Exploring the musical, cultural and social identities of young Indians learning Western classical music in India

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&
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Abstract

This thesis explores the narratives of the young people in India engaging with Western classical music as students, teachers, and performers. India's association with Western classical music began in the early sixteenth century with the arrival of the first colonisers. Since then, Indians have engaged with Western classical music in different cultural, religious, and political settings. However, in contemporary India, the role of Western classical music, and those engaging with it has not been studied in detail. With the focus on the musical, cultural and social identities of young Indians learning Western classical music, the study aims to situate these narratives in the wider context of postcolonial India.

Data for this study was collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted in the Indian cities of Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. A constructivist and grounded theory approach through coding was adapted to analyse the data which highlighted the various factors that enabled the participants to pursue Western classical music in India. The emergent themes from the analysis highlight the variables and factors such as role of family, cultural and social capital. Postcolonial studies and musical identities research provided the framework for the discussion of the emergent themes from the analysis. The discussion unearths these themes, and the identities of the participants while situating them in postcolonial India with the aim of influencing current educational policies.

This study amplifies voices that are insufficiently represented in mainstream academia.

General Acknowledgements

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1. Western classical music in India

I am on a Mumbai local train and most people have their earphones plugged in, listening to music or watching videos; I hear the Symphony Orchestra of India tuning up to start their performance and watch the audience take their seats in the air-conditioned Tata Theatre in Mumbai; the sound of the members of the Sunshine Orchestra playing scales as they warm up for their daily practice at KM Music Conservatory greets my ears on a warm sunny day in Chennai; elsewhere in the Conservatory, I hear a singer singing Raag *Bhopali* with the shruti box gently but firmly providing the drone; I watch as a teacher turns on her electric piano to start a singing lesson in her teaching studio in Hyderabad and her student places the sheet music on the stand; I cast my eyes on the walls and spot the laminated, framed and embossed certificates of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM); walking through the Bangalore School of Music, the strains of violin and piano melodies float through the corridors and I stop to listen to a student who is playing some Bach. On the streets, I hear a cacophony of car and bike horns, as Indian regional film music and the sounds of Bollywood blare from the shops, buses and autorickshaws, and the loudspeakers from the nearby temples and mosques play their devotional music and evening call for prayer respectively; I am a soloist in a concert in Goa, and as the sun sets we move into our positions to perform Haydn's Seven Last Words, the ladies of the choir draped in beautiful sarees, the men in their smart coats; I sit cross-legged on the temple floor listening to a *Kutcheri* as the singer traces intricate shapes with her voice, closely followed by the violinist and complementarily supported by the *mridangam*; I remember my mother playing her many cassette tapes of Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammed Rafi and gently singing along in a melodious voice and shaking her head to the beat as I prepare to leave for

school; I remember my first cello lesson in Chennai - I am staring at Eilidh playing the cello and I cannot take my eyes off the way her fingers move, I am entranced, and it is the first time I have heard the cello being played in such close proximity; I walk into my first performance class at a UK Conservatoire and am immediately aware that I am one of the very few students of colour in the room, I nervously take a seat at the back of the class; I sit down in a café in Mumbai for my interview with one of the study participants and they set their violin on the empty chair next to me.

Through personal anecdotes, these vignettes offer a glimpse into India's musical landscape. They recount my encounters with Western classical music within the confines of music schools and studios, juxtaposed with experiences in the outside world, vividly illustrating India's diverse musical palette – different styles contrasting and blending into different shades and textures on the same canvas. The cultural context of performing and engaging with Western classical music in India piqued my interest, especially in light of the intriguing tensions that arise from the coexistence of diverse musical worlds and ecosystems. These elements fascinated me, prompting further exploration and questioning, which became the foundation of this study. As an Indian musician learning Western classical music, I found myself drawn to delve deeper into these complexities and unravel the nuances of this musical intersection.

1.1 Motivation for the study

I grew up in Hyderabad, a South-Indian city in Telangana, as part of a middle-class family with a unique blend of cultures. With both my parents coming from different parts of the country – my mother from Goa and my father from Tamil Nadu – I grew up with a variety of languages, music, food, traditions, and cultures. My mother was

strongly inclined towards the performing arts – partly as a reaction to the fact that she had not been allowed to study music or dance as a child – but the schools I attended did not have specialised classes for music or the performing arts. I went for Bharatanatyam, Karnatic (singing and violin) classes after school and at the weekends and attended several music summer camps. Because I was raised a Catholic, I sang in various church choirs along with my sister and mother, and when my sister started her piano lessons, I began violin lessons in the same music centre. When I later moved to Chennai to join the KM Music Conservatory – India's only Higher Education Institution catering to Western classical music - I took up singing in a Western classical idiom. I began serious lessons with an American Indian Soprano and was also offered the chance to learn the cello as they had a cello teacher but no students. Although I had had a brief stint of singing with a choir at St Andrews School Bowenpally, where I studied between the ages of 11-12, it was in Chennai that, for the first time, I was part of a choir that sang in four-part harmony. I took graded examinations from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) for violin and singing and, after I completed my foundation course at KM Music Conservatory, moved to Sri Lanka for six months to continue my studies in voice and cello. It was then that I applied to study in the UK. I was advised by my cello teacher that if I wanted to learn Western classical music with a view to working professionally as a musician, then I should consider applying to an institution in the United Kingdom (UK) or United States (US). I got an offer from two conservatoires and chose to study in Scotland because my cello teacher in India had been Scottish.

Living in Scotland has been eye-opening, particularly due to the significant government support for the arts and arts education. This starkly contrasts with the

situation in India, where there is a noticeable lack of infrastructure and support for music. Despite music and dance being deeply ingrained in Indian traditions and culture, the education system does not adequately reflect this, and government funding or policy for the arts remains relatively weak.

Having grown up in Hyderabad, I personally experienced the challenges of accessing music education, as there were only a few teachers scattered around the city. My parents, especially my mother, played a crucial role in ensuring that my sister and I could attend music lessons. They would tirelessly drive us across the city, sometimes going to great lengths to facilitate our musical education.

As an Indian musician immersed in the Western classical idiom, my interest in the status of Western classical music in India intensified. Upon reviewing the existing literature and engaging in discussions with fellow Indian musicians, it became evident that very little research had been conducted in this area. This realization sparked the idea for my study.

My frustrations with the lack of access to quality music education in schools and the recognition of the pressing need for an improved system served as the driving forces behind this research. In the initial stages of my investigation, I recognised the significance of comprehending the role and potential of music education within the Indian education system. I set out to explore the experiences of young Indian individuals, including myself, who had chosen to pursue Western classical music. My aim was to uncover whether their narratives aligned with mine or each other's. I sought to delve into their backgrounds, motivations for embracing Western classical

music, and the genesis of their musical journeys. Moreover, I endeavoured to assess the extent of their access to music education, examine potential similarities in their social backgrounds, and explore the methods and venues where they received musical instruction.

Additionally, I sought to delve into their perception of their musical identities and the significance they attached to studying this genre of music in post-colonial India. I was curious about how the cultural context might have influenced their learning experiences. Furthermore, I sought to identify the challenges, barriers, and issues they encountered while accessing, learning, and performing Western classical music. These initial inquiries laid the groundwork for my study and led me to formulate three fundamental research questions that have guided my exploration in this domain.

Three research questions summarise the present research and have guided all aspects of the study. They are:

- What are the key factors and enablers that influence the young people in India to pursue Western classical music?
- What are the nature and narratives of musical, cultural and social identities of Indian young people engaging in Western classical music?
- What does 'engaging with Western classical music' in a Postcolonial India imply?

1.2 Musical Identities

The title of the study – *Exploring musical, cultural and social identities of young*

musicians learning Western classical music in India encompasses these core questions and they are united by a focus on what we might refer to as 'musical identities', a concept that has evolved over the past 25 years or so and proven to be a useful tool in understanding in different contexts, the place of music individuals' lives. In the preface of the 'Handbook of Musical identities', published in 2017, the editors David Hargreaves, Raymond MacDonald, and Dorothy Miell summarise the concept of musical identity as follows:

> Music is a separate and distinct channel of communication; music provides a unique and social context for collaboration and discussion; musical activities can be accessed by everyone, regardless of age, location, socio-economic status, or state of health. Furthermore, music is ambiguous, and no matter how composers or performers wish to imbue their music with particular intentions, listeners will contrast their own meanings for the music: these meanings will never be wrong and will always be unique, regardless of their earth-shattering importance or superficial banality. Thus, all music making, all music listening, all music talking, all musicking is essentially an identity project. Music provides a forum in which we construct and negotiate our constantly evolving sense of who we are, and our place in the world. (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2017, p. vi)

In the broadest of terms, they describe musical identity as an idea through which one can look at the various interactions between music and the individual (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2002), and at an individual's perception of musical self (Talbot, 2013). They unpack ideas and concepts such as music as a means of communication, as a collaborative tool and as a means to shape one's identity. musicking being an identity project. As Cook writes, 'In today's world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you "want to be"...but who you are' (1998, p. 5).

This research aims to draw out the stories of the participants in relation to their

particular cultural understanding; relationships with different people, places and environments; the musical and other roles that they play in these contexts; and the formation of their musical, cultural and social identities. The study also briefly explores the complex position of Western classical music in contemporary India, and how that position influences the participants and their identities. Finally, it attempts to capture the multi-cultural dimension of young people learning Western classical music in India. As Susan O'Neill writes:

> young people's identities offer a navigational system and a means of reference and orientation within their perceptual (space-time) and cultural (place-time) life worlds, which include the music activities, material resources, relationships, and interactions that emerge across the physical and virtual life spaces and places of home, school, local and online communities, and (mostly through the Internet) the wider world. (2017, p. 82)

Acknowledging the global nature of Western classical music and its presence in diverse national and postcolonial contexts, this study uses the concept of musical identity as a lens for understanding the interplay of cultures and musical perspectives among the participants. By examining how musical identities are shaped and influenced by a myriad of cultural interactions, both on a global and local scale, the research aims to unravel the complex tapestry of musical expressions in the modern world. The study recognises its connection to Postcolonial theory, which offers insights into the historical legacies of colonisation and the subsequent impact on cultural exchanges. Through this theoretical framework, the research seeks to explore how historical power dynamics and colonial influences have shaped the musical landscape in India and its engagement with Western classical music. By incorporating postcolonial theory to illuminate the participants' musical experiences and identities, a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the layers within

cultural encounters becomes possible. This approach enables an exploration of the multifaceted dimensions and subtle intricacies that shape these interactions, offering insights into the dynamics of cultural exchange and expression. However, it is essential to emphasise that while the study acknowledges these broader theoretical underpinnings, its primary focus remains the individual experiences and perspectives of young Indian musicians engaging with Western classical music. The research seeks to give voice to these musicians, recognising them as agents of their own musical journeys and identity formation. Ultimately, this research seeks to humanise the discourse surrounding Western classical music in India, moving beyond theoretical abstractions and stereotypes. By foregrounding the personal stories and experiences of the participants, the study hopes to reveal the complexities, challenges, and triumphs that young musicians encounter as they find their musical paths and contribute to the evolving musical landscape of a postcolonial India.

1.3 Positionality as a researcher

Above, I set out some of the personal experiences that led me to undertake this study, but it is pertinent for me, as the researcher, to unpack further the rationale for my decision to research Western classical music in India, rather than (say) Indian classical music, or any other musical tradition. While I do have a background in Indian classical music and dance, Western classical music was the field in which I progressed the furthest. I have spent much of my life learning, performing, teaching, leading workshops, masterclasses, and community projects, and engaging with Western classical music, which including graduating with a bachelor's degree in music from a UK conservatoire and now living in the UK, where the dominant classical genre is Western classical music. I have interrogated my position as a

researcher in this study on numerous occasions, reflecting on and situating my own experiences and understandings as an Indian exploring and performing Western classical music. As the researcher, I am in a unique position with first-hand experience that helps me to draw rich data from the participants, understand the discourses from the inside, and elucidate my findings with credibility. Also, my particular experiences enable me to build a bond of trust and honesty with my participants thus giving me an advantage while eliciting rich data. However, I have sought to be on my guard throughout for the obvious problem of 'confirmation bias' – alighting on those aspects of my participants' experiences that reflect my own or confirm my existing views of Western classical music in India. This research finds its origins in my personal experience, but I have striven to go beyond that, taking advantage of my 'insider' status while also seeking to let the voices of the participants speak through my work. Being an Indian researcher studying in the UK (or a global south researcher working in the global north) is another interesting facet of my positionality.

1.4 Locations and Participants

The cultural and musical landscape of India is intricate and extensive, making any attempt to study or engage with it inherently limited. The locations and participants chosen for this study are not meant to represent the entire population but rather serve as specific subjects for an idiographic approach. The study focuses on describing and analysing the findings, rather than seeking to establish general principles in a nomothetic approach.

To begin the study, an initial mapping exercise was conducted to identify Indian

cities with significant engagement in Western classical music. The metropolitan centres with high urban populations, such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Hyderabad, were selected as the obvious choices. A list of music schools, orchestras, and choirs in various Indian cities was compiled to gauge the levels of engagement.

Given the Western classical music community's limited extent in India, the research narrowed its focus to Hyderabad, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, and Ahmedabad. Notably, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore are also prominent hubs for national and regional film industries. While it would have been desirable to collect information from all regions of the country, the scope of a viable doctoral project made this impractical. As a result, the study concentrates on participants from these selected cities to gain meaningful insights into the engagement with Western classical music in India.

Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana, has a multifaceted cultural landscape that has evolved over the years, shaped by its historical past and modern developments. During the colonial period, Western classical music found its place predominantly within the Parsi community and select upper middle-class Christian families. However, as Hyderabad's economic landscape expanded with the growth of industries such as IT, pharmaceuticals, and biotechnology, new opportunities arose for the city's population, leading to significant changes in its cultural fabric. Since the boom of the IT industry in the late 20th century and early 21st century (Fuller and Narasimhan, 2007), many multi-national companies have made Hyderabad their base in India for call centres and other offices. This resulted in a growth in

international travel and opened up international and global connections for Hyderabad (Brosius, 2010). Hyderabad produces the second largest number of films in the country, second only to the Hindi film industry in Mumbai. While there are music and cultural festivals organised in the city, it does not have a specialist school or institution for Western classical music apart from private teachers and small-scale institutions. Since this is my home city, I was keen to capture the experiences and narratives of the young people in Hyderabad and I was able to find participants for the study through my own musical network in the city.

Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra, and it is formed of seven islands. These islands were part of the Portuguese empire and later came under the rule of the East India Company. The history of Western classical music in Mumbai is complex. With Mumbai being the financial capital of the country and also the home to the Hindi film industry, a globalised community inhabits this city. With a population of around 18.41 million people, Mumbai is rich with diverse cultures, languages, and is also the commercial and entertainment capital of India. Mumbai is also home to the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI), which is the only national Western orchestra. Apart from the SOI, there are a number of small chamber music ensembles in the city performing in the Western classical idiom. It hosts many art, film and cultural festivals, and the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) is in the south part of the city (Brosius, 2010).

