is within the diasporic network - the home, Tamils schools, temples and the diasporic music scene - where 'Tamilness' is nurtured. This 'Tamilness' is enculturated through home-life, Tamil schools, musical learning and performance, language and religion,

thereby reflecting the correlation between space, place and essentialised identity construction. Unlike many other diasporic groups and studies which focus on adaptation and hybridity of music in resettlement, this actively separate, differenced Tamil 'part' is reflected in the music being learned and performed and the contexts of performance.

The *puram* performances, and the mainstream, multicultural network they engage, represent national ideologies – top-down concepts of integration, bureaucracy, frameworks, laws and conventions prescribed by the expectations of the multicultural and national public. The *puram* also indicates the inclusion of musical influences and performances as a result of culture contact. Although some musicians feel marginalised in terms of broader performance opportunities, the empowered community maintain a strategic distance with this outer domain. Through the up-keep of an inner, spiritual domain, diasporic priorities are met, along with the maintenance of diasporic needs, values and expectations. To contrast with the outer world, inside the diasporic network is a place of Tamil diasporic intimacy, and of spatial and identity construction.

Akam	***Puram***
'Home'	'World'
Culturally familiar	Culturally unfamiliar/less familiar
Sacred and ritualised – 'tuned in'	Secular and unritualised
Following a known musical path	Following an unknown/innovative path
Rituals adhered	Rituals broken
Limited Public	Wide public
Agency within diasporic network	Must meet 'national' expectations

Figure 5.1: The characteristics of the *akam* and *puram* analogy.

Akam Inner Musical Practices and Diasporic Networks

Akam performances function as opportunities for diasporic 'oneness' and the regathering of an otherwise fragmented society. Musical performance is a key event for 'becoming one again' within the Tamil diaspora. The *akam* – inside and familiar – performances engage the diasporic network, thereby fulfilling specific functions for diasporic audiences. They take

place in a familiar constellation of locations, in temples or suburban venues familiar to the musical community. They are introduced according to South Indian conventions in the Tamil language and follow the ritualised practices associated with musical performances in South Asia and South Asian diasporas. These ritualised practices include 'tuning in' through *pooja* rituals and invocatory songs prior to the performance; following the path of performance set out from the cultural centre; and creating the 'correct' auspicious settings for musical performance. *Akam* inner performances are events to create Tamil space in the city, to perform and redefine essentialised identity in a 'culturally authentic' setting.

Like Chatterjee's spiritual inner sphere of the self, *akam* references the 'essentials' of cultural identity, of what is means to be Sri Lankan Tamil or South Indian. In the diaspora, the essentials of religion, language, music and dance, values, religious symbols and material culture are established as icons of such identity. The inner domain is where these essentials are protected and sustained. The 'home' and the inner world of diasporic subjects is not just the home itself. Another type of metaphorical home is an intimate space in which the essentials of diasporic ontologies are engaged. It is within this inner domain that diasporic emplacement occurs. Ritualised formats, conventions and means of devotion enable an environment to reach God and retain sociocosmic, homeland and historical connectivity.

The locations of musical performance similarly reflect the 'home' and the 'world' in the inner and outer domains. Whilst the *akam* category refers to the home and its vicinity, and other familiar life-spaces such as the temple, Tamil school and suburban theatres regularly used for Tamil cultural events, the *puram* category refers to the 'world' where unfamiliar and cross-cultural interactions take place, such as Central London's art centres and concert halls. The familiarity and iconicity of ritualised practices are known amongst a diasporic network of participants across London. The highly ritualised musical performances are used to gather

the diasporic network in an otherwise scattered or fragmented society. The inner performances are also familiar, known and connected in terms of their location, which are close to homes and temples, the centres of diasporic life-space.

Furthermore, the *akam* diasporic practices that reflect homeland and cultural centre practices are vital in the continuation of "a glorious Tamil past preserved in the present" (Clothey 2006: 15). Like Tamil community members in London, both from Sri Lanka and India, Clothey notes the conception of how

> the classical traditions of India have been preserved in a relatively pure form, perhaps more carefully than in any other part of India. Hence, Carnatic music, the classical dance of bharata natyam and the rich classical traditions of temple architecture, iconography, and ritual have been preserved ... there persists a myth... of a glorious Tamil past that has been preserved into the present. In a certain sense, then, the performance of public ritual, like that of dance or music ... is a "cultural performance" that encapsulates within a confined space and time a sense of what a community wants to demonstrate of itself to its children as well as to outsiders (2006: 15).

This is particularly noticeable in representations of 'Tamil-ness' in London, although these representations are accessible to the second generation rather more than the 'outsiders' suggested by Clothey. As a result, the music community in London is largely directed inwards to construct this 'glorious Tamil past preserved in the present' in its diasporic setting through music, dance, iconography and religious ritual. Such constructions result in performances such as the one described in the opening paragraph, in a temple 'inside' the diasporic network, to a limited public and retained within ritualised musical practices. I now discuss musical performance in the context of temple worship.

1. Devotional Temple Singing

Ritual music-making provides a platform for engagement with local devotees and musicians as well as a connection to God and the cosmos through familiar ritualised activity. The temple, or *kovil*, is an important outward facing symbol of Hindu devotionalism and a site of inner diasporic musical performance. Importantly, Saiva Hindu temples in London act as

fixed, permanent sites for cultural and religious activity. They are significant sites of Tamil Hindu collectivity amongst the urban landscape of London's periphery.

The London Siva Temple is located on a side street in the centre of Lewisham, South East London. Its distinctive white *gopuram,* a South Indian temple tower, stands amongst a skyline of Victorian terraces, churches and apartment blocks. The *gopuram* tower is intricately sculpted by highly-skilled Indian workmen brought to London to create the highly symbolic, iconic and familiar structure for devotees. *Gopuram* towers usually punctuate the landscape of both rural and urban areas of India and Sri Lanka. The structures are increasingly emerging in Tamil diasporic locales. The Siva temple is gated and a red flag with an image of Nandi – the bull associated with Siva - billows above the temple complex. The iconic structure is displayed to passers-by, functioning as both a rare display of Hindu devotionalism and Sri Lankan Tamil presence in London, as well as a familiar icon for Saiva Hindu devotees (see figure 5.2).[4] Whilst the structure outwardly symbolises itself as 'South Asian' and 'Hindu', I felt as though I crossed a distinct boundary when I entered the temple: I crossed from the 'outside' London society into the interior space of Tamil spiritual life in the diaspora.

4 Samuel K. Parker considers the *gopuram* relates to the exterior and, therefore, the *puram* part of the temple in his chapter that reflects the *akam* and *puram* in temple geography. He states that the *gopuram* "embodies the most exteriorized and public of the temple's spaces" (2008: 158).



Figure 5.2: London Sivan Kovil in Lewisham, South East London, September 2013. The photograph was taken during the annual *ther* chariot festival, where the deity of the temple is processed around the neighbourhood following ritualised homeland practices in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu, India.

Inside the temple, Tamil devotional songs written by seventh century Saivaite saints[5] echo around its marble interior twice a day. These *pannisai* songs - *pann* refers to the modal system that was a precursor to modern *ragas* and *isai* means music - represent primordial Tamil culture and are performed to complete *pooja* rituals. The performance of *pannisai* in the temple during worship remains of great importance among Tamil Hindus in the city and contributes to the maintenance of well-defined 'Tamilness' within the inner spiritual life of the community. *Pannisai* is an exclusively Tamil temple song repertory used in Saiva worship and it is a vital part of *Tamil Isai* music and its history. The repertory of songs are Tamil hymns and have travelled with Tamil-speaking diasporas outside of South Asia. Singing the

5The composers of these songs are manifested as bronze figures in the temple together with all 63 *nayamars* (saint poets) in Saivism. The saint poets wrote between the sixth and eleventh centuries CE.

Tamil hymns is an important religious act by Hindu devotees. The songs are directed towards Siva, the Supreme Being in Saiva Hinduism, and therefore singing the songs is a means of *bhakti* religious devotion. It is also a significant practice from the Sri Lankan 'homeland'. Cultural activist Bremakumar and singer Yogeswaran recalled that temple music - *pannisai* songs and *nadaswaram* shawm and *tavil* drum music - took priority over Chennai-style *kutcheri* concerts in Sri Lanka when they were growing up (pers. comm., November 2013; pers. comm., January 2013).

Pannisai songs are performed daily by the Siva temple's resident *oduvar*, a professional temple-based singer performing the devotional songs to Siva. Despite the age of the *pannisai* songs, and the distance they have travelled from Southern Indian and Sri Lanka, their ritualised performance remains important in London. Lewisham's *oduvar*, Sami Dhandapani, was hired from Chennai in 1998 to perform *pannisai* songs in the temple for *pooja* rituals. *Oduvar* Dhandapani lives in the temple complex with the priests who perform *pooja* rituals and completes religious rituals with his performance of the songs to Siva. He is also responsible to play recorded *mangala isai*, or auspicious music, of the *nadaswaram* shawm and *tavil* drum over the temple's P.A. system at appropriate times in the rituals. Other temples in London employ resident *nadaswaram* and *tavil* musicians from Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, but *Oduvar* Dhandapani is the only professional temple singer in London. As a result, he teaches in a number of temples across the capital. *Oduvar* Dhandapani only engages with Tamil devotees and Sri Lankan and South Indian diasporic musicians, so is very much within the interior of the Tamil diasporic network. Unlike many musicians who have relocated to the UK, Dhandapani lives his professional life in London, whilst his family remain in Chennai. Dhandapani travels annually to Chennai in April to conduct a *pannisai* festival at the *Tamil Isai Sangam*, bringing together enthusiasts from

India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the UK and other diasporic localities. He is highly transnational, regularly travelling between India and the UK and he also performs in Tamil diasporic localities in Europe and Asia. In contrast to Sri Lankan Tamil musicians, Dhandapani has not permanently resettled in London and upholds strong connections with Chennai.

Inside the temple, the Brahmin priests prepare all the vital elements to invite God into the space for the large evening *pooja*; petals are picked from flowers to throw over the Siva *linga* – the aniconic cyclindrical stone representing Siva[6] - and milk and water are put in the correct vessels to bathe the deity. Having finished his private Carnatic and Tamil music classes with local students, such as myself, *Oduvar* Dhandapani walks into the temple just before the start of the *pooja.* His appearance is similar to the priests; a white *jippa* sarong, layers of beads, and adorned with the coconut ash across his forehead and arms to symbolise his Saiva faith. Once the *pooja* has begun and the priests have recited the necessary vedic chants and attended to the deity, Dhandapani performs his role in the ritual. He sings an invocatory prayer to 'tune in' to the ritual and the cosmos. He then goes on to sing the *thevaram* – literally 'God songs' – towards the deity as a devotional act and ode to God (see figure 5.3). Singing with the drone of the electronic *sruti* box, he punctuates the first, fifth and seventh beats of the eight beat *talam* cycle of the song with small cymbals. From his vast knowledge of the *pannisai* repertoire, Dhandapani selects songs to sing in accordance with a conventionalised format, what I refer to as a song path, to accompany the *pooja* for each of the nine deities around the interior of the temple. In video example 5.1, Dhandapani sings a *thiruvasakam* in *raga mohanam* towards the Siva *linga.*

6 The symbolism surrounding the *linga* is contested. The *linga* is defined by a number of scholars as a phallus, although not in the Western sense (Johnson 2009: 187). Instead, it is a sign of creative power (Parker 2008: 158), simultaneously creative and destructive (Johnson 2009: 187). The *linga* is also a non-human representation of Siva (Flood 1996: 292). Wendy Doniger (2011) critiques the concept that the *linga* is a phallic symbol, but similarly critiques that the *linga* has no grounding in its phallic symbolism as a result of close readings of the Hindu mythology surrounding *linga* worship.



Figure 5.3: *Oduvar* Dhandapani performing the *pannisai* song path to complete the *pooja* ritual, London Siva Temple, October 2013.

Dhandapani trained in classical music in Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu and completed an apprenticeship as an *oduvar* temple singer in Chennai's iconic Kapaleeswarar Sivan Kovil, next to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan where a number of London's musicians performed during the music season. Through Dhandapani's presence, performance and tuition in London, musical and performer transnational networks are being sustained. The songs that Dhandapani sings connects ritual space in London with the homelands, cultural and spiritual centres, and with the cosmos. The same songs are sung in *poojas* around Greater London's saivite temples by priests and devotees in addition to Dhandapani. The songs, context and song path are highly ritualised and symbolic, based on practices in India and Sri Lanka. These fulfil a devotional and Tamil cultural purpose and reveal musical and performer networks with South Asia. The performance of *pannisai* in London is a vital part of retaining ritual, musical and historical connections across nations and continents.

Learning Pannisai in London

Pannisai is incorporated into *kutcheri* concert performances in London and Chennai, however, my main experience of the music has been through my participation in individual and group lessons at Lewisham temple. Every Saturday afternoon, first and second generation Hindu diasporic devotees attend the temple to sing *pannisai.* Some singers arrive early in order to pray to the deities ahead of the class. They circulate the interior of the temple clockwise from Ganesh in the left-hand corner and finish by praying to the Siva *linga* deity in the centre of the space. After anointing their forehead with the horizontal coconut ash line representing Siva and the red powder *pottu,* or *bindi,* as the third eye, the devotees sit to the side of the Siva *linga.* The group is almost exclusively made up of first generation Sri Lankan Tamils, who arrived in the late 1970s and 1980s. Some members are Tamil devotees from India and Malaysia and most singers perform key roles within the diasporic network. The performance of *pannisai* is a connection to the 'homeland' for the first generation musicians and devotees that participate. In addition to the memory of their youth and the pre-war homeland, the songs have local geographical importance as each song is dedicated to a particular temple in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Sri Lanka. Many first generation Sri Lankan devotees and musicians recall learning *pannisai* in the temples near their homes in the north of the island. It is a spiritual act to sing for God, whereas in Carnatic concert the expectations of the human audience is taken into account. In the case of *pannisai*, songs are sung to create an intimate space between the devotee/s and God. The voice has a particularly important part in South Indian music as it is considered to be a 'gift from God'. It is therefore believed by musicians and community members that singers with a good voice have been 'chosen' by God: “We believe music [singing] is God's gift, having a good voice and all the

necessary [musical] skills is the very best gift that only God can give you ... Music is the best [way] to reach God" (Gohila, pers. comm., September 2013). The closeness with God achieved through direct song was particularly important during the early resettlement period, more so than classical music as the musicians and audience had not yet 'gathered' at that time. Gohila, a vocal teacher who left Sri Lanka in the early to mid 1980s, arrived in London and spent much of her initial time in the new city at the Highgate Temple, singing *pannisai* in front of the deities as a way of connecting her old life in Sri Lanka and her new life in the UK (pers. comm., September 2013).

Thirty years after Gohila used *pannisai* to ease her resettlement, I regularly attended the adult *pannisai* class at Lewisham on Saturday afternoons. As three o'clock approached, myself and a number of devotees would gather to sit in a semi-circle on the heated temple floor, waiting for *Oduvar* Dhandapani to come and teach us. As our teacher arrived we would raise our hands in a prayer position to greet and show respect to him on his arrival. Others showed their respect with the full *pranam* gesture – the prostration at the feet of the teacher to request of his blessings. Typically a certain amount of shuffling took place whilst the teacher set up the *shruti* box and the students found the correct place in their notes written in the Tamil script. The shruti drone was set at pitch 5 (G) to accommodate the male and female singers in the group. We began each class by consolidating our collective *shruti* by singing 'om' to *sa, pa,* ***sa****, pa, sa* - the tonic, fifth, upper tonic, fifth and tonic of the fundamental pitch. During this moment in our lesson, we sang the *veda* of 'oneness' to bring our collective pitches together, to 'tune in' and to connect ourselves with the sound of the *shruti*, our surroundings and each other. Once Dhandapani indicated his satisfaction with our *shruti* pitch, we would raise our hands up again to the prayer position to recite an invocatory prayer 'Namaparvati pathayae', an auspicious invocation to address God and denounce the ego.

Unlike *pannisai* songs, the prayer is recited using just three pitches replicating the recitation of Sanskrit Vedic chants. Following the initial prayer to Siva and his consort Parvati, the *pannisai* begins. The sequence of songs invariably progress in the conventional South Indian 'song path' that Dhandapani learned and sung in Tamil Nadu's temples (see figure 5.3a). For two hours, we would sing through an extended song path, paying attention to each of the *pannisai* forms and following the ritualised order of the songs.

***Oduvar* Dhandapani's Song Path**

Order of Song Path	Song Type	Song form and characteristics	Ragam and Talam	Example sung in London
	Namaparvati invocation			
1	*Thevaram*	Song in metre sung for Siva. Often utilises two or three tempi.	Any *ragam* or *talam.*	'Niraikazhal Aravam'. 'Thoddudaya Seviyan'.
2	*Thiruvasakam*	*Virutham* – melodically and rhythmically improvised.	*Mohanam raga* (pentatonic), not set to *talam.*	'Kuraivilaa Kothilaa'
3	*Thiruvisaipa/ Thirumurai*	*Virutham* – melodically and rhythmically improvised.	*Anantha bhairavi raga*	'Olivalar Vilakke'
4	*Thirupalanthu*	Song in metre.	*Anantha bhairavi raga, adi talam* (8 beats)	'Paalujkkup Paalakan'
5	*Peryia puraanam*	*Virutham* – melodically and rhythmically improvised.	*Ragam mathiya maavadhi*, not set to *talam.*	'Uulakelaam Uunarnthu'.
6	*Abirami anadanthi*	*Virutham* - a piece dedicated to Abirami, the female manifestation of Siva. In group situations, Dhandapani asks only the women to sing this piece.	Any *ragam*, not set to *talam.*	'Aaththaalai Yengal Abhiraama'
7	*Thirupukkal*	Song in metre dedicated to Siva's son, Murugan. This form of *pannisai* is most commonly featured in classical concerts, particularly towards the conclusion of the performance.	Any *ragam* or *talam.*	'Ore Mukam' 'Muthai Tharu'

8	*Thiruvaalthu*	Song in metre.	*Ragam* maand or 'resettling' *mathiya maavadhi.*	'Uruvai Aruvai'
	Namaparvati invocation			

Figure 5.3a: The 'song path' of *pannisai* in London. *Oduvar* Dhandapani adheres to this path in his performance to the main Siva lingam deity during *pooja* and in the group classes in the temple. Dhandapani's song path corresponds to that set out by Geetha Rajagopal (2009) in the performance of *pannisai* in temples in South India.

The first in the song path is the *thevaram*. A popular and well-known *thevaram* is 'Todduya Seviyan' that we sing each week. Originally written in *pann* modes, the performance of *pannisai* songs has been sustained by substituting the *pann* mode for a *raga* believed to best replicate the original *pann.* Therefore, we sing 'Toddudaya' in pentatonic *raga gambeera naatai. Pannisai* songs follow a verse form identified as "*bhajan*" form (Viswanathan and Harp Allen 2004: 17). The songs in *talam* rhythmic cycles are often delivered in three tempos - *prathama kala* – first, slowest tempo or 'speed'; *dvitiya kala* – second tempo, twice as fast as the first and *trtiya kala* – third tempo, four times as fast as the first *kala*. Through demonstration and imitation, we sing the first two lines of the song according to Dhandapani's tuition. There is limited scope for individual creativity in the performance of *pannisai.* There are short *alapanas* preceding the songs, and we add *gamakas,* or ornaments, to the melodic lines which are otherwise sung in unison. Although some creative elaboration is attempted by individuals within the group before collectively settling on the final tonic of a song, there is more opportunity for creativity when singing non-metrical *virutham* prayers, such as *thiruvasakam* and *periya puranam.* The *Oduvar* does, however, teach a certain melodic path in singing these pieces. As in the *guru-shishya* tradition, he is keen for his students to replicate the style he was taught by his own *gurus* in India. When a new song is approached in the course of singing through the song path, Dhandapani introduces the new song by singing the *arohana* (ascending scale) and *avarohana* (descending scale) of the

ragam, emphasising the *gamakas* that feature in that particular collection of notes and provides the group with snippets of music theory in Tamil. Dhandapani introduces key features of the music theory and raga characteristics in the group lessons as a number of the students have not had a formal musical education. Once the *raga* is established, the process of demonstration and imitation ensues. Some students record the songs on their smartphones or sound recorders, whilst others rely on memory and the small musical directions written on their song texts.

Despite Tamil being their native language, many students in the group admit the first millennium Tamil poetry is sometimes complex and requires explanation from Dhandapani during lessons. In contrast to classical music, the focus here is on the lyrical content, communication with God and melody, rather than improvisation. The pannisai songs do not function to exhibit the virtuosity or innovative musical 'ideas' expected in Carnatic music, rather they contribute to the collective worship of God. As one of the singers pointed out to me, *pannisai* is "not competitive like classical music, it's about singing for the Almighty" (*pannisai* singer, pers. comm., May 2013). The melodies of the songs are therefore less technically demanding than some *kriti* compositions. As in Carnatic music, however, the *gamakas,* or ornaments, are integral to achieve the 'correct' sound and aesthetic. The *Oduvar* often reminds the group that "if there are no *gamakas,* it is not South Indian music" (Dhandapani, pers. comm., July 2013).[7]

Despite the educational dimension, the overall function of the class is directed towards the divine act of singing these songs and maintaining their performance in the diaspora. Towards the end of the two hours we approach the *thirupukkal* songs, indicating the

7 Producing the musical embellishments, along with perfecting the Tamil pronunciation, has been the biggest challenges in my own learning process. The pronunciation and the clarity of the melody and words are significant factors in this singing, and this has been another struggle in singing the hymns in an idiomatic manner.

end of the song path. As the class draws to an end, devotees gather in the temple waiting for the evening *pooja* and listen to the songs sung by the group. The class was always brought to a 'correct' end through the repetition of the *mantras* recited at the beginning of the session used to 'tune it'. In a circular process, the prayer to Siva and Parvati is recited, and the *shruti* sung again to 'om'. The group disperses to attend *pooja,* to purchase groceries from the South Indian shop opposite the temple, and to life 'outside'.

2. Diasporic *Kutcheri* Concert Performances

After attending the *pannisai* class in Lewisham temple on a Saturday afternoon in May 2013, I checked a small wooden display stand in the temple foyer next to the shoe racks. Here I found Sri Lankan and Tamil newspapers, the Tamil Pages, a directory for Tamil businesses in London, and glossy flyers advertising up-coming music and cultural events. In addition to word of mouth, the leaflets left on this stand were my primary means of finding out about concerts in London. Such limited publicity serves to maintain the boundaries around the inner field of Tamil diasporic music performance.

After the *pannisai* class, I made my way up to Highgate in North London to attend a concert by Sarangan in the long established Murugan temple on Archway Road. Like many events, the concert was advertised amongst the diasporic network. This particular performance at the Highgate temple was advertised through a poster in Tamil, thereby limiting the potential audience to Tamil readers (see figure 5.4).

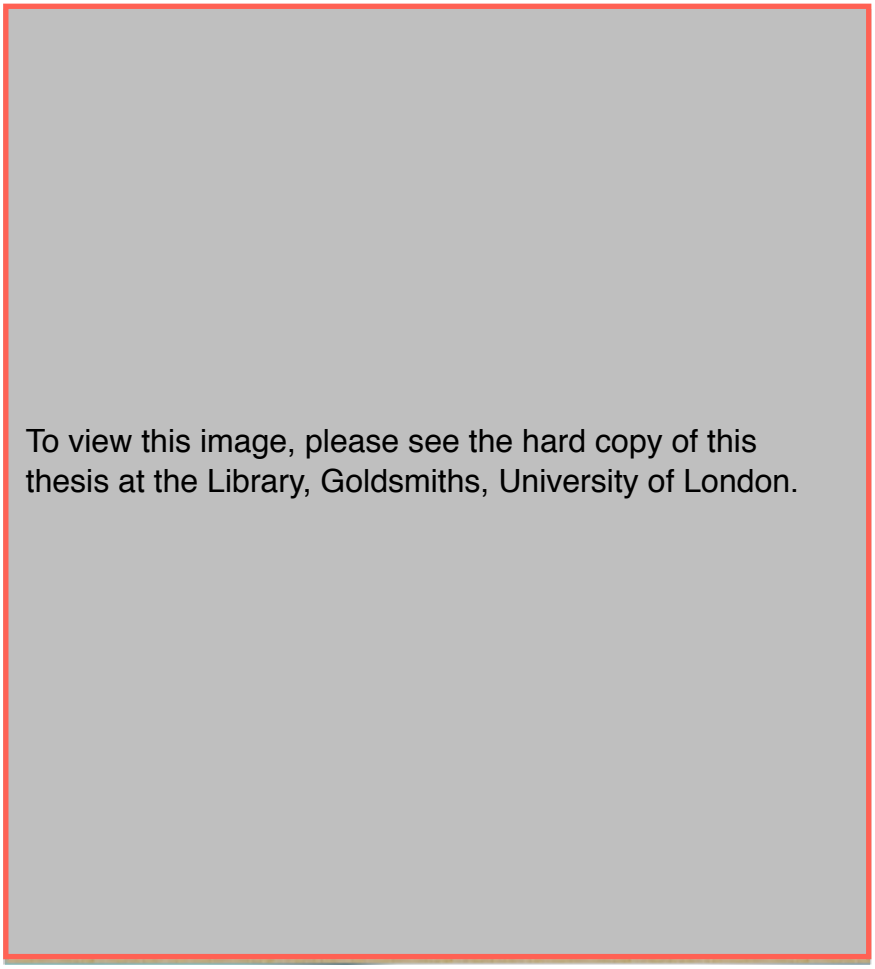


Figure 5.4: The promotional poster for the fund-raising concert at Highgate Temple. The poster advertises the event and the programme of artists.

Performances are generally advertised through the distribution of A4 glossy flyers in Tamil and/or English, left in temple foyers, handed out during other community events or displayed in Sri Lankan and South Indian grocery shops. The flyers are distributed in conjunction to text messages, emails and social media amongst 'known persons' to attract an audience from the Tamil diasporic public. I have often received such personal emails and text messages, as well as email flyers sent to selected recipients.[8] Institutions with a high number of Indian music enthusiasts and affinity interest groups, such as the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, are rarely used to distribute these leaflets. Instead, advertising is specifically directed at a Tamil

8Concerts can also be advertised on Deepham TV or G TV, Tamil diasporic television channels broadcast from London, although these tend to be the high profile concerts by visiting artists from Chennai.

diasporic public. Such limited promotion reflects the intention that these are 'inner' events that sustain Tamil diasporic gatherings.

The diasporic gathering of musical events importantly relates to the public to which performances are oriented. The type of public being engaged has a large impact on the presentation of the music, its format and function. There is no one 'public', particularly within diverse South Asian diasporas and mainstream multicultural London. Publics are therefore varied and their public spaces occur at different locations around the city, and subsequently engage audiences ranging from worshipping devotees in the temple, Tamil diasporic audiences, wider South Asian audiences, Western classical audiences, passers-by and 'world music' affinity interest groups. Whether limited publicity amongst the diaspora is a strategic choice or an inaccessibility to engage a broader, mainstream public, performances are often directed towards the diasporic community, particularly those in public venues in the suburban, peripheral locations.

In his book on Canadian indigenous music and dance, Byron Dueck highlights imaginaries and intimacies in public music and dance performance. Rather than the private – public dichotomy, imaginaries are social formations that occur through the circulation of mass-mediated performances and publications (2013: 6) and therefore relate to a public of strangers, that encompass many more people than one person could know (2013: 5). Intimacies, on the other hand, refer to interactions between known and knowable persons and involve face-to-face social and musical contact (2013: 7). Public spaces are significant as they are oriented towards a 'public of strangers' - who are physically close during a performance but socially distant (Dueck 2013: 8). Intimacy, however, is created in public spaces through the mutual experience of the performance, and therefore public venues are "simultaneously oriented to an imagined public and sites of face-to-face engagement" (Dueck

2013: 7). In contrast to imaginaries and publicity, Dueck discusses the orientation away from publicity and the avoidance of mass-mediated circulation as 'antipublicity'. Antipublicity represents a prioritisation of intimate interactions and relationships, a 'production of intimacy' and performances that place significance on face-to-face relationships (2013: 12-13). In the Canadian example, 'antipublicity' refers to instances such as the non-circulation of sacred rites or non-mass-mediated circulation of professional recordings via a record label.

The importance here is to pluralise 'publics' and to understand the different conventions involved in performances that are oriented towards these different publics. This understanding will help to position Tamil diasporic music performance in broader multicultural London society, particularly as performance settings and styles differ greatly depending on levels of engagement within the inner and outer domains of diasporic engagement. Also, it is important to acknowledge that in public spaces in diasporic concerts, many audience members have historical, cultural and social connections, therefore they already experienced many face-to-face engagements in the past through previous performances, attending *pooja* at the temple, being involved in Tamil schools and other community initiatives. By limiting publicity of diasporic performances to the Tamil diaspora, the known, and expected, essential symbols of language, music, rituals and customs ensure connectivity, intimacy and gathering of the diasporic community in public spaces. A Tamil diasporic public is an 'imaginary', and whilst concerts take place in public venues, there is a prioritisation of face-to-face relationships and cultural, social and musical intimacy as many of the audience members are already known to each other in some way. Information about the public performance is not extended towards a mainstream public therefore social, historical and/or cultural 'strangers' are rarely present at diasporic concerts. This is not antipublicity but it is a limited publicity and I suggest an appropriate term to think about this limited publicity

in the diaspora is as a 'diasporic public'. In the case of the Tamil diaspora in London, the diasporic public distinguishes between the historical, cultural and social relations between one public and the rest. Therefore, the Tamil diasporic public is limited to those in the diasporic network; intimacy is built in public spaces as known and unknown diasporic members gather and, importantly, are linked through the common network and the common idea of 'Tamilness'. The resulting audiences in public spaces are therefore historically, culturally and socially close through experiences of marginalisation, migration and resettlement, and they embody cultural knowledge of music, religion, language and social conventions. Despite the performance taking place in a public venue, there is a priority of Tamil intimacy created through expectations of familiar rituals, musical conventions and sharing vegetarian food. The diasporic network prioritises engagements oriented towards the diasporic public, therefore in performance situations in public space, the performance can be presented in Tamil with the culturally-expected conventions and rituals of the audience. These events are not marketed via mainstream mass media therefore they do not attempt to engage a broader mainstream public. Diasporic concerts create familiarity and intimacy through well-known conventions, the emplacement of divine and Tamil space through musical performance, and the collective development of an essentialised identity within the inner sphere amongst a specific audience. Therefore diasporic *kutcheri* performances function within the inner domain of diasporic ontologies. However, their function is twofold as they are a means of differencing in a multicultural society despite being within the inner sphere. The outer sphere has a presence here, in that it exists as the 'other' in contrast to the 'self'.

The concert I attended in the Murugan temple in Highgate in May 2013 was one such

performance. On entering the temple, I was directed down to the basement performance space by a resident priest. A few members of the temple board, including a key organiser and cultural activist Bremakumar, were setting up the space, but the musicians were yet to arrive. In contrast to the elaborate interior of the temple above, the performance space was sparsely decorated and served as a multi-purpose hall for cultural events, weddings and community meetings.

Eventually, the musicians arrived and promptly went up to the main temple to pray before the concert (see figure 5.5). The audience consisted of Sarangan's students, their families, other local musicians and devotees. Despite the time advertised on the poster, most arrived an hour later like the musicians. A small shrine was assembled at the right-hand side of the stage with pictures of Gods, Goddesses, and saint-composers positioned alongside vases of flowers, fruit and oil lamps. The music concert was prepared with *pooja* rituals performed towards the shrine on the stage. With the essentials in place, the concert started over an hour late, reflecting the somewhat accepted concept of flexible 'Tamil time'. The concert began with a short dance performance by a student followed by a short set of songs performed by violin and *mridangam* students.[9] Some initial issues with the PA and sound quality delayed the performance further as non-specialist community members acted as sound engineers. Following the Sri Lankan custom, sweet tea and spicy snacks were offered to the audience whilst watching the performance. Once the sound issues were resolved, the emcee introduced the performance and the artists in Tamil, with occasional English summaries for the benefit of the second generation. Sarangan opened the concert by 'tuning in' to the *shruti* by settling on the *sa* tonic note to sing 'om', in the same way I had that afternoon in the *pannisai* class. The vocalist went on to begin his own song path with the

9 The student performance was noteworthy particularly as the *mridangam* was played by a female student. Women playing the *mridangam* is uncommon due to the connotations of male physical strength needed to play the instrument.

recitation of the invocatory Sanskrit *sloka* verse 'Guru Bramha'. The *sloka* was performed in the pentatonic *raga hamsadhwani* in the metreless *virutham* form, with the violin following the melody sung by the vocalist. The inner space is prepared for the musical performance in the ritualised manner of invocation to bring together the musicians, audience, the surroundings, God and the cosmos. Unlike the concerts I attended in Chennai, Sarangan spent a good amount of time on this initial 'tuning in'. This is typical of his London performances to prepare the space and to connect with the sociocosmic network. 'Tuning in' counteracts the distance between London, the homelands and the cultural centre. Such a ritualised invocatory beginning of a concert performance reflects the spirituality embedded within the performance of music and the 'divine experience' and 'oneness' sought in musical performance. Homeland and spiritual adherence is met by the selection of highly spiritual repertoire performed in classical concerts as well as the preceding *pooja* rituals and the observance of vegetarianism and non-alcoholism during the evening.