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, is the capital of Tamil Nadu, a south-Indian state on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. Before the arrival of the British in 1639, Armenian and Portuguese traders lived here. Under British rule, it served as

the administrative and commercial capital. Chennai is the home to the Tamil film industry and a number of cultural institutions such as Madras Music Academy and Kalakshetra, which caters for south-Indian music (Karnatic) and dance (Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi). India's first Conservatory for Western and Indian classical music was founded by A R Rahman in 2008. A R Rahman is a famous name in the film music industry in India. He is an Oscar-winning music director and composer also known as the Mozart of Madras (Corliss, 2004). Due to his global fame, Rahman's soft power in the music scene and his motivation to promote music education was beneficial in setting up this Conservatory. The KM Music Conservatory, as it is known, is the first higher education institution in India to offer qualifications in Western classical music and is accredited to degree level by Middlesex University in the UK. The Institution has employed many international faculty members from the UK, US, and Europe. These faculty members predominantly teach Western music, and alongside them, KM Music Conservatory has Indian academic staff who teach Indian classical music and sound production; all the non-academic support staff are Indian nationals.

Bengaluru is the capital of Karnataka in central South India. Under the British Raj, it served as the largest cantonment in the country. Bangalore is leading as an IT exporter with many corporation headquarters in the city. It is deemed to be the IT capital of India and has earned the nicknamed of India's Silicon Valley (Brosius, 2010). It is the second fastest-growing metropolis in India and is the home to the Kannada film industry (also known as Sandalwood). Due to its location, the art and music scene in Karnataka is vibrant with a rich music of south-Indian and north-Indian music and dance styles. There are smaller private Western music schools

such as the Bangalore School of Music, which has around 29 members of mostly part-time staff, and the Harmony Music School, with 13 members of teaching and support staff.

Ahmedabad is the former capital of the state of Gujarat in north-west India. It was the base for the Indian Independence movement when Mahatma Gandhi established two ashrams that later on became centres for nationalist activities. In terms of art and culture, there are few institutions and schools. Only two of my participants come from Ahmedabad and one of them was resident in Chennai at the time of interview.

Participants

This study, in a modest way, sets out to reflect and explore the diverse cultures and communities associated with Western classical music in India, but it cannot represent them. Rather, it aims to narrate the experiences and stories of Indians learning Western classical music, which have not generally been heard or scrutinised, particularly where these narratives explore themes of identity, and other key ideas such as post-colonialism, in the Indian musical landscape. Class and caste need to be acknowledged, as most of the participants come from a middle-class or upper middle-class background and higher socio-economic groups. In this study, I have not fully explored caste as a specific variable, but I do briefly discuss it later in the thesis. Reflecting an interest in the younger Indians engaging with Western classical music, the age of the participants ranges from 17 – 32.

Participants were identified through the snowballing method in a combination of linear, exponential non-discriminative snowballing and exponential discriminative

snowballing, based initially on my own networks. The primary interviewees were identified through the various music schools in Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Mumbai – KM Music Conservatory, Bangalore School of Music, Harmony Music School, Strings and Tunes, Mehli Mehta Music Foundation, and also the Symphony Orchestra of India and the Indian National Youth Orchestra. A balance was sought between location, gender and their musical roles such as teachers, students, performers – but none of these was rigorously controlled. The focus was on the insights that might flow from individual narratives, rather than seeking a representative sample of participants who might stand in for a wider population of young musicians.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and all participants were guaranteed anonymity by using pseudonyms or changed initials for all references to them in the study. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and explicit consent to take part in the project was given by all participants. Participant information sheets were provided in English, which was spoken by all participants with varying degrees of fluency, and to ensure consent was fully informed, this was supplemented by an oral account of the project, which was also given in Tamil.

A total of 46 semi-structured interviews were carried out across the pilot and main studies. The pilot study consisted of 12 interviews in two musical schools – Mehli Mehta music Foundation and Global Music Institute in Mumbai and Delhi – with the pilot helping to develop and trial various interview and research skills in advance of the main study's data collection. 26 participants were interviewed for the main study

to ensure that a variety of ages, genders, locations, musical roles were considered in the study. Some of these participants have also studied music abroad in the UK, US or Europe.

1.5 The Thesis in Outline

Western classical music in Mumbai has never been the subject of an in-depth study, and Western music in India is under-researched. Martin Clayton has commented on the lack of attention that Western music in India has garnered from ethnomusicologists, writing, 'Westerners have remained largely uninterested in that part of Indian musical culture that most wants to identify with the West' (Clayton 2009:66). [Marsden, 2018, p. 17]

Undertaking a comprehensive literature review was a crucial initial step in this study, providing a solid foundation for contextualising the research and exploring its key ideas. The Literature Review section of the study delves into the themes of musical identities, art education, and music education in India, providing a broader perspective on the subject.

In the process of conducting the literature review, I explored existing studies that shed light on Western classical music in India. One significant study that greatly influenced the current research was conducted by Rupert Avis in 2017 - *The Significance of Western art music in contemporary, metropolitan India*. Avis's work highlighted the importance and impact of Western art music in the context of contemporary Indian society, particularly in metropolitan areas. This study acted as a steppingstone, offering insights into the musical landscape and trends in the specific

geographical and cultural milieu under examination.

Another noteworthy study, carried out by Hannah Marsden in 2018, *Global music, Local Meanings,* focused specifically on Western classical music in Mumbai, exploring the dynamics of global music and its local meanings. This research provided a valuable perspective on how Western classical music, despite its global roots, takes on unique and culturally contextualized meanings in the Indian urban setting. Marsden's study acted as a complementary piece, offering deeper insights into the specific nuances of Western classical music's reception and integration in one of India's major urban centres.

Drawing from these seminal works and other relevant literature, the literature review in the current study situates the research in the wider context of Western classical music education in India. It not only examines the historical aspects of music education in the country but also explores the contemporary situation and developments. Notably, the review highlights a particular aspect that has received limited attention: Western classical music education in India. By addressing this gap in the existing literature, the study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex and evolving musical landscape of the nation.

Undertaking this research, I travelled to India to conduct in-depth interviews with the participants. Recognising the significance of first-hand experiences, I sought to immerse myself in the local musical landscape, engaging with prominent institutions and musicians across different cities. I visited the KM Music Conservatory, and the Bangalore School of Music; for the pilot study, I travelled to Delhi to visit the Global

Music Institute. This institute is renowned for its contemporary and innovative approach to music education, making it an intriguing addition to the research. Subsequently, I journeyed to Mumbai to explore the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation, gaining exposure to yet another facet of Western classical music education in India. In the **Methodology**, I discuss my approach and the design of the study including data collection, my approach to analysis and lessons learned from the pilot study. As a researcher, I acknowledge my positionality and the potential impact it may have on the research. Being intimately connected to the city of Hyderabad as my home city, I approached the study with both familiarity and objectivity, recognising the need to maintain a balance between my personal background and the research process. I actively reflected on my biases and preconceptions, striving to conduct the study with impartiality and openness to diverse perspectives.

Additionally, my personal relationship with the study's participants demanded sensitivity and respect for their experiences. I navigated ethical considerations, ensuring confidentiality and consent throughout the research process.

As noted above, this study is idiographic in nature and does not seek to draw general conclusions about the young population that is engaging with Western classical music in India. The qualitative nature of this study leaves space to interrogate the place of Western classical music in India. Each of my participants' musical identities, their approach and access to music, is different and is discussed in the **Findings** chapter and discussed in the following chapter – **Emerging Ecosystem of Western Classical music in India**. The **Findings** chapter sets out the findings of the data collected through semi-structured interviews and identifies

themes in relation to the main research questions. The data is explored under emerging themes that are further discussed, dissected, and challenged in the subsequent chapter, which examines and reviews the emergent themes in the context of the research questions that drive the overall study.

1.6 Western classical music or Western Art music?

In an Indian magazine, *Serenade*, which caters to the Western classical music in the country, one of the writers describes Western classical music as –

Just one among many different traditions of classical music, so when we're discussing Western classical music, we're specifically discussing European classical music. (Palsule, 2015)

Palsule's idea and understanding of this music is predominantly European. In this study, I have, however, made a conscious choice to use the term 'Western classical music' as an umbrella term, rather than 'European classical music' or 'European art music' or any other available term, as a specific reminder that India has two longstanding classical music traditions – Karnatic and Hindustani, and that they are very different from Western classical (or 'art') music. Avis (2017) suggests that there are issues with the term 'Western' as it accentuates the 'Europeanness' of the music, a 'Europeanness' that does not seek to relate to 'East'. According to him, these issues are stronger in India given the interconnected histories of Western and Indian classical traditions and the influence that Western classical music has on the music of the Indian film industry. While discussing the music they play, the participants in this study used many related terms but, for simplicity, I have restricted myself to one term - 'Western classical musical' (WCM) to avoid becoming embroiled in and

secondary discussion about the implications, and relative merits, of the different terms available. In the interviews, however, participants used terms such as Western music, Western art music, art music and Western classical music. For the purposes of analysis, I have considered these to be interchangeable.

1.7 Thesis aims

Through this study I want to unearth the identities of the young people learning Western classical music in India. I wanted to hear their stories; understand the communities they grew up in; reveal the factors and variables of childhood and adolescence that shaped their musical narratives and lives. I was presented with an opportunity to conduct a study so I could make a thoroughly researched thesis as a case to influence policy makers and educators in the hopes of impacting the musical landscape of India. The findings, which will be discussed in later chapters, highlight the factors that influence these young people to pursue Western classical music.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to investigate the complex and interrelated dimensions of the musical, cultural, and social identities of young musicians in India actively involved in the realm of Western classical music as learners, teachers, and performers. The primary objective is to examine the evolving identities of a select cohort of young Western classical musicians, hailing from prominent urban centres in India, encompassing diverse age groups and developmental stages. These musicians will be drawn from various contextual backgrounds, providing a comprehensive understanding of their identities within the broader framework of postcolonial India. Additionally, this research endeavours to elucidate the underlying factors that influence the formation and development of their identities.

This chapter presents a critical review of the literature that contextualises the principal ideas of the research. The study of identities, both musical and cultural, is at the core of this research; consequently, this chapter has two main objectives. Firstly, to position the current study in the wider context of postcolonial India, I examine the history and current position of Western classical music education in India, together with the particular status of and issues surrounding Western classical music; then, the existing literature on musical identities is explored, with a particular focus on the issue of identity formation in children and young people, which is especially relevant to the present study, followed by an introduction to cultural and social identity. The chapter will also highlight previous research undertaken in similar settings and connect it to the current study.

2.2 Postcolonialism

In this section, I will review some of the main literature and concepts around postcolonialism that are relevant to the present study. Since there is little literature on the specific question of Western classical music in India, I begin with a broader frame of reference, with the aim of situating the present study in a wider context.

To begin with, it is important to note that postcolonialism is the political, social, cultural, and economic change brought about by the impact of colonialism. According to Young (2020), it was Edward Said's work, *Orientalism: Western representations of the Orient* (1978), that inspired writers, activists, and academics to explore how they might 'decolonise' the relationship between western and non-western people. Edward Said established an important strand of discourse around colonisation by mapping the relationship between culture and imperialism: this work, *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), has become a standard reference point for considerations of culture that intersect with imperial and colonial thinking. Works by M.K. Gandhi, Gayathri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon among others, have contributed significantly to our understanding of colonial and postcolonial attitudes. Bloechi's (2016) bibliographic reference work *Post-colonialism* is an excellent resource for understanding the theory and history of Postcolonialism, especially in relation to music. It signposts literature, cites useful postcolonial anthologies and unpacks critical concepts such as orientalism; exoticism; colonial diaspora and hybridity; decolonialism and coloniality of power; minor transnationalism, transcolonialism, and new comparativism. This bibliographic reference work also covers postcolonial music historiography; postcolonial research on music history; postcolonial music theory; and postcolonial aesthetics and ethics of music. I refer to some of the works listed in

this bibliography that directly relate to the current study in this chapter and in the following chapters.

Sharma (2012) explains that postcolonialism is the condition in which nation-states and cultures exist as they reinvent themselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and economically after being colonised. She also discusses how the postcolonial subject is often standardised as the 'disenfranchised, impoverished and marginalised' and made equal with the term 'third world' (Sharma, 2012, p.63), and problematises this reading. Smith (2021) expands on the idea of emotional reinvention after empire, suggesting that the theory of postcolonialism is concerned with decolonisation not only of the political sphere but also of the mind. William and Chrisman (2015) explained the term postcolonial as not necessarily after-colonial but relating to the process of moving-beyond it. This notion of a changing status also reflects the argument made by Sharma (2012) that globalisation, closely entwined with postcolonial theory, has led to a condition of fluidity that characterises the contemporary world. We might therefore argue that, in the Indian context, anticolonial resistance started not when India gained independence in the year 1947 but rather, emerged from the 18th century when the colonial powers began to influence the Indian land and its people and they, in turn, began to imagine a different world that might come after.

Young (2020) states that colonialism built structures of inequality based on race, and that postcolonialism defies these structures and aims that everyone should possess the same right to cultural wellbeing. According to him, postcolonialism posits that the Global South is in a state of continued subordination when compared to the Global North. He argues that postcolonialism gives rights to the global south and realises

the dynamic power of these 'subordinate' cultures, such that they are now also transforming 'Western' (or, rather, global North) society (Young, 2020, p. 6). The idea or notion that the best way of doing and understanding things is the Western way is considered a legacy of the dominance and power of the Western colonisers (see Young, 2020). Postcolonialism lends itself to shift this power, to challenge it and to transform it. Shome and Hedge believe that,

> [p]ostcolonial scholarship constitutes one of the most central critical lenses through which to name and theorize cultural conditions of contemporary society. Not just physical but all intellectual cultures. (2002, p. 253)

It is apparent that culture as a theme is woven into the fabric of postcolonialism. While the current study focuses only on the culture of Western classical music in the Indian context, it also explores other, more distinct, cultures of music, religion, and particular communities directly in relation to the participants.

Another important research that employs postcolonial theory to examine Karnatic music's intersection with Western modernity, illustrating its pivotal role in shaping modern subjectivity in postcolonial India is Amanda J. Weidman's, *Singing the classical, voicing the modern. The postcolonial politics of music in South India.* In her study, Weidman (2006) investigates the delicate balance between Karnatic music's adaptation to Western bourgeois subjectivity and its preservation of its unique Eastern identity. Her primary focus is on the voice, a critical domain for manifesting the modern Indian subject, challenging conventional assumptions, and uncovering its historical and cultural context.

Hall (1991) has mapped the shifting formations of the local and the global in connection with culture, cultural politics and shifting ethnic identities. According to him, this is a legacy of imperialism, where globally there is an increase in movement at different levels (local, global, international). Some of the effects of this increase in movement globally will be examined in this study inasmuch as we will consider the impact of this global movement on the participants of the study.

In the specific field of postcolonialism in music studies, two main strands of work have emerged. Bloechi suggests that the field of postcolonialism in music studies consists of not only the 'critique of colonialism's effect on musical life past and present', but most importantly (for the current study), it covers 'critically engaged documentation of musical life in colonial or postcolonial societies' (2016, p. 1).

2.2.1 Hybridity

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this third space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory… may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 1994, p. 38)

Homi Bhabha's contributions to postcolonial studies encompass a wide array of intriguing ideas, including hybridization, ambivalence, cultural differences, enunciation, stereotype, mimicry, and the concept of a third space. These concepts collectively position him as one of the most influential figures in contemporary postcolonial discourse. While all of his concepts are noteworthy, the focus of particular significance for the current study revolves around his concepts of hybridity, cultural difference, and the third space.

In the context of postcolonialism, hybridity serves as a crucial term attempting to address the transcultural amalgamation that arises after cultural exchanges occur. According to Bhabha (1994), culture is characterised by a dynamic essence, marked by constant change, flux, and transformation. However, the central aspect, as he emphasizes, lies in its 'mixedness' or 'interconnectedness,' which he labels as 'hybridity.' In essence, Bhabha posits that there is no such thing as a 'pure' and untouched 'Indianness' or 'Britishness' that can be accessed or examined in isolation. This notion holds paramount importance for the current study, as it seeks to understand the meaning of hybridity for Indians engaged in Western classical music. The rejection of the idea of a pristine and uncontaminated culture (Bhabha, 1994, p. 97) becomes a significant foundation in the context of this research. While the relationship between colonizer and colonized is not the primary focus, Bhabha's concepts still offer valuable insights as useful analytical tools.

However, it is crucial to note that the term 'hybridity' has faced criticism, with some arguing that it stems from assumptions of racism, as voiced by writers such as Mambrol (2016), Mohanty (1988), and Young (1995).

> [c]ritiques stress the textualist and idealist basis of such analysis and point to the fact that they neglect specific local differences. (Mambrol, 2016, para. 4)

In approaching the present study, I emphasise a focus on individual participants, aiming to do justice to their unique 'local differences.' Nevertheless, when dealing with the broader concept of Western classical music, the notion of 'hybridity' remains relevant and valuable.

> The changeability of discourses and perceptions makes it important to emphasize the fluidity of cultural production in Bhabha's third space. Even

though the notion of the third space was formulated in a colonial and post-colonial framework, it is still useful even in the complicated world of mass-produced and mass-mediated cultural forms. Taylor, T.D. (2007)

Moreover, Bhabha's ideas have been met with broader critiques. Shohat (1992) criticizes the entire notion of postcolonialism, deeming it 'politically ambivalent' due to its tendency to blur the lines between colonizers and colonized. On the contrary, Bhabha's notion of hybridity emerges when the separation between colonizer and colonized is relinquished (Guignion, 2021). Scholars like Hardt and Negri (2001) question whether hybridity truly leads to dismantling power hierarchies or if it inadvertently reinforces dominant cultural norms. They also assert that Bhabha's theories can be abstract and challenging to apply to concrete cultural contexts. However, it can be argued that Bhabha's idea of hybridity aims to disintegrate and blur the divide between various poles, such as past and future, and between the notions of home and the world. It strives to merge and blend these seemingly distinct groupings. By proposing this concept, Bhabha does not seek to ignore or invalidate the atrocities and horrors perpetrated by colonialism and imperialism. Instead, he acknowledges that in colonization, there is no clear-cut division between the two binaries—the colonizers and the colonized. The colonized may adapt certain aspects of the colonizers' culture, which can be seen as a form of resistance or even a strategy for learning. It is essential to underscore that the concept of hybridity does not serve to erase the impact of colonial atrocities. Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity challenges the view that culture is fixed and unchangeable, thus challenging the notion of superior and inferior cultures. The fluidity inherent in his concepts holds relevance and validity for the present study.

Returning to the focus of the present research, Indians engaging with Western

classical music exemplify a compelling instance of the hybridity of the colonised—a process of adapting elements from the culture of the coloniser. Additionally, Bhabha's concept of the 'third space' offers a lens through which to explore the agency within such cultural exchanges, making it highly pertinent to the study. This 'third space' creates a platform for understanding the intricacies and possibilities of cultural exchange in the context of globalisation. The researcher intends to delve further into these aspects in the forthcoming chapters of the discussion. As such, Bhabha's ideas of hybridity, cultural difference, and the third space stand as useful frameworks for analysing the complexities of postcolonial encounters and cultural interactions in the context of globalised musical expressions.

2.3 History of Western classical music in India

The current study does not intend to consider in detail the history of Western classical music in India. However, it will be useful to have a brief introduction to that history in order to set the current study in context. I focus mostly on the educational in this section.

The roots of Western classical music education in India can be traced back to the early days of colonial rule with, for example, Fr. Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552) establishing singing classes in Goan Roman Catholic churches and parish schools in the 16th century (e Sá, 1997). In Kolkata, Western classical music was patronised by the Tagore household and, in 1881, under their patronage, the Bengal Music School was established, where singing and instrumental classes were taught according to the Western notation system (Tagore, 1963). In his book *Music of the Raj: A social and Economic History of Music in the Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society*,

Woodfield (2000) explored musical life in the Anglo-Indian society in the late 18th century and examined elements of private and institutionalised music making in colonial India. Woodfield mentions that Western music making saw a significant growth in India with the arrival of the wives of the employees of the British Raj. These women would host soirées and performances which promoted music making in these communities. Woodfield gives an account of the growth of migrant musical culture among the Europeans who inhabited Calcutta in early colonial times. He assesses the musical tastes of the likes of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, who were the major Anglo-Indian figures of that period, and explores the attitudes of the British towards Indian music. He also describes how the British in Calcutta, for example, went to great lengths to recreate what can be described as 'an urban centre modelled on that of a typical provincial town in England' (Woodfield, 2000, p. 9). However, Woodfield points out that it was not only the British or the colonisers that practised Western classical music in India. There were members of the Indian royalty who trained in Western classical music, and also were patrons supporting this music. One such example would be the last ruler of Mysore, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, whose name appears alongside two other Indians listed as Vice-Presidents of Trinity College of Music, London in their 1940-41 prospectus (Trinity College of Music, 1940).

Marsden (2018) and Avis (2017) discuss how members of the Parsi, and Catholic communities dominated the Western classical music scene in India. During the British Raj, Parsis in Mumbai prospered by speaking English and interacting with the British on various transactional levels including business, education and cultural projects (Marsden, 2018). She further says that in Mumbai's Western classical music

scene today, Parsis are usually the organisers or audience members, while the musicians tend to be Catholics. She notes that although the Catholic community is associated with Western classical music, they are also engaged with other genres such as jazz, rock etc.

Avis comments that

> These communities used Western art music to express and delineate community identity, religious orientation, as a means of allying themselves with the British and other European powers, as well as a mode of socialising in India's metropolitan centres. (2017, p.36)

As noted above, apart from the political domain, British colonialism also exerted a great deal of influence on the social, cultural, and economic spheres of India, and crucially, this influence did not stop abruptly as soon as India gained independence in 1947.

The history of Western music in India is, therefore, inextricably intertwined with the nation's colonial past, and its position today cannot be understood without some reference to colonialism. In the case study *Dealing with 'Western Classical Music' in Indian Music Schools,* Clausen and Chatterjee comment that Western classical music in India today continues to survive, carrying with it souvenirs of the present and the past. Notwithstanding the complexities of the historical and current cultural position of Western classical music in India, the tradition that was established with Fr. Francis Xavier continues to the present day, though its position remains unclear.

Avis (2017) notes that using Western classical music as a form of philanthropy in postcolonial countries is problematic. He argues that it carries irrevocable associations with discourses of salvation, civilisation, modernity, missionisation,

Orientalism, and neoliberalism (see Willson 2011; 2013; Baker 2014; 2016; McGuire, 2009; Rosabal-Coto, 2015). There has been a significant amount of research undertaken on the deployment of Western classical music in postcolonial countries. The El Sistema project in Venezuela, for example, is critiqued for using Western classical music as a tool to 'civilise' the 'uneducated' masses (Baker, 2014, p. 71). Baker (2016) suggests that using a Eurocentric method of music under the dictatorship of a conductor, is highly problematic and deeply rooted in colonialism. While these studies and discourses are useful in problematising Western classical music's use in philanthropic projects, the specificity of the Indian context must be taken into account. In her study, *Western Classical Music in Mumbai: Global Music, Local Meanings*, Marsden (2018) explores the history of Western music culture and music education in the metropolitan city of Mumbai and talks about the postcolonial tensions that exist in the conflicting ideas of nationalism and globalism. The thesis will attempt to discuss and unpack some of this tension. While there is a body of literature on the issues surrounding Indian classical music education, both in India and in the West, there is a dearth of literature that explores Western classical music education in India, notwithstanding the confusion that is evident (Clausen and Chatterjee, 2012) in discourse around 'classical' music when (at least) two classical traditions exist side by side. This is also relevant to the current study, and it will be important to also delve into how colonial civilizational hierarchy influences indigenous traditions while also challenging the idea of hybridity.

Clausen and Chatterjee (2012) summarise the design and results of a competence study that accompanied a skill-enhancement project for Indian teachers of Western classical music in selected Indian cities. The participants of their study later named

this project (an initiative by the Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan of India) *Sur Sangam – Sharing Western Music*. Their paper proposes that Indians practising Western classical music choose teaching as a means of involving a greater number of people in the profession, drawing on UK-based examination systems conducted by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity College London. One of the conclusions drawn by the authors of this study was that musicians (participants of the study) in India feel that without sufficient educational or performance opportunities their development and growth as musicians will stagnate. What is striking in this finding is that Indians practising Western classical music feel an almost evangelical desire to preserve and extend the presence of Western classical music in India. It has, in short, become their own. This thesis builds on that insight, which situates the present research as postcolonial in the sense that Smith (2021) and others have understood the term.

Vishal (2015) notes that music education is not available to every child attending school in India: there is no clear expectation for music education in Indian schools and, according to Vishal, the Indian education system is not effective in providing avenues for students to choose music as viable career. The analysis of data of the Indian schools revealed that music is not available in all schools, some schools have music but only for certain classes or selected students; the curriculum is either absent or outdated; advocacy and monitoring for music education is very low; and availability of adequate musical instruments and ICT for music students need improvement. (Vishal, 2015)

Based on his research, he concludes that music in Indian schools is treated only as activity and not a subject or a discipline, worthy of study in its own right.

In the context of the present study, I do not directly tackle the limitations in music education in India; instead, I aim to offer an analysis of the experience of being a practitioner of Western classical music in India – the challenges, the structures, the forms, and the norms. I seek to understand what these limitations in music education mean in practice for those who are interested in learning this music and explore how these limitations shape their experience and determine who is able to access Western classical music.

To summarize, I would like to refer to Christensen's (2018) analysis of postcolonial theory:

> Postcolonial theory thus might offer us a surprisingly positive and productive model of cultural transferal by which ideas – including those of music theory – may be circulated globally and dynamically engaged by individuals with some degree of agency. (Christensen, 2018, p. 18)

This quote encapsulates many of the themes of the current study well. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is not my intention to imply that India 'needs' Western classical music. Rather, my claim is that, due to colonisation, it is a part of the Indian musical palate. The quote above brings out one of the positive aspects of postcolonial theory and how it has the potential to enable the transfer of cultural practices (in this case from the West) to those people seeking to engage with them. The most important thing about this transfer is the agency which is held by those engaging in it. While it is clear that there are Indians who engage with Western classical music, I will seek to explore whether the participants in this study reflect Christensen's notion of postcolonial agency while engaging with Western classical music.

2.4 Identities

Said (1994) says: 'The construction of identity […] involves the construction of opposites and 'other' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of their differences from us'. Here, I discuss some of the key themes of identity, at the individual, social and cultural levels, in relation to music. Social identity theory can be used to further the understanding of music that is embraced by groups on a cultural level, for example through identifying defined distinctions in the music preferences of groups (minority and majority) in multicultural societies (Gregory, 1997; Russell, 1997); in my study, however, it is the individual sense of identity that has prime place in the discussion.

2.4.1 Musical identities

A range of literature elucidates ideas of musical identity and the key concepts around children and young people's musical identity development that are central to this study. Musical identity is a well-established concept, deeply rooted in the fields of cognitive and social psychology and well represented in psychological and music educational research literature. In the broadest of terms, it can be defined either as a concept that enables us to look at the widespread and varied interactions between music and the individual (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2002), or as an individual's perception of musical self (Talbot, 2013). While identity formation could be argued to lie in the field of psychology, it can also be used in sociology to unpack how stories and narratives – in this case the stories and experiences of my participants – might relate to one another, within wider society.

A substantial body of research has been undertaken in this area by researchers in a number of related fields. Among these, the most prominent are Hargreaves, Miell

and Macdonald who are editors of *Musical Identities* and *Handbook of Musical Identities*. In their book *Musical Identities*, structured around the different relationships between identity and music, authors from a range of related disciplines explore notions of musical identity in detail, studying a wide range of roles and identities formed through music, including musical social awareness in infancy and childhood; self-identity of young musicians; gender identity; cultural identity; national identity; disability and musical identity (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell, 2002). A number of contributions to this book highlight the various processes involved in becoming a musician and how this impacts the individual's identity. I draw certain concepts from 'The changing identity of musical identities' (MacDonald, Hargreaves and Miell); 'Young people's musical lives: learning ecologies, identities, and connectedness'(O'Neill); 'Musical identity, interest, and involvement' (Lamont) among others. For the purpose of this study, certain themes around musical identity from these chapters are explored in detail. I begin with the development of identity within childhood.

Development within childhood

Musical identity and musical social awareness is evident from infancy (Trevarthen, 1999). Blacking (1979) proposes a theory of music as a natural ability that is a cultural achievement of human society in its widest sense with strong roots in human nature. Every human being has a biological and social certainty of musicality. This conclusion of Blacking has been supported by a wide range of work from researchers interested in developing our knowledge of the psychological foundations of music listening and performance (e.g., Hodges, 1996; Macdonald and Miell, 2000).

As Said noted, the experience of 'self' is not possible without the experience of 'others', thus creating the experience of 'difference' (Clarke, 2008). Clarke argues that this is the basis of the related notion of 'us' and 'them', leading to the possibility of relationships that delineate the personal and social aspects of identity. Research has shown that family members' beliefs influence the behaviour and attitudes of others, so much so that the interactions between them form the identities of both the children and the parents (Radford, 1990). However, only relatively recently has research in music psychology acknowledged that family members and family interactions are key in shaping a child's musical development (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002). According to 'script theory' (Byng-Hall, 1995, 1998), the patterns of functioning within a family are drawn from those that have already been founded and passed down the generations (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002). The framework in which the child is brought up also includes the pre-existing family attitudes, expectations, taboos etc. This is an important part of a child's upbringing and, among other things, the childhood of the parents' themselves also influences this framework (Carter and McGoldrick, 1989). Script theory also acknowledges other influencing factors such as peers and teachers, and, within the family, the age and ordinal position of the siblings (Sulloway, 1996). To understand and answer one of the research questions of this study – key factors and influences that enable the participants to pursue music – I will investigate to see if the family script theory is applicable to the participants.