Figure 5.5: A Carnatic concert held at Highgate Murugan temple to raise money for the temple's renovation, 11th May 2013. The performers are: Sarangan (vocal), Jalatharan (violin) and Kirupakaran (*mridangam*).

Following a similar path to concerts in Chennai, Sarangan began the performance with a song devoted to Ganesh, the remover of obstacles, in order to create favourable settings for a successful performance. Important references to the highly-regarded 'trinity' of composers were made through the performance of *kriti* songs. Such a *kriti* included 'Maha Ganapathim', which was performed after a short *alapana.* The song is in *raga natta* - a *ghana*, or 'heavy' *raga*, considered respectable in the first half of concerts in India and in diasporic performances. The text of 'Maha Ganapathim' is in Sanskrit – the divine language associated with ritual and the arts according to Brahmanical custodians (Weidman 2006: 306). Although diasporic audiences prefer Tamil compositions, the performer had mentioned to me before the concert that there is a certain amount of acceptance in the diaspora of

compositions in Sanskrit, as this is the language used to communicate with God during *pooja* (Sarangan, pers. comm., March 2013). Although songs in 'heavy' *ragas* are considered unrelatable to audiences who do not 'know' music, 'Maha Ganapathim' was popularised in the 1985 Tamil film *Sindhu Bhairavi*. In general, songs popularised through films are well received by diasporic audiences who have not received a formal music education. Film songs from the 1960s, 70s and 80s are especially popular due to the fact they remind diasporic audiences of Sri Lanka before conflict, displacement and migration. The 'Muthai Tharu' *thirupukkal* song, for instance, which appeared in the 1964 Tamil film *Arunagirinathar*, is a favourite amongst diasporic audiences and Sarangan performed it at the end of his concert in Highgate temple.

Sarangan only occasionally introduced the songs, *ragas* and *talams* being performed (listed in figure 5.6). Such knowledge is assumed to be known by the audience. A great deal of cultural and musical knowledge is vital to understanding a performance in this diasporic network. The concert path was followed as anything else would constitute a 'light, semi-classical' concert rather than a 'classical' *kutcheri*. Sarangan's performance, like many other diasporic concerts, replicated the classical aesthetic, format and conventions prescribed from India. The inclusion of many Tamil *kriti* classical songs and light songs, however, presented some local variation. The musicians who performed at the Highgate temple adopted the standard Carnatic framework and eschewed 'outside' musical features. The choice of *ragas*, song forms, compositions and improvisatory conventions and their placement in the performance followed the standard Indian concert path. Nonetheless, some musical priorities and expectations were different and this is often the case when comparing concerts in the diaspora and in Chennai. In Chennai, highly musically knowledgable audiences requires a technically exceptional performance that 'challenges' the musicians, whereas diasporic

publics do not have such high expectations for technical virtuosity and high-levels of ornamentation. Musical conformity with the 'cultural centre' of Chennai was important as a senior Indian mridangist sat in the front row, tapping *talam* and interacting with the performers on-stage in a *rasika* capacity, whilst music students tapped *talam* along with the musicians. Members of audience members sang along with the melody or hummed along with the *raga.* Musical innovation and deviation from musical conventions, therefore, would go against the expectations of this particular audience.

Composition	Ragam	Talam	Composer	Language	Musical Conventions
Sangeetham					
Varnam					-
Maha Ganapatim – kriti form	Nattai	Roopakam	Muthuswamy Dikshitar	Sanskrit	Alapana
Ennai Nee Maravade	Amrithavaeshini	Adi	Dhandapani Desikar	Tamil	Short alapana
….	-	-	-	-	Short alapana
Brova Bharama – kriti form	Bahudaari	Deshaadi	Thyagaraja	Telugu	Short alapana
Murugaa Murugaa Enraal	Saveri	Caapu	Periyasaami Thoran	Tamil	Short alapana, niraval
Mayil Vahana	Mohanam	Adi	Papanasam Sivan	Tamil	Extended Alapana, kalapana swaram
Tulasida Dalamulace – kriti form	Maamayaalava Gowla	Roopakam	Thyagaraja	Telugu	Niraval
Sri Kamalambike Shive – kriti form	Sree	Khanda jati	Muthuswamy Dikshitar	Sanksrit	Straight
Sadatava Paadha – main composition	Shanmugapriya		Balamuralikrishna	Sanskrit	Extended alapana, kalpana swaram, thaniavarthanam
Tukkada					
Chinna Cheera	-	-	-	Tamil	Straight
Muthai Tharu – thirupukkazl form	Paadal		Arunagirinathanar	Tamil	Straight
Uruvai Aruvai – thiruvaalthu form	Maththiyamaavathi		Arunagirinathanar	Tamil	Straight

Figure 5.6: Repertoire list and musical conventions employed in Sarangan's performance at Highgate Temple, London, May 2013.

Preceding each composition, Sarangan performed an *alapana.* Whilst a number of improvisatory forms and techniques were utilised, Sarangan placed particular emphasis on the *alapana* sections preceding his choice of composition. The extended *alapana* provides an opportunity for 'oneness' with the music, the performer and their environment. Unlike the *thevaram* which is performed directly as an ode to God, Sarangan's performance focuses on attaining 'oneness' with the environment, audience, 'vibrations', sociocosmic network and accompanying musicians, to be able to reach a transcendental state. This state can be reached when the musicians are fully 'tuned in' to one another after playing a number of songs, and it is during this unravelling of the *raga* in the *alapana* where he can attain this 'divine', transcendental experience (Sarangan, pers. comm., June 2013). After these shorter songs, the ensemble moved on to the 'main composition', in this case 'Sadatava Paadha'. Starting with an extended *alapana*, the three part *kriti* song was used as a point of departure for a 30 minute long exploration of *niraval, kalpana swaram* and a *thaniavartnam*, or percussion solo. The violinst fulfilled his conventional role in accompanying and elaborating on the main artist's 'ideas', and played the composed melody in unison with the vocalist. He followed the vocalist's improvised melody when elements of *manodharama sangeetham* – improvised music – were introduced. The mridangist added rhythmic embellishment, whilst sounding the *talam,* and used *korvais* (rhythmic cadences) to punctuate the end of a section and to end the performance of the song. The three performers adhered to their conventional roles and, during the main extended composition in the concert, the usual improvisatory techniques were engaged. For example, *kalpana swaram* solfège improvisations were performed and exchanged with the violinist, who then reinstated and reinterpreted the vocalist's musical and rhythmic 'ideas'.

Due to a Tamil audience, repertoire tends to lean towards songs in the Tamil language.

A purely Tamil language concert, however, would not be considered a 'classical' *kutcheri* by London's musical community due to its overlaps with South Indian diasporic groups and musicians with close proximity to Chennai and its musical standards and expectations. Sarangan's concert in Highgate included many Tamil compositions, and a number devoted to the deity Murugan, the son of Siva, as the performance was located in the hall of Highgate's Murugan temple. The context of the performance and its audience impacted the repertoire chosen by the main artist in order to respond to the audiences' expectations.

In the Indian style, there was no interval in the two hour performance and the musicians were honoured with silk scarves draped around them by members of the temple's board. The custom of patrons publicly honouring musicians to show appreciation for the performance replicates the historical practice of gift giving in the South Indian courts (Pesch 2009: 15) and a concert without this practice would be incomplete. Following the honouring with silk scarves, speeches in Tamil were given by the senior Indian mridangist and the organiser both of whom praised the musicianship of the artists. The performance was concluded with a *thirupukkal* – a song for Murugan. Rather than disperse from the hall upon the concert's conclusion, the audience queued to the side of the stage where a dinner of Sri Lankan 'string hopper' noodles and curry was served. Audience members, the organisers and musicians ate together and spoke for another hour after the performance. The concert was just one part of the event that functioned as a social gathering. Five hours after I had arrived at the temple, everyone returned to their home in different parts of London.

The individual and group connectivity attained through such performances is in high demand from an otherwise fragmented musical community living across London. Sarangan's concert in Highgate temple brought together a diasporic audience mostly from Sri Lanka and some

artists and audience members from South India. The performance was presented in a familiar manner to the intended audience as a result of their highly conventional format. Such performances oriented towards a diasporic public frequently take place in temples halls, community spaces, or familiar venues on the periphery of Greater London; they rarely occur in central London locations. Neither are the performances aimed at multicultural audiences. In Tamil spaces, there are few obligations to meet with mainstream multicultural expectations, such as linguistic and/or cultural translation, musical explanations or any other conditions. This type of performance is intended for a diasporic audience, without any emphasis on exoticism or 'otherness' as a marketing category, cultural exchange or project of British multiculturalism. Due to contact with 'others' – the colonial other, ethnic 'other', host society 'other' – South Indian music is an essential defining symbol within the inner sphere of identity construction. The emphasis of local diasporic musical performance is on community cohesion and the sustainability of the music scene in London. The devotional act of *bhakti* through musical participation and fund-raising for temple building in London and development projects in North Sri Lanka are also significant functions within the Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic network.

As a result of the community's dispersal in the city, these events are opportunities to reinforce community cohesion and cultural continuity. Such events maintain boundaries that are believed to be put at risk as a result of migration, resettlement and culture contact. Particularly in the arts, communities are concerned that subsequent generations will lose their art forms in favour of Euro-American mass mediated popular culture and South Asian film music. A number of musicians have told me they believe music breaks down cultural boundaries in multicultural societies and thereby acts as a gateway to approach and understand different cultures. Music can provide these musicians with an artistic platform to

exchange cultural knowledge and experiences. In London, however, music and musical performance is a powerful means of retaining the *akam* interior field of selfhood. For professional musicians and music teachers, it is within this inner sphere where secure income is generated from teaching and performing. Demand to retain an essentialised Tamil identity is the impetus behind local and transnational economies, therefore musicians have a reliable source of income in *akam* musical practices. To make a living, Carnatic musicians in London rely on the demand of music tuition, *arangetram* performances, diasporic concerts and accompanying visiting artists. In addition to community cohesion, collective agency and the maintenance of cultural identity, these performances provide social opportunities for the second generation to get to know each other. Such events, therefore, extend the diasporic networks of first and second generation artists.

Puram Performances and Mainstream Multicultural Networks

Puram, or outer field, performances are directed towards mainstream audiences and differ in content, path, format, function, location and conventions. The *puram* exterior is classically associated with non-kin, non-familiarity and ill-matchedness. The exterior is also associated with the breaking of the ritualised practices which contain and connect people. Here I relate the *puram* term to musical performances directed towards multicultural mainstream audiences outside of the diasporic network. Although the *puram* performances break away from the ritualised practices of the *akam* performances within the diasporic network, they are innovative in terms of conventions, performance settings, formats, musical material and instrumentation. Therefore the *puram* musical practices go beyond the diasporic network and the ritualised nature of cultural centre musical practices and towards British mainstream spheres of engagement.

Like Chatterjee's concept of the 'material sphere' in colonial India (1989, 1993), the outer field refers to the influence and necessary adaptations and alignments made to integrate, live, work, learn and perform in the UK. As diaspora scholars concur, diasporic identity politics, increasing globalisation and cosmopolitanism complicate what constitute distinct outer and inner worlds (see Bhabha 1994; Dayal 1996; Hall 1990). In this diaspora, however, the inner sphere nurtures the transnationally understood essentials of cultural identity performed through ritualised practices. The 'threat' of outside cultural influence infiltrating Tamil culture and space is present again, however, total assimilation is avoided through this imposed distinction of the inner and outer worlds.

In contrast to the diasporic public to whom the inner performances of Tamil diasporic music and identity are oriented, the *puram* performances are outward-facing in order to display culture to the 'world', or to the mainstream multicultural British public. At the other end of the spectrum to the diasporic public, the multicultural mainstream public has its own expectations. Unlike in diasporic public performances, the limited accessibility allows for Tamil-language communication, conventions and rituals, whereas in mainstream performances there is a "pressure to align to the practices that are normative in national publics" (Dueck 2013: 17) when orientating events to broader mainstream society. For example, in the case of the London music scene, these 'national publics' reflect the wide multicultural public that performances should appeal to in order to align with top-down objectives, such as those of Arts Council England funding. As the nature of the mainstream public is multicultural, it also includes members of the diasporic network and other South Asian networks. The knowledge and expectations of the ritualised practices surrounding the musical performance are, as a result, reset in this different outward-directed context. Therefore, even with a mixed audience in attendance, the function of the performance

changes from the inner construction of an essentialised, transnationally connected Tamil space and identity to the outer performance of this identity to the 'world' of an unknown and unknowing public.

Location

Diasporic music scenes and their urban geographies are significant to the music being produced and its diasporic and multicultural engagement. The intensified transnational networks spanning across Chennai, Sri Lanka and other diasporic locales are significant in musical practices in London, however, the importance, meanings and values ascribed to locations in the city do not lose their significance. As venues in Chennai have particular prestige and conditions assigned to them, London's locations reflect the positioning of music in the city according to their multicultural British ideologies. Su Zheng argues that the intensified transnational cultural flow has given heightened meaning to the battle over local spaces for the Chinese American community and its musicians (2010: 191). Despite the transnationality of the Chinese American diasporic scene, "[n]o space disappears in the course of growth and development; *the worldwide does not abolish the local*" (Lefebvre 1991: 86, cited in Zheng 2010: 191, emphasis in original). She goes on to argue that, Chinese American "[d]iasporic temporal events have to be translated by and located in New York City's local spatial politics in order to claim their impact and meaning" (Zheng 2010: 191). Similarly Tamil diasporic performances in London undergo a certain amount of translation and re-packaging in order to be visible and accessible to wider audiences in the city.

Space in the city is complex and access to perform in certain locations requires conformity to bureaucratic conditions and top-down ideologies. Within central London, prestigious arts venues, such as the Southbank Centre, are popular sites for multicultural

performances instigated by publicly funded organisations; and these are venues where established South Asian arts organisations and high profile musicians may host performances suitable for, and accessible to, mainstream 'multicultural' audiences. Performing at such central venues contributes to a musicians' reputation inside and outside the diasporic network and is often listed in their biographies as significant achievements. The prestige of central locations is meaningful in the diasporic network, for instance, in performing an *arangetram* debut performance ceremony in central London, such as the popular Logan Hall in Bloomsbury. For those who can afford it, this centrally located venue is often chosen over suburban venues, thereby engaging the diasporic network with local values of location and empowerment.

Performance locations are not neutral, and carry with them particular connotations known locally and transnationally. Drawing on the work of Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Zheng highlights that geographical locations around New York city are not merely postal addresses, instead, "they reveal or conceal some deep social and political hierarchies nested in power struggles informed by New York's local histories and politics ... At the same time, the symbolic identities of these public spaces are also constructed and invented by people's imaginations 'in a spatial articulation of values' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett [1980] 1988: 406)" (2010: 191). London's locations similarly have social and political hierarchies. Temporary and permanent sites of Tamil schools and community meeting places are located in highly permeable diasporic clusters on the periphery of London. Diasporic network musical learning and performance are therefore confined to the periphery of the city, in contrast to the clean lines and glass structures of Central London and the image of London's multicultural and equal society. Particular locations and venues are assigned a particular value and place in the geo-cultural hierarchy, signifying mainstream visibility and prestige – such as the Southbank

centre and Royal Albert Hall - with the aim of displaying 'authentic' representations of South Indian music packaged for mainstream audiences or so called 'fusion' projects. The Darbar music festival is such an example, in which primarily Indian resident and diasporic artists rather than local Sri Lankan diasporic artists are invited to perform. A number of active diasporic musicians I have worked with feel detached from these initiatives that focus on bringing musicians from India in order to deliver "classical Indian music at its most authentic" (http://www.darbar.org/about/welcome-to-darbar, accessed 20th June 2014).

Within these contexts and locations, local diasporic musical meaning is distorted as a result of the homogenising term and connotations of 'South Asian' (Shukla 2001). Bhangra, Bollywood and Hindustani music are represented as symbols of Britain's South Asian arts within wider society (see Farrell et al 2005). In addition to performances organised by publicly-funded South Asian arts organisations, British South Asian performing arts are also made visible to broader British society through nationwide initiatives such as the BBC's Asian Network radio station and the inclusion of Bhangra dancers at the 2012 Olympic closing ceremony. Furthermore , *bharatanatyam* dance performed to recordings of Tamil and Hindi film songs is often visible at 'South Asian' multicultural events, such as 'Diwali in the Square', set in London's Trafalgar Square. Such displays conform with the top-down ideologies of cultural acts in London "that are exciting" and "raise the profile of London as a diverse ... and welcoming city" (Greater London Authority 2012: 139).

Through engagement with the multicultural mainstream network, Carnatic and Tamil music, its performance and its symbolism transforms according to national associations – it becomes 'Asian', 'South Asian' and 'Indian' against the backdrop of multicultural London, rather than Sri Lankan Tamil. It becomes a distant representation of itself by aligning with mainstream expectations and knowledge in a translation to meet with top-down multicultural

ideologies in the UK. As performance emerges from the interior to the exterior of diasporic life, it contributes to a diverse society rather than symbolising the 'oneness' of 'Tamilness', Saiva Hindu devotionalism and 'home'.

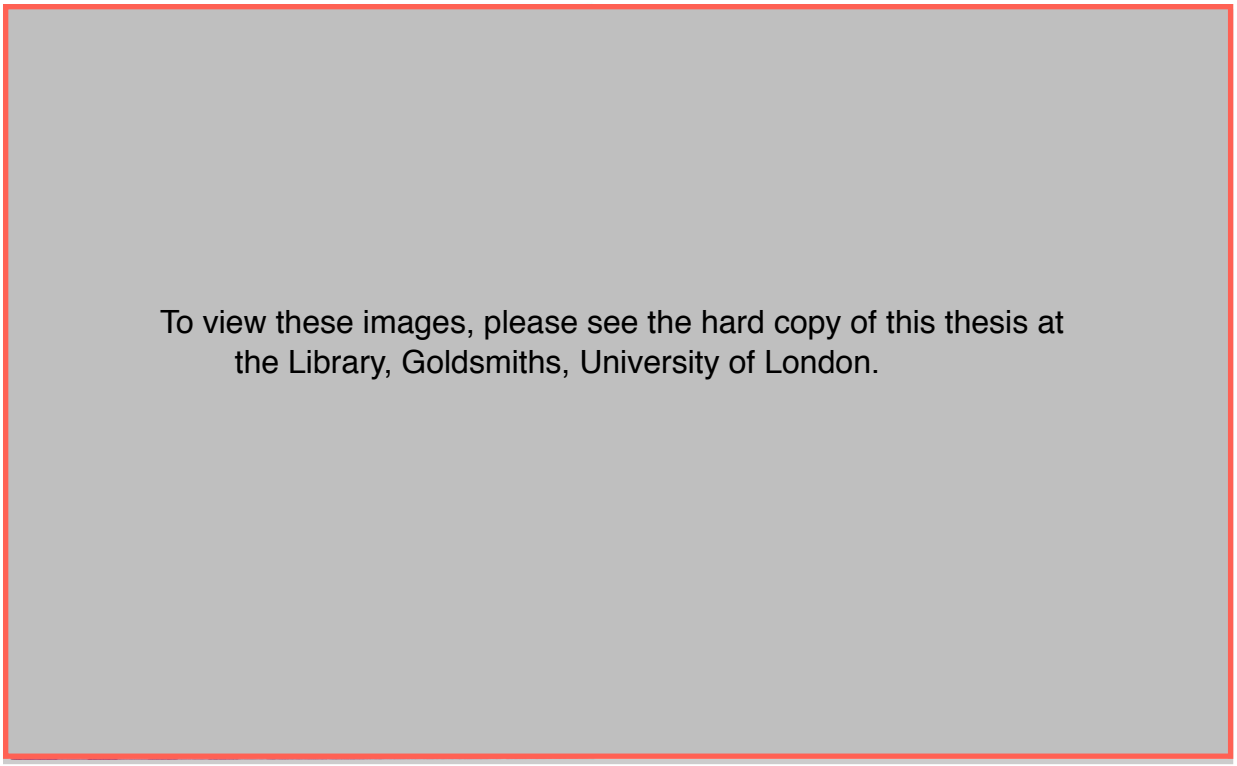
3. The Great British Gharana

On 23rd November 2012, I made my way to the Southbank Centre located by the Thames in the very centre of London. I rarely attended performances or cultural events in central London during my fieldwork, and such locations are rarely used for diasporic network performances. However, a number of Arts Council England-funded British South Asian arts and cultural events take place in the centre of the capital.

As I approached the Southbank arts centre, I passed a food market and trendy bars as I walked towards the illuminated London Eye and Houses of Parliament. The city's iconic structures served as a backdrop to the multiple performances taking place at the arts centre that evening. Having briefly looked out at the river Thames, I headed towards the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the 'The Great British Gharana' performance. Using the Hindustani music term *gharana* – meaning musical lineage, school or regional style of performance – 'The Great British Gharana' brought together a showcase of UK-based Indian music performers. Essentially, it was an outward-facing showcase of the varied Indian music scene in the UK. The use of the term *gharana* in the title - rather than the South Indian equivalent *bani* - demonstrated the wider profile and popularity of Hindustani music and musicians in the UK in comparison to the low visibility of South Indian music (Farrell et al 2005: 111). Although artists from the diasporic network participated in the event, the evening was organised by the publicly-funded South Asian arts organisation, Milapfest. There is no equivalent organisation within the Tamil diasporic music scene, therefore it is through such larger organisations that the musical community is made visible in mainstream art centres such as the Southbank.

Before the concert, a mixed audience - largely unknown to each other - milled around the foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and purchased alcoholic drinks and non-vegetarian snacks. This contrasted with diasporic network performances where the consumption of alcohol and meat would counteract the devotional act of musical performance and listening. I missed the sight of the heavy, colourful silk saris worn for Sarangan's performance in Highgate temple and the scent of jasmine flowers that women wear in their hair for such occasions. The presence of robed Hindu priests ready to perform *pooja* to ritually prepare the space were also missing from this outward-facing performance, along with a cluster of key cultural activists and musicians to comment on the performance. The audience felt anonymous in comparison to my attendance at diasporic concerts where I would spent the evening talking with familiar audience members and musicians.

The audience of unknown persons from diverse backgrounds were attracted to the concert through email notifications, social media and the well-produced leaflets distributed by the Southbank Centre. The organiser, Milapfest, marketed the evening as "[c]elebrating the fascinating sound of British Indian classical music" (promotional leaflet, November 2012; see figures 5.7 and 5.8) and orientated the event towards a wide public in order to align with the objectives of the funding body. The performance was highly accessible through advertisement features in mass-mediated 'world music' magazines such as *SongLines,* thereby attracting affinity interest groups, mixed South Asian diasporic audiences in addition to diasporic network members.



Figures 5.7 and 5.8: The leaflet advertising 'The Great British Gharana' at the Southbank Centre, London, 23rd November 2012.

The concert started promptly at its advertised time and the lights in the auditorium were dimmed to signal the start of the performance. According to the policy of the venue, latecomers were only allowed in during the applause between pieces. Reflecting the multifaith performers and audience members, the Saiva Hindu rituals, invocations and shrines present at Sarangan's performance were absent. Unlike the diasporic network events, this was a secular performance, 'untuned' through ritual practices of inner *akam* performances.

The showcase was introduced in English, with a speech by the Sri Lankan ambassador which acknowledged the participation of British Sri Lankans in the performance.[10] The concert began with a group of Sivasakthi Sivanesan's students singing Carnatic compositions and pre-composed *swaram* – sequences of notes sung to *sargam*

10 The presence of the Sri Lankan ambassador at a diasporic network performance would likely be unwelcome due to his association with the Sri Lankan state.

syllables. The group's and *guru's* presence represented the *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan* and the institution's participation in British South Asian music-making. After their performance, there was hesitation within the unfamiliar audience when to offer applause, in contrast to the immediate applause given after the final *saman* beat amongst 'knowing' audiences. Groups of British South Asian Carnatic and Hindustani musicians played in ten to fifteen minute slots, ranging from Hindustani *sitar* and *tabla,* a small Carnatic music ensemble and the South Asian Music Youth Orchestra (SAMYO). Long explorations of Hindustani *ragas* were performed on *sitars* and *sarods*, highlighting the system's emphasis on improvisation rather than the composition as the point of departure in Carnatic music. Though the evening included equal numbers of Hindustani and Carnatic acts, the Hindustani sets were generally much longer in duration. Again, the priority given to Hindustani sets reflected the higher visibility and mainstream popularity of the North Indian style in the UK.

A number of familiar second generation Carnatic musicians came onto the stage to perform as part of SAMYO and Tarang. The two ensembles are funded by Youth Music and Arts Council England, to support ensembles engaging with second generation British South Asian musicians. Established music teachers encourage students to audition for the ensemble in order to spread the music and culture into new environments beyond the inner diasporic field. Musicians are invited by audition and are required to be around the standard to perform an *arangetram* (for Carnatic musicians), between ages 10 and 18 and must be resident in the UK. SAMYO and Tarang are products of British 'melting pot' multicultural ideologies and the vast British South Asian demographic, providing a platform for young musicians who have learned Indian classical (Hindustani and/or Carnatic) music in Britain. The orchestra is also the outcome of the close proximity of second generation musicians learning Carnatic and Hindustani music. The two musical styles are otherwise divided by regional geography in

India or ethnicity in Sri Lanka. With multiculturalism as the basis of the organisation, of which the ensemble is a major outcome, Milapfest state:

> in the exciting and challenging task of building and strengthening today's multicultural Britain, our committed endeavour is to unite the hearts and minds of all communities through an exhilarating celebration of arts and culture (http://www.milapfest.com/home/sub-page-test/, accessed 20th June 2014).

Approximately 30 young musicians followed each other onto the stage, until the stage was covered with an orchestra of *sitars*, *tabla*, violins, *veenas*, *mridangam*, flutes and vocalists. Once the group had tuned, in a manner not dissimilar to the philharmonic orchestras or chamber ensembles that also tune on this stage, the musicians looked to their conductor to start performing their set. The orchestra performed original pre-composed, and highly-rehearsed, 'fusion' pieces, combining Carnatic, Hindustani and Western classical musical elements. Pieces were inventively arranged to combine the Carnatic and Hindustani instruments to create an orchestral sound through linear melodic layers of *ostinatos* and passages of melodic and rhythmic unison based on one fundamental pitch, or *adhara sruthi*.

After the interval, second generation violinist, Kiruthika walked onto the stage with a mridangist and *kanjira* frame drum percussionist. Kiruthika was dressed in a bright pink sari, whilst the mridangist and *kanjira* player were dressed in the male *mundum* (long white cotton sarong with gold thread border) and *jippa* (a long shirt). They arranged themselves on the stage in the conventional formation, reflecting the performance in Highgate temple. The main artist, Kiruthika, sat cross-legged in between the two percussionists and looked directly out to the audience, whilst the two percussionists sat sideways to the audience, looking at each other and the main artist. Once settled, the ensemble performed three short pieces. Following a modified concert path to fit within the prescribed timeframe, they performed two 'classical' songs before a catchy and very popular *bhajan*. The performance of the *bhajan* was greeted with sighs of appreciation and approving exclamations from pockets of the audience within

the 900 seat capacity auditorium. The *bhajan* 'Raghupathi Raghava Raja Raam' is one of the most popular devotional songs both in India and the South Asian diaspora. The *bhajan* was known as a favourite of Gandhi's (Jackson 2000: 267), and has been used in many Bollywood, Kaanada and Tamil films. The familiarity of the song, and its associations with Gandhi, has made it symbol of unity in the subcontinent. Beyond the song's iconicity within South Asian demographics, Pete Seeger performed 'Raghupathi Raghava' in 1963, bringing the song to the attention of audiences outside South Asia. In relation to the many compositions performed that evening, 'Raghupathi Raghava' was the most widely recognisable song beyond the South Asian demographic.

Kiruthika's performance was characterised by the clear song melodies, performed without extension through improvised passages or excessive ornamentation. The high sound quality and clarity of the precomposed melodies resulted in a smooth and short performance, characterised by the popular 'Raghupathi Raghava' *bhajan*. In this setting, Kiruthika and her accompanying musicians followed a different performance path from *akam* performances. The location of the concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the unfamiliar, non-specialist audience, meant that different musical priorities were addressed to those in inner diasporic concerts. Kiruthika performed with an emphasis on the sound aesthetic rather than technical virtuosity or improvisatory 'ideas':

> … with each show I do, there's always something you want to portray or something you want to really nail, so with the Great British Gharana, I realised I'm going to be in such a large hall and all eyes are going to be on me and my violin ... I want the sound quality to be really good, I wasn't too concerned about the technicality, it needed to sound nice because of the nature of the concert ... Obviously you don't compromise on the other stuff but I really focused on trying to get *that* part right. So when I was preparing I was focusing on that, and I was nervous for that, I wasn't worried about the *talam* aspect, I was worried about the sound aspect (pers. comm., January 2013).

Sounding 'nice' was the priority of the concert, over the technicality displayed in the performance of the songs. In contrast to her performance in Chennai a month after the Great

British Gharana that year and in diasporic concerts, the synchrony of her performance with the *talam* rhythmic cycle was crucial and served as an indication of her technical ability and knowledge as a performer. Unlike Chennai and diasporic concerts, in which the technicality and *talam* are key, noticeable features, for multicultural performances in prestigious venues the musical presentation had to appeal to a broad, non-specialist public. The choice of 'Raghupathi Raghava' also indicated her aim to appeal to a non-specialist audience. For such performances where the music is exhibited as part of a larger programme of South Asian music directed towards a wide and diverse audience, good sound production became a priority over musical inventiveness, technical virtuosity and rhythmic accuracy that would be appreciated in local diasporic and transnational Carnatic music circles. Yogeswaran, who has also performed widely in outward-directed performances, considers that performing for mainstream, multicultural audiences, rather than Tamil diasporic or Chennai audiences, creates a different experience, or 'vibration', for the performer. He refers to different audience behaviours and receiving a new level of respect, discipline and professionalism in mainstream European audiences. In contrast to diasporic concerts or Chennai audiences, Yogeswaran said that “people don't just go out of the concert hall or talk on their mobile phone, you get a different kind of respect” (pers. comm., February 2014). However, he claims that when performing for an informed audience - in terms of musical and cultural knowledge - another kind of respect and reception is given. For example, the technical mastery in *kalpana swaram* or other improvised passages is appreciated by informed audiences, whereas many musicians consider such virtuosity alienates audiences unfamiliar with Carnatic music. Therefore, as Kiruthika demonstrated in her Southbank performance, the clarity of melody is considered important in mainstream, multicultural performances.

After Kiruthika's ensemble had performed, a number of other acts followed. The

concert overran its allotted time and ended abruptly at 10:50pm, despite a group of Carnatic percussionists waiting in the eaves of the stage who had not yet performed. As the building was due to close, the audience and performers were quickly ushered out of the auditorium and scattered into the central London night. Unlike diasporic network performances that factor in time to eat together after the performance, the anonymous audience dispersed once the performance had finished.

The 'Great British Gharana' was a showcase of Indian classical music aligning to British mainstream expectations and settings. The event was packaged within the timeframe, location and conventions of mainstream audience expectations. In such a framework, with limited time constraints, a number of senior artists say that a musician cannot express themselves and argue that such performances compromise the art's aesthetics, values and rituals. Performances are presented within the conventions of wider mainstream classical or 'world music' concerts in the UK, contributing towards a piece of the multicultural mosaic rather than a snapshot of diasporic musical life. In outward-facing events, a considerable shift of power and agency takes place, and diasporic musicians have to fit within a framework imposed by the arts council funded organisations, the expectations of mainstream multicultural audiences and the policies of prestigious venues.

These outward-facing performances are often restricted to second generation musicians, in part to conform with the Youth Music funding body. First generation musicians covet opportunities to perform to wider audiences, however, opportunities are rare and the musical commitments to local and transnational diasporic networks remain a priority. One event in London is regularly referred to by established first generation artists, such as Sivatharini and Kirupakaran. In the late 1980s, a concert of Carnatic music was performed in the Purcell Room at the Southbank Centre. Organised by diasporic musicians to perform to a

mostly non-South Asian British audience, the artists recalled the positive reception they received from an audience from 'outside' the diasporic network, who were 'not our people' (Sivatharini, pers. comm., October 2012). The ensemble consisted of a combination of visiting India-based and local Sri Lankan musicians. Sivatharini was in the ensemble and, in a conversation with her, she expressed how she felt pride in presenting and performing her music to a non-Tamil and non-South Asian British audience. The response of the audience perpetuated her desire to maintain her musical practice in resettlement and to encourage the second generation to learn and perform Carnatic and Tamil music, for both cultural continuity and their collective contribution to the arts in the UK. She reflected on the concert:

> It's very difficult to get into Purcell Room and I got a chance there … It was fantastic ... It's something different, but nowadays it's very hard to get in there, and you have to do lots of work. Lots of work means 'outside' work [laughs] not with music, you know, there are too many contracts and ... bureaucracy. I'm not participating that much now, because I'm busy with teaching, *arangetrams,* and Tamil schools, so I don't want to go into that sort of thing nowadays (Sivatharini, pers. comm., October 2012).

Sivatharini and many of her colleagues have not performed in another concert like the one in the Purcell Room in London and I have not attended a similar outward-facing concert organised by Sri Lankan artists during my years of fieldwork. Sivatharini, however, has performed within the local and transnational diasporic network in London, Malaysia and Denmark for Tamil diasporic audiences, and she has performed in Chennai as part of the music season. The level of administration required in organising such mainstream multicultural performances in contemporary London has resulted in the Purcell Room concert in the 1980s being the highlight for a number of local musicians in their involvement and experience of a wider audience in a prestigious British venue. The commitments to diasporic network teaching and performance - private lessons, Tamil school teaching and organising *arangetrams* - are the primary, most secure means of earning a living as a Carnatic musician in London. It is within the diasporic network that connectivity is maintained with the

transnational scene and, therefore, outward-facing performances are not a priority for professional musicians in London.

Conclusion

South Indian musical performance in London takes place in a range of locations and for a number of functions. In this chapter I have explored three different examples of diasporic musical performance in London and how they are situated in the city. The three performances differ in context, locations and the audiences to which they are directed. As I set out in the examples, the performances directed within diasporic network and those directed towards mainstream audiences differ greatly in format, contexts, and conventions. Whilst I acknowledge that diasporic cultural practices are more complex than to be simply described in terms of binaries, my fieldwork in London was characterised by the difference between what I describe as *akam* and *puram* type performances. Within the *akam* field - symbolising the interior, known and connected, I explored the ritual music-making of *pannisai* songs in Lewisham temple and the ritualised practices of musical performances as diasporic gatherings in the Highgate concert. 'Inside' the diasporic network, local performances provide a space of cultural familiarity and intimacy through understood ritual and musical practices. This is evident in the ritualised settings, practices and 'tuning in' during performances, and in the clear paths of performances conventions negotiated outwards from South India. The 'Great British Gharana' and other *puram* - the exterior, unknown and unconnected - 'outer' field performances do not provide the familiarity and intimacy required through ritualised practices which enable 'tuning in', synchrony and becoming one as in diasporic network performances. Whilst musicians do want opportunities to perform in mainstream venues and to wide audiences, the opportunities to do so are difficult to attain and commitments to

musical practices within the diasporic network are the top priority.

Through exploring performance in terms of its context, musical content, its directed audience, location and representation, the chapter has presented various engagements or non-engagements with multicultural society. The lack of active interest to instigate multicultural projects in the outer field reveals the importance of music in the conception of the inner 'Tamil' self as being preserved in diaspora. Despite orienting to an extent with a multicultural public and the 'outer' sphere, the scene is directed towards India and other diasporic localities and developed in accordance to its conventions. Transnational iconic musical practices are largely maintained in *akam* performances rather than musical innovations such as those performed by South Asian orchestras in mainstream performances. The different levels of engagement reveals transnational connectivity rather than local cross-cultural musical innovation and highlights the importance of the transnational music scene. The *akam* – *puram* categories demarcate the directions in agency, 'selfhood' and citizenship, with the inner performances within the control of Tamil expectations and values, and the outer performances, often publicly-funded, must conform to the expectations of top-down national ideologies. As a result, engagement with the outer sphere is a much less regular occurrence, particularly with artists based in this in community. The ratio of diasporic community to multicultural society performances is striking, with diasporic events taking place almost every weekend whilst mainstream performances may take place a few times a year. It is by far a minority within the community that participate in musical projects directed towards mainstream audiences, with most focus and attendance at diasporic community events to develop and sustain participation in the transnational scene and to develop Tamil identity. In the inner diasporic network performances, musical performance is presented in the Tamil language, with cultural behaviours, religion and rituals, material culture, 'known' diasporic

persons and familiar locations, whereas these aspects undergo an adaptation to conform with the expectations and top-down multicultural ideologies of British society. Gerry Farrell argued that for South Asian diasporas, the correlation between language and music is significant:

> Language is the most central facet of group identity in immigrant communities, and is valued as a way of preserving tradition and culture across generations, and in the midst of rapid and often radical change. The lessening importance of the mother tongue is often considered a major cultural dislocation and a symbol of loss of identity. Music can be important for the preservation of language (Farrell et al 2005: 115).

The combination of the key facets of the essentialised Tamil identity - Tamil language and music - in 'inner' diasporic networks contribute to counteracting 'cultural dislocation' or the related Tamil concept of *tosam* – symbolising disconnection. As a result, the inner sphere delivers the connectivity, closeness and intimacy which were forgone in migration and resettlement, particularly from the villages of North Sri Lanka to a global city like London. Farrell et al stated that "[i]t is their lives and stories that have influenced and shaped contemporary South Asian music in Britain" (2005: 108) and the historical situations of mass migration and resettlement that has impacted the position, context, and intended audience of most Sri Lankan-organised Carnatic music performances. Sustaining an inner sphere directed towards Tamil audiences nurtures this intimacy, essentialised identity and inner world and sustains the network of professional musicians in the local scene.

The reflection of *akam* and *puram* categorises in identity construction and performance contexts reveals not only the importance of musical knowledge and the musical sound in demarcating difference, it also extends to the contexts in which such practices are transferred and performed. The highly ritualised and familiar settings in which diasporic musicians connect with the sociocosmic network in diasporic performances both create space and construct identity through that space.

Chapter Six

Ascending the (Diasporic) Stage: London's music *arangetram,* the mythical past and transnational present

Diasporic learning and performance in the UK is characterised by the phenomenon of the *arangetram*, the lavish debut performance of a young musician who has been learning for a number of years. Attending *arangetrams* around Greater London became a regular feature of my field research. Organised and performed within the diasporic network, the *arangetram* symbolises Tamil cultural continuity in the diaspora and is organised according to iconic transnational conventions. Elaborate invitations are sent to known individuals in the diasporic network, inviting them to the performance ceremony in one of London's familiar suburban theatres, temple halls or central London venues decorated to create the appearance of a temple in Tamil Nadu or Sri Lanka. In a music *arangetram*, a full *kutcheri* concert is performed by a young musician surrounded by their *guru* and well-wishers. The *arangetram* performance is a public transition from 'student' to 'musician' status and the performance acts as an initiation into the local and transnational performer network. The ceremony is 'tuned in' through *pooja* rituals and ritualised music practices, connecting the ceremonial space with the sociocosmic network. Through these ritualised and iconic practices, the ceremony also connects with pre-conflict homeland practices and synchronises with the present transnational music network. The ceremony is a ritual which gathers and grounds musicians and audiences in an embodied local experience.

This chapter explores the music *arangetram* in London focusing on the values and contestations of the music ceremony. It argues that the *arangetram* makes a contribution to local and transnational musical synchrony and is a means through which a 'glorious Tamil past' (Clothey 2006: 15) is recreated in a diasporic setting. The performance of the ceremony is also a marker of difference in multicultural British society. I suggest the *arangetram* is a display of Tamil citizenship

as well as a gateway to the local and transnational performer network. In particular, I highlight the importance of the *arangetram's* historical narrative to the displaced Sri Lankan Tamil demographic, as the origin of the ceremony lies in a time of the powerful ancient Tamil empires.[1] I conclude by summarising how the *arangetram* connects with this historical narrative whilst sustaining a future for London's musical network in the transnational assemblage. I first explore the historical narrative of the *arangetram* ceremony that has been promoted in the diaspora and its connections with 'ancient' Tamil practices.

The First Performance and Mythical Historical Narratives

> For seven years she studied dancing,
> Singing, and the art of enhancing her beauty -
> Every one of them perfectly. At twelve, she wished
> To perform before the king of heroic anklets.
>
> An expert in the traditions of the dance, her tutor
> Knew well the rules of the folk and classical styles.
> He paired different types of dances
> With the figures of song ...
>
> He played well, her music teacher, the lute
> And flute, following the beat. He had
> A good voice, and from the drums even teased a low note
> Or two. All these sounds he harmonized
> With the dance: for the vari and atal, he played
> The appropriate music ...
>
> Her drummer was skilled in every type of dance,
> In musical notes, singing, Tamil
> Ways of speaking, melody, rhythm,
> Modes of beating time, and the use
> Of words of diverse origins.
>
> With care a site was chosen, and the quality
> Of the soil inspected, following what learned
> Men had prescribed, for constructing a stage...
> Images of demigods, placed above the stage,
> Were worshipped and praised. Bright lamps
> Glowed at the four corners so that the pillars
> Cast no shadows ...
> And from the painted canopy flowed
> Strings of rare pearls, wreaths and garlands
> Of flowers.
>
> Strictly in order the musicians took

1 These Tamil Empires include the *Chola*, *Chera, Pandya* and *Pallava* rulers, who reigned in territories of South India from the fifth to the sixteenth centuries (Selby and Peterson 2008: 5).

Their seats. Her right foot Matavi placed
Forward, and stepped on the stage. Reached
The pillar on the right, stood by it as required
By custom. And near the pillar on the left clustered
Other dancers likewise following an old custom.
So that virtue might flourish and evil vanish,
Two kinds of song were sung in turn.
At the end of the benediction all the music instruments
Were sounded in unison. The lute followed
The flute; the barrel drum was tuned to the lute;
And the pot drum followed the barrel drum.
In unison with the pot drum resounded
The left-hand drum. Instruments tuned to it
Played in harmony.

Edited extract from 'The First Performance' from the *Cilappatikaram* by Ilango Atikal,[2] translated from Tamil by R. Parthasarathy (2004: 34-39).

This extract from the Tamil epic, the *Cilappatikaram,* describes an early version of the *arangetram* ceremony in the Sangam period[3] – third century BCE to fourth century CE - in Tamil Nadu. The description of 'The First Performance' by the courtesan, Matavi, in the *Cilappatikaram* remains a key point of reference for cultural practice in London's Tamil diaspora. For instance, when I asked Gohila about the significance of the *arangetram* in London, she began her answer by referring in detail to 'The First Performance' passage from the *Cilappatikaram* and she stressed the strength of *Muttamil,* the three part language of the ancient Tamils based on *irai isai natakam* - poetry, music and dance-drama - during the Sangam period. This highlights how the *arangetram* is regarded by the Tamil musical community as a distinctly 'Tamil' musical performance recorded in classical Tamil literature. In contrast to the discourse projected from the cultural centre that musical performance and its custodianship started with the Sanskrit tradition, Gohila cited the inclusion of the *arangetram* in the *Cilappatikaram* as 'proof' of Tamil music legitimacy. Particularly during the powerful Tamil *Chola* reign, Gohila emphasised that there was a strong Tamil musical tradition, thereby reflecting the important link between Tamil musical performance and Tamil

2 Scholars have been unable to determine when the *Cilapatikaram* was written. It is considered that the author, Ilango Atikal, lived in the second century CE, though this cannot be confirmed (Parthasarathy 2004).

3 The Sangam period is particularly important to the Sri Lankan Tamil historical narrative. The Sangam period was particularly prolific in poetry and the arts, patronised largely by the *Cholas*. The *Chola* Kingdom reigned in Tamil Nadu, but their territory extended to Sri Lanka and further to Southeast Asia. The Northern Sri Lankan Chola territory was called 'Eelam', the name used by the LTTE and its supporters who fought for a separate state in the twentieth century.

territorial authority.

Literally meaning 'to ascend the stage', the *arangetram's* Tamil etymology contributes to the popularity of the ceremony in the diaspora. As much musical and spiritual terminology is in Sanskrit, the cultural custodianship of the *arangetram* can be attributed as specifically Tamil in an otherwise Sanskrit dominated art form. The etymology and the reference to the Matavi's performance in the epic emphasises a key point that has been fostered by the Tamil diaspora: the *arangetram* demonstrates a commitment to art, but more importantly, it sustains the continuity of 'Tamil' culture. It was the discrimination of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka and the loss of homeland experience through forced migration, Gohila said, that has resulted in the popularity of the performance ceremony in London:

> In this country, this [the *arangetram*] is the one thing the Sri Lankans are doing, because of what we are missing. We are missing our part of the country, our culture ... we are scared of losing our traditions, so we are unlimited in the way we are pushing our children. Our generation has lost a lot, education, wealth, independence, happiness, our aims, our *life* in a way. We had been living in *our* country, *our* land, we had to depart from that part of the country and make a new life, so we are scared of losing our culture ... (pers. comm., September 2013).

Gohila experienced the loss of many homes, having been internally displaced in Sri Lanka before permanently resettling in London. The link with the mythical past and the present fear of loss as a result of forced migration has become a major impetus for the popularisation of the *arangetram* in London. This reading of the diasporic *arangetram* contributes to Fuglerud (1999) and Clothey's (2006) arguments about the connection of the past as an means of understanding the diasporic present for the displaced Tamil demographic. For those who have experienced trauma, constructing a historical narrative through selected and essentialised segments of history bypasses the troubled times that led to mass migration (Clothey 2006; Fuglerud 1999). Through its historical narrative, the ceremony references and reflects musical success and diasporic empowerment. The *arangetram* is therefore a symbol of the 'glorious Tamil past' that is preserved in the diasporic present (Clothey 2006: 15), manifested as a significant performance of the transnational identity portrayed to the second generation

and multicultural 'outsiders'.[4]

The excerpt from the *Cilappatikaram* quoted above serves two purposes. First, the discourse surrounding the *arangetram* includes recurrent references to the epic which emphasises and reinstates the concept of the 'glorious Tamil past'. *Arangetram* ceremonies construct 'ancestral' and transnational connections: they draw on ancient 'Tamil' performance traditions, which are 'validated' through references in the *Cilappatikaram* and are consolidated by the diasporic adoption of the practice. *Arangetrams* are not only important and iconic in the Tamil diaspora in the UK but also other countries, for instance, the United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, France, Singapore and Australia. Second, there were a number of parallels with the excerpt from the *Cilappatikaram* and my ethnographic experience of these ceremonies in London. Later in this chapter, I will discuss this literary reference in relation to music *arangetrams* in London and highlight how a number of details from 'The First Performance' are recreated in contemporary diasporic settings. Before describing the ceremony in London, however, I will contextualise the *arangetram* performance in South India and Sri Lanka.

The Historical Context of the *Arangetram*

The *arangetram* is historically linked with the non-Brahmin female *devadasi* community in Tamil Nadu. The *devadasis* were religious courtesans who were custodians of music and dance. As *devadasis* were metaphysically married to God, they resided in the temples of Southern India and were financially supported by wealthy patrons. The *devadasi* system is thought to have been established since at least the time of the *Cilappatikaram* and continued until the practice was legally abolished in 1947 (Subramanian 2011: 132; Viswanathan and Harp Allen 2004). Centred around dance performance, the *arangetram* was performed by a

4 *Arangetrams* are also performed by non-Tamil Carnatic music students in London, however, the majority are from Sri Lankan Tamil families.

devadasi in the temple as a ritual to display her commitment to her art. Madelene Gorringe refers to the historic *arangetram* as a debut performance and a culminating ceremony of a *devadasi's* dedication into temple service. Gorringe states: "[t]he arangetram was effectively a rite of passage signifying the dasi's cross over from traineeship to professionalism" (2005: 93). Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *devadasis* were associated with prostitution and the *arangetram's* links with the dedication rites of the *devadasis* resulted in the the ceremony being considered as inappropriate (Gorringe 2005: 94). Despite these negative associations, the *arangetram* ceremony soon became popular in the upper classes and castes. By the mid-1940s, performers of an *arangetram* were "educated, well-to-do and primarily Brahmin ... the situation of the new dancers could hardly have been further removed from their low caste and often impoverished dasi counterparts" (Gorringe 2005: 94). The development of the *arangetram* reflects the change of custodianship of the arts from temple courtesans to the urban Brahmin communities of South India. The *arangetram* became a performance of privilege, a demonstration of status and prestige. Still regarded as a middle-class ceremony in its diasporic setting, the *arangetram* in London similarly displays success, cultural capital and affluence; some members of the musical community consider that 'anyone with money' can perform an *arangetram*. The ceremony may be considered by individuals as a statement of prestige and socio-economic background rather than a demonstration of artistic talent, however, the connection with its historical context and function is still celebrated.

Although early *devadasi arangetrams* are commonly associated with dance performances, the *Cilappatikaram* refers to dance and musical performances. London-based musicians, teachers and students typically make connections between the modern music *arangetram* and 'ancient tradition', referring particularly to the *Cilappatikaram* rather than the more recent *devadasi* tradition. Mridangist Kirupakaran, for instance, told me that the

arangetram remains an important ceremony because "our children want to keep their tradition, their tradition from long, long ago ... once you've learned an art, you must have some sort of ceremony, it's called arangetram. That's the most traditional thing" (pers. comm., December 2012). As a performing artist, teacher and *arangetram* organiser, Kirupakaran frequently participates in music *arangetrams* in London, Europe and North America. Making a contribution to the continuation of an 'ancient tradition' and becoming part of the ceremony's historical narrative is a significant incentive for him and many others in the Sri Lankan Tamil community in London.

The 'Homeland' Arangetram

In addition to the connection with primordial India, the historical narrative of the *arangetram* refers to the homeland practices of pre-conflict Sri Lanka. The emergence of the *bharatanatyam arangetram* in Sri Lanka reflected the trend of South Indian classical arts as a symbol of Tamil ethno-nationalism and cultural differencing adopted during the twentieth century (see Reed 2010: 132). In the early twentieth century, Reed states that mastering both Carnatic music and *bharatanatyam* was considered essential "for a young Tamil woman making her *arangetram* into Tamil society" in middle and upper-class Colombo Tamil society (Reed 2010: 132; see also Wilson 2000). Such a practice was demonstrated by London's Sivasakthi Sivanesan, now a leading musician in the diasporic community, who performed her dance *arangetram* in Jaffna in 1973. As music and dance forms were intertwined, the *arangetram* symbolised the beginning of her artistic career which eventually led her to becoming a musician rather than a dancer. At the time, however, music *arangetrams* were rare in Sri Lanka and did not afford the same levels of persistence and popularity on the island that dance *arangetrams* retained even in post-conflict Sri Lanka.

New York-based mridangist Balaskandan[5] and I broached the subject of *arangetrams* in Sri Lanka whilst we spoke in a coffee shop in South Chennai. Just before he and his family left Jaffna, he performed a music *arangetram* after years of learning the *mridangam.* Balaskandan had attended *mridangam* and violin lessons at a large weekend music school in Sri Lanka, at which time he said that music *arangetrams* were 'incredibly rare'. He recalled that when his parents sent out invitations, the invited audience did not know about music *arangetrams* and reacted to it as a novel occasion:

> I did my arangetram in *mridangam* at that [music] school. Unlike today, arangetrams were a very rare occasion, you know when someone was going to do an *arangetram*, everyone would be like 'Wow, you're doing an *arangetram*?!' like it's a big thing, now it's ... so frequent. So the school had been running for a number of years and I was the first student ever to do an arangetram, so that kind of indicates that it wasn't very common. So I was the first *arangetram*, and I did my *arangetram* in *mridangam*, and then basically we left, my family left Sri Lanka so I didn't ever do my *arangetram* in violin (Balaskandan, pers. comm., January 2013).

Many of London's first generation Sri Lankan Tamil musicians did not perform a music *arangetram* like Balaskandan. The civil war and subsequent internal, and international, displacement disrupted much of everyday life in Sri Lanka and some speculated that the music *arangetram* would have increased in popularity on the island had it not been for 'the troubles'.

In India, David Paul Nelson (2000) conveys the music *arangetram* as a 'graduation day' of particular importance and a normal occurrence.[6] This view, however, is contradicted by the majority of first generation Indian and Sri Lankan artists in London who argue that although music *arangetrams* take place in India, they are primarily a diasporic phenomenon.[7] Many professional musicians, such as Sarangan, did not perform an *arangetram per se* but

5 Balaskandan is a Sri Lankan Tamil mridangist, violinist and vocalist who regularly travels to perform and learn in Chennai. Now based in New York after a period in London, he migrated to Canada as a teenager as a result of the civil war and ethnic persecution.

6 Nelson describes the *arangetram* as: "When the teacher feels that his student has mastered enough ... material to play in public, he arranges a coming-out concert (*arangetram*). The other performers are often the teacher's peers and may include the teacher himself. Its purpose is to showcase the student in an emotionally supportive and musically high-caliber context. This concert is an important rite of passage; in the words of one well-known drummer, 'There are certain dates that you don't forget in your life: your birthdate, your wedding date, your *arangetram*.' Afterward, the drummer may continue studying, but on a different basis. His concentration now moves to developing accompaniment and playing as a solo concert artist on his own" (2000: 157).

7 The few times I have heard about music *arangetrams* in India, they have been organised and performed by diasporic students.

gained experience from performing short concerts. As his performance profile grew, Sarangan performed increasingly longer concerts in Sri Lanka and India until he became recognised, thus his performance profile and style developed over a long period of time. Such a trajectory among first generation musicians is common and despite the present popularity of the music *arangetram* in the diaspora, it is a fairly recent development. The significant increase in popularity therefore positions the music *arangetram* as a diasporic phenomena.

Arangetrams in London

Sivasakthi Sivanesan organised the first known music *arangetram* in the UK. The *arangetram* took place in 1989 and was performed on the *veena* by one of Sivasakthi's students. In conversations I have had with Sivasakthi, she recalled how she arranged the *arangetram* to function as a social gathering for the resettling Sri Lankans. She described the Sri Lankan demographic as 'scattered' in London at that time and the *arangetram* brought the dispersed population together through a recognisable and iconic cultural ceremony already situated in the Tamil cultural imagination. Musical performance in general was yet to become a regular diasporic social gathering in the highly dispersed capital as few key artists had established themselves in the UK. As an active musician connected with the Chennai scene and the resident Carnatic music teacher at the highly regarded Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London, Sivasakthi was in a respected position to implement a new 'traditional' practice.

The introduction of the diasporic music *arangetram* acted as a vital event in the early stages of assembling the diasporic network. As more musicians migrated to the UK throughout the late 1980s and 1990s and the second generation were growing up, the *arangetram* became a rite of passage for the diasporic second generation. The *arangetram* is a voluntary ceremony, funded by the student's family, with an invited audience consisting of friends, family and key figures from the diasporic network. Costs of the ceremony typically

run into tens of thousands of pounds and this expenditure has provoked complaints from some in the music community.

Like the 'music season' in Chennai, the '*arangetram* season' in London is a significant time of the year when many in the diasporic network attend debut performances. The *arangetram* season runs between July and October in the UK, ending before musicians and music enthusiasts travel to Chennai for the music season in December. Dictated by the structure of mainstream school holidays, the vacation allows students to attend intense classes in the weeks preceding the ceremony. The *arangetram* season is also positioned conveniently for teachers and musicians who do not have teaching commitments at Tamil schools during the summer months. It is rare that a weekend in the *arangetram* season will pass by without at least one *arangetram* taking place. Often, a number of *arangetrams* in London will happen simultaneously in different venues around the capital. On evenings with a number of *arangetrams,* it is not unusual for some participants to travel across London in order to catch one half of the performance before moving on to another in a different location. As a result of the season and simultaneous performances, demand for accompanying artists, invitation and brochure designers, venues, caterers, photographers, videographers, audience members and musicians to judge the performance is great. An economy has been generated around the *arangetram*, with a network of actors contributing to the organisation of the ceremony akin to Becker's production of an artwork in an 'art world' (2008). The *arangetram* has become instrumental in the economic sustainability of professional musicians in the UK. Gohila, and many others, described the *arangetram* economy as a “big money-making business” akin to the wedding industry. Nonetheless, Sri Lankan families are often happy to invest in such ceremonies. *Arangetrams* symbolise the on-going knowledge, culture and education of displaced Sri Lankan Tamils whilst everything else has been lost (Gohila, pers. comm., September 2013). Leading on from Gohila's comments, I suggest the

arangetram is a statement of Tamil cultural continuation and resistance against homeland persecution using the musical knowledge, culture and ancestral connections musicians brought with them in forced migration. The result of the diasporic *arangetram* is the construction of a ceremony to regather the 'scattered' concepts of 'Tamilness' and Tamil peoples after the process of displacement from North Sri Lanka and international dispersal.

Having evolved from its initial function as a diasporic gathering in the late 1980s, the *arangetram* is now a display of 'Tamilness' by the diasporic second generation. The performance of the ceremony is expected by the diasporic music network and, in addition to the performance of music, the *arangetram* is a performance of cultural identity and Tamil citizenship directed towards the diasporic network and, to a lesser degree, towards mainstream society through the invitation of school headmasters, teachers and non-Tamil friends.[8] Priya Srinivasan similarly refers to the *bharatanatyam arangetram* in the U.S. as a dual function ceremony:

> On the one hand, it is *the* performance of Indian nationalism and defines the terms of its cultural citizenship. It embodies an alternative to U.S. mainstream assimilation pressures, one that extinguishes the threat of exogamy by teaching primary young Indian American girls to become ideal Indian women cultural citizens. The *arangetram* functions as the performance of that alternative cultural citizenship (Srinivasan 2012: 142-43).

The second function Srinivasan refers to is the demarcation of difference in American multicultural discourse and society (2012: 143). Srinivasan's comments highlight a number of differences with London's *arangetrams* and, despite its diasporic cultural iconicity, reveals the transnational *arangetram* as a heterogenous and complex ceremony. Srinivasan deals with the Indian-American *bharatanatyam arangetram* rather than its musical equivalent and therefore the ceremony is gendered by default as a result of the higher participation of females in the dance form. In the UK, *bharatanatyam arangetrams* are largely performed by female students and reflect the gendered position of the ceremony in the 'The First Performance' excerpt of the *Cilappatikaram*. Music *arangetrams,* however, tend to be

8 The performance of an *arangetram* is also often referenced in UCAS university applications and used to gain a significant number of UCAS points.

balanced between male and female students, partly due to the emphasis on the ceremony as a 'Tamil' tradition and the emergence of music *arangetrams* in Sri Lanka just before the civil war broke out. Instead of the gendered demonstration of the ideal Indian women in the US, in London *arangetram* students demonstrate the ideal diasporic Tamil citizen despite the lost experience of the homeland. Aside from gender, Srinivasan's passage highlights the main difference in terms of the ceremony's purpose of "Indian nationalism and cultural citizenship", whereas the *arangetram* in London largely demonstrates 'Tamilness' and/or Tamil ethno-nationalism. Despite the differences in motivations and meanings, the *arangetram* continues to serve as cultural capital, an essential rite of passage into musicianship, and as a means of synchronising within, and between, diasporic localities and with the mythical past. As a result, the ceremony serves to regenerate a "golden age of the Tamils" (Gohila, pers. comm., September 2013), as well as an aspirational commodity to capitalise on in the future, in both the transnational diasporic community and in mainstream British society.

Arangetrams in London: September 2013

In September 2013, I attended four music *arangetrams* in London. The first two *arangetrams* I attended that September were vocal *arangetrams* led by Sarangan. The third was a *mridangam arangetram* involving a number of visiting Indian artists, and the fourth was organised by Bremakumar for his second son, Ashwin. I discuss the fourth *arangetram* in detail below, highlighting themes and issues with the ceremony in the UK. The performer's for Ashwin's *arangetram* were all locally sourced in order to adhere to Bremakumar's objective to sustain a local, self-sufficient music scene. Although my ethnographic account of this London *arangetram* is specific, the performance ceremony is highly conventional and this particular *arangetram* reflected many key characteristics.

Ashwin's vocal and violin *arangetram* took place on 28th September 2013. I was initially invited to the *arangetram* during a temple festival where I spoke with Bremakumar, and later that month I received an *arangetram* email invitation. In addition to the email invitations, I often received India-produced elaborate and colourful invitation cards from families preparing their child's performance. My invitation from Bremakumar stated that the *arangetram* would take place on a Saturday evening in Logan Hall, a large auditorium at the Institute of Education in London's Bloomsbury. Central London venues like Logan Hall are prestigious, and performing in such venues contributes to local and transnational reputations.

As I approached the Institute of Education, the time and place of the ceremony was confirmed by the number of women entering the building wearing colourful thick silk *saris,* the type specifically worn for such cultural events. The banana leaf bunting above the entrance of the door similarly affirmed that this was the 'carefully chosen site'[9] for the *arangetram.* The folded and dried leaf decorations wound around the staircase down to the hall, where I was greeted by a large *murthi* statue of the deity Ganesh, the remover of obstacles. The Ganesh *murthi* was surrounded by oil lamps, fruit and floral offerings (see figure 6.1). Standing next to the statue of Ganesh were two young female relatives of Ashwin, the *arangetram* student, who were responsible for handing out sugar candy, anointing each guest with blessed water, and giving the *arangetram* brochure to arriving guests. The *arangetram* brochure is an important part of the *arangetram* and its material culture. Like the location of the venue and stage, the brochure can display success and prestige as well as containing important information for the proceeding ceremony. Ashwin's brochure contained well-wishing letters from members of the musical and diasporic network, displaying the various cultural connections of the family alongside images of Ganesh. The majority of *arangetram* brochures contain backdrops of South Indian temple or spiritual

9 "With care a site was chosen, and the quality of the soil inspected, following what learned men had prescribed, for constructing a stage ..." from 'The First Performance' extract.

imagery, again linking to when the performance took place in temples by the *devadasi* community.

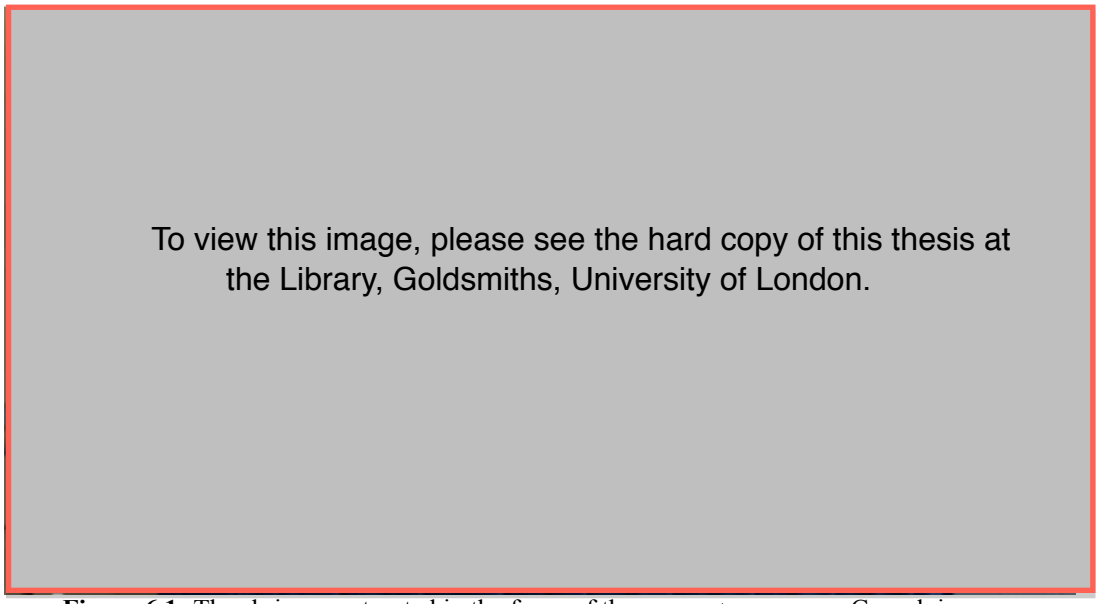


Figure 6.1: The shrine constructed in the foyer of the *arangetram* venue. Ganesh is centred, surrounded by oil lamps, flower and fruit offerings, sugar candy, blessed water and the *arangetram* brochure (left).

I arrived at the *arangetram* an hour early as I was invited to attend the *pooja* ritual performed before the audience entered the auditorium. As the sound check overran, I waited outside the hall talking to a number of familiar faces – musicians, parents, organisers - involved in the music scene in London. With the soundcheck complete, I was allowed into the performance space to witness the *pooja.* I walked across to the opposite side of the auditorium, past the large sound desk and video cameras set up to film the performance. The filmed performance was later put onto YouTube via a link to Bremakumar's Facebook page. The transnational dissemination of *arangetram* recordings is a characteristic of the ceremony, reflecting the highly-dispersed but well-connected diaspora. Another *arangetram* I attended at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in the same month was broadcast live on the Internet. As the compere introduced that particular *arangetram* to the physically present audience, she also acknowledged the presence of friends and family members around the world viewing the ceremony on the Internet. The digital networks signalled to the development of the

arangetram from a local diasporic gathering in the late 1980s to a transnational diasporic gathering in 2013, facilitated by the advancement of technology and its adoption within this 'ancient' practice.