Borthwick and Davidson (2002) undertook an investigation with 12 families in which one of the children (in each family) engaged in a musical interest and was labelled as the 'musician' in the family. Through semi-structured interviews, parents and children in each family gave an account of their individual musical development and

tastes. The data was analysed through IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) and the interpretations (structured key themes) authenticated through an external review. The results indicated that the families that choose music as a core value allow music to direct and shape their daily routine. They also indicated that family interactions have a major impact on the child's development of his or her musical identity. Although Avis (2017) did interview a number of parents as part of his study, more detailed research in this particular area has not been undertaken in India, and certainly not in specific relation to Western classical music. I will therefore use this study to explore in detail the family interactions of my participants and discuss the role of families in the musical narratives of my participants.

Borthwick and Davidson's work brings other interesting aspects of musical identity to light: some parents projected their own musical identity on a child that was learning a similar musical instrument to them, expecting them to achieve higher musical success. A strong sense of shared identity was constructed. (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002) but, as a result of this, the other members of the family felt excluded from this musical equation. Some of the parents who participated in this study also taught their children and knew the risk it entailed (balancing the parent-teacher role). Parents showed a willingness to familiarise themselves with musical genres that were different from their own but preferred by their children. A couple of parents, inspired by their children, took up playing an instrument, but there were also cases where the parents gave mixed messages to their children when it came to the expectation of commitment. The study also showed flexibility of musical identity in terms of the family scripts changing in order to adapt to the family's circumstances. As this is one of the influencing factors for musical identities, the current study will explore the role of family script in an Indian context as noted above. According to

Susan Hallam (1998), musical identities are not static and keep evolving throughout the life span responding to one's changing circumstances. While the previous study strongly suggests that family expectations (including trans-generational influences) are powerful factors, there are elements that show that certain external factors also have the power to change family scripts. The agency and the role of the family is crucial to this study. I will aim to discuss this and unpack what the role played by the family in influencing the participants choose or pursue Western classical music.

Development within education

According to Alexandra Lamont (2002), two important topics need to be considered when talking about musical identity among children: self-understanding (how one understands oneself) and self-other understanding (how one understands others). Both self-understanding and self-other understanding develop simultaneously in children as they grow. This could be further discussed by categorising into personal and social identity (Lamont, 2002). Other research evidence and highlights the function of music listening in developing a personal and social identity (Crozier, 1997; Hargreaves and North, 1999; Larson, 1995).

Festinger (1954) believes that children begin to engage in the process of group comparison during middle childhood (ages 6-12) and that this process influences the way children perceive themselves and others. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model is a useful way of understanding the different contextual influences that have an impact on children.
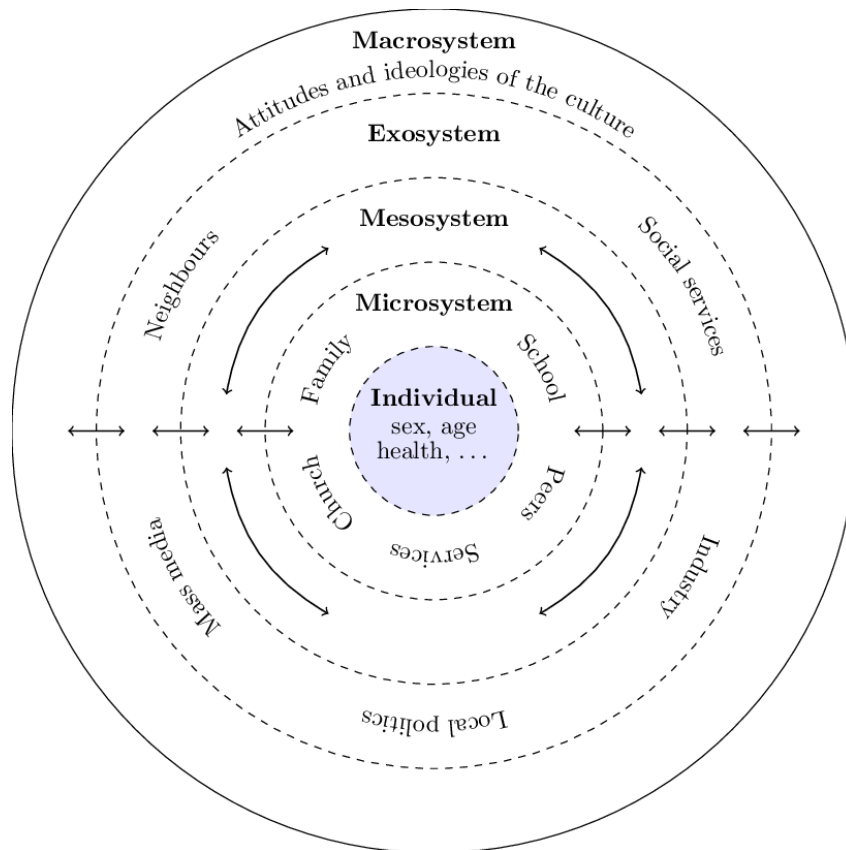
Fig 1. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Rousseaux, 2018)

The microsystem consists of family, friends, school, and close peers. The relationships shared in the microsystems are called the mesosystems. There are also differences between the family experience and the school experience. The other outer layer (exosystem) is made up of other external factors that do not directly affect the child's identity but may act through the shared relationships of the mesosystem. Until children experience larger social settings such as the nursery school and school, they are only within the microsystem of their families and close relatives, which is a limited group. Once the children are exposed to a bigger group of peers that are of a comparative age and skills, social comparisons become evident within the microsystem of nursery school or school thus giving them a slightly greater awareness of self-understanding and self-other understanding (Higgins and Parsons,

1983). Lamont (2002) argues that a child will usually develop a musical identity around the age of seven years, when s/he is able to understand the concept of differentiated identity and when her/his musical identities can be based on external activities and experiences. Lamont's study around this aspect of musical identity development, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model can be applied to the present research to help unearth the narratives and experiences of the participants.

Young people

In the preceding section, we have primarily considered children's musical lives and identities; from this we now move to Susan O'Neill's (2015) research in a similar area, on older young people. Her study titled Mapping the musical learning ecologies, involved 93 young people aged between 11-18. The study seeks to understand how particular kinds of music learners have been 'assembled,' 'made plausible,' and 'intelligible' through music learning ecologies that highlight the diverse characteristics of being a young musician (O'Neill, 2015, p.22). Results of this study demonstrated a common pattern of musical learning ecologies that may overlap. Each of these ecologies creates new unique forms of identities (O'Neill, 2015).

O'Neill builds on work by a number of other scholars: Urrieta (2007) suggests that individuals encounter figured worlds on a daily basis through social activities, practices and lived through activities. Through their interactions with other people and social groups over time, young people develop shared understandings, common sense beliefs, and values, which can be conceptualised as 'life worlds' (Habermas, 1987). Situated within a related field, Larson argues that the world is made of dissolving boundaries and rapid change (Barnett, 2012). The idea of a 'liquid world'

by Bauman (2000) is described as a fluid modernity that requires old concepts that constrict views to be renewed or revised to open up new possibilities; this includes the creation of new 'musical selves' (O'Neill, 2015). Drawing this work together, O'Neill proposes that young people's musical selves are laced into their experiential worlds and their personal ambitions as they go about 'making up' their musical selves within the context of the music learning ecologies they inhabit. When young musicians reflect on their values and consciously make an effort to plan and devise action that mediates new ways of seeing themselves, others and the wider society in relation to their musical tastes and activities, they are creating or reshaping their musical selves (O'Neill, 2012). In response to this idea, the present research will explore the participants' positions in their respective ecologies – how their own individual context, including the sorts of support and experience they have within their families, at school and in the community, helps to shape their identities. The learning ecologies of the participants, both formal and informal, will be investigated. I will also seek to draw comparisons between the current study and Young's (2020) idea about the different kinds of education – experiential and institutional. O'Neill (2012) also proposes the sense of connectedness which may help young people navigate their musical worlds, develop, and build connections within groups or in spaces. This notion has been further extended to include the sense of relationality when young people interact with 'non-human, multimodal, and technological objects' (O'Neill, 2012, p.86).

Mans (2009) suggests that many young people who are being raised in cities experience a struggle due to the tensions between their different identities, and this makes them uncertain about where they truly belong. It is not a great leap to imagine that young people learning music in in India, in a range of different contexts, donning

different roles (teacher, student, performer), working in a genre that is associated with colonialism but being exposed to other musical cultures such as Indian classical music, jazz and rock, might also potentially feel these tensions in terms of musical identities. I will seek to be alert to these potential tensions in this study.

Other concepts that I will consider in this study are self-concept and self-agency. Self-concept can be understood as the ways in which the individual can answer the question 'who am I?' (Spychiger, 2017, p. 268). Spychiger's definition of self-concepts, in her essay 'Musical self-concept as a mediating psychological structure' (2017), is that they are –

> [a]gents of consciousness, and powerful predictors of what people feel confident to do, and what they think about themselves. (Spychiger, 2017, p. 267)

Harter's (2003) definition of self-concept is slightly simpler – how one describes oneself. While exploring identities, it is important for the individual to reflect on what they think about themselves and how that differentiates them or makes them like others; the notion of self-concept is, therefore, a useful one in the context of this study.

Self-agency can be described as –

> [t]he capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own decisions based on an awareness of their situation and the range of responses open to them. (Hammond and Wellington, 2013, p.8).

I perceive a link back to O'Neill's ideas around the 'making up' of a musical identity, meaning that self-agency also seems an important concept in the process of

mapping musical identities. I will consider are these two concepts, self-concept and self-agency, in my analysis and discussion of participants' musical identities.

2.4.2 Social Identities

Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their membership of groups that are meaningful to them (Tajfel and Turner, 1979, p.34). When talking about social identity, it is important to understand that group membership is not externally attached to the person but is a real and important part of how that individual understands themselves. It is, therefore, an aspect of 'self-concept', discussed above. Individuals are thought to have an inbuilt tendency to put themselves into one or more in-groups, building their identity on the basis of their membership with a that group and imposing boundaries with other groups.

Social identity is linked to our roles in life such as teacher, student, sibling; to our physical features such as ethnicity, gender, age; and, to other formal or informal memberships we hold – to organisations, clubs, political parties etc. Understanding social roles is important in this context, whether they are roles that are given to us through our age, social status, gender, or those that derive from other experiences, such as education etc.

Like individual identities, social identities are dynamic – participants are born into an identity, or they can choose one; they can be visible or invisible in that identity; they can shift social identity or take on multiple identities. Social identities and combinations of these make an impact on their experiences and narratives; society shapes and regulates which of these multiple identities are flagged and what differences matter and in certain situations and positions certain social identities can

feel more prominent that others.

2.4.3 Cultural Identities

Culture often seems to connote a 'looking back' on habits, customs, and norms of collective visions (Sharma, 2012); there is a sense of 'rear view mirror' in the concept. It is the process of 'becoming' that is in some ways central in the present study, which is principally concerned with individual identity. Nonetheless, the participants in this research are themselves members of a distinctive community of 'Western classical musicians in India', which may have its own particular cultural identity, expressed through perhaps unwritten traditions, ways of being, and shared assumptions.

Social identity theory can be used to further the understanding of music that is embraced by groups on a cultural level, for example through identifying defined distinctions in the music preferences of groups (minority and majority) in multicultural societies (Gregory, 1997; Russell, 1997) such as India. To a certain extent, such behaviour mimics the process identified by Said in the quotation I placed at the head of this section. In the present study, these key themes can be used to understand the social identity of the participants as it is expressed in their musical tastes. In this sense, young musicians in India playing Western classical music are no different from participants in previous studies that have explored how such preferences bring about social identity and help individuals in the group to differentiate themselves from the other groups (Deyhle, 1998; Peterson and DiMaggio, 1975; Russell 1997).

Folkestad (2000) takes a very similar view, believing that music plays an important role in forming the identities of individuals and groups of people. Not only is music a

way of defining oneself as an individual belonging to a certain group, but it can also assist in defining those in other groups that are different to one's own group. These groups based on culture, ethnicity, religions, and nationalities also influence the formation of an individual's identity. Hebert and Campbell's work in this area also proposes that among all human activities related to a sense of identity and community, music is the most personal, relatable, and meaningful activity (2000). In India, these communities could be founded on religion, class, or caste.

In his book, *Music and the identity*, Ruud (1997) talks about the connection between the global and the local, and how the discussion on global and local affects the presentation of music and identity. Lundberg, Malm and Ronström, in their book, *Music, Media, Multiculture* (2003), agree that due to the growth and development of tourism, migration and technology, never before has it been so easy to access so many musical styles, genres and forms of expression. This diverse multiculture is grounded on cultural identities. According to Lundberg et al. (2003), in today's world, culture and identity are, both together and separately, the most significant concepts underpinning our understanding of society.

To summarise this section and to draw a connection with postcolonialism, I would like highlight Bhabha's reflection on culture. He believes that culture can be seen as something that cannot be fixed in time or in space. He further says that like identity, culture is fluid, and it does not stop changing or moving. He uses the analogy of adding various elements to a simmering pot. These melting and fusing elements in this pot constantly transform our cultural identities.

2.5 Postlude: Music for a Postcolonial Child

So far, I have considered literature whose themes and insights speak to the general

questions of postcolonialism and identity in music. One further study I would like to

highlight before concluding this chapter is, *Music for a postcolonial child,* a chapter

written by written by Roe-Min Kok (2011). While I have been unable to identify any

research on the UK based board examinations (such as ABRSM, Trinity College

Music) in an Indian context, and the implications they have for the music education

experience of the Indians, Kok's paper considers this question in the context of

Malaysia. Kok unpacks some of the problematic practices of Western classical music

in Malaysia, reflecting on the intertwining ethnicities, colonial heritage, and local

history of Malaysia. She sets out her view of Western classical music education, and

what this means in contemporary Malaysia.

> The ABRSM could hardly have chosen more fertile ground for its activities
> than Malaysia, where it arrived in 1948 amid the nation's negotiations for
> independence, eventually achieved in 1957. Respect for British systems of
> education remained deeply ingrained among those in my parents'
> generation—privileged and brilliant Malaysians… (Kok, 2011, p. 79)

She raises a range of interesting points and challenges the practices of the UK

based Associated Board, accusing them of not caring enough about those who will

be sitting those exams.