Although digital technology allows for a transnational synchronous experience of such occasions, large numbers of Bremakumar's friends and relatives travelled from Sri Lanka and Malaysia to be physically present in Logan Hall for the *arangetram* ceremony. Many of the relatives who had travelled were invited onto the side of the stage for the *pooja* ritual. A shrine had been constructed and images of Gods and the saint composer Thyagaraja were displayed, along with the Ganesh *murthi*, oil lamps and offerings of fruit and flowers. The large crowd gathered around the shrine and the Brahmin priest stepped forward to perform the *pooja* on the stage (see figure 6.2). The performing musicians also gathered around the priest so he could bless them before they embarked on the *arangetram* performance. Two female relatives emerged from the crowd and lit the oil lamps on the shrine to signal the beginning of the ritual. The priest recited Sanskrit Vedic chant and simultaneously rang a small, brass *pooja* bell to dispel evil spirits and to attract God to the space. The student's musical instruments were placed at the bottom of the shrine and were blessed before the vocal *guru* presented her student with the *tambura* and the violin *guru* presented his student with the violin. All the while, the priest recited Vedic chant, centring around three tones; B, the most prominent, followed by turns around B down to A and up to C for the cadences of the Sanskrit verses. Although melodic in character, Vedic chant is not conceived as music but it must be intoned in a particular way in order to have power in the world and to ritually emplace the performance space.[10]

Towards the end of the *pooja* ritual, Ashwin prostrated in front of a number of musicians and *gurus* who came on-stage to bless him before his first performance. The whole

10 The correct, intoned *Vedic* recitation is very important during such rituals, as *"*power and sacredness is inherent in their correctly enunciated sound" (*'sruti and smrti'* Johnson 2009: 310).

ritual had finished in just over ten minutes. Most of the crowd gathered around the shrine were familiar with their roles in the ritual, knowing when to clasp their hands together in prayer and lighting the lamps, although the Brahmin priest whispered specific instructions to Ashwin in order to correctly complete the ritual. Such a religious ritual prior to the *arangetram* is a vital part of the ceremony as it connects the space and performance to the sociocosmic network (see Clothey 2006).

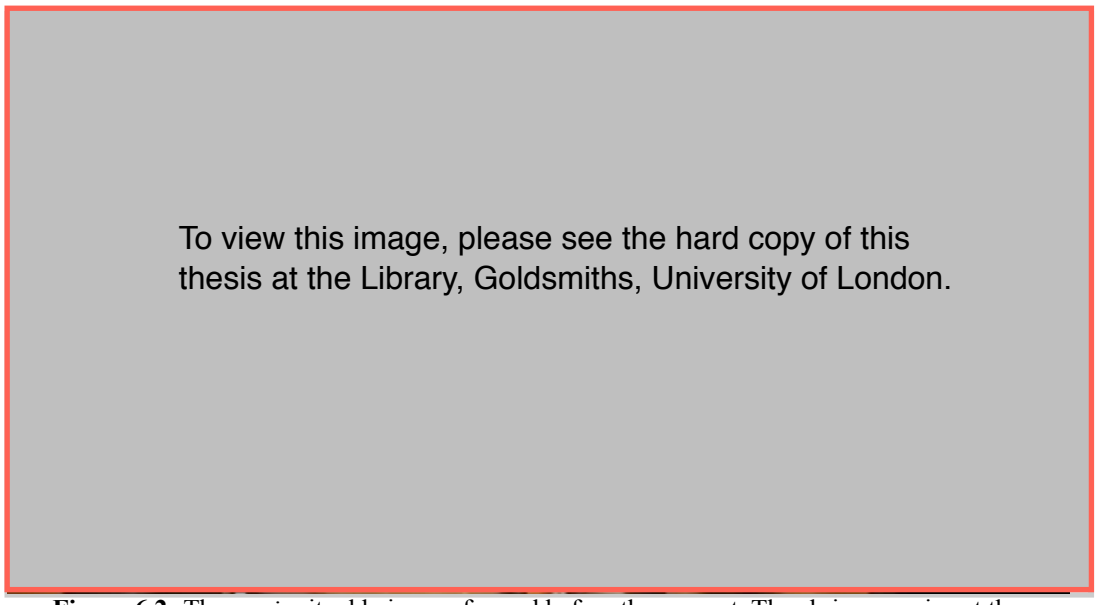


Figure 6.2: The *pooja* ritual being performed before the concert. The shrine remains at the side of the stage during the musical performance. The student, *gurus,* family members, friends and musicians are blessed during the ritual by the Brahmin priest. The *tambura* is lying on the floor in front of the shrine.

As the *pooja* finished and the space was ritually emplaced, the priest and family members left the stage and the curtains were drawn. Following the ritual, a *nadaswaram* shawm and *tavil* drum ensemble sat in the entrance of the auditorium and performed *mangala isai,* literally 'auspicious music', as the invited audience members filed into the performance space. Consisting of a repertoire of 'classical' *kriti* compositions, the *nadaswaram* and *tavil* provided an auspicious start to the *arangetram* ceremony through the ensemble's associations with the temple and ceremonial occasions. Bremakumar is a key individual in hiring *nadaswaram* and *tavil* artists in London, driven by his personal affinity

for the *periya melam* ensemble from his childhood in Jaffna. The temple music tradition in North Sri Lanka was particularly strong when Bremakumar was growing up on the island, and the *nadaswaram tavil* prioritised over the Carnatic *chinna melam* ensemble before the conflict. The *nadaswaram tavil* and temple music tradition remains strong even after the end of the war. The temple musicians at the *arangetram* had been hired from North Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu to perform for *pooja,* temple festivals, weddings and *arangetrams* in the UK.[11] The accompanying artists, however, were all local in order to adhere to Bremakumar's aim to cultivate a sustainable local scene in London.

I walked passed the temple ensemble, took a seat in the auditorium and set up my camera. Whilst I looked through the glossy *arangetram* brochure before the start of the performance, I noticed the list of local accompanying musicians in Bremakumar's *arangetram* contrasted with the *mridangam arangetram* I had attended in a theatre near Heathrow two weeks previously, which was performed by a mix of local and visiting India-based musicians.

Although I had not received an official invitation for the *mridangam arangetram*, I had been indirectly invited by several musicians and attended the *arangetram* with members of the local musical community; musicians often attend these *arangetrams* without invitation. The presence of musicians in the audience is coveted by the *guru* and *arangetram* student as they can receive specialised musical feedback and, depending on the performance, these attending musicians can contribute towards the young artist's and *guru's* future reputation. The reputation generated from an *arangetram* is important in both the student's and *guru's* placement in the local musical network as reputation determines whether or not they will be considered for future performances. This point was made in the following comments by Kiruthika, who performed her violin *arangetram* in 2006:

11 A number of *nadaswaram* and *tavil* artists are now resident in the UK. During the summer months each year, however, a number of temple musicians travel to London from South Asia in response to the demand for musical performance in *arangetrams,* weddings and temple festivals.

> [I]t [was] almost necessary for me to do one [an *arangetram*] because of the culture, because of the scene in London, like doing an *arangetram* is almost like 'right, she's done an *arangetram* now', if I hadn't done one then people wouldn't look at you, [they] wouldn't ask you [to perform] for concerts ... (pers. comm., January 2012).

Since her *arangetram,* Kiruthika has performed widely in the UK and is regularly asked to accompany local and visiting artists. The *arangetram* therefore served as a point of entry into professional musicianship and an access point to the wider music assemblage. Similarly, Bremakumar uses *arangetram* performances to scout 'talent' in London; he told me that he judges the student's performance as a whole and on their musicianship, which includes their sense of *shruti* (pitch intonation)*, talam* (rhythm), and *bhavam* (expression) (pers. comm., November 2013).

On such example was a *mridangam arangetram* at the Beck Theatre in Hayes on 15th September 2013, where the performing student was rumoured to have a promising talent in *talam* according to local musicians. I went to this *arangetram* with Sarangan, who had also heard that the *arangetram* student was performing to a high standard and could therefore be considered to accompany performances in the future. Furthermore, India-based artist Sikkil Gurucharan sang for the *mridangam* student and Sarangan was keen to pick up musical 'ideas' directly from this singer. Despite arriving with a highly respected musician, I soon felt like a 'gate-crasher' as Sarangan sat at the front of the auditorium reserved for musicians, dancers, cultural activists and religious figures who judged the performance, whereas I sat further away from the stage. However, I was particularly keen to attend this ceremony as three India-based musicians had been invited to participate in the *arangetram* (see figure 6.3). Due to the large sums of money families are prepared to pay for the ceremony, the *arangetram* is a regular opportunity to bring artists from India to provide the performing student, and others, inspiration and refinement according to the Chennai musical aesthetic. Inviting India-based performing artists to perform in diasporic *arangetrams* also reinforces socio-musical synchrony between local diasporic musicians and India. Local artists rely on

arangetrams as a core means of financial income, however, and a balance between the amount of India-based artists and local artists must be achieved in order to retain economic sustainability for London's musicians. In order to support diasporic artists, *arangetram* organisers like Kirupakaran and Bremakumar try to retain a balance between local and Indian musicians.



Figure 6.3: India-based 'star' musicians Karaikudi Mani (delivering a speech), Sikkil Gurucharan (vocalist) and Ghatam Surresh (*ghatam* player) participate in a *mridangam arangetram* in London, September 2013. Local artists perform together with the transnational musicians and the *arangetram* student.

With the completion of the *pooja* ritual and the performance of auspicious music back at the Bloomsbury *arangetram*, the audience shuffled in the auditorium and found a seat in the 900-person capacity venue. Once the audience was seated, the lights were dimmed and the stage curtains opened to reveal a stage decorated with flower garlands, hanging lamps and draped gold silks. Following the London custom, Ashwin's brother welcomed the audience on behalf of his family, before passing over to a compere to present the rest of the ceremony. Speaking over the drone of the electronic *shruti* box, the female compere said:

> On this auspicious occasion, we pray to Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles, to guide Ashwin [performing student] in tonight's performance. Music is one of life's greatest pleasures. The origins

> of Carnatic music stretch back thousands of years, evolving from the Vedic scriptures, emanating the rich cultural heritage of South India. It represents what is divine and spiritual, and is believed to elevate the musician both intellectually and emotionally. It is said *'shruti laya, maata pida*' the melody is the mother of music, while rhythm is its father. Attaining perfection in both of these aspects induces inspirational music. Like many art forms, Carnatic music is timeless, and to this day has a global presence. An *arangetram* is the debut performance of a full repertoire by a student after undertaking years of arduous training. It represents a stepping stone in their journey as an artist (*Arangetram* speech, 28th September 2013).

This speech highlights a number of common themes that characterise discourse on *arangetrams* in the UK. These include: divinity, spirituality and the presence of the Gods; the ancient connections with scriptures, such as the *Cilappatikaram*; musical perfection; and the music's 'global presence'. These themes characterise diasporic *arangetrams* and such discourse reinforces the ceremony as an iconic diasporic practice. They connote the past through discourse, objects and ritualised practices and to modernity through the highly dispersed Tamil diaspora, the 'global presence' of music and its dissemination through transnational networks.

After the speech, the student and his professional accompanying musicians were formally introduced by the compere and the ensemble ensued with a performance of a *varnam* composition before an invocatory song for Ganesha. The *guru* sat to the side of her student, providing a supportive presence, both musically and emotionally. The standard concert path was followed after the initial benediction to Ganesh. Some unconventional songs, however, were included in the path. Ashwin sang a song written by his *guru* to remember the “suffering of thousands in Sri Lanka in recent times” in the 'light' half of the performance. Such reference to recent conflicts and politics are rare and the light *tukkada* half concluded according to the conventional concert path with a *thevaram* and a *thillana.*

After the short vocal performance, there was an interval. Sri Lankan vegetarian snacks and non-alcoholic drinks were served to retain the 'divine' nature of the ritualised occasion. During the interval, the musicians in the audience went backstage to socialise with the accompanying artists and to offer support to the student. As I weaved in and out of the crowd – who were catching up with friends and acquaintances – I met a large number of

music participants and organisers who regularly attend these performances around London. The intervals of *arangetrams* proved to be a good time to meet and talk with musicians and organisers and to discuss upcoming performances. After an extended “20 minute interval” that lasted closer to 40 minutes, the audience returned to the auditorium and Ashwin performed his violin *arangetram*. It is common in the UK for students to perform multiple instruments in their *arangetram* ceremony, or to perform both music and dance, reflecting the multiple art forms they have learned during their childhood. The violin *arangetram* followed the same musical conventions and concert path. Like the 'light' half of the vocal performance, some unconventional musical arrangements appeared in the latter half of the violin performance, with the inclusion of the *nadaswaram* and *tavil* performing with the *arangetram* ensemble. Despite the very close historical and musical links between the two ensembles, the variation was described by some audience members as 'fusion'. Personality and family background is shown particularly in the light half of the *arangetram* performance, whether it is through the inclusion of *bhajans* for the family's deity*, thevaram,* film songs or 'fusion' pieces. Unlike the vocal performance, the violin *arangetram* was interspersed with speeches from local Brahmin priests and *nadaswaram* artists who were the special guests for the occasion. The inclusion of speeches from invited special guests is intended to provide the performing student with in-depth musical feedback. Although feedback is given in diasporic *arangetrams*, it has become more customary to congratulate and commend the second generation on their contribution of cultural continuity through their performance, rather than providing any detailed critique of their playing.

At the end of the *arangetram,* Ashwin gave gifts to the *gurus* and the accompanying musicians before he gave his own speech to end the ceremony. After six hours, the *arangetram* was complete and audience members left. Each person was handed a decorated bag containing a food parcel of Sri Lankan rice and curry and bottled water. In the

proceeding days I discussed the *arangetram* with the musicians who attended, hearing their opinions about the musicianship, *shruti*, *talam* and *bhavam* displayed by the student. In general, musicians who attend *arangetrams* comment that they are inspired by the young musician's *arangetram* performance and want them to perform with their own students in the future. Often, they comment on the extravagance of the event and how the diasporic ceremony is used by families to display their wealth and success rather than the student's musical ability and acquisition of knowledge.

The richness of the ethnographic experience cannot be easily translated into text, but *arangetrams* embody important values that circulate in London's Tamil diaspora. The *Cilappatikaram* and the mythical past are continually referenced through the event itself, through its historical connections with the ancestral homeland and through musical connections with present-day Chennai. The multiple references to the past in the *arangetram* contribute to Øivind Fugerlud's point that the past must be consulted in order to understand the diasporic present particularly amongst Tamil refugees (1999: 90). The next section reflects further on this historical dimension with reference to the material culture of *arangetram* ceremonies.

Material Culture and Connecting to the Past

Walking in to the *arangetram* venue is an exciting part of the ceremonial experience. Objects, food, displays and clothing are used to construct a setting that reflects the descriptions found in the *Cilappatikaram* and ceremonial practices in South Asia. The foyer and the stage are ornately decorated with silks, flowers, sculptures and musical instruments. In addition, shrines to important Hindu deities, such as Ganesh, Saraswathi, and Nataraja, and oil lamps are placed to the side of the stage to burn a sacred flame. Such essential, iconic objects were present at all the *arangetrams* I attended in London between 2010 and 2013. At Ashwin's

arangetram in Logan Hall, an abundance of banana leaf bunting and garlands of jasmine flowers filled the foyer and guests were greeted by an elaborate *kolam* – a geometric pattern drawn in front of Hindu households every morning to bring prosperity during the day. The *kolam* had been prepared with India-imported colourful chalk powders and flowers that had been carefully sprinkled and arranged near the entrance of the hall (see figure 6.4). Jasmine garlands and the *kolam* are quotidian in South Asia and are used to complete everyday rituals in the home and temple (see Laine 2009). Despite the ordinariness of such objects in South Asian culture, the presence of the objects is significant in diasporic events. Such objects symbolise the material networks between South Asia and the UK where ordinary, yet essential, objects for rituals, ceremonies and everyday life flow from South India and Sri Lanka to the diasporic groups in London. According to Srinivasan, the presence of such material goods imported from the subcontinent renders the cultural citizenship portrayed in the ceremony as tangibly connected with India and therefore "authentic" (2012: 143). Material goods are also a means of demonstrating wealth through the amount of imported goods, elaborate decoration and gifts to members of the audience.

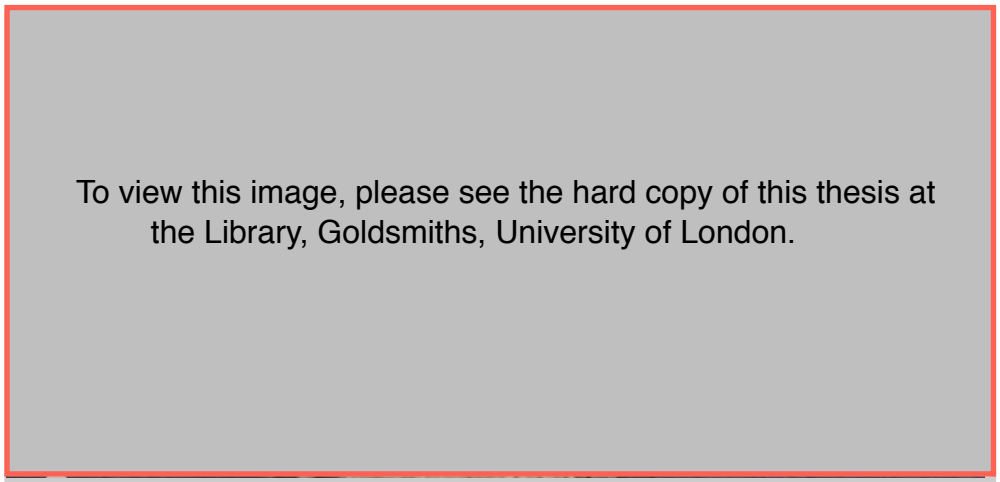


Figure 6.4: A large *kolam* decorating the foyer in front of the auditorium at Logan Hall, London. Lotus flowers, colourful chalk powders and jasmine flower garlands are imported for ceremonies such as *arangetrams* and weddings.

Each space is decorated differently, although most reflect the description in the

Cilappatikaram through the inclusion of key objects, such as: “the images of demigods above the stage”; “bright lamps”; and “strings of rare pearls, wreaths and garlands of flowers” (Parthasarathy 2004: 37). Although the *Cilappatikaram* is understood to be a fictitious account, it is also regarded as an account of Tamil cultural history and is regularly referenced with regards to 'Tamil traditions' by cultural activists in the diaspora. The decorative objects themselves do not contribute to the musical performance *per se*, but they are instrumental in the construction of a historicised and ritualised space for the ceremony.[12]



Figure 6.5: Vocal *arangetram* at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, October 2013. A highly decorated stage with a shrine on the right-hand side, images of saint-composers as a backdrop, oil lamps in the corners of the stage and elaborate flower arrangements.

12 Philip Crang argues for the importance of material culture studies in understanding the forging of diasporic identities and social spaces through “objectifying, mediating and shaping social relations, identities and differences” (2010: 139).



Figure 6.6: *Veena arangetram* at the Watersmeet Theatre, Hertfordshire, August 2013. Images of temples and deities remain the most popular backdrop for diasporic music *arangetrams.*

In addition to the *Cilappatikaram,* the temple is the main reference point for constructing a suitable space for the *arangetram* ceremony. Having historically taken place in the temples of Tamil Nadu by *devadasis*, the *arangetram* is constructed in the diaspora by referencing imagined historical and religious settings in London's secular suburban theatres. Garlands of flowers, pearls and silks outline the *gopuram* tower of a Saiva Hindu temple on the backdrop of stages or large images of Gods and saint-composers are presented behind the performing artists, heightening the ritualisation of the occasion through imagery (see Figures 6.5 and 6.6). The space is 'tuned in' through the performance of the *pooja* ritual to start the *arangetram* and the decorations provide visual closeness with a mythical narrative. Through ritual and the preparation of space in accordance with the imagery of the *Cilappatikaram* and South Indian temples, the ceremony connects with the ancestral past and the transnational and sociocosmic networks. Fred Clothey highlights the importance of rituals and the mythical historical narrative in the Tamil diaspora:

> It is ritual that creates or reorients these spaces [in diaspora], and it is myth that links them to the past. Myth reads the present into the past; it is constructed of the bits of memory of 'home'

> mingled with the bricolage of present circumstances. Myth rearticulates the cosmology that has been reinvented and expressed in newly constructed spaces; it attests that the sociopsychic ambience of new spaces is indeed like those 'back home' (2006: 22).

Although the music *arangetram* ceremony was a rare event 'back home' in Sri Lanka, the familiar *pooja* rituals, ritualised musical practices and objects referencing the ancestral past converge to articulate diasporic space.

Images of South Indian and Sri Lankan temples are particularly prevalent in the *arangetram* brochure. Handed out by *sari*-clad female friends and relatives, the brochure is given to the invited guests at *arangetrams* to outline the programme and serve as a lasting memento of the occasion. The glossy pages contain messages from the *guru* and other members of local or transnational Tamil society, the list of repertoire and information about the performing artists. Brochures also typically include professional photographs of the student dressed in traditional South Indian clothes and posing with their musical instruments. Such photographs are superimposed onto images of 'ancient' South Indian and Sri Lankan temples (see Figure 6.7 and 6.8). These images transport the appearance of the diasporic *arangetram* to a different time and place and are rich in spiritual associations. They also link with the *arangetram's* history of being performed in the temples of South India and, therefore, visually position young diasporic musicians in this historical narrative. The material objects, then, explicitly display a coveted mythical connection with the diasporic *arangetram* and the ancestral homeland.

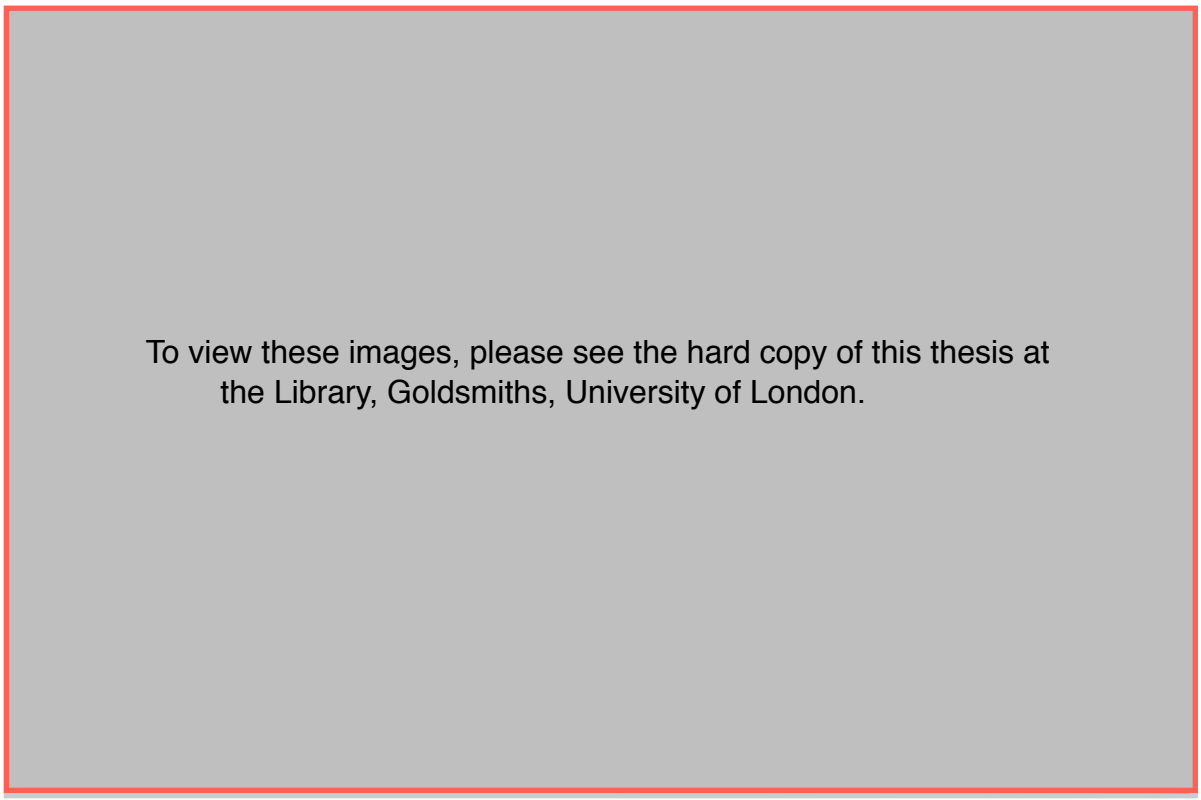


Figure 6.7 and Figure 6.8: *Arangetram* brochures from 2010 and 2013. The temple in figure 6.7 resembles the iconic Nallur Kandaswamy temple in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. In Figure 6.8, the student musician takes the *pranam* prayer pose in front of an image of a South Indian temple.

The objects used to create the correct settings for the ceremony are iconic and reference not only the mythical past but also the present transnational situation. The expectations of the audience are met with the presence of *murthis,* food, decorations, flowers and clothes.[13] Through material culture, the *arangetram* ceremony contributes to the mythical history in the *Cilappatilakaram*, linking displaced Tamil families within a selective historical narrative based on the longevity of Tamil culture rather than persecution and conflict.

The *arangetram* ceremony requires a great deal of organisation aside from the venue and material culture. Musical preparation is integral to the success of the ceremony and I will discuss the learning, rehearsing and organising process in the following section.

13 Rather than a diasporic personal memory museum (Boym 1998: 516), the objects contribute to the mythical imagination and build present and future narratives linking with the mythical past and with the transnational diasporic present.

Learning, Rehearsing and Organising the *Arangetram*

When I first met Sarangan at an *arangetram* in February 2013, he told me about his two students preparing for their *arangetram* in September later that year. *Arangetram* ceremonies are often organised at least a year in advance to secure a venue, allow time for shopping trips to Chennai and, most importantly, to prepare the student. Both Sarangan's *arangetram* students had undergone a similar musical education. They had attended weekly Tamil school lessons from a young age and completed their graded Carnatic music exams[14] before pursuing one to one classes with their *guru* for a number of years. Despite their long-term learning, both of Sarangan's students undertook intense musical training in the months preceding their debut performance. Extended classes were held several times a week before the final rehearsals. The week before the *arangetram* daily rehearsals were held with the accompanying musicians to attain musical 'perfection' in the performance. In August 2013, I attended the last three rehearsals of Sarangan's senior student, Yathursdan, for his vocal *arangetram* which took place in London's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in West Kensington.

On a Wednesday morning in August, I woke early to travel towards Wembley for Yathursdan's rehearsal. The rehearsal had to start promptly at 9am as the accompanying musicians had to attend another full *arangetram* rehearsal later that day. Once I arrived at Sarangan's house, we were picked up by the student's parents and taken to the rehearsal venue. After almost an hour driving, we arrived at a community hall in Hertfordshire, North West of Greater London. Surrounded by blocks of flats, the hall was a small, 1970s building containing a large open room with tables and chairs stacked around its periphery. The space was quickly transformed as a large, colourful Persian carpet was thrown over the wooden floor which was then covered in microphones, stands and leads. A small P.A. system was set

14 The participating exam boards in London are modelled on the exam boards that assessed musical performance in Sri Lanka, such as the North Ceylon Oriental Music Society. There are London branches of similar associations, such as Oriental Fine Arts Academy of London (OFAAL) and Oriental Examination Board London (OEBL) that examines students in London and in other Sri Lankan diasporic localities.

up by the *ganjira* (frame drum) artist, a second generation semi-professional percussionist and medical student. The accompanying musicians then arrived, mridangist Kirupakaran and violinist Sivaganeshan who regularly perform with Sarangan in London. Yathursdan's mother set about making tea, coffee and spicy vegetable sandwiches as breakfast for the *guru* and accompanying musicians. The student finally arrived and walked into the rehearsal space carrying a file containing written out *sargam* notation for the repertoire being rehearsed. Family members came and went whilst siblings and cousins offered support as they themselves had already undergone their own *arangetrams*.

The musicians sat in their conventional places and rehearsed each of the fifteen songs from the repertoire list. In each of the three rehearsals I attended, the repertoire was rehearsed in its entirety taking approximately three hours to complete. The rehearsals ensured the musical synchrony and interaction between the musicians and, most importantly, provided familiarity with the complex improvisation sections. The file that Yadhurshan carried with him was full of the extensive notation for the *kalpana swaram*, the virtuosic passages of improvisation that his *guru* had prepared for his *arangetram.* The passages were very complicated in terms of melodic density and movement and rhythmic complexity. The accompanying musicians, all of whom were familiar with the Chennai music scene, referred to the *kalpana swaram* as 'extreme' in terms of technicality by Chennai's standards. Such a technical display would bode both *guru* and student well in the future in terms of their musical reputations. In order to encourage musical 'ideas' from the student in the memorised *kalpana swaram,* the violinist extemporised his own musical ideas, rather than customarily recite and elaborate on the 'ideas' sung by the vocalist. This unsettled the student, but at times had the desired effect of inducing creativity. Although the *guru* supervised the student and their rehearsal, the accompanying artists provided musical and personal support during the *arangetram* process. The musicians regularly reassured the student and gave him snippets of

performance advice, from confidently tapping *talam* to performing with the appropriate *bhavam,* or expression.

Arangetram rehearsals are an important part of the learning process as they provide students with the rare opportunity to gain interactive experience within an ensemble on-stage and to perform with improvising musicians. The students, therefore, gain essential knowledge of the conventions and performer roles vital to transnational musical interactions, discussed as micro-level networks in chapter three. Practical performance issues such as using microphones and adjusting the *shruti* box are also learned during the rehearsal process. These musicianship skills are focused upon in the *arangetram* rehearsals as musicianship should be displayed in the *arangetram* in addition to the acquisition of musical knowledge. On the way to one of the rehearsals, Yadhurshan's father told me that the *arangetram* provided his son with the opportunity to perform with professional artists in a way that he may never experience. Such an opportunity, he suggested, was worth the financial and temporal expenditure.

Once the ensemble had run through the whole repertoire to the satisfaction of the *guru*, Yadhurshan's mother and other female relatives brought an array of Sri Lankan 'rice and curry' into the hall. Everyone ate together before the artists were paid and thanked for their participation in the rehearsal. Their payment was handed to them by the student, who also gave them a symbolic gift representing *gurudarkshina* – a Sanskrit concept of gift giving to show respect and thanks.[15] *Gurudakshina* differs from the payment for lessons and can consist of anything from a £1 coin to an extravagant gift or service. After handing out the payments and *gurudakshina,* the student sought each of the musician's blessings through performing the *pranam* prostration in front of them on the floor. The rehearsals were rich in South Asian Hindu customs and concepts, taught through years of ritualised musical learning

15 Ludwig Pesch describes *gurudakshina* as a "customary gift ... presented to a teacher on certain auspicious occasions or after the training period was completed to mutual satisfaction" (2009: 149).

and rearticulated through the preparation and performance of the *arangetram* ceremony.

During the weeks preceding the performance of an *arangetram*, some *gurus* suggest following the practice of *gurushisyakurukulum,* or living with one's *guru*. Originally the primary mode of learning in South India, *gurushisyakurukulum,* or *gurukul* for short, is still regarded as the best way to acquire knowledge from a *guru.* The practice is becoming increasingly rare in South Asia and in the diaspora. However, *veena* teacher, Sivatharini still practices *gurukulum* before an *arangetram* ceremony because it allows for intense musical practise throughout the day and develops the spiritual and emotional bond between the teacher and student. Such a practice is otherwise uncommon in London.

'*Arangetram Music*'

Arangetram performances in the London are always highly rehearsed. For many *arangetram* students, the rehearsals are necessary as they embark on their 'first performance'. The rehearsals also provide an opportunity to practice the complex improvised sections of the performance, such as the extended *kalpana swaram.* The performance of *kalpana swaram* is a significant musical challenge for professional musicians, let alone an *arangetram* student embarking on their first performance. Despite the musical support he was given by his *guru* and siblings who prompted him from his extensive notes, it was noticeable in Yadhurshan's rehearsals that memorising such long and complex passages of *svaras* was particularly difficult. The importance of *manodharma,* or the improvised, 'creative', aspect in Carnatic music is regularly expressed, however, there is an understanding in London's musical community that improvised passages of an *arangetram* are precomposed. Most *kalpana swaram* are composed by the *guru* and memorised by the student, and are not a spontaneous musical creation in a concert setting as would be the case in professional concerts in London and Chennai. Such a practice is considered by musicians as the result of musical learning in

the diaspora, where musical learning and graded music exams outweigh the gradual immersion in Carnatic musical performance in India. Performing rehearsed 'improvised' material is therefore not 'pure', or culturally authentic, according to the Chennai musical aesthetic. Sarangan, however, likens the *kalpana swaram* to 'mathematics', or *kanakku*, due to its reliance on musical formulae. He therefore believes that musicianship is demonstrated in other parts of the performance, such as the *alapana*, where 'oneness' between the music and musician can be achieved and the individuality of the musician can come across (Sarangan, pers. comm., September 2013).

The 'improvisation' sections in *arangetram* performances are memorised for two primary reasons. First, during the *arangetram* process students are under a great deal of pressure to perform to a high standard and memorised *kalpana swaram* reduces the risk of mistakes in the performance. Memorised 'improvisation' contributes towards the musical 'perfection' and fluency sought after in the expensive ceremony. Second, *gurus* or families often put the student through their *arangetram* performance before they have achieved the necessary technical standard. The onset of college exams and university education is often the cause for the rush to complete the *arangetram,* so that musical practice does not hinder 'academic' studies. The musical skills required to perform a technically demanding song contrast with the improvisatory skills needed to use the song as a point of departure for creative extension. To perform spontaneous improvised passages, musicians need a great deal of experience and confidence in the musical system and performance situation. Musical learning is often less intense in London than it might be in India or Sri Lanka, due to the demands of contemporary British life and therefore the necessary musical standard is often not achieved before an *arangetram* ceremony is undertaken.

Commenting on the highly rehearsed nature of the *arangetram* performance, musician and concert organiser, Srikanth makes the distinction between "*arangetram* music", as

"scripted" and "non-creative", and "creative Carnatic music":

> *Arangetram* music in this country [UK], now that is what I call ... rehearsed, rehearsed, and rehearsed. Everything is like he'll or she'll be singing this [repertoire] even in the middle of her dreams but ... if I ask her 'hey, can you go one step beyond what is scripted and can you actually bring out a couple of statements, nuances' she says 'no. I'll phone my teacher, give me a break' ... Having said that we still love the non-creative Carnatic because that's where the children start, the gateway into appreciating Carnatic music is to do a scripted music ... we love that because without that people would never enter into ... the creative world (Srikanth, pers. comm., October 2012).[16]

In these comments, Srikanth highlights the importance of the *manodharma* in Carnatic music performance and the lack of spontaneity in *arangetram* performances. Such sentiments are widely shared by musicians in London and some maintain that the *arangetram* in the diaspora has become redundant in its musical function and meaning. Some suggest that musical ability as a whole can be questioned, because the improvisatory sections, during which students should display their individuality and creativity, are in fact memorised products of their *guru*. An alternative perspective to such assertions of musical inauthenticity, however, is that the music is scripted to solidify the *guru's* style. Performing in the *guru's* style can be understood to further strengthen the musical connection between the student and the teacher, and ultimately to reinforce the musical lineage from India and Sri Lanka before the completion of the studentship in London.

The Arangetram as a Gateway to the Transnational Scene

Rather than a passage into professional musicianship as in the historical tradition, Srikanth considers scripted '*arangetram* music' in the diaspora as a 'gateway into the creative world'; entering the advanced world of improvisatory Carnatic music from the introductory, memorised starting point. For many students, such as a Kiruthika, the ceremony is certainly the gateway to musical, stylistic and creative independence, therefore the *arangetram* retains

16 Srikanth is a music organiser and musician from Bangalore, India. Despite his involvement with Tamil music-making in London, he acknowledges a divide between 'Tamil' music-making and Carnatic music in London.

its historical function as a transformative ceremony. The *arangetram* is, as one of many brochures stated, “a stepping stone into the artistic realm” (*Arangetram* brochure, September 2013) allowing students access to the wider local and transnational scene. Kiruthika explains the importance of performing an *arangetram* in transforming her position in the local network and beyond:

> [It was] after doing my *arangetram* that ... I was able to go to a different teacher. If not, I would have had to have stayed with my first teacher ... it was only after my *arangetram* that my teacher was like 'yeah, you can go and learn from whoever you want now for further education' ... so that ... enabled me to develop further (pers. comm., January 2013).

The *arangetram* acted as a gateway in a number of ways for Kiruthika. After her *arangetram*, her *guru* allowed her to learn from another teacher in order to refine her performance skills and develop her musicianship. She went on to study with a Chennai-based violinist and has since performed in the Chennai music season. Her *arangetram* in London therefore allowed her to develop new connections with the subcontinent. The *arangetram* also acts as a gateway for students to start their own semi-professional career in London as the performance is in itself a showcase. Students can then be considered for future programmes, concerts and teaching opportunities in the local music network. Similarly, the *arangetram* is a point at which young musicians can become innovative with their style. Kiruthika now performs in a second generation South Asian band, performing classical styles alongside popular instrumentation. Having solidified her classical style through performing an *arangetram,* she has been able to apply her Carnatic music knowledge in different contexts.

From a *guru's* perspective, Sivatharini considers that the *arangetram* marks the point of a student's musical independence. Commenting with regards to one of her own senior students who wanted to experiment with his style of *veena* playing, Sivatharini states the *arangetram* is the point at which the student gains the *guru's* blessing to experiment musically. She said the *arangetram* symbolised the completion of her student's training with her, therefore she gave him her blessing to experiment with his performance style. She

commented; “my student ... he plays so good, he likes Rajhesh Vaidhya's ['light' popular] style, he loves that. So I said 'okay, you've had your *arangetram*. This is my style, if you want to change, go!' He plays all sort of cinema songs and he goes for that, he plays well and earns money” (Sivatharini, pers. comm., October 2012). Sivatharini comments that her style reflects the 'deeper' classical style of playing the *veena* in contrast to Rajhesh Vaidhya's popular style and film repertoire. She does, however, recognise that the *arangetram* is a point at which young musicians gain musical autonomy from their *guru*. Unlike many *gurus* in India, London-based teachers are keen for their students to attend workshops by visiting artists in order to gain inspiration and 'polish up' their style in accordance with the current Chennai aesthetic. Before the performance of an *arangetram,* however, Sivatharini dissuades her students from attending workshops with musicians who have contrasting styles to herself (pers. comm., October 2012).

The *arangetram* symbolises a gateway in the capacity of musical autonomy from the *guru*, in addition to being a display of Tamil cultural citizenship. The ceremony therefore retains its ritual function as an agent of change. The diasporic *arangetram* marks a change in the young musician's career, in that they become part of the local and transnational musical network. In wider Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic society, their social status is also changed by their display of 'Tamil' diasporic citizenship through the ceremony. With this in mind, the *arangetram* has become more of a musical ritual and the event itself is more significant than its aesthetic content. In London, the *arangetram* has become an iconic ceremony to display cultural commitment to the local and transnational diasporic network.

Conclusion

The diasporic *arangetram* is an iconic transnational event which characterises and sustains the musical scene in London. The macro-level transnational networks employed in the

construction of the *arangetram* ceremony aligns the local London scene with other diasporic localities and counteracts the possibility of disconnection. Through such connections, the *arangetram* acts as a point of convergence and synchrony, linking the transnational present and the Hindu concept of cosmic connectivity. The *arangetram* is a means of enculturation and a display of cultural citizenship to both the diasporic network and multicultural society. The ceremony has inevitably changed its character and function in its diasporic context, yet its importance has intensified. Importantly for Sri Lankan Tamils, the *arangetram* is a ceremony that connects the diaspora with a mythical historical narrative beyond recent conflicts in their homeland.

The *arangetram* in London retains characteristics similar to Illango's description of Matavi's 'First Performance' in the *Cilappatikaram* and this reference is maintained through the discourse and material culture surrounding the ceremony. In her study of *arangetrams* in the USA, Priya Srinivasan questions the historical discourse and references surrounding the diasporic *arangetram.* She asks: "[w]hat is the investment in this fictive authenticity, in drawing a particular history from the nation into the diaspora?" (2012: 160). Srinivasan admits her unease with the "pull of authenticity, whether it is the need for 'authentic' objects such as the *sari* from India or merely 'authentic' discourses whose falsified histories seem to plague *bharatanatyam* practice" (2012: 160). The 'pull of authenticity' is strong amongst musicians in London in relation to adherence to Chennai musical conventions and material goods from the subcontinent. The connections with a fictitious history, however, go beyond the 'pull of authenticity' and contribute to a discourse of belonging and validation for the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in London. It is widely acknowledged by musicians, students and community members that the diasporic *arangetram* is a different ceremony from that conducted in South Asia, particularly in terms of its preparation, the memorisation of 'improvised' musical sections, and its function. However, the performance of the ceremony

remains validated by its 'ancient' Tamil origin and connection with the ancestral homeland. Rather than creating a new and disconnected diasporic practice, the *arangetram* performance is firmly situated in the mythical historical past and transnational diasporic present.

The relationship between Sri Lankan Tamil musicians and mythical histories is significant. South India is regarded as the 'original homeland' for many Sri Lankan Tamils who have disconnected from the island, and is imagined as the ancestral homeland of the Tamil people. Discourse on the *arangetram* in the diaspora frequently references to the 'timelessness' and 'ancient tradition' of the ceremony, its connection with the *Cilappatikaram* and the *devadasis* of Tamil Nadu's temples. The historical narrative of the *arangetram* provides a means for the diasporic musical community to proceed with their lives in the UK, whilst referencing and displaying their transnational connections. Fuglerud suggests that concept of the interwoven past, present and future with regards to Sri Lankan Tamil refugees is complex. He suggests:

> [t]he only way to create a coherent present is to connect it to a past through which it was produced and from there to work one's way forward to a correct image of the now which one seeks to understand. In this cognitive process 'history' is understood selectively; past events are emphasised by a present which allows them to stand as causes for what is (1999: 90-91).

I suggest that the diasporic *arangetram* is a consolidated event of a selectively understood history. The present-day diasporic ceremony is a symbol of the 'glorious Tamil past' that has been recreated in the present despite the atrocities of the twentieth century in Sri Lanka. Paul Connerton discusses the experience of the present as dependent on the selectivity of different past events and objects, and suggests:

> We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present (1989: 2).

The music *arangetram* reconnects selectively to pre-conflict Sri Lanka with the rise of the modern 'golden years of Tamil music' in the 1960s and 1970s in Sri Lanka and earlier to the age of the powerful Tamil empires in India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. As a result,

“attempts at continuity are forged in these communities by reconstructing traditions and myths from pastiches of the past” (Clothey 2006: 213). The *arangetram* ceremony in the diaspora clearly demonstrates this empowering reconstruction of the 'glorious past' rather than referencing a past of persecution, conflict and trauma. Due to the dispersal of the Tamil diaspora around the world, the mythical past is a vital point of reference in the maintenance of transnational connections in the diasporic present and future.

Chapter Seven

Transnational Networks and Embodied Musical Experiences

This chapter discusses the embodied musical experiences coveted by the local London scene through transnational interaction. I first explore Skype music lessons used to replicate face-to-face musical experiences over long distances. Although these lessons provide a musical connection, means of long-distance dissemination and a simultaneous shared experience in two different locations, they do not provide the levels of embodiment expected from musical learning. I then discuss the added importance of transnational artists performing in the London locality providing an embodied and grounded musical experience to diasporic audiences. However, as a result of the multiple locations of the music scene, each with local variants and expectations, an alignment to local adaptations takes place in these transnational performances. Such adaptations are particularly subtle in a scene which largely remains musically and culturally synchronised. As a result of the diversity of the musical community and aided by the circulation of attitudes from Chennai and other diasporic sites, overlapping expectations of musical performance compete. The disjuncture of expectations has created a discourse referring to London's aesthetic as 'diluted'. Instead of referring to the 'dilution' of music in local performances, I suggest that artists demonstrate competency of aligning and performing according to different expectations developed as a result of the transnationality of the scene. I argue that the face-to-face manifestations and interactions through transnational networks are perpetuated by the demand of grounded and embodied musical experiences to emplace the local scene. In order to 'become one again', transnational interactions need to be localised to counteract the high dispersal and fragmentation of diasporic life. The embodied and emplaced musical experiences reiterate the importance of local sites in transnational and

globalising processes.

First, I consider how London is situated in a larger scene consisting of global Sri Lankan and South Indian diasporas and the possibilities of multilocal musical experiences via digital networks.

Multilocal Shared Experiences and Digital Networks

Early on the 15th September 2014, I waited for a bus to Lewisham. I knew there would be difficulties getting into the centre as the roads were closed. It was the day of Lewisham temple's *ther* chariot festival, a procession on the streets around the Siva temple marking the final day of the annual temple festival. I participated in the festival a few days before, singing the 'Thodudaiya Seviyan' *thervaram*, or song for Siva, and a *periya puranam*, a life story of one of the 63 Tamil Saiva poets, in the temple. The songs were taught to me by *Oduvar* Dhandapani and I sang them in front of the deity as part of the large evening *pooja.* As I checked the news on my phone, Kavinaly, a musician friend in Colombo, sent me a message via Facebook. She wrote:

“how are you??

did u sing tamil thevaram in the temple??

'thodudaiya seviyan' ...”

Having some knowledge of being mentioned on a local diasporic Tamil TV interview about my involvement in *pannisai* singing in the temple, I thought she had watched the interview on the television channel which is broadcast worldwide for Tamil diasporic audiences. Instead, she told me that a friend of hers in New Zealand had shared the video of my performance on Facebook. When I checked, several thousand others in areas with a significant Tamil population, such as Sri Lanka, India, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada, Norway, and the United Arab Emirates, had shared the video via social media. I was unaware that a video of my performance was filmed on a phone and shared on

the Internet within days. Before I sang in the festival, I felt nervous about my part in completing the ritual, and as far as I was concerned, my participation in the ritual performance would dissipate at the end of the *pooja.* The positive reception of the video, entitled, in Tamil, “White girl sings Tamil thevaram in temple”, was overwhelming, as was the speed and scale at which the video was shared.[1] The scope of the video's views and shares was an example of macro-level digital networks across the highly-dispersed diaspora, and the resulting shared multilocal musical experience. It was an example of the interconnectedness through technology, religion, music and language.[2] The performance, which I experienced as grounded in local space and time, actually revealed London's part in the larger assemblage. Later in the week I received a number of messages from London's musicians congratulating me on my performance, having seen the video via Facebook, the Tamil website Manithan.com and YouTube. Unwittingly, I became part of the large and instantaneous digital network shared and experienced synchronously in multiple locations. Whilst I discuss interactions between individuals rather than digital content, I consider the Internet as a 'place' in the multilocal scene (see Wood 2008), with increasing live broadcasting, homeland and diasporic video uploads, and Skype video-calling.

The projection of the scene as traditional and timeless, as well as 'global' (multilocal) through technology is evident from the possibilities of musical dissemination and shared musical experience. For example, the broadcast of *arangetrams* live on the Internet has been adopted as a means of involving dispersed family members who cannot attend the event in person, but can watch the event live through Internet-streaming (see figures 7.1 and 7.2). The second advertisement example in figure 7.2 includes the broadcast times in Australia and Canada, indicating the multilocal audiences across the world. Engaging with other localities

[1] The frequent sharing of the video was heightened by the novelty of my participation, however, it highlighted to me the large digital network that already existed.
[2] The video was shared with Tamil nationalist comments. Both Sri Lankan Tamil nationalistic and Dravidian nationalistic sentiments, relating to the different types of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka and India (see Krishna 1999). Therefore, the digital networks here are likely to be an overlap of musical and nationalist networks.

and viewing events simultaneously does not replace sharing the experience in the same space, however, and many families travel long distances to attend *arangetram* ceremonies.

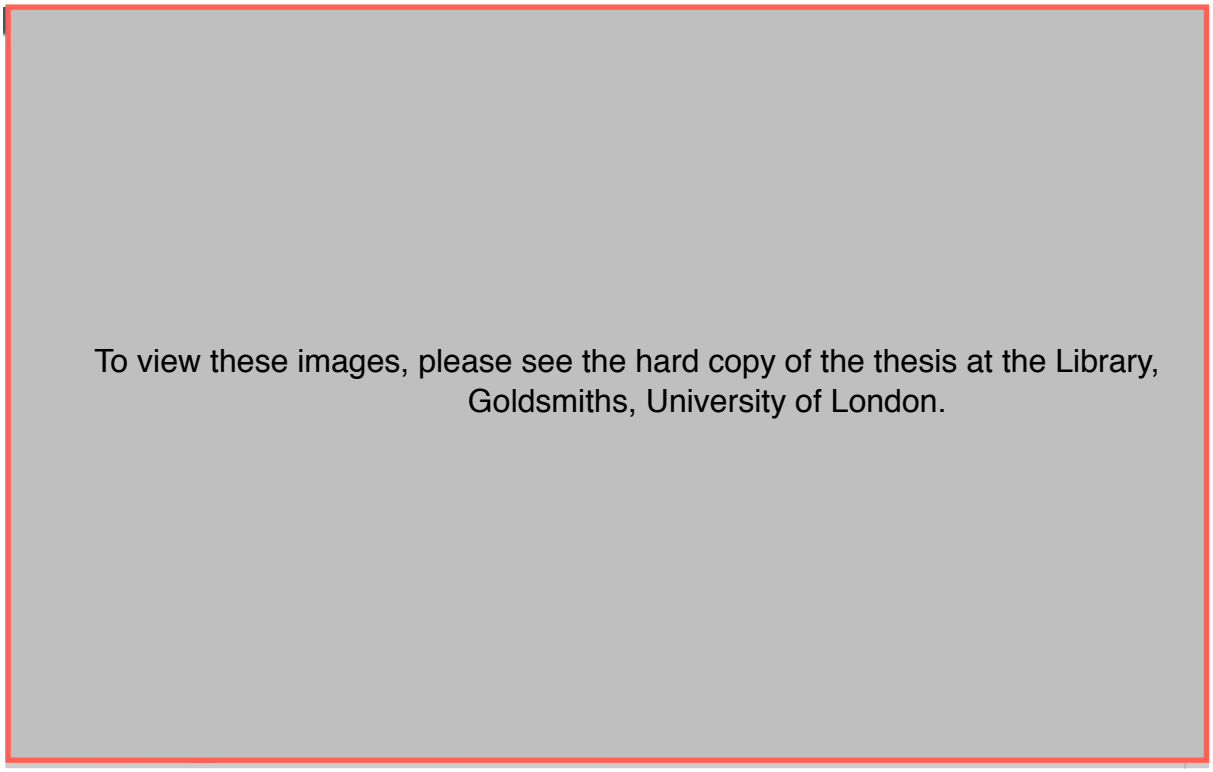


Figure 7.1 and 7.2: Online advertisements for live web telecasts of *arangetram* ceremonies in London in 2013. Both images were taken from www.vanakkamlondon.com (accessed 31st August 2013 and 1st September 2013).

Similarly, the Tamil diasporic satellite television channel, Global Tamil Vision (GTV), reflects the connectivity through mass media, digital networks and the classical arts, with its promotional material illustrated with an image of the earth and *bharatanatyam* dancers emanating from the UK (figure 7.3). Mass media provides the possibility for shared experiences of performances. However, these performances are not grounded or locally shared.

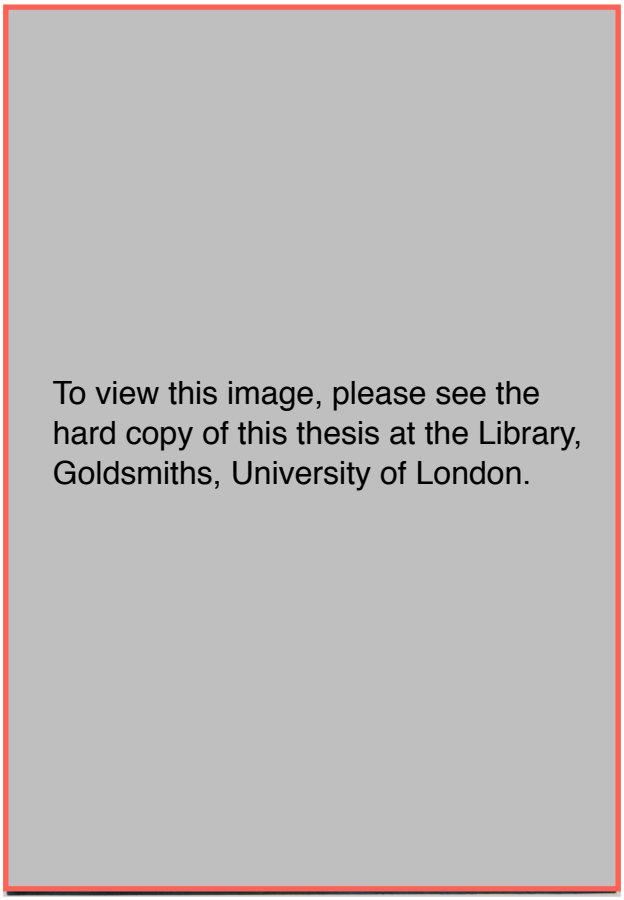


Figure 7.3: *Bharatanatyam* dancers represent the scope of Global Tamil Vision, in addition to representing an art form that can be transnationally recognised to represent 'Tamilness' amongst Sri Lankan diasporic audiences.

In 2014, concerts were also being broadcast live over the Internet from the Maargazhi Music Festival, or Chennai's December music season. The service indicates the demographic of diasporic Carnatic artists and music enthusiasts who do not travel to Chennai (see figure 7.4). The advertisement indicates the 'global' interest of the December music season concerts around the world and highlights the use of the Internet to remain connected with the cultural centre, homelands and other diasporic localities. Through Internet broadcasts, concerts performed in strict accordance with the Chennai aesthetic are thus made available to the transnational music scene.

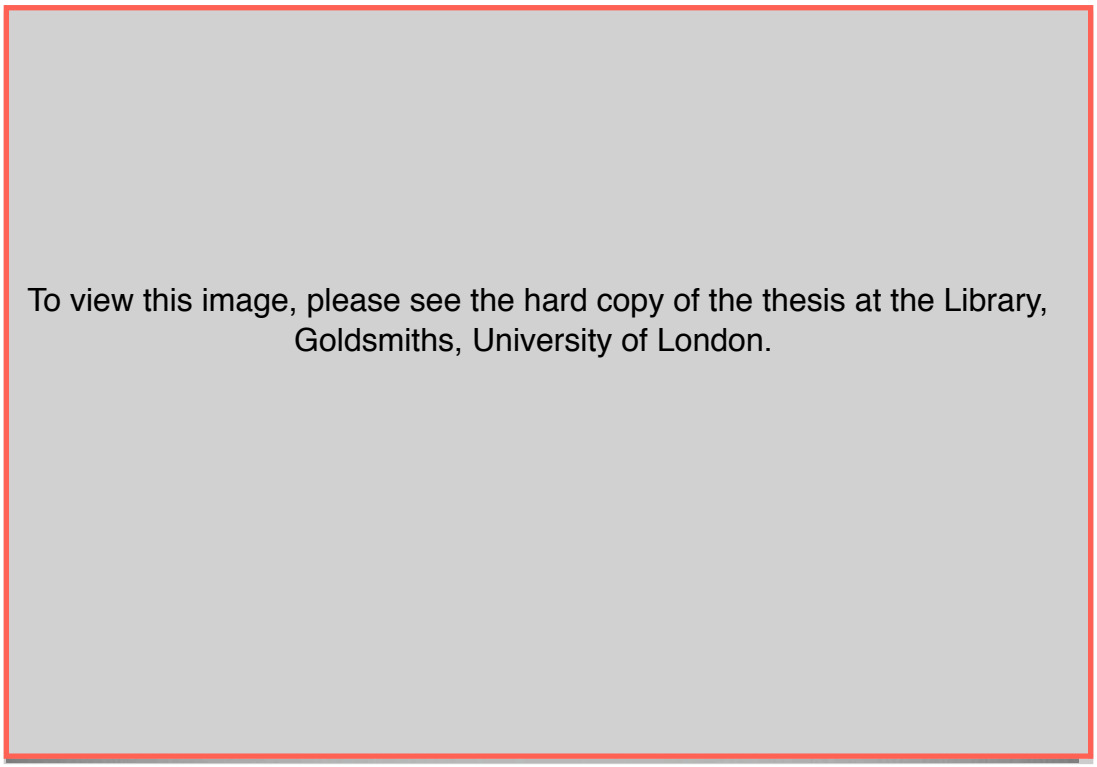


Figure 7.4: "Which ever part of the world you live in ... lose yourself in the bliss of the divine music" – e-advert for Maargazhi Isai, a live-streaming service of concerts from Chennai around the world – image accessed from Rasikas.org (Carnatic music forum) Facebook post 15th December 2014.

Digital networks enable the shared experience of musical events in multiple localities. London is simultaneously a local site with its own politics whilst being connected through extensive transnational networks and therefore contributes to the multilocal scene. This multilocality creates a shared sense of experience across physical space and it is becoming increasingly possible for cultural events to be simultaneously experienced. For example, musicians within the London music scene enable shared experiences through: shared events organised and fulfilled by local actors e.g. the Thyagaraja *Aradhana,* Sivaratri and Navaratri celebrations; participation in musical performance and workshops with visiting artists based in other localities; mass media via satellite television, radio and the Internet; and long-distance learning via the Internet. Multilocality does not imply equality amongst the multiple locations in terms of power relations, connectivity or the directionality of its flows. Chennai

projects as a cultural centre, whilst diasporic hubs, like London, are considered peripheral to musical negotiation and conventions. A hierarchy relating to levels of musicianship, place, transnational synchrony and connectivity is prevalent in the multilocal network in terms of learning and performance in particular.[3]

Multilocality is enabled by and through musical, performer, material and digital transnational networks. In relation to American-Chinese musicians in New York, Su Zheng argues that "synchronously shared multilocal experiences" (2010: 205) are enabled by transnational electronic media,

> … which constitute a basis for framing not only 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983), but also *imagined worlds*, 'that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe' (Appadurai 1990:7 emphasis in original in Zheng 2010: 205).

Such 'imagined worlds' refer to large formations and globalising processes enabled particularly by mass media and the Internet. Transnational electronic media, such as diasporic television channels from London, live broadcasting of *arangetrams* and concerts, and YouTube and other social media, is regularly used in the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and in the musical assemblage. For active musicians in this London scene, such multilocality is a characteristic of their lifeworld rather than a feature of specific engagement with mass and social media.

While broadcasting *arangetrams*, concerts, and *poojas* over the Internet is part of the digital network, the dominant Internet practice in London and around the musical assemblage is between individuals. The participation of multiple locations creates richness and scope of the scene but it also unearths partial experiences and disjunctures of expectations. As a result, students use the Internet to have music lessons with their *gurus* over long distances, replicating the interactions of the lesson as if the *guru* and student were face to face. Skype, and other video-calling applications, are being used across Sri Lankan and Indian diasporas

[3] Brahmin caste, kinship and nationality connections between South India – rather than Sri Lanka –and the United States are particularly strong. As a result, the U.S. is considered by diasporic musicians as higher in the hierarchy in terms of musical quality, expectations and performance.

to keep in touch with highly-dispersed family and friends, but also to learn and disseminate musical knowledge. Musical learning over Skype is an example of synchronously shared multilocal activity and a means of closing distances across the musical assemblage.

Internet Music Lessons

The long gaps in musical learning which once characterised transnational music education have been overcome by the use of the Internet. Today, long-distance dissemination of musical knowledge is largely associated with Skype lessons in contemporary South Indian and Sri Lankan diasporas. Internet learning has become a standardised form of learning, musical interaction and experience in South Asian diasporas. Nasir Syed (Cooley, Meizel and Syed 2008) discusses the emergence of the "Internet Guru" within the Hindustani music scene, referring to the Internet resources *per se* as the '*guru*', rather than an individual who imparts their musical and spiritual knowledge to their student. Using audio files, video clips, and virtual lessons highlighting techniques, Syed argues that Internet learning sites collectively constitute a digitised "Internet Guru" (Cooley, Meizel and Syed 2008: 103), a contrast to traditional *guru-shishya* music pedagogy. Although such digital resources are widely available for Carnatic music students, a human *guru* is deemed most important to impart the embodied, spiritual and musical *sangeetha gnanam*, or musical knowledge. Furthermore, access to the wider music scene is often dependent on, and accessed through, the *guru*, therefore Internet resources cannot replace the important position of the *guru* as a gatekeeper. YouTube videos are consulted by diasporic musicians for *arangetram* performances or concerts in order to gain 'ideas' and inspiration for the possibilities in the performance of particular compositions. Such ideas, however, are consulted in relation to the established style and advice given by their *guru.* The Internet can therefore be experienced as a resource as well as a medium and, with regards to learning, there are two primary ways of engaging

with this online environment. The first is learning from resources on the Internet with an individual interacting with shared online content. The second is learning through the medium of the Internet, enabling connections and interactions with another person in another locality.

Related in particular to the second type of Internet learning, Alexander Cannon (2012) discusses transnational music lessons by the musician, Nguyen Vinh Bao, in South Vietnam. Vinh Bao teaches traditional music to a number of mostly Vietnamese individuals in different parts of the world through Skype. Cannon argues that this learning environment, where individuals interact over the Internet, is a means of building diasporic identity and a "trans-nation" away from, and in reference to, Vietnam (Cannon 2012). Preservation, identity negotiation and exchange are the principal factors within this network, which is based around the centre point of an individual musician. This teaching method is rare, if not unique, in the Vietnamese traditional music scene.

There are some similarities between this case and the use of Skype in the Tamil diaspora; however, Skype teaching has become a standardised method in the transnational Carnatic music scene. An economy has been built around Skype lessons by Indian *gurus* teaching diasporic students as their pay is generally relative to local diasporic music tuition fees, which are considerably higher than fees in India. Skype lessons are therefore an easy and efficient means of acquiring economic capital and transnationally disseminating musical knowledge. The 'trans-nation' suggested by Cannon and the use of Skype lessons as a means of constructing an alternative national space in Indian and Sri Lankan networks is a by-product of cultural connectivity. Indian music and long distance musical learning is a standard practice and is a widely accepted means of learning music outside of India. In order to understand some of its characteristics and current processes, I suggest this standardised teaching practice as a multilocal musical experience in the transnational music assemblage.

Most Skype lessons are taught from India to diasporic students and Indian teachers

can capitalise on this exchange of musical knowledge from 'the root of the culture' towards the periphery. The use of Skype learning as a means of economic capital between the cultural centre and the diaspora is particularly popular between India and the USA (see Krishnamurthy 2012). In London, Skype lessons have become an important means of learning both transnationally, between London and India or Sri Lanka, and translocally, across the UK or even across London. The difficulties of crossing the capital to teach at different locations on the periphery of Greater London also makes Skype lessons useful within the metropolitan environment.[4] The majority of Skype lessons, however, take place across long distances, for instance, between India and the UK, Sri Lanka and the UK, and the UK and Australia. As a result of long-distance tuition, time differences and performance schedules, most Skype lessons are scheduled for early in the morning or late at night. Alternatively, lessons are arranged spontaneously when the student and teacher have a common window of opportunity, starting with a long-distance phone call to check availability followed by an immediate lesson. The latter reflects the spontaneous organisation of lessons in the *gurukulam* tradition, or living with the guru, in a digital age. Along with my face-to-face classes in India and London as part of my own musical learning, I also took Skype lessons in an attempt to understand the learning experience.

My first Skype lesson was confirmed by a text message from my teacher Sarangan with a time for the class. Five minutes before the start of the class, I ensured I was connected with him by checking his website and business card to confirm his Skype ID. In India, as well as in London, Skype 'IDs', or usernames, are handed out with email addresses and phone numbers, reflecting the normalised use of Skype as a transnational musician. I was nervous at the idea of singing at my laptop and being assessed without the physical presence of my teacher and the subtle reassurance this presence tends to bring. Sarangan, however, appeared very comfortable using this medium for teaching. Going against the usual direction of

[4] I have also heard that Skype lessons are also taught within Chennai.

musical transmission, North London-based Sarangan teaches over Skype to students in Chennai and Madurai in India as well as students in Croydon, South London.

Once connected and after an initial exchange of pleasantries, my teacher switched on the *shruti* box and we began by singing the *shruti.* To sing or play the *shruti* at the beginning of every music lesson is the ritualised practice of 'tuning-in' between the teacher, student, the space, *nadam*, or sound, and *shruti*, or pitch. Singing the *shruti* has been a constant feature at the beginning and end of every music lesson I have participated in or observed. In my first Skype class, Sarangan indicated the start of the 'tuning-in' process by singing the *sa.* This was a signal for me to join him, ensuring that we were in-tune with each other and the *shruti* before moving up a fifth to the *pa*. This 'tuning in' is a means of engaging the individuals and surroundings into a communal space, establishing connections needed for the transference of knowledge. Satisfied with the fifth, my teacher started a *glissando* up to the upper octave *sa,* which is held to ensure the clarity of the note's pitch. A breath was taken and we fell back down to *pa* and then finally to *sa.* When we both heard that this was in-tune, we gradually broke off the sound with a *diminuendo* and ended by humming the mutual tone. A simultaneous shake of heads, in the South Asian affirmative manner, signalled we were both ready to get on with the lesson with the completion of 'tuning-in' to the *shruti*.

The performance of *shruti* is conventional in Carnatic and Tamil music lessons and performance, from group *pannisai* lessons in Lewisham temple to Sarangan's *kuthcheri* concerts. Performing *shruti* over Skype, however, holds greater importance. At the beginning of my first lesson, I was instructed by my teacher to tune to the *shruti* several times to ensure our mutual sonic and personal connection, and my correct pitch, before we moved onto the rest of the lesson. As Sarangan mentioned in an interview, the teacher and student do not occupy the same physical space in Skype lessons and this affects the overall pedagogical and personal experience (pers. comm., March 2013). A rapport or mutual 'mood', he says, is

difficult to create and share over Skype. Similarly he considers the different space - environments, climates and societies - that the teacher and student occupy when they take Skype lessons ultimately creates different experiences of the lesson. The mutual mood and environment should be a shared experience in all senses in order to connect and effectively transmit musical knowledge (Sarangan, pers. comm., March 2013). Metaphysical connections are vital to the singer and in performances Sarangan places great importance on settling into the 'vibrations' of the accompanying musicians, the audience and the performance space in order to achieve 'oneness', or a *paravasa nillai* trance-like state. Establishing a connection through sound during lessons therefore becomes all the more important across physical distance, where this closeness is otherwise hard to achieve. The connection enabled by Skype to transfer musical knowledge creates a disjuncture between shared space and shared experience, although it does provide a "co-presence" between individuals (Ruthmann and Hebert 2012). The shared 'space' of the Internet and shared multilocal experience that digital networks and the Internet make possible does not replace the physical closeness and embodiment of the mutual surroundings, interactions and moods. With regards to virtual learning, Ruthmann and Hebert comment:

> [a]s consumers increasingly experience music in the recontextualized and interactive spaces of online and virtual environments, the inherently kinesthetic features of musical sound and corresponding embodied meanings also become increasingly elusive, challenging the conceptual limitations and future directions of musical experience (2012: 573).