> Although the ABRSM marketed itself as a prestige-laden private educational
> enterprise had the Board researched Malaysians' attitudes and needs with
> regard to Western classical music? Did the Board know about the lack of
> resources Malaysians faced? Was the Board concerned that the ears and
> brains of those who processed the music it prescribed had otherwise had little
> exposure to and experience with the cultures of which the music was
> inextricably part? The ABRSM directors seem to have been contented to
> transfer its methods, created and practiced [sic] in culturally, politically, and
> economically different Britain, directly into a postcolonial setting, instead of
> adapting the methods in ways that would have shown sensitivity to the
> Malaysian context. (Kok, 2011, p. 82)

There are potentially many points of contact between Kok's work and the present study, albeit this study is more broadly-based. India and Malaysia have distinct musical landscapes, but they share a common thread as Asian countries engaging with Western classical music against a postcolonial backdrop. Kok's research has made me more attentive to the diverse tensions she discusses in her paper, particularly regarding music examinations and their impact on participants' music education. Additionally, it helps unpack further significant concerns about the examination boards and their business models, which may not be inherently geared towards supporting the development and self-sustainability of the Indian Western Classical Music (WCM) community but could instead perpetuate colonial models. I delve deeper into these topics in the subsequent chapters.

In summarising this literature review, a few conclusions can be drawn that perhaps provide 'draft answers' to the research questions of the current study, based solely on the literature, ahead of the data which will be explored in further chapters:
The existing literature has little to say on the key factors and enablers that influence the young people in India to pursue Western classical music. We might, however, expect the nature and narratives of musical, cultural, and social identities of young Indian people engaging in Western classical music to be fluid, and related closely to the particular circumstances (the 'microsystem' in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model) of each individual and the history of Western classical music in Indian. 'Engaging with Western classical music' in a Postcolonial India brings with it a complex negotiation of a number of tensions, and engagement with structures (such as the ABRSM) whose activities and approach might be tinged with a colonial mindset. On the question of synergies between individual identities and institutional and societal structures, the existing literature has nothing to say on the specific

Indian context, but the wide range of work on musical identities offers some tools for thinking that might open up insights in this area.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the relevant literature in postcolonialism; musical, cultural, and social identities; with the hope of synthesising them to provide a preliminary response to the research questions of the current study. In an attempt to decolonise academia in a small way, I made an active choice to find and reference as much of the work and concepts of south Asian scholars whose work is relevant to mine, along with other scholars can support and help situate my research. But before I proceed to analyse the data to discuss and answer the research questions, I will first examine the methodology of the study.

3. Methodology

> We are more often 'the studied'; those unnamed barely visible participants who appear fleetingly in research papers rather than the principal investigators… Perspectives from the global south are often fairly silent in these publications and indigenous voices or Pacific voices are rarely heard. (Kidman, 2018, p.2)

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the methodology and design of this study, which as I have already noted is qualitative in nature. I aim to answer the key questions for a qualitative methodology chapter (Murcott 1997), which include the overall strategy adopted and the method of research. I undertook a small-scale pilot study with twelve participants from two Indian music schools to test the methods of data collection; here, I also reflect on that experience. Subsequently, the main study involved interviews with a larger number of participants across four cities in India. Apart from critically examining the data collection and methods, I also reflect on my positionality in this research, building on the comments I included in the introduction. This qualitative study centres on three core research questions that guided the whole project and shaped the method. These research questions explore the following aspects of young people in India engaging with Western classical music:

- What are the key factors and enablers that influence the young people in India to pursue Western classical music?
- What are the nature and narratives of musical, cultural, and social identities of Indian young people engaging in Western classical music?
- What does 'engaging with Western classical music' in a Postcolonial India imply?

3.2 Social Constructivism

The qualitative approach of this study is evident in the research questions that contain key terms such as 'influence,' 'nature,' and 'narrative.' Merriam (1988) and Creswell (1994) highlight that qualitative research primarily focuses on processes rather than end results. Its essence lies in comprehending how individuals perceive their lived experiences and the structures shaping their world. Merriam (1988) further emphasises that qualitative researchers themselves often act as the primary data collection and analysis tool, making the process more human-centric rather than relying on machines or questionnaires. This humanized approach enhances the transfer of data.

There are, naturally, challenges and restrictions in qualitative research. Hathaway (1995) notes that the choice of methods for institutional researchers is critical. Although qualitative researchers often make this decision with ease, choosing methods that will provide them the information they seek, Hathaway says that these decisions are sometimes made without giving sufficient thought to the research methods and their underlying assumptions. Hathaway is critical of doctoral dissertations that misuse the methodology chapter as a place to merely describe how the data were generated. Partly in response to Hathaway's criticism, this chapter is very reflective and throughout the chapter, I often circle back to my subjectivity as a researcher.

Another challenge with qualitative research is the potential lack of transparency both in relation to defining what the researcher did, and also how they arrived at their conclusions. There is sometimes a lack in clarity on how the participants were

recruited when compared to the easily reported procedures followed in quantitative research. The pilot study assisted me in refining my approach in this regard. As I will note (under 'Ethical considerations', below), there was a slight concern that a number of the participants were known to me personally on account of the small size of the study population, and that this might affect the data. It is important for me as a researcher to explain with clarity the choices made when describing the research processes and methods used.

The pilot study, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter, established that a qualitative and social constructivist approach would be an effective basis for the main study. Constructivism is a dynamic approach to understanding oneself, daily experiences, and society, involving reflection and meaning creation (Shor 1992). It challenges the notion that knowledge and reality are fixed entities to be discovered, proposing instead that they are constructed through active interpretation. This perspective promotes engagement over passive absorption, urging individuals to question established knowledge and embrace inquiry. By fostering critical thinking and exploring diverse viewpoints, constructivism enriches comprehension and empowers individuals to actively shape their own understanding of the complex world around them, contributing to a more adaptive intellectual landscape. Dilthey (1833 – 1911) believed that humans should be studied within the context of their social and cultural lives and that an underlying order exists which is created through humans reacting to and interacting in their physical and social environments. According to the philosopher, the aim of the human sciences is to comprehend how humans give meaning to their narratives. In the present day, a constructivist approach takes up Dilthey's ideas and the key concept of musical identities is, itself,

rooted in a constructivist worldview.

Bryman (2012) suggests that,

> Constructionism is an ontological position (often also referred to as constructivism) which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision. (2012, p. 33)

He implies that these phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision and change. It is important, therefore, for me as the researcher to state that the insights my work can generate will be specific, contingent, and provisional, and certainly not definitive. Bryman also considers epistemology and how it is concerned with the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. My epistemological stance in this study is interpretivist, and when discussing the interpretivist approach, Wright (1971) notes the clash between positivism (application of natural science methods to study social reality) and hermeneutics (a theological term that when used in a social science context is concerned with the method and the theory of human action and its interpretation). The contrast can be described as reflecting the difference between the explaining of human behaviour and the understanding of human behaviour. However, Weber's (1947) definition of *Verstehen (empathic understanding of human behaviour)* successfully marries both explanation and understanding, through his premise that sociology is a 'science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects'. (Weber, 1947, p. 88)

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), reality is relative, socially constructed, plural, and not governed by natural laws. Guba and Lincoln also claim that new knowledge

is created in the interaction between the researcher and the participant during the interview and inquiry process. This is a meeting of two perspectives – the perspective of the insider, and the perspective of the observer. As the researcher in the current study, I am able to give an insider's perspective which comes from the culture in which I, the researcher reside, as well as the observer's perspective that comes from the formalising of my investigation as an enquiry; I can therefore shift perspectives. According to Fetterman (1998), an emic perspective is key to understanding how humans observe the world around them. In practical terms, Fetterman also states that qualitative researchers usually begin the interviews with open ended questions in order to know more about how things work from the participants' perspective. This method helps the individual participant to frame a particular concept, idea or situation and then expand on it. Thus, the participant's 'mental map' or cultural understanding is more easily accessed. In order to delve deeper, the researcher asks more focussed questions. As a researcher who shares similarities with the participants' narratives, maintaining an outsider's view and stepping back from the data was vital and necessary.

In this study, my ontological stance is that my participants give relevant data when they talk about their experiences and views on their experiences. Their expression of their experiences and views are the objects that I will interpret in my research. As noted above, my epistemological stance is that I am able to construct knowledge by interpreting the qualitative data provided by the participants of my study. Therefore, the ontological and epistemological approaches provide the foundation for structuring and designing the data collection (interview questions) for this study. These foundations shape the methodology of this study as a whole. By using constructivism, I acknowledge that my participants bring different nuanced

perspectives to help deepen our understanding of the world.

Before I begin to examine the processes involved in the pilot study in detail, I will firstly discuss the relevant ethical considerations.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

In qualitative studies, researchers examine a real-life context, hence all such research will have ethical implications that must be carefully considered (Janeswick, 1998). For the purpose of the pilot study and the main study, ethical approval was sought from the Royal Conservatoire's Ethics Committee through submission of an application with relevant documents (please see Appendices 2-5). As an ethical researcher, it was important for me to respect the rights of my participants by ensuring that they were properly informed of the nature and purposes of the research, and any implications for them. As Participant Information Sheet summarised all the necessary information for the participant to read before the interview along with my contact details and those of my supervisor. The consent form gave the participant the option of withdrawing from the study at any time, should they choose to. To assure them that their rights will be protected, they were guaranteed anonymity. No persons deemed 'vulnerable' (people under 18 or adults with a disability) were involved in this study, minimising the ethical implications by ensuring, so far as possible, that all participants were able to grant their fully informed consent. All the transcripts from the interview and notes were securely stored in a password- protected account and were accessible only to me.

Although these were the requirements of the formal ethical approval required for me

to undertake the study, I was also acutely aware of a wider ethical concern: that of

representing the experiences, perspectives, and understandings of participants in

the research with integrity and authenticity. Although this is a concern that should

always be at the forefront of any qualitative researcher's mind, it was especially

important to me because the work was intended to reflect the lived experiences of

people whose voices have not often been heard in formal 'academic' research.

3.4 Reflexive Researcher

Some of the participants were known to me and I was aware that this could

potentially affect the authenticity of the interview data. However, this was difficult to

avoid as the population size for this particular study was relatively small and most

people who engage with Western classical music in India are known to each other.

This will be further unpacked in the discussion chapter. Dodgson states that –

> If a researcher clearly describes the contextual intersecting relationships (e.g., race, socio-economic status, age, cultural background) between the participants and themselves, it not only increases the creditability of the findings (Berger, 2015) but also deepens our understanding of the work. (2019, p. 220)

My shared experiences with the study's participants support me to be a reflexive

researcher. Berger (2015) states that reflexivity occurs when the researcher

recognises and *takes responsibility* for their position within the research. I, as the

researcher of this study, acknowledge and have tried to understand the implications

of this on the participants, the interview questions, the data gathered and the

interpretation. The pilot study was important in this regard, as it offered me the

opportunity to consider these implications and experience first-hand my positionality

in the research.

3.5 Pilot Study (at Global Music Institute and Mehli Mehta Music Foundation)

3.5.1 Background

In April 2017, I carried out a pilot study to trial the research methods of interviewing and my processes of coding and analysis. It also acted as a case study involving the two quite different institutions, explore the efficacy of their particular approaches. I conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants (two students, two staff and two management members) at two Western music schools in India: the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation, Mumbai, and the Global Music Institute, Delhi. Apart from testing the research methods, the aim of the pilot study was to unearth themes that help understand the individual and institutional identities in relation to music, culture, and society, and to discuss these themes.

3.5.2 Schools

Mehli Mehta Music Foundation (MMMF) was established in 1995 to promote Western classical music in Mumbai. The school is a non-profit organisation that occupies two apartments in Mumbai where the institution provides lessons in strings, piano, choir, theory and ensemble playing to around 640 students between the ages of three and fifteen. The Foundation was set up to honour Mehli Mehta, who was a pioneer of Western classical music in India, the founder of the Bombay String Quartet and the Bombay Symphony Orchestra, and father of the renowned conductor, Zubin Mehta.

The Global Music Institute (GMI) was launched in 2011, with a mission to establish a distinctive and modern approach to music education in India. The institute has part-

time and full-time programmes that allow students the flexibility to take different courses, including a combination of music theory, ear training, ensemble (band), individual lessons and music seminars. The ages of students are usually between 18 and the early to mid-twenties. GMI is the only official provider of the Berklee College of Music curriculum in India and provides artist and professional diplomas.

3.5.3 Data collection

For the pilot study, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve participants from the two institutions. Each institution provided two members from the management team, teaching staff, and student body. These face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The data gathered through these interviews helped shape the final research questions and methods for the main study, as well as framing and contextualising it. The interview process in the pilot study provided valuable insights into the method's potential and refined my project ambitions. It also improved my skills in preparing open-ended questions, maintaining focus, and being aware of my biases. The participants' anonymity was ensured, although the institutions' names were disclosed.

3.5.4 Analysis

These themes were drawn from recurrent phrases and words using the thematic coding method, a combination of thematic analysis and grounded theory. At this stage of my research journey, I was still grappling with navigating through the research methods and depended heavily on my supervisors for guidance. However, it is important to acknowledge the learning I gained from carrying out this pilot study.

This pilot study was, in effect, a small-scale application of the main study. For this study, I did not develop a formal methodology, but the choices of data collection and analysis were still rigorous. The pilot was effective in shaping the main study and the direction it should take, ensuring the feasibility of the main study and also helping in very practical ways, such as by identifying participants for the main study. Most significantly, the pilot study helped me better understand my reflexive researcher position. The pilot study interviews are not formally included in the final study but are referred to for context.

3.6 Main Study Data Collection

After the pilot study, I travelled back to India between 2018 – 2019 to gather data for the main study. As in the pilot study, the main data collection method for was semi-structured interviews.

3.6.1 Participants

India is a culturally diverse country – an amalgamation of various cultural identities. This study, set in India, aims to reflect some of this diversity. I selected the participants based on their location; cultural and social backgrounds; musical roles such as teacher, performer, student; age and gender. The decision to interview within the age range of 17-32 was a choice I made to reflect the focus of the study on unearthing the identities of young Indians learning Western classical music. Also, as a reflexive researcher with shared lived insights, I felt it was important to work with participants in the age group closest to mine. The participants hailed from Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata with one interviewee from Ahmedabad. Before beginning my PhD, and during the pilot study, I had the

advantage of having travelled to these cities and had established contact with some of those who engage with Western classical music. As an Indian who learned Western classical music in India, and with the limited number of institutions and opportunities for others to engage in the same, it was not difficult to identify people who might volunteer as participants for this study.

Recruitment to the study was achieved through snowball sampling, through engaging with my personal contacts and social networks. In order to capture authentic responses, participants' trust was gained by guaranteeing anonymity and providing them with consent forms and participant information sheets – though doubtless my own position also helped reassure participants that their contributions would be treated appropriately. Indeed, during the interview, my shared experiences with the participants were also discussed, where this would engender fruitful discussion. As noted earlier in the chapter, the participants were informed that the study was voluntary and that they were free to decline or withdraw from the study at any given point without the need to offer an explanation. They were also informed that if any names were referenced in the interviews or quotes used in the study; pseudonyms would be given, or the quotes would not be used. As mentioned under the ethical considerations, the necessary ethical requirements were met through a robust method where permission was sought from the RCS Ethics Committee. The main study included a total of 26 interviews.