This suggests that the disembodiment of musical experience in recontextualised learning and performance is detrimental to an art form, such as Carnatic music which is highly integrated in symbolic and spiritual life. Meanings will become detached from diasporic musical learning and the current experience of connectivity displaced, resulting in the perceived 'dilution' of the music practice. In a scene that values ritualised musical practice in order to feel 'oneness', a partial and disembodied experience reflects the fragmentary and displaced life rather than emplacement and 'becoming one' through ritualised musical practices.

Replicating face-to-face lessons, however, Skype classes are grounded in the use of tangible objects, ritualised practices and two-way shared experiences. Before my own class, my teacher asked if I had the 'blue book' used for beginner musical exercises. The lists of *swara* exercises in the book were used as a point of departure for the Skype class like they had in my face-to-face classes and in the Tamil school music classes I had observed. In the Skype class, the mutual reference to the book manifested material networks, something that was grounded and tangible in an otherwise physically distant situation. My teacher sang the exercises from the book and I repeated. We went through *alankarams* - sequences of scalic patterns set to *talam* - before learning one of his devotional lullabies. Much of the class was learned by 'following' the *alankarams* and *alapana* of the composition before the demonstration and imitation of the pre-composed lullaby for Krishna. Unlike my *pannisai* teacher, who stressed that I should always sing with *gamakam,* or ornaments, Sarangan's style focused on the absolute clarity of each note and he requested me to add ornamentation later. This approach was in line with the style of his *guru*, K. V. Narayanasamy. Although the class did not emphasise ornamentation, some of the melodic intricacies were marred through the *ipad* my teacher used. The sound balance between my teacher and his *shruti* box was difficult to control through the device's microphone. There were also occasional lapses in Internet connection, resulting in uneven *talam* and missed or unclear notes, making the learning experience difficult. Despite the unreliability of technology, the teaching methods here replicated those I experienced and observed in face-to-face classes at temples and Tamil schools.

Most students learning through Skype, however, are far beyond the 'blue book' and elementary *swaram* exercises. Having performed their *arangetram* and acquired their *guru's* blessing to seek advanced training, junior musicians use Skype lessons to refine their art according to Chennai standards. Long distance learning with a Chennai-based *guru* also

provides access to the Indian scene. Kiruthika, a second-generation Sri Lankan Tamil violinist, for example, sought further training after her *arangetram* in London and eventually took lessons from Chennai-based violinist H. N. Bhaskar. Having initially encountered his playing style and teaching at a South Asian Music Youth Orchestra (SAMYO) workshop in Liverpool, she approached the violinist for lessons. H. N. Bhaskar is predominantly a performing artist who travels extensively accompanying high profile Carnatic artists and popular Indian band, The Raghu Dixit Project. After an initial trepidation at asking the violinist, she was accepted as one of his few students. At first, she spent two months in Chennai taking extended lessons in person with her teacher, in addition to travelling with him to concerts and socialising with him and other musicians. When I met Kiruthika in Chennai in 2013, she was in the middle of a period of *gurukulam,* living with her *guru.* As a result, they practiced together during the day and played late in the night after her *guru's* evening performance. She stayed for just three weeks during the December music season as her work schedule required her to return to London in mid-January. Kiruthika's learning therefore consists of short, intense periods of *gurukulam* in India and occasionally at her home in the UK when the violinist is on tour. In order to 'keep in touch' and close the temporal and spatial distance with this level of practice, she takes Skype lessons when she is back in the UK (Kiruthika, pers. comm., January 2013).

H. N. Bhaskar has a full schedule with daily performances all over India, therefore Skype lessons with Kiruthika in London must be early in the day, often starting at 6am. In our interview, Kiruthika described that her Skype lessons reflect her usual face-to-face classes with her *guru.* The Skype lessons often comprise of her *guru* singing through an improvisation of a particular *ragam* that she 'follows' on the violin. The instantaneous acceptance or rejection of her imitated passage through body language, facial expressions and eye contact in face-to-face classes is replaced by verbal confirmation after the passage on

Skype. The unreliable Internet connection in India often results in poor picture quality, or no picture at all, therefore verbal affirmations replace kinaesthetic ones. Similar to my own Skype lessons, Kiruthika and her *guru* focus on melodic work over Skype, such as the possibilities of performing particular *ragas*. They often save complex rhythmic work for face-to-face classes as the connection creates a time lag and results in problems when tapping *talam.* The image and the sound become out of sync, disrupting the placement of the beats within the melody or the rhythmic pattern being learned. The dis-synchrony of the melody and *talam* has major implications for the transference of 'correct' musical information, particularly in a tradition with a complex rhythmic system. The incorrect placement of rhythmic patterns in the rhythmic cycle would be detrimental in performance if the final emphasis did not end on the *saman*, or first beat of the cycle, and would be judged by audiences as poor musicianship. Kiruthika comments that Skype limits how music lessons are approached and describes her own classes:

> [I]t does depend on both of the individuals and how the lesson is approached, because of the way, Bhaskar Sir does lessons, it's not planned it's just like 'what *ragam* shall we play today?' and then we'll do improvisation and I'll follow him. And say he plays a phrase that I can't follow and I get stuck on, there's only so many times you can repeat it over Skype ... if I can't see his fingers or if it's not face-to-face ... I keep hearing the same thing but I can't really follow it, so it needs to be approached in a different way for me to learn ... And also things like putting *talam* because of the time lag and because I can't see his fingers I don't know where I am so it makes it difficult ... it's not ideal but I think it can work as a substitute in intervals, alongside face to face lessons in December when I come here or if he comes [to London] during the year. If you get that [face-to-face classes] and then you get a few Skype lessons in between ... it can work that way, just to keep the continuity ... Skype lessons are better for some things than other things, like following *ragam* is fine, as opposed to rhythmic stuff so you focus on stuff like that in your Skype lessons then it could work like that (pers. comm., January 2013).

Kiruthika highlights the importance of Skype lessons as a means of 'keeping the continuity' within the transnational music scene between her face-to-face lessons. Despite the benefits of being able to have lessons with her Indian *guru* from her home in London, Skype is only a short-term solution to maintain musical connectivity across long distances until the opportunity arises for lessons in a shared locality.

Skype learning is generally considered as a major compromise in musical education. The shared experience and interaction of the grounded musical moment is missed, making

online learning convenient but not coveted by teachers, artists and senior students in the UK. Kiruthika comments:

> I don't like it [learning over Skype] ... I just feel like it lacks the personal interaction, like, I've had lessons where, because of the time, sometimes I have to wake up at 6am and 'skype', so I wake up at 5.55, come down in my PJs and just sit. If it's like a proper lesson, face-to-face, you're more involved, there's more involvement, I don't like Skype lessons. But I do have them because they are useful to a certain extent, so, and it's better than nothing (pers. comm., January 2013).

Like Sarangan, Kiruthika reiterates the issue of the lack of shared presence, shared physical space, kinaesthetic signals, personal interaction and involvement in Skype lessons that is considered an important part of physically present, face-to-face lessons. As Sarangan reflected, living in different time zones and different environments as well as occupying different physical space affects the way the teacher and student come together in different locations and share the experience. Gnanasundaram, a violinist based in London, similarly values the physical presence and connection of face-to-face lessons over Skype. Both musically and experientially he prefers face-to-face lessons:

> Advanced learners can learn from Skype. For beginners, it's difficult because we need to connect personally, for the correct fingering and everything. And there are some [issues] with the delay in the rhythm and the pitch varies, with the pitch it's difficult. But for advanced students it's okay. But I prefer personal, one-to-one [lessons], that's the best thing (Gnanasundaram, pers. comm., November 2012).

Gnanasundaram makes the distinction between the usefulness of Skype lessons for beginners and advanced learners. As advanced learners have acquired their musical knowledge in shared spaces, the connections between the *guru* and *shishya* have been formed and their passive knowledge - kinaesthetic information and embodied meanings - has already been acquired. Advanced students have implicit technical and musical knowledge as the result of extensive, long-term tuition. Beginners, on the other hand, need to be guided as a result of a lack of this passive knowledge acquired through embodied, kinaesthetic and ritualised learning environments.

Despite its experiential drawbacks, Internet learning does lend itself to the

transnational dissemination of specific musical knowledge in a highly efficient way. Giving guidance according to his *guru's* style in the diaspora, Gnanasundaram provides further training to students already proficient in Carnatic violin. Gnanasundaram learned from eminent Indian violinist, Lalgudi G. Jayaraman, and he feels duty-bound to ensure the continuity of his *guru's* style. Placing importance on *bhavam*, or expressiveness, in performance over technicality and the unique positioning of the violin midway onto the chest, Jayaraman's style has a distinct sound quality and philosophy. Gnanasundaram predominantly wants to disseminate the unique style his *guru* taught him in India. He says: "[t]hat's my main aim ... I want to propagate this style all over the world, wherever possible I want to propagate [it]" (Gnanasundaram, pers. comm., November 2012). Teaching through Skype is an efficient means of fulfilling his main musical aim. Face-to-face lessons are also vital to this process and he travels extensively to perform and teach in India, Australia and the US. For example, Gnanasundaram has a senior Chennai-based student who he maintains contact with throughout the year and performs with in Chennai during the music season. He also shares his *guru's* musical gift with students in Melbourne, Australia. He regularly participates in the Thyagaraja *Aradhana* festival in Melbourne, along with his sister and brother-in-law, Ravichandhira, and teaches students during his one month stay. On his return to the UK, he maintains contact with his students through Skype lessons, resulting in knowledge flows between the UK and Australia, bypassing India in the musical dissemination.

Skype learning impacts the macro-level networks, their directionality and the centring of Chennai in the musical assemblage. Internet learning can decentre the conception of Chennai and South India as the cultural centre and source of musical knowledge, shifting power relations in the transnational scene from a centre and periphery to a multiple inputing/negotiating scene. Although the direction of musical knowledge often flows from

gurus in India to students in the diaspora, mass migration and Skype lessons have contributed to the altered direction of musical knowledge circulation. Recently migrated musicians, such as Sarangan and Gnanasundaram, retained their students in India when they moved to the UK and, as a result, they still teach these India-based students through Skype. Both musicians have specialities which remain coveted by their students despite the less-desired long-distance learning that must be undertaken. Having learned from highly-regarded and renowned *gurus*, the musicians have forged a distinct style emanating from that of their *guru* and therefore have a 'gift' to share with the musical world.

In the cases of the musicians I have worked with, Skype lessons have been a long-distance supplement to face-to-face interactions. The consensus between transnational teachers and students is that Skype offers a limited musical experience which is not replaceable to the experience of shared physical space. However, with a reliable Internet connection Skype does emanate a face-to-face experience unlike other types of Internet learning suggested by Syed (Cooley, Meizel and Syed 2008). Despite the overall preference to face-to-face experiences, digital networks have provided a vital link in diasporic musical learning. As I argued in chapter three, digital networks are one of the most significant macro-level transnational networks which work to keep connections between the homeland, cultural centre and diasporic localities. Despite the virtual and disembodied space which the Internet in particular provides, it does enable connectivity and synchrony of musical performance and, most importantly, multilocal cultural continuation.

The dissatisfaction with musical experiences between individuals in two different localities reflects the value of physical presence in localised musical experiences. To counteract partial experiences of connectivity, embodiment and groundedness, the demand is perpetuated for transnational physical networks in London. As a result, India-based musicians travel to London to perform, teach and conduct short, intense workshops to retain physical

connectivity with multiple locations in the transnational scene.

Transnational Performances as Diasporic Emplacement

Transnational performances in London are a valuable way to connect with the rest of the diasporic network, extending to other diasporas and, importantly, India and Sri Lanka. Unlike the concerts broadcast live over the Internet from Chennai, performances by local and transnational artists function as a diasporic gathering and means of emplacement through ritualised musical practices. Like Internet learning, live broadcasts or recordings of performances are considered distant and disembodied. Kiruthika stresses the importance of embodied musical experience as she says: “I don't like listening to records because it's not like listening to a live concert experience, I'm satisfied with what I get from the live concert experience so I don't buy recordings” (pers. comm., January 2013). Kiruthika is not alone in favouring live music over recordings and, therefore, frequent attendance of concerts and cultural performances are characteristic of London's Carnatic and Tamil music scene.

I spent many Saturday evenings in Lewisham temple hall, attending Carnatic and Tamil music concerts between 2010 and 2014. Regularly a site for weddings, *arangetrams* and other cultural performances, the space resembles a small concert hall with a stage surrounded in blue velvet curtains and crystal candelabras overhead. Despite its modest size and location, the hall is regularly a venue for Carnatic music concerts by India-based 'star' musicians, attracting almost exclusively a diasporic audience. Like diasporic network performances by local artists, transnational music performances most often take place on the periphery of London, situated in temples, suburban theatres and community centres familiar to the local network. Little publicity is oriented towards mainstream society or affinity-interest groups. Attendance at such concerts provides tangible connections and exposure to 'homeland' and cultural centre practices and reinstates important transnational connections.



Figure 7.5: A concert performed by visiting Chennai-based violinist, H. N. Bhaskar in Lewisham Temple Hall, January 2014. He is pictured performing with his senior student, Kiruthika Nadarajah and accompanied by local artists. The banner behind the artists promotes the development charity Saiva Munnetta Sangam (UK).

The majority of transnational concerts are organised in aid of charities rebuilding war-torn North Sri Lanka, and behind famous artists visiting London, such as saxophonist Kadri Gopalnath (in 2013), vocalist siblings Ranjani Gayatri (in 2013), Sudha Ragunathan (in 2010 and 2014) and H. N. Bhaskar (in 2014) charity promotional banners are often displayed towards the audience (see Figure 7.5). The banners act as a constant reminder that despite the relative comfort and enjoyment of life in the UK, others are struggling with everyday life in Sri Lanka. In addition to the enjoyment and *bhakti* (devotion) of music, aesthetics and social cohesion, there is a humanitarian responsibility to those 'back home'. The purpose and priority of the musical performance is to raise money for charities and organisers often request that the performers ensure the enjoyment of the audience.

In the last ten years, music community members have noticed the rise of transnational

performances in London, with at least one performance a month by visiting artists. In 2013, I attended at least 14 performances by visiting artists in London, although a number more took place. As is the case with the London scene, artists arrange their tour schedule to fit with the December season, and performances by visiting artists generally take place between February and early November.

The ensembles for these transnational performances are realised in two ways. First, a performing artist may travel from India and perform in London with a local violin and *mridangam* accompaniment and secondary accompaniment including *ghatam* clay pot, *morsing* mouth harp or the small *kanjira* frame drum. Second, a complete ensemble may be on-tour from India and therefore no local accompaniment is required. In an ensemble of visiting and local artists, local artists can benefit from the experience of accompanying India-based artists as they can learn from them and contribute to their own reputation. Some India-based artists, however, have told me that performing with local artists presents a certain amount of 'risk' to the performance in terms of incompatible musical competencies between the unfamiliar artists. In contrast, an ensemble of India-based artists requires a great deal of organisation, in terms of acquiring work permits and securing travel costs and accommodation. Inviting India-based artists is also considered a means of creating sustainability into the second generation in order to musically inspire and motivate practice and performance. Sivasakthi reflected on a particularly memorable concert by Lalgudi Jayaraman on her arrival in Chennai as a student in relation to her organisation of concerts. The musical inspiration she was exposed to at that point motivated her throughout her career and she aims to provide her students with the same experience through her regular invitations to eminent Chennai-based artists to perform in the UK. In recent years, Sivasakthi has invited singer T. V. Gopalakrishnan (in 2013), flautist Shashank (in 2013), mandolinist Mandolin Srinivas (in 2012) and singer Sanjay Subramaniam (in 2015) to perform in London in an

attempt to ignite a similar inspiration she experienced as a student in India. The visits also include short workshops by the artists. The workshops provide opportunities for visiting artists to teach students new compositions and *ragas*. Senior students receive tips from India-based artists to 'polish' their technique and enhance their application of *bhavam*, or musical expression, an aspect often criticised as lacking in diasporic students' performance. First generation teachers have told me that many of their second generation students do not necessarily understand the meaning of a song's text due to the lack of everyday exposure to the Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit languages. The difference in social, cultural and spiritual environment is also given as a reason for the 'lack' of highly subjective judgement of *bhavam*. Arriving from the cultural centre, the temporary presence of transnational artists in London contributes to the development and sustainability of the local music scene whilst generating financial economy for India-based artists.

In November 2013, Sandeep Narayan, an Indian American vocalist resident in Chennai, visited London. During his time in London, he performed an intimate concert in Wembley and another in Lewisham temple hall. He also facilitated a short workshop for vocalists in the city. I attended his performance in the London Tamil Centre, North Wembley. The performing artists, in addition to a number of community members and local musicians, were late to the performance due to the heavy 'deepavali traffic'. Families were on the road to visit and celebrate *deepavali*, the festival of light, around Wembley, an area with a large South Asian Hindu population. The intimate concert was performed to mostly female students of Veenalaya, Sivatharini's music school. Sivatharini travelled to Chennai from Jaffna to study music in her youth and, like Sivasakthi, advocates transnational performance. Parents, local musicians and invited music enthusiasts made up the rest of the audience, including Sandeep's long-distance, London-based student, Sanji. Having left our shoes by the front door of the centre, the audience sat on bamboo and plastic mats on the floor opposite

the musicians in the drab hall, lit with florescent tubes and with tables and chairs pushed to the sides of the large, white room. First and second generation musicians and community activists attended the performance; mostly from North London and those with strong connections to Sivatharini and the London Tamil Centre.

The performance was acknowledged as an excellent opportunity for the students in the welcome address before Sandeep started his performance. Musical 'ideas' are sought from visiting artists and are considered particularly valuable if the ideas are from artists based in Chennai. Sandeep provided not only a 'voice' from Chennai, but he also connected the diasporic students to the 'voice' of his *guru,* eminent vocalist Sanjay Subramaniam. 'Being there' at such performances contributes to a transfer of knowledge and transnational musical lineage, in addition to exposure and access to the music and musical style from India. Such an event also emplaces the London locality in the broader scene.

Standardised musical conventions structured Sandeep's performance, from the initial *varnam* to start the performance, through to his display of *manodharma sangeetham* - improvised, creative music – in the first half of the performance, followed by 'lighter' renditions of devotional songs in the 'light' *tukkada* half of the concert path. A Tamil *virutham* verse marked the transition between the strictly 'classical' renditions and repertory and the clear melodic delivery of popular devotional songs. The main composition in Sandeep's performance was signalled through his performance of various improvised forms - *ragam*, *niraval*, *kalpana swaram* - which were responded to by the local artists, as the result of a shared musical knowledge and competency. Each piece came together as a result of this shared knowledge and clear individual roles in the ensemble. Sandeep selected 'Swara Raga Sudha' by Thyagaraja as the main composition, which was thoroughly explored in its 50 minute performance. The extensive improvised exploration of a *raga* and melody in a *ragam thanam pallavi,* however, was not performed by Sandeep. The *ragam thanam pallavi* is rarely

performed by transnational artists in the UK, instead occurring more frequently in *arangetram* performances. The repertoire performed by Sandeep during his two London performances in November 2013 can be seen below (figures 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8).

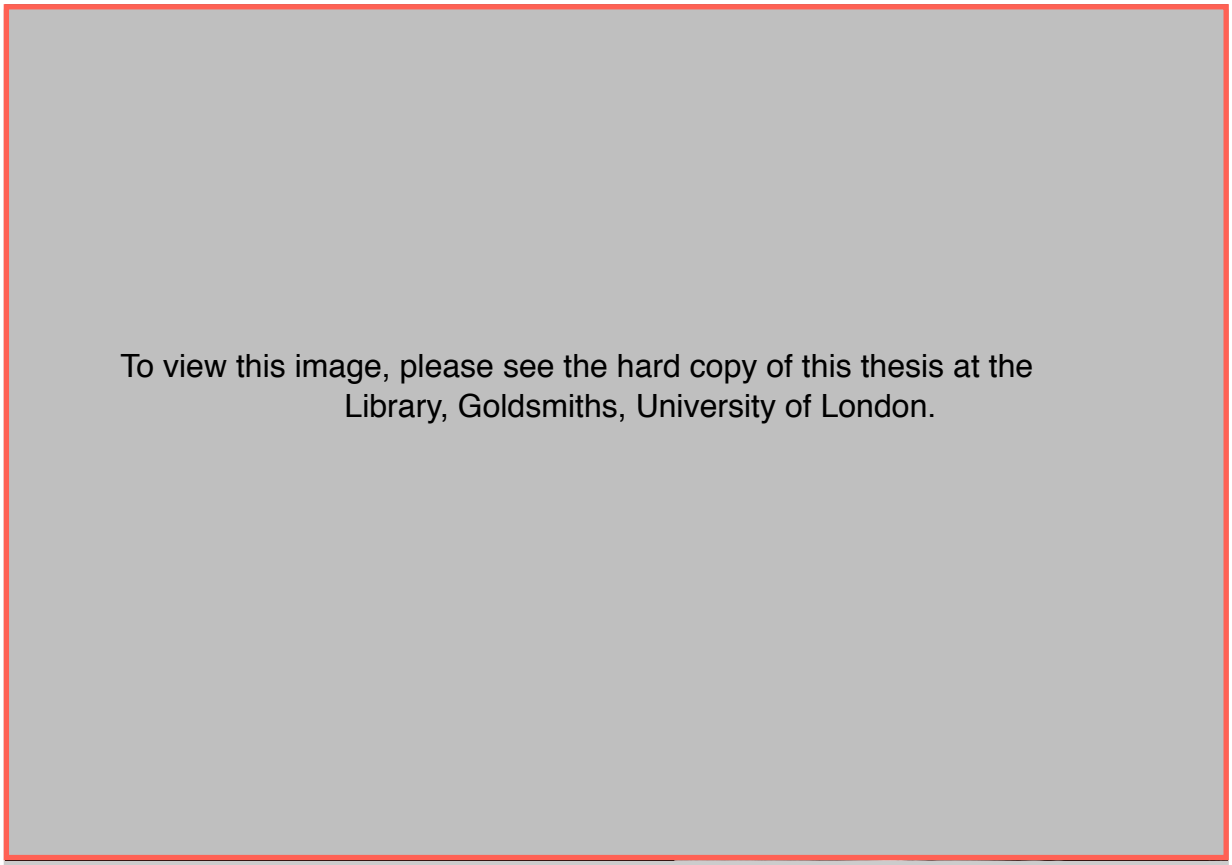


Figure 7.6: Sandeep Narayan's blogpost including information from his performance in the London Tamil Centre, 1st November 2013. His use of letters in brackets after the composition symbolise what musical conventions he introduced in each piece, therefore (s) shows that he performed *swaram* in 'Swaminatha' and that 'Swara Raga Sudha' was the main composition as it included '(r, n, s, t)' – *ragam*, *niraval*, *swaram* and *thaniavartanam*.

Composition and Form	Ragam	Talam	Composer	Language	Musical Convention
Sangeetham					
Varnam	Todi	Adi	Patnam Subramania Iyer	Telugu	-
Swaminatha - kriti	Nattai	Adi	Muthswamy Dikshitar	Sanskrit	Swaram
Vaananai - thevaram	Kiravani	Misra Chapu	Appar	Tamil	Ragam, swaram
Chamundeswari - kriti	Chithrambari	Adi	D Pattamal	Sanskrit	-
Swara Raga Sudha – kriti – Main Composition	Sankarabharanam	Adi	Thyagaraja	Telugu	Ragam, Niraval, Swaram Thani
Tukkada					
Virutham				Tamil	-
Kanavendamo - kriti	Sriranjani	Tisra Nadai	Papanasam Sivan	Tamil	-
Payoji Maine - bhajan	Misra pahadi	Adi	Meera	Hindi	-
Thillana	Dvijavanthi	Adi	Thanjavur Kalyanaraman		-
Pavamana	Saurashtra	Adi	Thyagaraja	Telugu	-

Figure 7.7: The repertoire, concert path and musical conventions performed on 1st November 2013 in North Wembley.

Composition and Form	Ragam	Talam	Composer	Language	Musical Convention
Sangeetham					
Sabhapathikku - kriti	Aboghi	Rupakam	Papanasam Sivan	Tamil	Niraval, Swaram
Edayya Gathi	Chalanatta	Adi	Koteeshwara Iyer	Tamil	Ragam
Marakathavallim	Kambhodhi	Adi	Muthuswamy Dikshitar	Sanskrit	Ragam, Swaram, Thani
Tukkada					
Irakkam Varaamal	Behag	Rupakam	Gopalakrishna Bharathi	Tamil	-

Koovi Azhaithal	Valaji	Adi	Vali	Tamil	-

Figure 7.8: The repertoire, concert path and musical conventions performed on 3rd November 2013 in Lewisham.

During the performance, Sandeep took on a didactic role and spoke about aspects of music theory and aesthetics between pieces in the *sangeetham* half of the concert. The *rakti ragas*, 'pleasing' *ragas* that are suitable for extensive improvisation, in Carnatic music were discussed and Sandeep prompted the attending students to name them to him.[5] Furthermore, he included a composition in s*ghana,* or 'heavy and 'respectable', *raga nattai*, exemplifying reference to the Chennai aesthetic and the fact that his Chennai performances would normally include 'heavy' and/or rare *ragams* and largely Sanskrit and Telugu compositions. Between pieces, Sandeep offered practical advice for Sivatharini's students, suggesting they learn *raga todi* as the *gamaka* on the *ga,* or the third degree of the *arohana* or ascending scale, takes account of being performed on the *veena.* The ornament is particularly associated with *raga todi* and it is referred to as '*todi ga*'. Sandeep also suggesting suitable *varnam* compositions for them to learn. Throughout his performance, Sandeep introduced the compositions, along with the *ragams* and *talams* and their composer, and the audience interacted with the musicians through tapping *talam*, demonstrating both their musical knowledge and engagement in the performance.

Local conditions and the convergence of unfamiliar artists in transnational performances was reflected in parts of the performance. Some of the local musicians struggled to imitate Sandeep's intricate and complex improvised melodic and rhythmic patterns during the *kalpana swaram* improvisation. The musical difficulties amongst the ensemble revealed the different musical environments in which the local and visiting musicians usually reside. The London scene is focused on teaching and identity construction

[5] The students shyly responded by, correctly, naming the *ragas todi*, *sankarabharanam*, *bhairavi*, *kalyani*, *karaharapriya* and *kambodi* as the *rakthi ragas.*

whilst the Chennai scene is focused on performance. The musical challenge presented in Chennai performances is not replicated in London and, as a result, discussions and rehearsals before the performance become more important as musicians do not regularly perform in a vigorously spontaneous, or musically critical, environment (see chapter four). Local musicians' economic income depends on teaching rather than performance and, therefore, more time is spent teaching and organising student performances than performing their own concerts. The difficulties, especially in improvised passages, that can arise in transnational musical performances largely reflect the fact that London-based artists often have less performance experience. Although musical synchrony with the performance styles of Chennai is desired, it is not easily achievable due to the different demands in the two scenes.

Local alignment in the transnational scene

Whilst Sandeep based his performances on Chennai concert conventions, he nevertheless made a number of changes to the concert path based on expectations of the local audience. The most markable local musical alignment was Sandeep's choice of a large proportion of Tamil language songs in his London performances. In contrast to his concerts in Chennai's music season, Sandeep included a number of Tamil *kriti* 'classical' songs, Tamil *virutham* recitations and 'light' songs in his performances. In the Wembley performance, Sandeep included the Tamil *thevaram* devotional song 'Vaananai' in the *sangeetham* half of the concert that he extemporised with an *alapana* and *swaram* (see figures 7.6 and 7.7). The choice of a Tamil *thevaram* devotional song at that point of the concert would have been reprimanded had the performance been in Chennai. Similarly, Sandeep's concert in Lewisham temple hall consisted almost entirely of Tamil repertoire with the exception of the extended main composition, 'Marakathavallim' in Sanskrit (see figure 7.8). The affinity for devotional temple music, Tamil *kritis* and popular Tamil film songs brought by the Sri Lankan first

generation is well known in the transnational scene and characterises the London aesthetic.

In addition to the language and form of the songs, the concert path was further altered from the performances I attended in Chennai. During the Chennai music season, concerts consisted largely of the *sangeetham* section of a concert path, consisting of the 'classical' *kriti* songs. The *tukkada*, or 'light', second half of the concert, however, consisted of one or two songs – the minimum to complete the concert path. In London, on the other hand, the *tukkada* is extended and often takes up to half of the overall concert. Whilst Tamil compositions and additional 'light songs' are brought into the concert path, the virtuosic *ragam thanam pallavi* is often discarded in transnational performances; although it is considered a central part of an *arangetram performance*. For instance, Sandeep's concert in Wembley consisted of five short *tukkada* items. H. N. Bhaskar's concert (pictured in figure 7.5), however, consisted of equal halves of *sangeetham* and *tukkada.* In other transnational concerts I have attended in Lewisham temple hall, the *tukkada* has also been longer than the *sangeetham* section. Another contrast to the Chennai concert path is that the *sangeetham* and *tukkada* sections are separated by an interval. As musical performances are primarily a diasporic gathering, the interval is an opportunity to meet with others in the city.[6]

Sandeep's adaptations to align with the London aesthetic in his concerts reflect the characteristics of other visiting artists alignments. As I have referred to Chennai's conventions and expectations as the 'Chennai aesthetic', I describe these localised adaptations as the 'London aesthetic'. The London aesthetic reflects the local function of musical performance in the diaspora and many visiting artists respond to this change of function in their performance. Like Sandeep, Sushma Somasekharan planned her performance according to London's local expectations when she performed at the *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan* to a diasporic network audience in October 2012. Sushma lives, learns and performs in Chennai

[6] During some performances, India-based artists have given the audience the option to continue the concert without an interval. Organisers and audiences, however, often insist on an interval in order to catch up with friends and eat Sri Lankan snacks.

as a vocalist and, like many India-based artists, she has performed in the UK on a number of occasions. From a Singapore-based Indian Tamil family, Sushma grew up in Singapore and spent her summers in Chennai with her *guru.* She moved to Chennai in 2009 to focus on her musical career. As a result of her own diasporic experience in Singapore, she is particularly aware of the change in function, meaning and adaptation of music in diasporic contexts. As a musician who aims to attain an embodied experience of 'oneness' through her musical performance, she realises the importance of providing her audience with a similar experience. Selecting the repertoire for each performance takes a great deal of thought to ensure good musical balance in terms of *ragas* and song forms, in addition to the language of the songs and their delivery. I interviewed Sushma in Chennai in 2013 after I had seen her perform in London and in Chennai. In terms of her performance in London, she commented:

> I performed in London [in] 2011, so I had an idea of what kind of audience [is there], and also ... I realised a lot of [the audience] are Sri Lankan Tamils, they have a great affinity for Tamil compositions, so I wanted to make sure I had Tamil compositions in my repertoire. And I didn't want to complicate my repertoire by bringing in very rare songs, or songs which an audience might not be able to relate to. From what I've noticed, I think the difference between an audience in Chennai and an audience elsewhere is an audience in Chennai wants to hear something new even with regards to the repertoire, like 'oh, that was a new song, that was nice'. But if I am overseas and I give all new [repertoire], they would be like 'oh, we could not relate to it', so I think they want a mix of popular compositions as well as popular *ragams*, I had to consider that when I select the repertoire … I normally ask who the audience is, and what will they enjoy. And particularly overseas I write the meaning of the song beforehand, and I tell them the meaning before I perform. I think that helps, and also I feel like there might be a non-Indian, in my audience and I think it's nice if they can follow the meaning (Sushma, pers. comm., January 2013).

Sushma also acknowledged that for diasporic audiences, going to a music concert was a way to feel “back at home” in their country of resettlement (pers. comm., January 2013). Overwhelming diasporic audiences with complex and/or unfamiliar repertoire would not fulfil the role of creating an intimate diasporic gathering. Her priority in diasporic concerts is to connect with her audience through her performance, therefore she aligned to local musical aesthetics to create a familiar shared experience. Like Sandeep, Sushma included 'classical' Carnatic songs in Sanskrit and Telugu in the repertoire she chose, thereby “paying respect to different composers who have done justice to the different languages” (Sushma, pers. comm.,

January 2013). She also included Tamil language compositions in the *sangeetham* half of the concert. Sushma also selects popular *ragams* that are familiar to diasporic audiences. For instance, the popular pentatonic *raga mohanam* is regularly performed by transnational and local artists. The *raga* is characteristically delivered without heavy ornamentation and is distinguished by its melodic turns. *Mohanam* is heard regularly in ritual music-making in London's temples as part of *pooja,* particularly through the recitation of *thiruvasakkam* (see video example 5.1), and is used as the foundation of a number of Tamil film songs. The *raga* is therefore both relatable and familiar.

Visiting artists therefore consider the cultural function of musical performance in the local musical community in order to make a connection with the diasporic audience in London. The emphasis on music and language in the Tamil diasporic essentialised identity is important for the experience of the diasporic gathering and transnational concerts contribute to this project. The local adaptations of musical performance in London reflect the function of music in constructing Tamil space and in performing an essentialised 'Tamil' identity. The decision to align to the local aesthetic is not simply one-sided on the part of the performer, however, and some local organisers request visiting artists to either 'perform as you would in India' or consider the demographic of the audience. Visiting musicians negotiate with the local concert organisers in London to determine appropriate repertoire for the audience, often prioritising the London aesthetic, local function of music and enjoyment of their audience over Chennai aesthetics and expectations. Some concert organisers request 'Tamil language only' concerts based on the expectations of their Sri Lankan audience, as Sushma experienced in the UK for a Sri Lankan Tamil charity fundraiser concert:

> It was a totally Sri Lankan audience, so they requested a completely Tamil concert, they were like 'we want to understand your songs, so no Telugu or Sanskrit. So, can you please present in entirely Tamil' … It is nice because I'm Tamil and it's nice that I can understand all my compositions (pers. comm., January 2013).