The table 3.1 at the end of this section, indicates general information about the participants including city, gender, role, and religion participants are identified here by the pseudonym adopted for the study. As noted above, I sought to achieve a

balance between gender, age, and religion.

The six participants (within the 26 interviewees) who are highlighted in yellow in the table below (table 3.1), are either currently studying abroad or have had access to HE music education abroad including US, UK, and Germany. The inclusion of these participants enabled me to compare, explore and investigate contrasting experiences with those of other interviewees: apart from the use of language, and understanding of this style of music (Western classical), the participants have had access to education abroad, with all the cultural and social experiences that that might entail. The diverse range of participants' backgrounds and locations reflect the multifaceted nature of the participants and this study and enable an understanding of their diverse and multifold identities.

3.6.2 Location

Western classical music in India is more prominent in the urban, rather than the rural, parts of India. After initial mapping exercise of identifying Western (including Jazz and pop) music schools across the country, I decided to choose the following metropolitan cities - Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad. I limited the choice to these cities for purely practical reasons. Interviewing participants from different cities offered another opportunity for comparing and contrasting data and results. All cities (except one) are capital cities of their respective states – thus giving a certain breadth and parity to the participant pool. Cities like Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad etc. are also home to thriving film industries (Bollywood, Tollywood, Kollywood) in India which offers access to music generally in terms of performance, jobs, and other opportunities. These cities are

geographically and culturally diverse with distinctive histories, and all share a rapidly

expanding economy and a growing middle-class population (see Avis, 2017). In his

research, Avis (2017) found that individuals who engage with Western classical

music in these cities share many commonalities with each other, more than others

from the surrounding village or rural areas. He suggests that this is also to do with

the material wealth, and I will discuss the access, class issues and privilege of the

participants from these cities.

NO.	Name	City	Role	Instrument	Religion
1	AH	Hyderabad	Teacher/Performer	Voice / Piano	Christian
2	RH	Hyderabad	Teacher/Performer	Violin	Hindu
3	NH	Hyderabad	Teacher	Voice / Piano	Hindu
4	CH	Hyderabad	Teacher	Piano	Hindu
5	JH	Hyderabad	Teacher/Student	Voice / Piano	Christian
6	SH	Hyderabad	Performer/Teacher	Voice	Hindu upbringing
7	SC	Chennai	Performer/Teacher	Voice	Hindu
8	DC	Chennai	Performer/Student	Voice	Hindu
9	BC	Chennai	Performer/Student	Cello	Hindu
10	SPC	Chennai	Teacher/Performer	Piano	Hindu
11	EC	Chennai	Performer/Student	Violin	Christian
12	AC	Chennai	Performer/Student	Double Bass	Unknown
13	JC	Chennai	Performer/Teacher	Voice	Christian
14	HC	Chennai	Performer	Piano	Hindu
15	TB	Bangalore	Performer/Student	Voice	Unknown
16	BB	Bangalore	Performer/Student	Voice / Piano	Hindu
17	JB	Bangalore	Performer/Student	Viola	Christian
18	IB	Bangalore	Performer/Student	Voice	Unknown
19	RB	Bangalore	Student	Piano	Hindu
20	AB	Bangalore	Performer/Teacher	Organ / Voice	Christian
21	VM	Mumbai	Teacher/Performer	Voice / Conductor	Christian
22	FM	Mumbai	Performer/Student	Voice	Parsi
23	SM	Mumbai	Performer/Teacher	Woodwind/Strings	Christian

24	MM	Mumbai	Teacher/Performer	Piano	Hindu
25	AM	Mumbai	Performer/Student/Teacher	Violin	Hindu
26	AG	Ahmedabad	Performer/Teacher	Guitar	Hindu

Table 3.1

(Highlighted participants have studied Western classical music in the UK, USA, and Europe)

3.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

As discussed above, the use of interviews as a tool has been successful in the social sciences due to the focus on the individual's lived experiences. It would not have been possible to capture the data with comparable integrity with surveys and questionnaire, as the personal interaction would be missing, but the opinions, experiences and stories of individuals are effectively captured by interviews.

All interviews were audio recorded and varied in length from 30 to 45 minutes. Wisker (2001) states that researchers can obtain both the detailed information that they set out to collect, and also some interesting context and/or other information when they use interviews as a tool to gather data; I certainly found this to be the case. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to gather the data without pigeon-holing the participants' perceptions and answers and as noted by Bernard (1988), I had the freedom to pursue any new leads, should they appear during the interviews. I had prepared a list of open-ended questions (interview schedule) to help with the discussion and guide the interviews. The interview schedule also helped maintain the consistency in data collection and helped me to make comparisons between the

different interviewees; it was not handed out to the participants. The interviews were recorded on my phone and then transferred on a file on my laptop which was password protected (after the transfer, these recordings were deleted from the phone). Recording helped me focus on the conversation and the interview, limiting the chances of making errors if I were only taking notes which would distract me from the main purpose of the research and these interviews. It was also advantageous to listen to them repeatedly while transcribing.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that data collection and analysis are interrelated processes. They point out that in order to maintain consistency in data collection, the researcher must pay attention to all indications in every observation which include those carried from previous analysis and ones that emerge in the current situation. This was one of the ways in which the pilot study assisted me.

3.7 Analysis

> [...] qualitative researchers need to be storytellers. That, rather than any disdain for number crunching, ought to be one of their distinguishing attributes. To be able to tell (which, in academia, essentially means to be able to write) a story well is crucial to the enterprise. (Wolcott, 1994, p.17)

In the process of this study, I actively engaged in the collection, transcription, and subsequent analysis of the data, effectively integrating three distinct processes as outlined by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. The chosen approach, that of thematic analysis, emerges as particularly well-suited to the qualitative essence of our research. This method enables us to delve into the intricacies of the data while embracing the inherent variability of qualitative research. It encourages us to remain open to emergent patterns and themes, facilitating a deeper exploration of the

subject matter and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the qualitative aspects under investigation.

3.7.1 Grounded theory

Babchuk (1997) defines grounded theory as a qualitative method that derives its name from the method of generating theory that is 'grounded' in the collected data. Instead of using an existing theory, grounded theory generates themes or theory from the collected data. According to Charmaz (2003a), both the method and the product of inquiry is referred to as 'grounded theory'. These methods help the researcher build and develop intermediate-level theories after successfully analysing the data and developing concepts. This approach also helps the researcher to remain close to their study 'worlds' and to build a set of theoretical concepts from the empirical materials drawn from the data. The focus of grounded theory is on the process.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that the lack of specificity in the method allows for creativity and freedom for the researcher. They also claim that 'analysis is the interplay between the researcher and the data' (p. 13). In this study, ensure that the data emerged authentically from the lived experiences of the research participants was the starting point, ensuring that I, as the researcher, could follow the way the participants' worlds are constructed. Put simply, the way the participants' worlds are constructed emerges from the data. Charmaz (1994) states that these lived experiences help shape the researcher's approach to collecting the data and the analysis.

The study, however, only uses this grounded approach to code the data and for its

analysis, and not for developing any complete theory. Instead, I allowed myself the freedom and flexibility to change, adapt and also utilise the thematic analysis method. Going back to Wolcott's quote about researchers being the story tellers, this study is about stories: it is about the identities of these participants who engage with Western classical music in varying capacities and roles, which are closely related to their personal lived experiences and narratives. In order to capture the ethos of their experiences, the choices of semi-structured interviews for data collection, and using a combination of grounded theory and thematic analysis for analysis constituted an appropriate approach because, in addition to the stories of the participants, I also wanted to engage in a secondary way with the theme of postcolonialism – a theme, or theory, that I imposed on the study. The method therefore creates a canvas for the postcolonial and identity development framework which will further explore the identities of the participants. From the two important principles, change and determinism, that Strauss and Corbin (1990) have drawn from grounded theory, change seems to be the most relevant to this study. The phenomena are not static and keep changing in response to the evolving conditions, hence, a key characteristic of this method is to incorporate change through the processes of analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin, grounded theory seeks to capture how actors respond to changing circumstances and the results of their actions. Since this study is about identities and identities, as we have seen, are fluid and change to adapt or react to circumstances, this fluidity is mirrored in the method and the nature of the study, connecting the two closely to each other. Fluidity is also key to this study when discussing identities and development of identities across time and in different spaces.

3.7.2 Grounded coding

In this study, grounded coding was the main method of analysing the transcribed interviews. As noted earlier in the chapter, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

For this particular study, the use of thematic analysis determined by grounded theory was particularly informative, giving me, the researcher, a combination of the specifics from thematic analysis and the flexibility of grounded theory. The transcribed interviews were organised in a columnar format, and two columns were added for so-called open and axial coding. The open coding was done on raw data followed by axial coding for which my interpretation of the data and open coding was refined to find emergent themes. A selection of the coding process can be found in appendix no. 1 for reference.

The first step of the coding process was named 'open' coding by Strauss and Corbin (1990) because the process opens up the data in order to unearth and explore particular concepts and meanings. The interviews were read and re-read, and codes were added liberally to flag each idea or concept. At this stage, I was not concerned about the number of initial codes that emerged as it was important to just note where new information appeared. Once the codes were listed, the next stage of coding began. The open codes were interpreted into concepts and labelled. Strauss and Corbin caution the researcher to be alert and keep an open mind at this stage of analysing the data. Similar interpretations and concepts were grouped together to create categories. I looked for the frequency at which the categories and concepts appeared in the data, drawing on Strauss and Corbin's suggestion that each of the

concepts makes its way into the theory by appearing repeatedly in interviews, observations. These concepts then become the basic units of analysis and can be grouped to form categories which can then be developed and related. These categories are higher in level and can be abstract compared to the concepts they include. Strauss and Corbin propose that categories are cornerstones of a developing theory and that it is not enough if the concepts are merely grouped together to form a category. They argue that these concepts should be developed, and the characteristics should be given serious consideration in order to answer any further questions that can be raised.

Benaquisto (Given 2008) raised a criticism of this idea of micro analysing the data, open coding at the scale of individual ideas, which can take away from the larger concepts and narratives of the study. However, in this particular study, the open coding method was suitable to generate the first stage of codes which were then developed further. Once the recurring patterns were highlighted, I named them with a theme depending on the subject. Once all these open codes were identified, the links between the themes were viewed, creating clusters, thus indicating the axial codes that I would consider in the second stage of grounded theory coding. Whiteside (2017) states that in her study, the open coding method brought meaningful words and statements that were separated from the interview and grouped together.

Through the process of axial coding, I developed the categories of concepts and identified core categories or themes based on repetition and other factors. Benaquisto (2008) suggests that this is the stage when researchers should be

advised to ask questions of the data. The name, derived from the term "axis" denotes paying attention to one category at the given time. Strauss and Corbin suggest that the researcher should seek answers for the series of questions of one category at a time and as new categories emerge, relationships between these categories should be explored. The themes that emerged from this coding process were reviewed and narrated as they related to the study. I did not constantly compare as part of the analytical process (understood to be one of the key tenets of grounded theory) but followed a simple method of coding on a word-by-word basis. Thus, the main focus was the information, concepts and categories drawn from the data.

Relating the themes in grounded theory analysis weaves together all of the loose threads of data that were created during the open coding process. The second stage of the analysis is, therefore, a higher, more abstract, stage. It is the stage where the data is sewn back together to help make connections between categories. Thus, it enabled me, as the researcher, to view the data as a whole and present it with veracity.

3.8 Flexibility and restrictions

Bryman (2012) states that qualitative researchers can be wary of the effect of pre-determined systems on the social world and suggests that this is because there is a preference in qualitative research for the researcher to see through the perspective of the participant on the individuals being studied. He notes that qualitative researchers tend to keep the structures to a minimum so they can create the opportunity to reveal the genuine perspectives of the people or participants involved

in the study.

In this study, the qualitative approach allows me to build my understanding of the properly contextualised life experiences of the participants and their identities rather than forcing a particular framework and design onto them. I was also in an advantageous position of being able to adapt and refine my questions and interview practice after the pilot study and its first set of interviews. More than this, however, I have immersed myself in the research field – by visiting the cities, interviewing the participants in person and having some of the same lived experiences. As noted earlier in the chapter, the reflexive researcher is a strong and unique positionality that gives strength and value to the research.

Smyth and Morris (2007) claim that most researchers fail to make explicit their theoretical, epistemological or methodological positions. In this methodology, I have tried to make these as clear as possible.

Bryman and Burgess (1994) point out that data analysis in qualitative research is not always explicit and can lack clarity. I hope that using the robust grounded coding approach with thematic analysis, for this study, clearly lays down the processes followed, and the choices made. When discussing coding, and in particular axial coding, Benaquisto (Given, 2008) raises the concern that the researcher may be confused by the complicated and non-transparent terminology associated with the practice. Bryman (2012) considers this approach is too subjective: there is a potential danger from the researcher's unsystematic views about what is pertinent and important, and the close relationships with the people being studied. As noted

above, this is something I have been wary of as a researcher who has shared life experiences with the participants. Bryman also brings to light another issue with qualitative research – there is difficulty in replicating the study. Because this particular style of research depends on the researcher's inventiveness, the approach is unique to the study and is difficult to replicate. The nature of the research interview adds to this - the researcher chooses what is important to focus on when interviewing, which is usually based on their judgement. Bryman says that due to the unstructured nature of qualitative research, the interpretation of the researcher can be skewed based on their subjective inclination. However, in this current research and based on my positionality, I have tried to minimise any skewing while harnessing the opportunities that arise from my subjectivity.

The other restriction and challenge pertinent to this particular study, would be the issue around generalisation in qualitative research. Here, Bryman (2012) raises some significant points on how data from a small population of people cannot be representative of an entire population. Since this study is idiographic in nature, it does not set out to represent the views of the entire Indian population, or even of all young people in India pursuing Western classic music. At a certain level, it 'can be seen to be instances of a broader set of recognisable features' (Bryman, 2012, p. 406), but it makes no wider claim to generalisability.

3.9 Decolonising methodologies

> While there are difficult questions raised around their use together, surrounding both theory and method, it does not mean that it should not be attempted. Rather, an engagement with these questions will benefit both sociology and postcolonial theory. (Moles, 2007, p.50)

As introduced in the literature review, I am seeking to incorporate methods, literature, discussion, analysis of the study that are alert to the concerns of postcolonialism. After I completed the pilot study, in the initial stages of my research, I made the choice to apply the Bourdieusian framework, which utilizes key theoretical concepts such as "field," "habitus," and "capital," to comprehensively analyse and unpack the dataset. However, as I delved deeper into my study, I began to recognise that employing Bourdieu's framework, which is rooted in European assumptions, particularly concerning class and learning, might pose challenges within the context of a postcolonial field.

This realisation prompted me to re-evaluate my approach and consider an alternative path forward. I was determined to ensure that my research remained sensitive to the complex issues of colonialism that are intricately woven into the subject matter. To achieve this, I selected the grounded theory as my method of data collection and analysis, a method that allowed me to adapt and tailor my research to address these sensitive concerns effectively.

Furthermore, I acknowledged the importance of my own positionality in this research journey. This self-awareness enabled me to navigate the potential pitfalls associated with studying a subject in a postcolonial context and to adopt a more nuanced and culturally sensitive perspective. To deepen my understanding and awareness of these critical issues, I devoted significant time to extensive reading and research surrounding post-colonial theory and the decolonisation process which I then used as a general framework to contextualise the data of this study.

As Smith writes:

> *Decolonizing Methodologies* is concerned not so much with the actual technique of selecting a method but much more with the context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities. It is also concerned with the institution of research, its claims, its values and practices, and its relationships to power. (Smith, 2021, p.286)

3.10 Summary

In this chapter, I have highlighted the methods used in the study including the specific process and challenges. The chapter considers the social constructivist paradigm that underpins the study, and how the research questions arise from that paradigm. The ethical considerations and the pilot study showed that planning and robust structures was central to the study. The process of data gathering was well suited to this study with certain drawbacks which were laid out and discussed. Continuing the methodological discussion, and after discussing key tenets of grounded theory and coding, I have reflected on the thematic analysis undertaken for this study. The challenges and advantages of the qualitative approach were also discussed in light of the current research and how these challenges have been handled. I reflected on my position as a researcher and acknowledge the role that my subjective experience and values takes in this research process particularly with respect to my ambition to take a decolonising approach to my research. The next chapter will delve deeper into the data that emerged from this process, bringing to light various key themes and concepts that will be discussed further in the discussion chapter.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the key findings of the semi-structured interviews, analyse those interviews and identify the emergent themes in relation to the research questions. Following from the previous chapter, this chapter briefly recaps participants, research questions and the process of data analysis to help orient the reader. This chapter aims simply to describe and analyse the emergent themes leaving the discussion and evaluation of these themes in relation to the existing literature for the chapter that follows.

4.2 Participants

As noted above, the participants for this study were meticulously selected based on criteria that included their geographical location, backgrounds, and musical roles. The aim was to ensure a diverse representation of individuals involved in Western classical music, encompassing teachers, performers, and students, within the age range of 17 to 32. Additionally, efforts were made to strike a balance in terms of gender, age, and geographical location, resulting in participants from vibrant cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and one participant from Ahmedabad.

In total, 46 interviews were conducted throughout the research process, encompassing both the pilot study and the main study. These interviews served as the primary source of data for the analysis. While the interviews conducted during the pilot study were not included in the formal analysis, they played a crucial role in establishing the contextual framework for the subsequent interviews. They provided

helpful insights and background information that contributed to a more nuanced interpretation of the findings of the main study.

Out of the 46 interviews conducted, the 26 interviews conducted during the main study form the heart of this thesis. These interviews capture the participants' in-depth experiences, perspectives, and reflections regarding their involvement with Western classical music. The exclusion of the pilot study interviews from the formal analysis does not diminish their significance; rather, they served as a reference point for contextual understanding, shedding light on the participants' musical journeys leading up to the main study.

As an Indian individual who has personally experienced learning Western classical music in India, it was of utmost importance to me to uphold the integrity of the participants and their viewpoints. The aim was to represent their experiences authentically, capturing the essence of their individual agency and the decision-making processes that shaped their musical identities. By delving into the themes that emerged from the participants' narratives, I sought to comprehend and explore their sense of agency through various lenses, including travel and mobility, connectivity, technology, and globalisation, among others.

In this chapter, I will delve into the myriad ways in which the participants' attraction to Western classical music can be understood by closely examining these emergent themes. The insights gained from analysing these themes will shed light on the participants' motivations, inspirations, and the factors that influenced their journey towards Western classical music. I have categorised these emerging themes under

two major headings that will serve as the guiding framework for the subsequent

sections of this chapter: access to Western classical music through accrued cultural

capital: and, opening up possibilities for Western classical music through experience.

By exploring the participants' experiences within these thematic dimensions, we can

gain a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of their engagement

with Western classical music. This exploration will not only contribute to the existing

body of knowledge in this field but will also provide a platform for the participants'

voices to be heard and their unique perspectives to be acknowledged. Through an

extensive analysis of their narratives, we can uncover the intricate interplay between

personal agency, cultural influences, and the transformative power of music,

ultimately enriching our understanding of the broader sociocultural context in which

Western classical music operates in India.

4.3 Access to Western classical music (through accrued cultural capital)

This section seeks to map out and contextualise the various factors that enable the

participants to access Western classical music. To understand these factors, it is

important to note and analyse the role of the family, and its agency in forming the

musical interests of the participants. In order to show the richness of the data, the

participants' quotes drive the narrative of this chapter ensuring that the participants'

voices have complete agency in this story.

4.3.1 Family

In the majority of cases, a comprehensive analysis of the collected data has revealed

a recurring pattern indicating that family exerts a significant influence on the

formation and development of the participants' musical preferences. Notably, the impact of family extends beyond mere influence, as it also plays a vital role in facilitating the participants' learning and pursuit of music, irrespective of the specific genre or style. When participants were asked about their family's musical background, a trend emerged. A substantial number of respondents indicated that they had immediate and/or extended family members who possessed either musical skills or a deep-seated passion for music. This familial connection to music seemed to be a common thread among the participants, regardless of their individual interests or preferences.

During the interviews, an intriguing term surfaced: 'musically curious'. It was a phrase that participants used when describing their families' relationship with music. One participant, SH, shared insightful thoughts about his own family's musical inclinations. According to SH, his family members may not be virtuosic musicians themselves, but they exhibit an insatiable curiosity for music. They actively engage with it, showing a genuine enthusiasm as avid listeners. SH's words underscore the pivotal role that the family environment plays in creating and fostering such a musical curiosity.

> Well, my family's always been musically curious. They're not musicians and this in terms of being virtuosic or things like that, but they're very musically curious. SH, performer/teacher

In RH's case, the family have shown a longstanding appreciation of music. She also shines some light on how religious traditions can be connected to music, such as the Hindu religious practice and its connection with Karnatic classical music.

> So, while my family is not particularly inclined towards those(religious) customs and traditions, they have always loved music. RH, performer/teacher

During the interviews, SPC provided insights into his family's relationship with music.

When asked about his family's musical inclinations, SPC revealed that both his

parents had a strong affinity for the performing arts. His father, while not pursuing

music professionally, played various musical instruments as a hobby. On the other

hand, SPC's mother was a dancer. His father's musical hobbies and his mother's

artistic dance background provide a cultural foundation for SPC's own musical

journey.

> [I]t was just for his (father) hobby or he was much more interested in making
> instruments. So, he and few of his co-workers in his village experimented on
> making Hawaiian guitar and making electric guitars first of all. So, like that
> was a point where he got into playing music and used to get bored with
> instruments. He just has to change. I was actually forced into music. [Okay] by
> my parents, of course because they were into music. My mom was a dancer
> so not exactly music but kind of an artist so they forced me into it and then
> after like few years, I started enjoying it when I found out the intricacies of
> learning music not only Western classical but the joy of learning and the job
> performing. Main attraction was the performer's personality which attracted
> me to pursue music. SPC, performer/teacher.

Interestingly, SPC stood out among the participants due to his usage of the phrase

'forced into music' when describing his musical background. This remark suggests

that his parents might have had expectations or desires for him to pursue music,

possibly stemming from their own involvement in the performing arts. However, as

SPC progressed in his musical journey, he discovered a growing enjoyment for it. It

was only after a few years of learning music that he found himself genuinely

appreciating and embracing the art form.

SPC's choice of words within the quote offers further insights into his family's

background and musical experiences. By referring to his father's upbringing in a rural

setting as a 'village,' SPC highlights the cultural and environmental influences that may have shaped his family's musical context. Moreover, SPC's remark about exploring different musical styles, beyond just Western classical music, suggests a broadened perspective on music appreciation within his family. This openness to diverse genres and traditions likely contributed to SPC's own multifaceted musical interests and preferences. Furthermore, it becomes evident that the performance aspect of music and the personality of the performer holds great significance for SPC.

BB, another participant, shared a similar sentiment of feeling coerced into music. In her high school years, she held a strong aversion to learning Indian classical music, deeming it 'lame'. BB perceived the traditional classical genre as dull and uninteresting, especially when compared to the appeal of more popular genres. However, her mother intervened, insisting that she pursue Indian music, an act that BB regarded as being 'forced' upon her at the time.

> For a long time, I was learning Karnatic music and Hindustani music like, you know when you're in like the high school, when you're in high school and stuff that music is lame. So, you can kind of divert your attention to popular music. So, like that definitely happened… Yeah and for a while like I didn't want to learn Indian music, but my mom forced me to which is awesome. BB, performer/student/teacher

Upon reflection, BB now realises and acknowledges that her mother's intervention was a pivotal moment that shaped her musical journey in a positive way. What initially seemed like an imposition turned out to be a transformative experience that she now views as 'awesome'.

This quote highlights two crucial aspects. Firstly, it emphasises the agency of BB's

mother, who played a decisive role in guiding her daughter's musical path. Despite BB's initial resistance, her mother recognised the value and significance of Indian classical music, leading her to advocate for its pursuit.

Secondly, BB's teenage tastes and preferences are significant factors at play. During her adolescent years, she was drawn to more contemporary and popular genres, considering them more exciting and appealing. This juxtaposition of her youthful inclinations and her mother's insistence on traditional music highlights a generation gap and the clash of musical sensibilities experienced within families.

RH also expresses gratitude for her parents' persistent encouragement and occasional insistence on practicing music. Their push and, at times, forceful approach played a crucial role in keeping her motivated and dedicated to her practice.

> And I think you would agree that is like we're so grateful to have parents that we have who have really pushed us and sometimes forced us into practising. I should say that at some point I really needed motivation to practise. RH, performer/student

As mentioned earlier, the role of parents in various contexts is pivotal for the participants' musical narrative. The above two quotes by BB and RH show some resistance to the parents' behaviour, which is later overcome as they 'see the benefits'.

There were many instances where parents have themselves engaged with music. JH assumes that she and her siblings got their 'talent' from their father, given his knowledge and familiarity with various musical instruments. It is interesting to note that, similarly to SPC's father earlier, JH's father also knows to play a number of

different instruments.

> I mean he (father) knows different instruments little bit of these instruments and I think we siblings got the talent from daddy. JH, teacher/performer

She goes on to recount an anecdote which depicts how she first picked up the mouth organ after observing her father playing it.

> So, when I was about three years old, my dad had a mouth organ and it so happened that when I saw the mouth organ, I somehow knew the, knew how to use it I mean to blowing in and blowing out. That is when Dad kind of understood I have a knack for music… somebody had gifted me one small keyboard and he(father) taught me the song 'This is the day' the usual song with any Christian family would learn. JH, teacher/performer

Her playing the mouth organ convinced her father that she had a 'knack for music' and this pivotal moment led her father to take on the role of her mentor, teaching her songs on the keyboard. The first song taught to her by her father, 'This is the day', is a religious song that is sung in many Christian households. This is another instance which highlights the relationship of religion (in this case, the Christian religion) to music in the Indian context.

AH's initial music learning began at home with her mother teaching her the Indian harmonium: she learnt to play Indian music before starting Western classical.

> [M]y mum used to train me at home for a bit an then I moved on to… she taught me a little bit of keyboard, Indian style of teaching keyboard. AH, teacher/performer

Apart from the parents acting as initial teachers and guides for the participants, it is important to discuss parents' involvement in other activities involving music, which can also be seen to have influenced participants. In AB's case, religion played a part.

> So, here I was put into music because my parents were into church music…So, my parents' basic idea was to make me play for the church… AB teacher/performer

AB's parents held a vested interest in encouraging his pursuit of music, partly driven by their own involvement in church music and the desire for him to contribute musically within their religious community. Later, we will discuss the relationship between Parsis, Christians and Western classical music; here, though, there is a link with Christians from Goa. SM mentions that his mum was 'Goan' and knew how to play the keyboard. Hence, she wanted to teach SM the keyboard.

> [M]y mother was Goan, and she played a bit of piano. She loves singing she claims to know what 5,000 songs and she is probably right actually, but she was she wanted to teach me the keyboard because that's what she learned. SM performer/teacher

The motivation and encouragement provided by JH's parents shaped her musical narrative. Note that her use of 'we' highlights that her siblings were also into music.

> And, I think right from the childhood days, whenever there was any competition, such be at school or church, I think parents motivated us and encouraged us to go ahead and that is when we started giving a try and we realised okay we are singing, we can sing and play… JH teacher/performer

Both of SH's parents played musical instruments thus enabling SH to pick up a few instruments too. He uses the words 'curious' and 'musical household' which gives an idea of how this may have influenced his musical learning and journey. His father played two instruments – flute and the mandolin, and his uncle also plays a musical instrument. The musical household can be seen as a strong influence in SM's musical narrative:

> [S]o my parents, my mom and my dad both play instruments and my mom

plays the Veena, my dad plays the flute and the mandolin, which I picked up a little bit of both of those and my uncle also plays the mandolin. So, it's been a, it's a very musical household and they're very curious like most Indian families. SH, performer/teacher

VM's story takes a slightly different trajectory. He did not have the advantage of a musical background within his family; none of his relatives possessed any musical inclinations. This lack of familial musical influence presented a challenge in terms of understanding and providing the necessary support for VM's musical pursuits. However, VM's friends played a pivotal role in his musical journey by helping him find contact information for music teachers. This act of reaching out to his friends revealed that his friends themselves were also engaged in learning music. Thus, the social environment surrounding VM, particularly his friendship circle, played a significant role in shaping his musical narrative.

My family is not very is not musical. Like there's nobody in the family that has done any music or anything like that. So, it was very hard for them to even understand what, how do they go about it, but they asked people around, they asked my friends and things like that and kind of got their teachers numbers and things like that. VM teacher, performer

The term 'musical' in this context suggests that VM's parents did not actively participate in musical activities themselves. They may not have been personally involved in music or possessed any musical talents. However, despite their own musical disconnection, VM's parents supported and encouraged his musical endeavours.

The parents of some of the participants not only encouraged music learning but have a musical narrative of their own. Following this trajectory did bring up some interesting narratives…

[M]y mother, when she was younger, before marriage. So, she was, she used

to sing in the radio, All India Radio and though it was not encouraged, learning arts was not encouraged. Though she did, end up doing her MA, BEd and all that in spite of all hurdles. She was musically inclined but after marriage she had to quit everything and sort of give up on the dream. She was not formally trained but she was musically gifted, so I sort of you know completed her dream and I was also musically inclined as a child. NH, teacher

The All India Radio (AIR) is a national radio channel based in New Delhi, which is the largest radio network in the world. AIR stands as one of the globe's largest broadcasting entities. Presently, its domestic service spans 479 stations across the nation, effectively covering almost 92% of the country's land area and reaching 99.19% of the total population. The programming on AIR is produced in 23 languages and 179 dialects. Thus, singing on the All India Radio can be considered a matter of great prestige. NH's mother, defying societal norms, pursued her passion and sang on the radio. However, she reluctantly gave up this pursuit after getting married. This major decision left a lasting impact on NH, instilling a sense of her mother "giving up on the dream". As a result, NH's own aspirations became intertwined with fulfilling her mother's unfulfilled dream, serving as a driving force in NH's determination to carry on a musical legacy on behalf of her mother.