These local adaptations of transnational practices create a disjuncture of expectations

amongst London-based and transnational musicians and audiences. The change of function as a result of migration, resettlement and culture contact inevitably creates localised adaptations of a transnational music practice. Therefore, within the multiply-located transnational and multicultural scene, disjunctures arise as a result of overlapping expectations, meanings and functions.

The practice of adaptation and alignment by Chennai-based artists, however, is particularly significant in the musical assemblage. Fluent in Chennai's conventions, the visiting artists in London disregard the strictest conventions in order to align with the expectations and tastes of the diasporic network in London. The local alignments of musical performance suggest a decentring of Chennai and its aesthetics, as musicians based in the city align to the expectations of other vital scenes in the transnational assemblage. This practice therefore indicates the two-way directionality of the network, decentring Chennai as the absolute centre and revealing the assertion of power from the diaspora.

Just as performing according to the understood conventions and roles, alignment to local aesthetics and expectations is an important part of transnational connectivity in order to create a grounded experience through musical performance.[7] The alignment to the local aesthetic has been deplored by some artists as a process of 'dilution' and 'compromise' of the music, specifically those particularly keen to maintain strong musical synchrony with Chennai.

The London Aesthetic and 'Dilution'

In June 2013 I attended a concert by London-based violinist Jyotsna Srikanth. The promotional material used to advertise the performance referred to the concert as a

[7] This point reflects the concept of the "production of locality" suggested by Appadurai (1996: 178). "Locality" is an "inherently fragile social achievement" (Appadurai 1996: 179). In this case, a distinct Sri Lankan Tamil locality in London is produced through social gatherings and musical performances reflecting the tastes of the local community.

presentation of “traditional, unspoilt and orthodox Carnatic music” (advertisement, June 2013), contributing to the discourse surrounding authenticity in the transnational scene. Unusually, the repertoire list was handed out to the audience and the list of songs adhered to the Chennai, rather than London, aesthetic. Telugu and Sanskrit classical songs were performed in the concert and the one 'light' *tukkada* piece was in Kaanada, the language of Jyotsna's hometown of Bangalore in South India. Contrary to all other performances I attended in London, the original repertoire list did not include a single Tamil composition. Just as the performance was drawing to an end, Jyotsna burst into the popular Tamil *thirupukkal* song 'Muthai Tharu'. After the concert I asked her why she included the unplanned piece and she responded that she performed it for the large turn out of Tamil audience members (pers. comm., June 2013). Her last minute inclusion was a sign of musical competence and fulfilment of her duty to the local audience. The 'unspoilt and orthodox' description of her performance and original repertoire, however, reflects the discourse surrounding musical adaptation in London. Attitudes projected from Chennai regarding the adaptation of the concert path and its subsequent 'dilution' have travelled to London with transnational artists and enthusiasts. Kiruthika highlights the discourse surrounding ideas of authenticity with regards to her experiences of performance in Chennai and London:

> when you come to India in December to the music season ... it's such a well known festival the artists feel ... it's very pure classical and you get like the real deal. Whereas sometimes ... in London I find that the artists sometimes choose compositions that are only Tamil songs because they know the audience is Tamil. Or they won't do a *ragam thanam pallavi* because they don't feel the need to, just keep it without one. So sometimes a performance isn't as proper, but proper in the sense that you don't get a *ragam thanam pallavi* ... Other than that it's the same I think (pers. comm., January 2013).

The main factor in the disjuncture of expectations amongst musicians and audience members is referred to as the 'Tamilisation', and subsequent 'dilution', of Carnatic music in London. 'Tamilisation' refers to the high numbers of Tamil-language compositions included in a concert path repertoire. Attitudes towards Tamil repertoire and 'dilution' reflect the

ongoing, decades-long debate in the Chennai music scene between the Brahmin custodianship and the Tamil music movement (see chapter 4). London's performances can include a higher ratio of 'light' film or devotional songs, verse-form songs, *bhajan* devotional songs and 'light' renditions of popular *ragas*, compared with 'deep' and technically-demanding renditions of popular or rare *ragas* and *kriti* form compositions. The examples below demonstrate the differences in the length of time given to explore the piece, in addition to the various improvisatory forms employed and the use of the precomposed melody as a feature between a 'heavy' piece and a 'light' song. The 'heavy' piece was performed by Sandeep in his Wembley performance (see figure 7.9 and audio example 7.1). 'Swara Raga Sudha' is a song by Thyagaraja, and such songs in *rakthi ragas,* like this piece in *sankarabharanam*, are used as 'main' compositions in a performance. The duration of the piece allows for extended exploration of the song and the *raga*, and creativity and virtuosity is demonstrated in a number of ways by all musicians. The 'light' song, 'Chinnan Chiru Killayae', was performed by Sarangan and is regularly performed by visiting and local artists in London. It is a very well-known and popular piece written by the Tamil poet Bharatiyar, and very rarely incites extended improvisation (see Figure 7.10 and audio example 7.2).

Time in example	**Time in concert**	**Musical section/feature** (individual duration)
0'05" – 15'58"	1 hr 2 mins 16 secs	*Ragam* (*alapana*), performed by vocalist and violinist. (15 min 53 secs.)
15'58" – 16'34"	1 hr 18 mins 9 secs	Percussion check tuning, followed by a short excerpt of *alapana.* (36 sec.)
16'34" - 19'38"	1 hr 18 mins 45 secs	*Pallavi* – (precomposed) performed as composed, with variations of the melody (*sangatis*). (3 min, 4 secs)
19'38" – 21'04"	1 hr 21 mins 49 secs	*Anupallavi* – (precomposed). (1 min, 26 sec.)
21'04" – 21'40"	1 hr 23 mins 15 secs	Return to *Pallavi*. (36 sec.)
21'40" – 24'20"	1 hr 23 mins 51 secs	*Charanam* (precomposed). (2 min, 40 sec.)
24'20" – 24'55"	1 hr 26 mins 31 secs	*Pallavi* and back into *charanam.* (35 sec.)
24'55" - 32'52"	1 hr 27 mins 6 secs	*Niraval*, based on first line of *charanam*. Virtuosic improvisation using the melody and lyrics as a point of reference. (7 min, 57 secs)
32'52" – 41'36"	1 hr 35 mins 3 secs	*Kalpana swaram* – virtuosic improvisation using solfege notes. (8 min, 44 secs.)
41'36" – 41'52"	1 hr 43 mins 47 secs	Return to *pallavi* (precomposed). (16 sec.)
41'52" – 51'11"	1 hr 44 mins 3 secs	*Thaniavartanam.* (9 min., 19 sec.)
51'11" – 51'20"	1 hr 54 mins 22 secs	*Pallavi* (9 sec.)
51'20" - 51'32"	1 hr 54 mins 31 secs	*korvai* to End (12 sec)
		(Total duration: 51 min., 32 sec.)

Figure 7.9: 'Swara Raga Sudha' performed by Sandeep in Wembley, London, November 2013.

Time in example	**Time in concert**	**Musical section/feature/individual duration**
0'00" – 0'47"	1 hr 11 mins 45 secs	*Alapana.* (47 sec.)
0'47" – 2'21"	1 hr 12 mins 32 secs	*Pallavi* (precomposed), subtle variations embellish the precomposed melody.(1 min., 34 sec.)
2'21" – 2'35"	1 hr 14 mins 6 secs	*Anupallavi* (precomposed) (14 sec.)
2'35" - 2'54"	1 hr 14 mins 20 secs	*Pallavi* (19 sec.)
2'54" - 4'27"	1 hr 14 mins 39 secs	*Anupallavi* (1 min, 33 sec)
4'27" – 8'09"	1 hr 16 mins 12 secs	*Charanam* (precomposed – *ragamalika*) (3 min, 42 sec.)
8'09"	1 hr 19 mins 54 secs	End (Total duration: 8 min, 9 sec.)

Table 7.10: 'Chinnan Chiru Killayae' performed by Sarangan in Pinner, Greater London, January 2015.

Whilst the majority of London's audience members show their appreciation for the

Tamil language and popular songs performed by the visiting artists, some second generation musicians express discontentment with the choice of the repertoire, opting for more 'pure', 'orthodox' and heavily ornamented and explored *ragam thanam pallavis* of rarely heard *ragas* in London. Rather than the catchy melodies of Tamil songs such as devotional 'Chinnan Chiru Killayae' and 'Kurai Onrum Illai', which they believe are markers of the 'Tamilisation' and 'dilution' of Carnatic music performance in London, these music enthusiasts and musicians hope to be transported to a *kutcheri* concert setting in the cultural centre, or at the very least, gain a glimpse of current trends in *raga* choices.

Sushma argues that although there is talk about 'dilution' this may not be may not be the correct word for the local adaptations of Carnatic music in the diaspora. Instead, she suggests that there is a process of simplification in order to appeal to a wider audience than just Chennai's specialist *rasika* audiences. She says:

> ... it is very hard to stick to the same form [of music], you want to make it reach the people, and if you're going to give it in it's more complex form and in the most pure way that exists here [in Chennai], it won't reach there [London], so you want to break it down into simpler parts. So what happens is ... make it very simple for them, you might not shake the notes, so for their students they [the teachers] might present the notes flatly … so [their students] they can grasp it so that kind of 'dilutes' the Carnatic music ... (Sushma, pers. comm., January 2013).

Rather than refer to a process of musical 'dilution', I suggest that the alignments to local expectations are a demonstration of transnational musical competency. Sushma's, and other artists', ability to recognise and perform repertoires and styles amongst different audiences in different localities is therefore a musicianship competency. Such a competency creates familiarity and feeling of 'oneness' in a local embodied musical experience.

Sarangan reflects that during his fifteen years of living, learning, performing and teaching in India, he aligned the content of his performances according to the Indian state he performed in, its urban or rural environment, the occasion and the demographic of the audience. In reference to the idea that singing in Tamil dilutes the 'music', he argues that “the music is the same, so why should it be sung in a language that the audience doesn't

understand?" (Sarangan, pers. comm., March 2013). Based on his experience in India, he is critical of the concept of musical 'dilution' and suggests that the use of the term may be an attempt to portray cultural prestige and closeness with the Indian scene in terms of audience expectations, musical knowledge and position in society (Sarangan, pers. comm., March 2013).

Embodiment and Emplacement

The diversity of the transnational music scene becomes particularly evident in musical aesthetics and competing expectations. The migratory experience, musical background, generation, class and caste creates a disjuncture of musical expectations and attitudes towards musical function. In London, classical Tamil *kritis,* popular film songs in Tamil, and Tamil *pannisai* songs commonly heard in the temple are familiar and evocative for those who have been displaced. Mid-twentieth century film songs and 'ancient' *pannisai* songs are particularly evocative as they were regularly heard by the first generation in pre-conflict Sri Lanka. At concerts in Lewisham temple hall, the enjoyment and pleasure of these popular songs is unmistakable in a diasporic audience and the songs are greeted with applause, singing and humming along. The clear preference and nostalgia felt for much of this 'light' repertoire and the tension with Chennai aesthetics reflects discussions of what is considered as classical music performance.

The disjuncture of expectations is the result of a highly diverse, multilocal scene with musicians and audiences from different social backgrounds and varying access to their 'homelands'. Attaining an embodied experience of 'realness' or 'oneness' amongst a diverse musical community is a significant task for local and transnational artists. Michelle Bigenho has suggested different ways of thinking about "authenticity", not as definitions but as understandings of competing ideologies (2002: 16) in a scene that encompasses diverse

participation and different cultural functions.[8] In reference to indigenous Bolivian music, Bigenho refers to “experiential authenticity” as “embodied”, something that roots people to places and achieves performative “oneness” (2002: 17). The emplacement and embodiment of “experiential authenticity” is a *feeling* and experience of realness among some circles, which, “[is] the culturally inauthentic for others” (2002: 4). In competition and contradiction to this is “cultural-historical authenticity”, which she describes as “a slightly imperfect representation, as it purports a continuity with an imagined point of origin, situated in a historical or mythical past” (Bigenho 2002: 18). Such a representation of 'cultural-historical authenticity', I argue, reflects the privileged position of the Brahmanical custodianship in shaping music in Chennai. In a scene that encompasses diverse multilocal participation and different cultural functions, such competing ideologies create the 'pure' discourse. The projection of the Chennai aesthetic as 'pure' within the diasporic site relates to 'cultural-historical authenticity', reflecting the discourse referring to the largely experienced 'realness' as something 'diluted' by a physically distant society. This denies local adaptability and 'realness' amongst a musical community predominantly concerned with creating a familiar and connected world in a highly-dispersed diaspora. The realignment of musical style and performance in accordance with local aesthetics and ideologies of experiential authenticity however re-emphasises the role and power of the local in transnational interactions and networks. The feeling of 'oneness' also reveals the importance of the multiple localities outside Chennai and the experience of localised embodiment in the perpetuation of the transnational musical scene. Beyond what is considered 'pure' or 'real', it is the localised gathering – the shared physical space, ritualised practices and transnational connectivity – of musical performance that contributes to 'becoming one again'.

[8] Bigenho's framework attempts to bridge Wade's asserted dualism of culture as a way of life and culture as a set of representations (Wade 1999: 449).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the transnationality of the music scene is largely perpetuated through the demand of localised, embodied and grounded musical experiences. I have shown that transnational music in the diaspora inevitably undergoes adaptations and that visiting artists must align to local expectations to attain 'oneness' with their audience. London is an important site in the multilocal scene by functioning as a hub for transnational performance and Internet learning. I have explored the discourse and tensions created as a result of disembodiment in long-distance learning over the Internet and the transnationality and diasporic convergence of multiple expectations of the music scene.

London's music scene is a diasporic construction and the reaction to the migratory experience is reflected in the scene's local functions and aesthetics. Pre-conflict culture and education have been two aspects carefully carried from Sri Lanka to the UK, often via India. Musical practices instigated by displaced Sri Lankan Tamils therefore reflects the concept of Tamil cultural continuity and resistance to hegemonic societies. Continuity is a key term in literature about South Asian culture and in particular the Tamil diaspora. Despite the importance attributed to continuity within this diaspora, the term is critiqued for assuming a seamless mobility and history of culture (see Bhabha 1994; Dufoix 2008). In reference to South Asia, however, others argue that continuity does not mean immobility “but rather a durability of specific features” (Goody and Fennell 2010: 164). With this meaning in mind, local adaptations of such features, like musical conventions and ritualised practices performed transnationally, contribute to the durability of diasporic music practices and retain the possibility of multilocal synchrony.

The multilocal musical synchrony, enabled by Internet learning and regular exposure to visiting artists, allows a (re)connection for those living across long distances. However, this synchrony similarly exposes the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora to cultural hegemony from

the 'cultural centre' projected onto the diasporic locale, as is the case in London. Ideologies concerning cultural authenticity and custodianship are extended to the diaspora from the hegemonic Chennai music society through connections and networks established to 'keep in touch'. However, little acknowledgment is given to the diasporic environment in which the music is being practiced. As I have demonstrated, local variations of performance conventions and audience expectations are not in total synchrony with Chennai, but the ritual of performance brings participants to a point of commonality or 'oneness'. Core musical content and its integrity are maintained, but the variations as a result of the heterogeneous participating demographic – i.e. diasporic Sri Lankan Tamils together with Carnatic artists from different locales in South India – and the adaptation to the local environment create inevitable variations. The ritual of performance and musical conventions nevertheless remain to connect musicians, teachers, students and audiences across nation-states, communities and generations.

It is the local convergences of these macro-level networks which sustain high levels of transnational connectivity and synchrony, but it is also these local manifestations that display the scene's heterogeneity and adaption in different localities, demonstrated through the tensions which arise between local and transnational expectations. In some ways and to varying degrees, these interactions demonstrate another type of globalising process. The multilocality and influence of South India in London does indicate another way of understanding cultural influence on diasporic groups. Rather than gaining specific influence from local Western music, the connectivity enabled through a type of 'non-totalising globalisation from below' (Clifford 1994) through migratory groups shifts the focus from Eurocentric perceptions of globalisation. 'Continuity' of culture through the construction of a multilocal site in reference to the familiar rituals, sounds and icons of the Sri Lankan Tamil community and the hegemonic input of the cultural centre and cultural 'custodians' ensure

validation, access and authenticity. Su Zheng points out that in the Chinese American diaspora the “familiar forms of music representation and many well-known musicians and repertoire metaphorically constructed the imagined continuous physical and social space between diaspora and homeland” (2010: 225). In London, the representation of music, repertoire and musicians similarly construct imagined continuous space, but this is also grounded in localised, embodied experiences. From being the 'other' both in Sri Lanka and in the foreign multicultural society, attempts are made to gain access to an imagined multilocal shared space in order to remain humanly connected to the transnational music scene. Despite the possibilities of the transnational networks, it is ultimately the local and embodied experience that contribute towards 'becoming one'.

Conclusion

Towards the end of my fieldwork, I received a phone call from Sarangan. It was *Sivarathri* – the great night of Siva - and he had organised a concert devoted to the supreme God that night between 1 and 4am in a Wembley temple. The concert marked the 25th anniversary of his first performance back in Sri Lanka in his villages' temple for the same occasion, but it also symbolised his migration from Sri Lanka to India, his musical education and career in Tamil Nadu, and his eventual migration and resettlement in North London. We had a long conversation about *Sivarathri* and the importance of performing music as part of this Hindu festival, after which I told him I had just sung *thevaram* – songs for Siva – in Lewisham temple as part of the ritual worship. He replied; "you sang *thevaram* in the temple on Sivarathri? You must have been born in India in your past life!". In general, comments such as "you were once born in India", "you have a cosmic connection with South Asia", "your previous life in Asia has imprinted on this life" have been common throughout my fieldwork. Such remarks from musicians, teachers, devotees and friends were a way of making sense of my presence and my interest in their lifeworlds; ultimately this had to be connected in some way to the whole and incorporated into the metaphysical 'oneness'. My travel, participation, conversations, musical learning and performance, and the acquisition of knowledge, or *gnanam,* through, and as a result of, these actions indicated to my own presence being accepted as connected to the whole: according to my informants, I too had a place in the oneness.

Through this thesis, I have explored the transnational Carnatic and Tamil music scene in London. My aim was to gain understanding of diasporic musical learning and performance in London and explore the transnational networks which manifest in the London locality and

what enables, motivates and results in these interactions. South Indian musical development in London has been highly dependent on the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee population who resettled in the city from the late 1970s onwards and have contributed to both music in the UK and to the transnational scene. As a result of the migratory experience and physical inaccessibility to the homeland, musical practices have been deeply concerned with the connectivity of cultural roots, collective cultural identity, transnational connectivity and synchrony with other diasporic localities and the cultural centre. I have also shown that diasporic music practices are highly complex, particularly as the result of negotiation between ideas of 'cultural authenticity' between individuals and overlapping diasporic groups, the expression of diasporic experience, and the adjustment and adaptation of homeland cultural practices.

Summary of the thesis

This thesis has considered a number of areas relating to diaspora, music and transnationalism. In chapter one, I explored the meaning of, and what constitutes, 'diaspora' within diaspora studies and ethnomusicology, and questioned the use of the word with regards to complex interactions in large and varied transnational groups. I questioned whether the current definitions of the terms transnationalism, diaspora and globalisation are appropriate in reflecting transnational cultural practices and group dynamics such as music in the Tamil diaspora. As I argued, the migratory experience followed by periods of resettlement and subsequent transnational “mobilizing structures and practices” (Sökefeld 2006: 270) characterise a diaspora. The chapter showed that diasporas and their musics must be theorised in their own terms, as the characteristics of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in London challenges a number of suggested ideal types (Cohen 2008; Safran 1991). The South Asian and Hindu diasporas are 'divergent' (Vertovec 2000: 1) through their heterogeneity,

development, complexities and vast experiences of migration and resettlement.

Leading on from the general discourse of diasporas I focused in on the pre-migration function of music in Sri Lanka and the transnational connections between North Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu in the second chapter. The pre-migration musical function and migratory experiences of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora heavily informs the function and contexts of musical practice in London, therefore understanding the contexts of music in Sri Lanka is significant. I have done this through providing contextual background of music and musical lives in pre-conflict Sri Lanka. One of the main functions of Carnatic and Tamil music in Sri Lanka before migration was as an ethno-nationalist symbol of 'Tamil' art on the island, actively linking it with Tamil Nadu, India. The musical link with India established in the early twentieth century was an initial transnational musical network which would be reinforced in the diaspora. Following on from the context of pre-migration music, I then explored the emergence of the music scene in London and the process of migration and resettlement. I suggested that the emergence of the music scene developed with ethno-nationalist symbolism and essentialised identities, both of which are significant in grounding an understanding of the primary diasporic functions of music in London. I highlighted the multiple migratory experiences which took place over the twentieth century as a key point in understanding the difference of values, priorities and functions of music in diaspora (see Zheng 1991). The function of musical learning and performance as a unifying feature came about only when the realisation that those in the UK could not return 'home' and an influx of thousands of refugees acted as a catalyst for collective cultural practices.

The resettlement process and the gradual development of a music scene was the result of dosplaced Sri Lankan Tamils in London. I also assert that musical practices were a vital element in the formation of the diaspora in London. Tamil schools were significant community institutions in the 'regathering' of displaced individuals, and the schools

facilitated the continuation of Carnatic and Tamil musical practice as a 'Tamil' art form from Sri Lanka to the UK. As the second generation were considered to acquire traits of 'outside' British culture, 'inside' Tamil identity therefore needed to be nurtured through music, dance, language and religion. Through the development of these institutions by first generation cultural activists, Tamil schools contributed to the construction and enculturation of an essentialised 'Tamil' identity for the second and subsequent generations. This essentialised identity is transnationally recognisable, glossing over the heterogeneity of diverse meanings of 'Tamilness' in order to portray a self-empowered collective (see Hall 1990; Ong 2003; Spivak 1996). Therefore, musical learning and performance emplaces diasporic groups within a larger cultural sphere as it resembles a transnationally iconic performance of ritual and identity.

Musical practices are grounded in pre-migratory homeland traditions and have developed to become in-sync with the current transnational music scene. This wider Carnatic music scene is the result of mass migration from South Asia as a whole and is manifested through interactions with other South Asian and, specifically, Sri Lankan Tamil diasporas. Processes of diasporic inter-culture (between South Asia and other diasporas) and diasporic intra-culture (between specifically Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic localities and homelands) are both at play here and such processes have developed the local scene as part of the larger music world. I suggested that the multiple and heterogenous locations of South Indian musical practice resemble an “assemblage” (DeLanda 2006), with many parts coming together to form a whole. The identifiable features of the assemblage are the strong adherence to musical conventions and ritualised practices, both of which characterise Carnatic music. To understand this larger music world and the local and transnational interactions of which it is constituted, I suggested that transnational networks should be explored through three levels to gain a broader understanding of globalising processes and

their local manifestations. Macro-level networks were explored through four primary networks. These were: musical networks, performer networks, material networks and digital networks. Such macro-level networks constitute transnational musical practices and, although abstract, I ground these networks in ethnography. Despite the scale of these networks, they are manifested in the interactions of individuals as well as groups and institutions.

Mid-level networks in London were explored in reference to work on local music scenes by Benjamin Brinner (2009) and Manuel Tironi (2010). I showed the mobility of the local scene and suggested that the ritualised practices of learning and performance are key in creating a Tamil space and emplacing the music scene. The local London scene is dependent on both space and actors as there are few organisations and venues acting as permanent hubs dedicated to the local musical network. There are high levels of mobility both geographically and between the ensembles in which musicians perform. The ritualised practices and musical conventions are locally and transnationally important in emplacing diasporic events in an otherwise mobile scene.

Finally, micro-networks involve the individuals that embody musical knowledge and create the possibilities of the events that manifest the scene. Micro-level network interactions are explored in the conventions of musical performance, through an analysis of three key sections of a Carnatic song. Such conventions are vital in grounding the wider musical assemblage.

By looking at three levels I have explored complex and abstract transnational processes through localised ethnography. From this study, it has been highlighted that strict adherence to the musical conventions and a common canon of repertoire negotiated from Southern India are vital to enable high levels of transnational interaction. The ritualised ways of musical learning and performance are key facets of this music scene. The examples discussed in the chapter show the role of the individual across the macro-, mid- and micro-

levels, and reveal the agency individuals have in globalising processes.

South India, and Chennai in particular, is considered as the 'cultural centre' – an especially important convergence point of people and institutions, the site of musical negotiation and the 'root of the culture' - and is regarded as such in India, Sri Lanka, the London diasporic locale and other diasporic localities. Chennai is the point of musical reference in London and sets the standards by which diasporic musicians – positioned as peripheral participants - must abide in order to be accepted within the transnational scene. Although this thesis is about convergence and connection of transnational networks in an attempt to become one, chapter four highlights the centre - periphery positioning projected by the cultural centre towards the diaspora as a characterising feature of this music scene. As a result, the annual migration to Chennai for the December music season is part of the diasporic musicians' lifeworld. The journey not only provides an opportunity to establish and maintain a transnational reputation in the Carnatic music world, it also provides performers with the opportunity to refine their high standards of performance and to bring back additional musical knowledge to their diasporic students from the 'root of their culture'. Although performing and learning in Chennai provides a certain amount of musical authentication and validation through contact with the cultural centre, diasporic artists and, in particular, Sri Lankan artists feel discrimination as a result of political history, caste and 'outsider' (or Non-Resident Indian) status.

Despite the complexities and prejudice faced by Sri Lankan musicians, the city of Chennai and the state of Tamil Nadu are regarded as an alternative homeland due to the cultural similarities, climate, landscape, and language with North Sri Lanka. For displaced Sri Lankans, South India is often considered as the 'original, original homeland' of the Sri Lankan Tamil people, with musicians connecting themselves with a mythical ancestral history by travelling to India to participate in cultural practices. Continuity with 'ancestral'

practices is therefore maintained through visiting South India and this contributes to the continuity of culture and ritualised practices in the diaspora.

Despite the transnationality of the Sri Lankan and other South Asian diaspora, the mythical history narrative in the discourse surrounding the participation in musical learning and performance is significant to feelings of belonging. The importance of India to many Sri Lankan musicians questions the importance of the 'homeland' in this diaspora and it is actually the cultural centre rather than the homeland that is a reference point for musical practices in the diaspora. Following Mark-Anthony Falzon's ideas about the 'cultural hearts' challenging the place of 'homeland' in the study of diasporas (2003), I suggest the relationship with Chennai rather than Sri Lanka holds greater importance for transnational musical participation and can tell us more about the positioning of diasporic musicians in the wider assemblage. As a result, this notion decentres the importance of 'homeland' in the study of this diaspora.

Following on from the experiences of diasporic musicians in Chennai, I revealed how the impact of musical experiences, practices and expectations in Chennai infringe on the local music scene and its participants in London. The musical conventions negotiated from Chennai are a constant point of reference for the diasporic musicians who teach and perform in London. These conventions are demonstrated through teaching methods, musical priorities, expectations, and performance formats. Clear 'concert paths', or performance formats, and musical conventions are long established in Chennai and are reflected in diasporic practices. These paths are discussed in chapter five, where I investigate how musical practices, contexts, audiences and locations reflect the scene's direction towards transnational participation and synchrony with South Asia and its diasporas. Diasporic musical performances largely contribute towards maintaining connectivity across diasporas through ritualised practices of musical learning and performance, in favour of contributing to

the multicultural ideologies of mainstream British society. This is evident from the contrasting performance contexts of three different examples of musical performance in London, discussed in the chapter. There are two distinct 'publics' engaged with South Indian music performance in London, defined as the diasporic network and the mainstream network. The differing levels of engagement with these networks shows that engagement with the transnational scene and diasporic locales (the diasporic network) is of greatest significance. I suggest that the different contexts reflect the Tamil concept of *akam* and *puram* – interior and exterior fields. I reflect on these categories in reference to Partha Chatterjee's work on the negotiation of identity in colonial India (1989, 1993) and his suggestion of material and spiritual spheres of Indian nationalism. The concepts of *akam – puram* symbolise 'home' and the 'world'. I argue that the *akam* and *puram* concept serves as an analogy for the different practices, music, publics and locations involved in these performances relating to the inner development of identity in reference to 'Tamil' cultural practices (*akam*) and the outer display of difference (*puram*).

Within the *akam* field, 'Tamil' identity is constructed through musical performances that engage the diasporic network. Devotional temple singing and diasporic concerts are key points of convergence in the scattered diaspora in London. Familiar ritualised practices emplace the performance and its audience within the socio-cosmic network and the musical assemblage. Such events are directed to the diasporic network and therefore inherent cultural practices (such as language and *pooja*) as well as understood musical conventions create intimacy, familiarity and connectivity. The audience present at *akam* performances share some or many aspects of a common history, migratory experience, resettlement and collective construction of 'Tamilness' in London.

Puram events, on the other hand, are directed towards a wider public and must fall within the frameworks of wider British society. Here the diasporic network is again present

as the Other, the minority in a foreign society. Diasporic performances are therefore focused on *akam* performances and the musical and economic sustainability of the diasporic music scene.

I explored the multiple audiences and locations in which musical interaction takes place, and revealed that the demarcation of boundaries through music, language, discourse, rituals, and conventions is important in order to retain transnational connectivity and a clear sense of 'Tamilness'. Musical innovation and engagement with the mainstream network and local styles are of little collective importance as they are outside the remit of the imagined historical connections with India or the transnationally synchronised present. Neither do they directly contribute towards the continuity of South Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil culture outside the subcontinent, which is of great value for the London scene. The priority of ritualised homeland and cultural centre practices is indicated in the main types of performance in London and their diasporic engagement.

The ritualised music ceremony – the *arangetram* – is a key diasporic musical event and one of the main types of performance within the diasporic network in London. Chapter six explored the ceremony as a culmination of learning and the characteristic musical performance in London. Through its popularity, discourse, musical conventions, ritualised practices and material culture, the *arangetram* is a means of convergence - to 'become one' - through learning and performance in the diaspora. The *arangetram* symbolises a convergence of transnational networks, a significant connection to a mythical homeland and history, and an explicit performance of cultural identity and citizenship. The discourse surrounding the ceremony indicates a process of connecting with an imagined historical narrative of the Tamil people, in a selective history bypassing the trauma of ethnic persecution, war and forced migration (Clothey 2006; Connerton 1989; Fuglerud 1999). The *arangetram* represents a time in Sri Lanka before conflict and displacement, described as 'the golden years of Tamil

music in Sri Lanka'. Similarly, the *arangetram* was originally recorded in the time of the 'glorious Tamil past', through the depiction of the ceremony in the *Cilappatikaram* epic written in a time of powerful Tamil empires. I argue that the diasporic performance of the *arangetram* contributes to this historical narrative, symbolises Tamil cultural citizenship and becomes an act of self-empowerment.

The *arangetram* ceremony, however, is contested due to its cost and associations with social status. The function of the diasporic ceremony contrasts with that of South India and Sri Lanka in that the *arangetram* in the diaspora is a display of cultural citizenship rather than a demonstration of lifelong artistic commitment. The competing attitudes surrounding the diasporic *arangetram* reveals differing expectations of musical performance, values and priorities, demonstrating the diverse values and expectations of individuals participating in diasporic musical practices in London. Despite competing attitudes, the music *arangetram* is the most symbolic performance in terms of diasporic experience in London, indicated by its popularity in the diaspora in comparison to its current rarity in South Asia. The performance ceremony is a means of metaphorically 'tuning in' to the 'oneness', with mythical connections to the past and connections across the transnational diasporic networks of the present and future.

Finally, in chapter seven, I argue that despite the transnationality of the wider scene and the possibilities for shared multilocal experiences, local, grounded and embodied musical experiences are vital to construct feelings of connectivity. As the scene is part of the musical assemblage and Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, the scene is implicated by multilocality and long-distance shared experiences. There are a number of possibilities for multi-local simultaneous shared experiences through live Internet broadcasting of diasporic *arangetrams*, live concerts from Chennai's music season and diasporic television. The digital network enabled by the Internet is highly valued and regularly employed. A prominent multi-local simultaneously

shared musical experience is the practice of Skype lessons, where teachers and students replicate the ritualised practices of musical learning via the medium of Internet video calling. The lessons are based on the highly conventional music system and employ standardised teaching methods used in face-to-faces classes. However, Skype learning is considered a disembodied and ungrounded practice, suitable only as a long-distance stop gap between face-to-face lessons. Despite its function of long-distance connectivity, the practice is disembodied, and therefore regarded as disconnected from ritualised musical practices.

Despite the possibilities enabled by digital networks and macro-level global processes of travel, technology and communication, local adaptation and embodied and grounded musical experiences remain most valued and sought after between transnational actors. Such grounded ritualised musical experiences contribute to the emplacement of the diasporic network and its locality. The chapter explored interactions between transnational artists and students and showed the shared conventions which enable successful performances in the diaspora between diasporic and non-diasporic musicians. As musical performance in London is informed by the construction of 'Tamilness', I referred to the local adaptations that have occurred in London as the 'London aesthetic', and this localised aesthetic is adhered by visiting India-based artists. The musical adaptations made by visiting Indian artists are reflected in the way that the Chennai aesthetic is adhered to by diasporic musicians in their music season performances in the South Indian city. The local adaptations made by transnational musicians reiterate the importance of the local and grounded experiences in a globalising world. They also reveal a competency for addressing localised aesthetics in the music world and the intertwined importance of diasporic localities and the cultural centre. Such adaptations are, however, considered by some as a 'dilution' of the pure musical form displaying “competing ideologies of authenticity” (Bigenho 2002: 16) amongst participants in diasporic musical practices. These adaptations, however, also reveal that the diaspora and

the 'cultural centre' are dependent on each other, and suggest a shift in the assertion of power projected by the Chennai scene. Whilst Chennai remains an important central point in transnational networks, the transnationality of musical practices could potentially result in a more pronounced shift in the future. Diasporic musical learning and performance remain grounded in embodied experiences despite long-distance interactions, and are essential practices of connectivity in real, and metaphysical, time and space.

Broader themes

The points brought forward in the thesis indicate a number of broader themes in the study of music, diaspora and transnationalism. The broader issues include embodied diasporic experiences, the need to strive towards 'becoming one' and 'oneness', globalisation from below, and the changeable characteristics of 'diaspora'.

The transnational cultural practices evident in London are motivated by the need for the 'continuation' of embodied, connected and synchronised musical and spiritual experiences. This point is particularly prevalent within music and diaspora studies and I suggest it is important within this case for a number of reasons relating to concepts of diasporic time, emplacement, identity, resistance, cultural continuity, and the Tamil concept of disconnectedness or *tosam*.

The concept of 'diasporic time' and realignment is a well-documented concept in diaspora studies. Diasporic time is considered as a temporality derived “from a position of supplementarity: being extra, out of sync and ex-centric” (Harris 2012: 454). Bhabha (1994) uses the term 'discrepant temporalities' to refer to non-linear, recursive time considered to characterise the 'dirupted and circular' time of diasporic groups who have experienced unsettlement, loss, and are now living in foreign multicultural societies (Bhabha 1994; Harris 2012). However, I argue that musical learning and performance is an attempt to connect and

synchronise with the progressive time of the musical centre in South India, where the music itself is negotiated and developed. Though 'diasporic time' is out of sync, the synchrony achievable through ritualised musical learning and performance is, I would suggest, central to the popularity and success of these cultural practices outside of South Asia. The transnational articulation of common conventions and meanings show that the London musical community is not pushed back by a liminal time and space. This synchrony is particularly emphasised by the musicians who travel to Chennai and invite India-based musicians to London in order to 'up-date' their musical knowledge according to the current trends. The generation of financial and knowledge economies surrounding diasporic musical practices link the music, and London's musical community, with the temporality of the musical and ancestral 'homelands', and thereby directly contribute towards the negotiation and development of the transnational Carnatic and Tamil music scene.

Whilst diasporic time and discrepant temporalities are 'realigned' and synchronised through musical performances, the most evident motivator relates to issues of being 'out of place' and disconnected in the diaspora. The overt diasporic condition of being 'out of place', 'scattered' and disconnected is overcome by the emplacement achieved through musical practices. Within this musical community, participation in musical practices does not only ground individuals and groups in their present diasporic setting, they also emplace diasporic musical communities within an imagined mythical narrative, within the traditions of the homeland and cultural centre, and within a 'transnational imagined community' (Sökefeld 2006). This is a particularly prominent point, as it suggests that emplacement, connection and groundedness in diasporic music-making are enabled through transnational networks.

The construction of an essentialised diasporic cultural identity is also an important means of this emplacement. The 'Tamil' diasporic identity constructed and enculturated through music, dance, Tamil language and religion at Tamil schools has become something

considered inherently 'Tamil' or Sri Lankan 'Tamil'. To identify with and participate within the construction of collective identity is both a means of emplacement in diaspora and is considered as a resistance to the total 'Westernisation' of the second and subsequent generations living in the UK. The demarcation of difference is a key motivating factor in musical learning within this diasporic musical community, and musical learning and performance is a vital element in this differencing. The transnational connectivity between Sri Lankan Tamil diasporas, in particular, represents long-distance resistance to the hegemonic society in Sri Lanka, from where many participants have been ethnically persecuted. The Sri Lankan Tamil demographic has been a minority on the island and still are in resettlement. Selvy Thiruchandran (2006) argued that the marginalisation of the Sri Lankan Tamils has resulted in an identity constructed as 'Other', as inferior and as partial citizens. Diasporic cultural practices and 'Tamil' collective identity, however, projects an image of a mobilised and active, yet dispersed, group. To recall Clifford, the empowering paradox of diaspora here is the assumed solidarity and connection there (1994: 322). However, through the transnational networks in musical practice, the transnational solidarity is not so much assumed as evidenced.

The construction of an iconic, essentialised 'Tamil' diasporic identity symbolises strength, defiance, mobility and agency in reference to the ethnic persecution experienced by the first generation of refugees. 'Tamil' identity also retains difference amongst South Asian diasporic populations in the UK which are otherwise susceptible to homogenisation in mainstream discourse (Shukla 2001). However, as I have previously explained, the subscription of Carnatic music as an indicator of 'Tamilness' is contested in India and in London due to multicultural participation in the genre. Such contestation further highlights the multiplicity in the diasporic Carnatic and Tamil musical practices.

Cultural continuity is another important facet of musical practice across many

diasporic and non-diasporic South Asian populations. The spread of traditional and ritualised cultural practices through migration outside of South Asia, and the resulting contribution to its propagation and continuation in the diaspora, is notable. The generation of economies between India and diasporic localities contributes to the maintenance of music in the cultural centre. Diasporic musicians in London feel a duty to contribute towards the continuity of Carnatic and Tamil music, to ensure that the practice of music is not overtaken by the mass popularity of film music in India, Sri Lanka and the UK. Although the concept of continuity in diaspora studies is critiqued in relation to diasporic adjustment and adaptation, the idea of cultural continuity is strong within discourse surrounding Indian music, religion, literature and language. This is particularly strong in a culture with a strong classical legacy and discourse surrounding the 'glorious Tamil past' (Clothey 2006).

Realignment, synchrony, emplacement, continuity and connectivity signal to an overarching concern with disconnection in diaspora. Disconnection and the Tamil concept of *tosam*, I argue, is a driving factor for transnational connectivity. Clothey (2006) and Fuglerud (1999) have previously argued that, within the Tamil diaspora, *tosam* is a significant concept in the consciousness of displaced citizens living in foreign societies. I suggest that *tosam* is evident in my study of music and transnationalism through the persistence of the intra-diasporic, cultural centre and homeland connections. *Tosam* refers to the disorders of the body's natural harmony, however, within diasporas it is the inherent social, rather than physical, character of *tosam* that is particularly relevant, and individuals and groups maintain ritual and social connectivity to avoid disconnection and the resulting afflictions of 'aloneness' (Daniel 1989; Fuglerud 1999: 79). Such disconnection and aloneness can come about if individuals take themselves “outside the social context in which cosmological principles are embedded” (Fuglerud 1999: 78-79). Distance from the cosmos as a result of distance from social contexts is avoided through regular worship and, importantly, ritualised

practices of musical learning and performance. Clothey argues that ritualising helps to counteract the possibility of *tosam* (2006: 213) and I further suggest that the underlying concept of *tosam* extends to the continuation, and ritualisation, within the practice of musical learning and performance. That disconnection is avoided through ritualised practices suggests that music has been a vital means of connection, and reconnection, in everyday and spiritual life for Sri Lankan Tamils in London. Musical conventions and ritualised practices recognisable in Sri Lanka and South India are another means of maintaining the ritual and musical rules that ensure connectivity. Although connectivity and continuity relate strongly to the point about emplacement through musical interaction, *tosam* is the result of disconnection from ritual practices, and is implicated in distinct notions of disconnection and emplacement.

The final point returns again to Gohila's words, that "the world … is becoming one again, it's becoming one world" (pers.comm, September 2013). I refer back to this quote in order to discuss the contribution of diasporas in globalising processes. The intense levels of interaction and circulation through the transnational networks explored in this thesis contribute to previous suggestions that diasporic communities perform a role in the process of non-totalising globalisation from below (Clifford 1994; Zheng 2010). By looking at the macro-, mid- and micro-level networks and transnational interactions, I have shown the impact of diasporic musicians and musical practices in macro-level processes. Therefore, a more pluralistic globalisation is taking place as the result of diasporic transnational networks, like those I have identified and analysed in this thesis. The 'scattering' of people through various stages of migration, and the gradual reconnection through social links and cultural practices bring localities in synchrony with each other. In contrast to studies of diasporic groups who ascribe to extreme musical readjustments and the explicit expression of the diasporic experience through aesthetic and stylistic musical forms, such as Bhangra (Bakrania 2013; Roy 2010; Sharma, Hutnyk and Sharma 1996), the Tamil diaspora and their

transnational interactions demonstrate the spread of ritualised cultural and spiritual practices across the world. Many South Asian diasporas, and increasingly affinity interest groups, look towards India rather than the UK for spirituality, and culture, bringing into question Eurocentric views on globalisation as a form of Westernisation and modernisation. Contrary to the mass global appeal of Euro-American media and music, the 'non-totalising' networks which stretch across the world between diasporic groups should be acknowledged as an important part of the world's 'increasing long-distance interconnectedness' (Hannerz 1996: 17). Such a stance acknowledges the agency and mobility of diasporic groups and their impact on globalising processes and cultural globalisation, and questions the top-down homogenisation of the world. Diasporas have agency within, and contribute to, world changing processes, thereby reflecting the stance of Mark Slobin's optimistic perspective of that overarching systems do not control flows of culture (1992: 2). Therefore, the work of individuals and groups contribute to larger processes. This stance is pertinent in the spread of Indian music around the globe; for example, Ravi Shankar brought North Indian music to the attention of the non-Indian world in the 1960s, and now diasporic groups are instrumental in the emergence of South Indian music from South Asia.

The importance of the transnational networks and their contribution to globalising processes have been enabled by the advancement of technology and communications, but also by the Hindu concept of cosmic connection. The social, cultural, physical and musical interaction and mobility explored in this thesis indicates that further considerations should be given to the character of contemporary diasporas within world changing processes and the important role of diasporic musical practices. The considerations that I suggest are; the act of synchrony; the importance of a cultural centre; the impact of host societies; and intercultural and intracultural diasporic interaction.

Whilst Safran's model of diaspora (1991) has been critiqued, his assertion of the

importance of memory and memories of the homeland have retained their position as key points of focus. This thesis has demonstrated the high levels of participation and interaction between diasporic, non-diasporic and homeland actors through physical contact and technology. I suggest that a significant change is highlighted and that acts of synchrony, rather than remembering, characterise diasporas active in transnational networks. The music scene in London has developed from the temple singing of refugees in the 1980s, to the intense musical interactions between the cultural centre and diasporic localities. The musical practices and lives of diasporic musicians presented in this thesis reveal the highly-organised act of musical and cultural synchrony despite geographical distance.

The importance of a 'cultural centre', or 'alternative homeland', should be considered in transnational diasporic groups. Such a characteristic results in the ascription of the artistic conventions of that alternative homeland or cultural centre rather than the adaptation of variants of the homeland culture with local flavour. Synchrony and adaptation to a near cultural alternative is a new possibility enabled by these networks and resists explicit Western influence. Such a perspective also adds to the original dichotomy of 'homeland' and 'hereland' (Slobin 1994) and can emphasise important cultural centres in diasporic interactions and imaginations.

Further to the adoption of a cultural centre or alternative homeland, in addition to greater interaction with actual places of origin, we can begin to question the impact of the host and/or Western societies on diasporic cultural practices. Local changes and adaptations are inevitable through arts policies, locations, broader social behaviour and legislation, however, intense connections and interactions through transnational networks ensure impact and influence from an alternative source to the place of resettlement. This again signals to the importance of considering diasporic communities within globalising processes.

Mass migration and global cities also place diasporic groups in close proximity to one

another resulting in a great deal of interaction among different diasporic groups. Along with transnational networks, diasporic contact encourages more intercultural and intracultural diasporic interactions. Again, such interactions provide another source of influence and impact beyond local cultural influences. This point goes beyond culture contact in places of resettlement, as it suggests that diasporas, particularly from South Asia, that share languages, religions, art forms and social behaviours become more influenced by each other than by other local attitudes and culture.

These issues suggest that diasporic localities are highly impacted by multiple diasporic locations and the transnationalism of music is reflected in diasporic realities. The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and the practices by the musical community thus show the 'local' as a site that accommodates the micro-level musical interactions, as well as an important hub in transnational networks and globalising processes.

These broader considerations do not dismiss the on-going importance of memory within diasporic groups. Rather, synchrony, alternative homelands, changing relationships with hegemonic societies and intercultural diasporic interactions are borne out of memory and common histories. These further considerations, however, position diasporic groups as empowered actors in the world.

Possibilities for Future Research

As little research within Tamil diasporic music-making in London has been conducted before, there are multiple possibilities for rich future research. Firstly, the multilocal nature of this research could be broadened by conducting fieldwork in additional diasporic localities where musical interactions with London-based musicians are frequent. Key sites would include Toronto, Melbourne, Copenhagen, Oslo, Paris and New York. Research in these sites

would contribute to this study and provide an excellent macro-level understanding of musical interaction within the primarily Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. Such a study would also contribute to music and diaspora studies concerning cultural interaction, the values of transnational diasporas and ways of maintaining musical connections.

A second focal point could deal with musical innovation in a highly conventionalised scene. A number of musicians enculturated within the ritualised practices of Carnatic and Tamil music are emerging with innovative musical projects in London. These projects, whilst innovative and experimental, are often grounded within their practices as classically-trained musicians (classically-trained in the South Indian sense) and require negotiation between their musical background and new creative realms. A study focusing on both individual creative processes and broader issues of cross and inter-cultural music-making would contribute to the research in this thesis through understanding the issues of breaking away from the ritualised practices negotiated from the cultural centre. In a culture which fears disconnection in diaspora, what is the value of music which has actively disconnected from homeland practices? Such a study focuses on culture contact but also the reactions to and values attributed by diasporic audiences to innovative music projects. It would also add to this study by addressing issues of local adaptation and innovation by emerging second generation musicians enculturated in the musical learning and performance explored in this thesis.

A third possibility for future research is the study of individual narratives through new compositions and recordings. A study of the composition process has been outside of the scope of this thesis, but a number of Carnatic musicians in the London scene are also active composers. The individual narratives of diasporic musicians who have experienced forced migration can contribute in two primary ways. First, a focus on how narration and musical creativity interact to provide a means for coping with conflict and forced migration will

explore further the realities of individual musicians. Second, the use of CD and digital recordings will be highlighted, thereby adding another dimension to the research presented here. These compositions are often recorded rather than integrated into performances, suggesting that the process of recording and performance operate in different realms with different repertoire, functions and values. Investigation into these different realms and creative processes would result in additional knowledge about the values attributed to musical practices and styles, particularly those from South Asia which are steeped in 'classical' and ritualised traditions. The circulation and reception of these recordings would also add another dimension to the transnational networks explored here. Such a project could be multi-sited, with the narratives of composers based in London, Norway, Germany and Canada. The research would then be two-fold; focusing on the narratives of individuals and the subsequent function and circulation of their compositions and recordings.

Music in London's Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and the transnational scope of Carnatic and Tamil music is a rich area for understanding contemporary diasporic interactions and illustrates the significance of long-distance connectivity. At the very beginning of this thesis, I referred to two vignettes; one of Yogeswaran's concert in Chennai and the other of Sarangan's performance in London. These vignettes contrast in location and context of diasporic musical practice, but they reveal musical connectivity. Despite the dispersal of diasporic musicians, Carnatic and Tamil music are key in transnationally linking diasporic localities in reference to South Asia. Transnational musical practices highlight divisions and heterogeneity within musical communities and diasporas, but they are also a vital means to create an individual and collective sense of oneness in the world.

Bibliography

Amarasingam, A. 2015. *Pain, Pride and Politics: Social Movement Activism and the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in Canada.* Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism.* London: Verso.

Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneappolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———.1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy". Public Culture 2 (2): 1-24

———.2008. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy". In J. X. Inda and R. Rosaldo (eds.), *The Anthropology of Globalization: a reader.*47-65. Malden: Blackwell Publishing

Baily, J. 1995. "The Role of Music in Three British Muslim Communities". *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies.* 4 (1): 77-87.

———. 2005. "So near, so far: Kabul's Music in Exile". *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 14 (2): 213-233.

———. 2008. "Ethnomusicology, Intermusability, and Performance Practice". Henry Stobart (ed). *The New (Ethno)musicologies.* Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 117-134.

Baily, J. and M. Collyer. 2006. "Introduction: Music and Migration". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* 32 (2): 167-182.

Bakrania, F. P. 2013. *Bhangra and Asian Underground: South Asian Music and the Politics of Belonging in Britain*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Basch, L. G., N. Glick Schiller, and C. Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Langhorne, Pa: Gordon and Breach.

Baumann, G. 1996. *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Becker, H. S. 1982. *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2008. *Art Worlds*. 2nd revised edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Becker, J. 2006. "Funding the Final War: LTTE intimidation and extortion in the Tamil Diaspora". *Human Rights Watch*. 18: (1C). accessed 20th September 2015 from https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/03/14/funding-final-war/ltte-intimidation-and-extortion-tamil-diaspora

Bhabha, H. K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bigenho, M. 2002. *Sounding Indigenous: Authenticity in Bolivian Music Performance*. New York: Palgrave.

Boym, S. 1998. "On Diasporic Intimacy: Ilya Kabakov's Installations and Immigrant Homes." *Critical Inquiry* 24 (2): 498–524.

Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London and New York: Routledge.

Brecher, J., J. B. Childs, and J. Cutler, eds. *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order*. 1st ed. Boston: South End Press, 1993.

Brinner, B. E. 1995. *Knowing Music, Making Music: Javanese Gamelan and the Theory of Musical Competence and Interaction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2009. *Playing across a Divide: Israeli-Palestinian Musical Encounters*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Brubaker, R. 2005. "The 'diaspora' diaspora". *Ethnic and Racial Studies.* 28 (1): 1-19.

Cannon, A. 2012. "Virtually Audible in Diaspora: The Trans-national Preservation of Vietnamese Traditional Music". Journal of Vietnamese Studies 7 (3): 122-156.

Census Data 2001 [India]. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Language/Statement4.aspx accessed 4th February 2016.

Census of Population and Housing of Sri Lanka, 2012. http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHouSat/CPH2011/Pages/Activities/Reports/FinalReport/Population/Table%20A3.pdf accessed 4th February 2016.

Chatterjee, P. 1989. "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India." *American Ethnologist* 16 (4): 622–33.

———. 1993. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Clifford, J. 1994. "Diasporas." *Cultural Anthropology* 9 (3): 302–38.

Clothey, F. W. 2006. *Ritualizing on the Boundaries: Continuity and Innovation in the Tamil Diaspora*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Cohen, R. 2008. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Connerton, P. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Themes in the Social Sciences. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cooley, T. J., K. Meizel, and N. Syed. 2008. “Virtual Fieldwork: Three Case Studies”. G. F. Barz and T. J. Cooley (eds). *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Crang, P.. 2010. “Diasporas and Material Culture.” In K. Knott and S. McLoughlin (eds) *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities*, 139–44. London: Zed Books.

Daniel, E. D. 1989. “The Semiosis of Suicide in Sri Lanka.” In B. Lee and G. Urban (eds). *Semiotics, Self, and Society*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 68-100.

———. 1996. *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropography of Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

David, A. 2008. “Local Diasporas / Global Trajectories: New Aspects of Religious ‘performance’ in British Tamil Hindu Practice.” *Performance Research* 13 (3): 89–99.

———. 2012. “Embodied Migration: Performance Practices of Diasporic Sri Lankan Tamils Communities in London”. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 33 (4): 375-394.

Dayal, S. 1996. “Diaspora and Double Consciousness.” *The Journal of Midwest Modern Language Association* 29 (1): 46–62.

De Landa, M. 2006. *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*. London and New York: Continuum.

De Silva, K. M. 1981. *A History of Sri Lanka*. London: C. Hurst.

"Diaspora" *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, February 2015. Web. 2nd February 2012.

Doniger, Wendy. 2011. “God's Body, or, The *Lingam* Made Flesh: Conflicts over the Representation of the Sexual Body of the Hindu God Shiva”. *Social Research*. 78 (2): 485-508.

Du Bois, W. E. B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. A. C. McClurg & Company

Dueck, B. 2013. *Musical Intimacies and Indigenous Imaginaries: Aboriginal Music and Dance in Public Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dufoix, S. 2008. *Diasporas*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Falzon, M-A. 2003. “‘Bombay, Our Cultural Heart’: Rethinking the Relation between Homeland and Diaspora.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26 (4): 662–683.

Farrell, G. 1994. *South Asian Music Teaching in Change*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Farrell, G., Bhowmick, J. and Welch, G. 2005. “South Asian music in Britain”. H-K Um, (ed), *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions*. London: Routledge.104-128.

Fernando, J. L. 2013. *Religion, Conflict and Peace in Sri Lanka: The Politics of Interpretation of Nationhoods*. Zürich: Lit Verlag.

Flood, G. D. 1996. *An Introduction to Hinduism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fuglerud, Ø. 1999. *Life on the Outside the Tamil Diaspora and Long-Distance Nationalism*. London and Sterling: Pluto Press.

Fuller, C. J., and H. Narasimhan. 2014. *Tamil Brahmans: The Making of a Middle-Class Caste*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilroy, P. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Harvard University Press

Goody, J. and S. Fennell. 2010. "Cultural continuity in India". J. Goody. *Renaissances: The One or the Many?*. 161-197. New York: Cambridge University Press

Gorringe, M. 2005. "Arangetrams and manufacturing identity: The changing role of a bharata natyam dancer's solo debut in the context of the diaspora". H-K Um (ed), *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions*. London: Routledge. 91-103.

Greater London Authority. 2012. "Cultural Metropolis: The Mayor's Cultural Strategy - 2012 and Beyond". Accessed 20th October 2014, from https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/CulturalMetropolis.pdf

Hage, G. 2005. "A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community". *Anthropological Theory.* 5 (4): 463-475.

Hall, S. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In John Rutherford (ed). *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hannerz, Ulf. 1996. *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London and New York: Routledge.

Harris, R. 2012. "Tracks: Temporal Shifts and Transnational Networks of Sentiment in Uyghur Song." *Ethnomusicology* 56 (3): 450–475.

Hodges, S. 2005. "Revolutionary Family Life and the Self Respect Movement in Tamil South India, 1926-49." *Contributions to Indian Sociology.* 39 (2): 251–277.

Holt, J., (ed). 2011. *The Sri Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Home Office (UK). 2014. *Country Information and Guidance – Sri Lanka: Tamil Seperatism*. Accessed 26th September 2015 from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348268/CIG_Sri_Lanka_Tamil_Separatism_v1_0e.pdf

Hudson, D. D.. 2008. "Ruling in the Gaze of God: Thoughts on Kanchipuram's *Mandala*". in

M. A. Selby and I. V. Peterson (eds). *Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 87-116.

Jackson, W. J. 2000. "Religious and Devotional Music: Southern Area." In A. Arnold (ed) *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent*. New York: Garland Publishing. 259-271.

Jackson, W. J. 1993. *Tyāgarāja, Life and Lyrics*. Chennai and New York: Oxford University Press.

Jayasuriya, J. E. 1981. *Education in the Third World: Some Reflections*. Bombay: Somaiya Publications [for Indian Institute of Education].

Johnson, W. J. 2009. *A Dictionary of Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kaufmann, W. 1991. *The Ragas of South India: A Catalogue of Scalar Material*. New Delhi: Oxford and IBH.

Kiwan, N. and U. Meinhof. 2011. *Cultural Globalization and Music: African Artists in Transnational Networks*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Knott, K. 2000. *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krishnamoorthy, C. 1987. "Hindu Association of Great Britain Souvenir". *Highgate Hill Murugan.* www.highgatehillmurugan.org/Temple%20History.pdf, accessed 2nd October 2012.

Krishnamurthy, R.. 2012. "Logging on to the Virtual Gurukulam." *The Hindu*, December 19. http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chen-arts/chen-music/logging-on-to-the-virtual-gurukulam/article4214484.ece. Accessed 10th December 2013.

Krishnamurti, B. "Dravidian Languages". *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Britannica Academic*. http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/171083/Dravidian-languages, accessed 4th February 2016.

Krishna, Sankaran. 1999. *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka and the Question of Nationhood*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Krishna, T. M. 2013. *A Southern Music: The Karnatic Story*. Noida: HarperCollins Publishers India.

Laine, A. 2009. "In Conversation with the Kolam Practice: Auspiciousness and Artistic Experiences among Women in Tamilnadu, South India." Unpublished PhD thesis. Göteborg: University of Gothenburg, School of Global Studies.

Law, J. 2000. 'Objects, Spaces and Others', published by the Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University, at http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Law-Objects-Spaces-Others.pdf , accessed 2nd July 2014

Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Trans. D. Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell

Marcus, G. E. 1995. “Ethnography In/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography.” *Annual Review of Anthropology.* 24: 95–117.

McGilvray, D. B. 2008. *Crucible of Conflict: Tamil and Muslim Society on the East Coast of Sri Lanka*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Miller, Daniel, (ed.). 2009. *Anthropology and the Individual: A Material Culture Perspective*. Oxford and New York: Berg.

Mohan, Giles, and A B Zack-Williams. 2002. “Globalisation from below: Conceptualising the Role of the African Diasporas in Africa’s Development.” *Review of African Political Economy* 29 (92): 211–236.

Nelson, D. P. 2010. Karnatak Tala. In Alison Arnold (ed) *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent*. New York: Garland Publishing. 138-161.

Neuman, D. M. 1990. *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nubin, W., (ed). 2002. *Sri Lanka: Current Issues and Historical Background*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Ong, A. 2003. “Cyberpublics and Diasporia Politics among Transnational Chinese” *Interventions.* 5 (1): 82–100.

Palanithurai, G. and K. Mohanasundaram. 1993. *Dynamics of Tamil Nadu Politics in Sri Lankan Ethnicity.* New Delhi: Northern Book Centre.

Parthasarathy R. 2004. *The Cilappatikaram: The Tale of Anklet by Ilanko Atikal*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Parker, S. K. 2008. “Sanctum and Gopuram at Madurai: Aesthetics of Akam and Puram in Tamil Temple Architecture”. M. A. Selby and I. V. Peterson (eds), *Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 143-173.

Pesch, L. 2009. *The Oxford Illustrated Companion to South Indian Classical Music*. New Delhi and Oxford University Press.

Pillay, K. K. 2007. *The Caste System in Tamil Nadu*. Chennai: MJP Publishers.

Rajagopal, G. 2009. *Music Rituals in the Temples of South India*. New Delhi: D. K. Printworld.

Ramnarine. T. K. 1996. '“Indian” Music in the Diaspora: Case Studies of “Chutney” in Trinidad and London. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology.* 5: 133-153.

———.2001. *Creating their own Space: The Development of an Indian-Caribbean Musical*

Tradition. Jamaica: University of West Indies Press.

———.2007a. *Beautiful Cosmos: Performance and Belonging in the Caribbean Diaspora*. London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press.

———. 2007b. Musical Performance in the Diaspora: Introduction. *Ethnomusicology Forum*. 16 (1): 1-18

Reed, S. A. 2010. *Dance and the Nation: Performance, Ritual, and Politics in Sri Lanka*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Reyes, A. 1990. Music and the Refugee Experience. *World of Music*. 32 (3): 3-21

———.1999. *Songs of the Caged, Songs of the Free: Music and the Vietnamese Refugee Experience*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Roda, P. A. 2015. "Ecology of the Global Tabla Industry." *Ethnomusicology*. 59 (2): 315-336.

Rouse, R. 1991. "Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernity." *Diaspora* 1: 8–23.

Roy, A. G. 2010. *Bhangra Moves: From Ludhiana to London and beyond*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate.

Russell, J.. 1982. *Communal Politics under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947*. Dehiwala: Tisara Prakasakayo.

Rutherford, J (ed). 1990. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Ruthmann, S. A., and D. G. Hebert. 2012. "Music Learning and New Media in Virtual and Online Environments". In G. McPherson and G. Welch (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Education Volume 2*. Oxford University Press. 567-584.

Safran, W. 1991. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1 (1): 83–99.

Sambamoorthy, P. 1983. South Indian Music. Madras: Indian Music Publishing House.

Schultz, A. C. 2013. *Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schutz, A. 1964. "Making Music Together". A. Brodersen (ed). *Collected Papers II.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 157-178

Selby, M. A. and I. V. Peterson (eds), *Tamil Geographies: Cultural Constructions of Space and Place in South India*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sharma, S., J. Hutnyk, and A. Sharma (eds). 1996. *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*. London and Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books.

Sherinian, Z. C. 2014. *Tamil Folk Music as Dalit Liberation Theology*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Shukla, Sandhya Rajendra. 2001. "Locations for South Asian Diasporas". *Annual Review of Anthropology.* 30: 551-572.

———. 2003. *India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sivathamby, K. 2005. *Being a Tamil and Sri Lankan*. Colombo: Aivakam.

Slobin, M. 1992. "Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach." *Ethnomusicology* 36 (1): 1-87.

———. 1994. "Music in Diaspora: The View from Euro-America." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 3 (3): 243–51.

Sökefeld, M. 2006. "Mobilizing in Transnational Space: A Social Movement Approach to the Formation of Diaspora." *Global Networks* 6 (3): 265–84.

Spivak, G. C. 1996. Subaltern Studies:Deconstructing Historiography. In G. C. Spivak, D. Landry, and G. M. MacLean (eds.) *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. 203-236. New York: Routledge. 203-236.

Srinivasan, P. 2012. *Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Stokes, M. 2004. "Music and the Global Order." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (1): 47–72.

Subramanian, L. 2011. *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sugarman, J. C. 1997. *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sykes, J. 2011. *The musical gift: Sound sovereignty and multicultural history in Sri Lanka.* unpublished PhD thesis. University of Chicago

———. 2013. "Culture as Freedom: Musical 'Liberation' in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka". *Ethnomusicology*. 57 (3): 485-517

"Tamil (People)". *Encyclopaedia Britannica. Britannica Academic.* www.britannica.com/topic/Tamil, accessed 16th December 2015.

Terada, Y. 2008. "Tamil Isai as a Challenge to Brahmanical Music Culture in South India." *Senri Ethnological Studies* 71: 203–26.

Thiruchandran, S. 2006. *Stories from the Diaspora: Tamil Women, Writing*. Colombo: Vijitha

Yapa Publications.

Tironi, M. 2010. “Gelleable Spaces, Eventful Geographies: The Case of Santiago’s Experimental Music Scene.” I. Farías and T. Bender (eds). *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London: Routledge. 27-52.

Titon, J. T. 1997. “Knowing Fieldwork”. G. F. Barz and T. J. Cooley (eds). *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. 25-41.

Tsing, A. 2008. “The Global Situation”. In J. X. Inda and R. Rosaldo (eds.), *The Anthropology of Globalization: a reader.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing. 66-98.

Turino, T. 2000. *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*. Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, V. 1986. *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications

Um, H-K. 2005. Introduction: understanding diaspora, identity and performance. H-K Um (ed). *Diasporas and Interculturalism in Asian Performing Arts: Translating Traditions*. London: Routledge. 1-14.

Van Hear, Nicholas. 2013. 'Sri Lanka's Diasporas'. Joya Chatterjee and David Washbrook (eds). *Routledge Handbook to the South Asian Diaspora.* London: Routledge. 236-247.

Vertovec, S. 1997. “Three Meanings of ‘Diaspora,’ Exemplified among South Asian Religions.” *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 6 (3): 277–99.

———. 1999. Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22(2): 447-62

———. 2000. *The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns*. London and New York: Routledge.

Viswanathan, T. and M. H. Allen. 2004. *Music in South India: The Karṇāṭak Concert Tradition and beyond: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wade, P. 1999. “Working Culture: Making Cultural Identities in Cali, Colombia”. *Current Anthropology* 40 (4): 449-471.

Weidman, A. J. 2006. *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Wilson, A. J.. 2000. *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: Hurst & Co.

———. 2011. “Language, Poetry, Culture, and Tamil Nationalism.” J. C. Holt (ed). *The Sri*

Lanka Reader: History, Culture, Politics. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 459-470.

Wong, D. A. 2001. *Sounding the Center: History and Aesthetics in Thai Buddhist Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wolf, R. K. 2009. "Varnams and Vocalizations: the Special Status of Some Musical Beginnings". R. K. Wolf (ed),*Theorising the Local Music, Practice, and Experience in South Asia and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 239-263.

Wood, A. 2008. "E-Fieldwork: A Paradigm for the Twenty-first Century?" H. Stobart, (ed). *The New (ethno)musicologies*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press. 170-187.

Zheng, S. 1990. "Music and Migration: Chinese Traditional Music in New York City." *World of Music* 32 (3): 48–67.

———. 2010. *Claiming diaspora: music, transnationalism, and cultural politics in Asian/Chinese America*. New York: Oxford University Press.