A sizeable proportion of the participants have taken up the study of music as a result of their parents' musical background or the agency of their parents. ANC's father's desire led the siblings to learn music.

My Dad wanted me and my sister, I have a sister, to learn music. He had this desire and that is why my sister and I went for classes. My sister went for singing classes and I went for keyboard; we were enrolled to these classes. ANC, student

For BB, the main influence to take up music and pursue it, was her parents. This

quote below also highlights that her sister, who is much older than her, also influenced her musical tastes indirectly.

> My parents were the main influence but when I was younger, I hated pop music only because my sister loves pop music and my parents were like, oh my God, she party so much and I was like, I will never be like her and so I ended up hating pop music for a while. BB, performer/student

The siblings of participants clearly had a role to play in the participants' musical path, as we will explore in the next section.

4.3.2 Siblings' agency and influence

This section discusses the role of siblings in the musical tastes and influences of the participants. It is noted that most siblings of the participants were into music or had musical interests as well. Also, the siblings learning music have supported and helped shape the participants' own musical learning and their musical narratives.

> [S]o, I had my sister, who is a pianist, mentor me on learning the pieces and finding recordings of violinists who have performed those as well and she even accompanied me for the exam and walked me through the theory and kind of gave me a holistic understanding because she was doing her advanced level of piano. RH, performer/teacher

RH's account reveals an intriguing aspect of her musical journey, one that is relatable to my own experience. Like RH, I too discovered a strong resonance with the influence of a sibling on my musical path. In my particular situation, my sister had already embarked on piano lessons, and it was during her time at the music school that my mother stumbled upon the Western violin and decided that I should start learning it. In RH's case, it highlights not only the impact on her musical narrative but also the influence on her parents.

> My parents for some reason really took to the Western music also because my sister was learning the piano in the US at that time. RH performer/teacher

They 'really took' to Western music implying a two-way influence on musical taste. This two-way influence between parents and children in shaping musical tastes is an interesting dynamic.

Another example of how the sibling played an indirect role in the participant's choice of learning music is found in the story of EC, who also talks about how his brother learning music was beneficial to him because he had his brother's guidance when there was a lack of teachers and teaching resources. His sibling took on the role of a guide and a teacher because of his previous knowledge in playing the violin and was able to help EC.

> She brought me into playing violin, my brother and I studied. He actually studied before me… violin before me. EC student/performer

> And then I was pretty much self-taught for like eight years then until my eighth grade, I had no teacher, my brother guided me a bit. EC student/performer

> My brother is also like he was in a rock band and he learned Indian classical music. SPC performer/teacher

With SPC's brother also having musical interests and with his father trying many musical instruments, it creates a melting pot of musical ideas in the same household. JB's brother picking an instrument that is not available at their home, and JB's intuition of picking up and copying her brother's habits, steered her towards picking up the violin.

> So, my elder brother JA chose to play the violin and that's very surprising because why the violin we had the guitar, we had pianos, we had everything

in the house except a violin. [Okay] and JA chose the violin, so... funny fellow. And yeah, just seeing him play I wanted to do everything he did. I copied him, and we were playing Duets everywhere. JB student/performer

Similarly, when talking about siblings' influence over the choice of instruments (for the participants), SM decided against learning the piano after listening and watching his sister practice.

[S]omehow, I was never into the sound of the keyboard like you know the it was like a non-touch responsive kind of very Casio 'esque' so, I never was interested and it looked like no fun at all, you know pressing buttons are a thing and yeah watching my sister's like, you know practice and all that made me really think like that is not something that I wanted to do. SM performer/teacher

During my conversation with CH regarding his musical journey, I inquired about his interactions within his immediate (inner) circle. He revealed that his sister happened to be a pianist, and this connection provided a valuable opportunity for him to engage in musical discussions. Amidst a family where musical inclinations were generally scarce, the presence of a musically inclined sibling in CH's inner circle held significant importance.

[B]asically my sister is a pianist again…Yeah, she has done her Grade 8. So, I discussed with her a few topics. CH teacher/performer

Siblings have influenced the participants' musical choices, supported their music learning by playing duets and being there for discussing musical ideas. In the discussion chapter I examine in more detail the role of family – parents and siblings - and the influence this has on the participants.

4.3.3 Social circle

Recalling CH's point about not being able to discuss musical interests with family members, some participants whose friends were not interested or engaged in Western classical music indicated that their social life was affected especially in ways they connected with their outer circle. In certain cases, they did not have any friends in their social circle with whom they could discuss music or share the same interests. For AB, this was the case but once he joined a music school (KM Music Conservatory) in Chennai, he met others with whom he was able to discuss and talk about music. His interactions with this immediate circle were about and around musical experiences.

> From the time I did my schooling, until I joined KM, I didn't have anybody who was fully into music. So, I didn't have any opportunity to talk like that, but once I joined KM, it is only, most of them were Western classical. AB, teacher/performer.

When discussing about the influence learning music has had on the participants' lives, SPC shared an insightful perspective. He emphasised that learning music has not only enhanced his skills as a performer but has also played a vital role in shaping his overall personality, particularly in terms of building confidence. Through his musical journey, SPC has witnessed a profound development in his self-assurance, allowing him to perform with ease but also improve his interpersonal interactions.

> Yes, so my personality changed. My patience level, including in personality, of course, that increased and the confidence to present myself anywhere not being in a musical circumstance and the situation but in any social situation that changed. That affected the confidence and the way I interacted with other human beings. SPC, performer/teacher

In SPC's case, music performance played an important role in strengthening his

communication and social abilities. During the interview, SPC initially exhibited signs of shyness and reservation. However, as the conversation shifted towards music, his passion and enthusiasm for music became abundantly evident. I delve into this further in the next chapter.

4.3.4 Music Education (School and private lessons)

In India, there are various types of school systems – Government schools, Government-aided private schools, private schools, national schools and international schools. Apart from these, home-schooling is also an option. There are also three main educational boards across India – State, Central and International. The State (under regional states) and Central (under the Central Board of Secondary Education) streams are organised at the National level, and the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education was set up as a replacement for the Cambridge School Certificate in India. Most government schools follow the state board, while the private, national, and international schools follow either the Central or International boards.

In order to fully comprehend the context of this study, it is essential to understand the background of the Indian education system. In India, music and the performing arts do not take a prominent place in the overall educational landscape. Instead, subjects such as Engineering, Medicine, and Law are deemed more important and significant. Consequently, young individuals are often encouraged to pursue these 'serious' fields of study from a very early age. As a result, music and the performing arts are not integrated into the formal school education system. While there are higher education institutions that cater to Indian Classical music (Hindustani and Carnatic)

spread across the country, there are no dedicated institutions exclusively focused on Western classical music, Jazz, or Pop genres. The KM Music Conservatory in Chennai stands out as it is the sole conservatoire in India that offers formal higher education qualifications in Western classical music. The absence of specialised educational institutions for Western classical music and other than Indian Classical genres, underscores the limited emphasis placed on these genres within the Indian education system. As part of his own research on music education in India, Vishal writes:

> Far from encouraging the pursuit of the arts, our education system has steadily discouraged young students and creative minds from taking to the arts or, at best, permits them to consider the arts to be 'useful hobbies' and 'leisure activities'. The arts are reduced to tools for enhancing the prestige of the school on occasions like Independence Day, Founder's Day, Annual Day, or during an inspection of the school's progress and working. Before or after that, the arts are abandoned for the better part of a child's school life, and the student is headed towards subjects that are perceived as being more worthy of attention.

When asked about music classes in his school, JC humorously remarked that the emphasis was solely on marks scored in exams, with little to no emphasis on or encouragement for cultural activities. In this context, music and arts fall under the category of 'cultural' activities. JC's observation sheds light on a prevailing perception within Indian families, where these cultural activities hold less value due to these not being part of the formal curriculum. Instead, the focus tends to be primarily on other academic subjects like mathematics or science. This further emphasises the earlier point about the arts being marginalised and not regarded as an essential component of education.

JC's experience highlights a broader trend in the Indian education system, where cultural activities such as music and arts are often overlooked or devalued in favour

of more quantifiable academic achievements. The limited recognition and emphasis placed on the arts as an integral part of education underscores the need for a shift in perspective and a greater appreciation for the holistic benefits of engaging with cultural activities. By acknowledging the value of arts education and providing opportunities for students to explore their creative potential, educational institutions can foster well-rounded individuals with a more comprehensive skill set. Asked if he learned music at school, JC said:

> Nothing, nothing. My school was like that actually, there was very less cultural activities. So, it was all about marks, marks, mark, score. (laughs). JC, performer/teacher

If it existed at all, music education in Indian schools for most participants was limited to group singing classes or school choirs. DC and SM, for example, had group singing classes in their schools where they learnt English songs. DC was part of the school choir that sang every morning.

> So, my first exposure to Western music was during my school days when I was part of choir. So, obviously the like English songs and you have to do that like every morning. DC, student/performer

SM mentions that the teacher was a 'Catholic uncle' that taught one class a week, where the students learnt songs in English – but there was not great interest among the students as the majority of them did not speak English and thus did not understand the songs. His musical education in school was limited to one group singing class for around 45 mins.

> No, not at all. [Okay] so we had one singing period in one week like which was. It was run by one Catholic uncle only and he used to teach us like all

those party songs which people but like most of the kids didn't even speak English. So, like there was not really much interest in it. They didn't understand, it was like more of a task for them. SM, performer/teacher

In this context, the term 'party songs' refers to tunes like 'County Roads', 'I have a dream' and others of a similar nature. These are some of the songs I learnt in my own music classes at school. AM also talks about the casual nature of the music classes in his school. Similar to the others, he had a group singing classes. He gives the impression that this was not a serious pursuit, and you were able to participate to the best of your interest and abilities.

Umm my school... Well, this teacher I went to, here we used to have singing classes till 5th standard. [Okay]. So, basically, we just learned how to sing songs. Basically. We didn't have, we didn't go into the formal basics as such. [Okay] We would go in a class he would start playing a song and you would just sing and basically whatever it wasn't much of a thing I don't know. AM, performer/teacher

The provided quotes shed light on the absence of a structured framework for music classes in schools, ultimately resulting in underwhelming experiences for the participants. It becomes apparent that instrumental classes are lacking in most schools, leaving aspiring musicians with limited options. Consequently, participants who were unable to access instrumental tuition within their schools sought private tutors outside of school hours for instrumental lessons. This further underlines the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to music education within the school system, ensuring that students have ample opportunities to explore and develop their musical talents.

[a]t school most of the music we would participate in would still be Indian songs… instrument would usually be played by tutors since there were no instrumental lessons for students. RH, teacher/performer

However, International schools have music as part of the curriculum, or as extra curriculum activities. AG shares his narrative, which is different from the other participants. As part of the school curriculum, he was taught history of Western music, reading notation, and learning about musical analysis. He also acknowledges that this is not the case with most Indian schools. He talks about the quality of curriculum in the international school (the one he taught at) as being 'really bad'. Even though these students were being prepared to give exams, they could not read notation.

> I studied in IB and IGCSE which is International Board but similar to A level, I guess. So, it was a part of a curriculum learning the history of western music learning how to read notation, learning basic music analysis and all that. So, I ended up learning that I didn't really have a choice. I'm glad I did it. Yeah, I don't I don't know what to say about that because I don't really have a choice. I'm quite sure that these concepts are not there in most Indian schools. [Okay] even now schools that have IB in fact because I know I did do one when I was Scotland, during Summers, I used to teach at an IB school in Bangalore. [Okay] So, this was not as good of a school. Their curriculum was really bad. Their students, there were IB students who are preparing for exams, but they were unable to even read notation. They didn't have these concepts with them. Okay, there are bad schools I think it stems down to basically people want to teach music at schools, but they are limited to what the teachers can teach. AG, performer/teacher

AG raises a noteworthy and challenging concern regarding the perceived limitations in the skills of music teachers. He highlights that as a result of these limitations, students may not be reaching the desired level or standard in their musical education. It is crucial to acknowledge the validity of this observation, as it highlights the importance of well-trained and competent music educators who can effectively guide students in their musical development. However, in considering AG's perspective, it is important to recognise that his access to the IGSCE qualification provides an indicator of his relatively high socio-economic background. This observation prompts us to consider the potential disparities in music education

based on socio-economic factors. While AG's access to formal qualifications indicates opportunities and resources available to him, it also raises questions about the accessibility and availability of such educational opportunities for individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

VM's experience serves as a compelling example of individual agency and resourcefulness within the context of music education. Taking advantage of the opportunity to lead music for religious masses in schools, VM saw this as a platform to develop conducting skills and learn how to train singers for choirs. Despite the lack of formal opportunities and resources, VM seized the moment and took the initiative to acquire these valuable skills.

This display of individual agency is not an isolated case, as several other participants faced similar limitations in terms of opportunities and resources. In their unique circumstances, the absence of established avenues for learning and teaching music compelled them to step forward and assume the responsibility themselves. It went beyond mere choice; it became a necessity for them to take charge of their own musical education.

> In school, we had music till class four. After that there was no music but we had I mean all these annual days and this day and that day and some Masses in school, where, I kind of took the lead and I ended up even training people for like choirs and conducting and all those things. So, I kind of just learnt on the go… VM, teacher/performer

AG also shares his experience of living away from his parents and the city life during his time at a boarding school. In this unique setting, where distractions were minimised and the focus was on academic pursuits and extracurricular activities, AG had the opportunity to engage deeply in his musical education.

It is essential to acknowledge that most boarding schools in India come with a hefty

price tag, which sheds light on AG's privileged socioeconomic status. This privilege allowed him the means to attend such an institution.

AG's contrasting experience of music education sets him apart from the other participants in this study. His access to a well-resourced and academically renowned boarding school provided him with opportunities and resources that may not have been available to others. This discrepancy highlights the disparities in access to quality music education based on socioeconomic factors.

> Yes, I started in school. I was I guess I was lucky enough to go to one of these boarding schools where there is an abundance of co-curricular activities because you when you're living away from parents living away from city life. [Yeah] so apart from [awesome] school and studies there's a lot of co-curricular activity. So, I was quite involved with music over there. AG, performer/teacher

> [t]he school itself did not provide me enough time and resources on its own. AG, performer/teacher

When asked if he learnt any music in school, AB replied that music education in his school was limited to Indian music and learning the Indian notations '*sa re ga ma'*, which can be loosely described as the Indian equivalent of *do re mi.* He considers this to be 'basic', reflecting the point made earlier when BB thought that learning Indian classical music in school was not 'cool'.

> Not really, we had a music class as such, but it was very limited like we used to sing Sa re ga ma pa. It was not, umm up to what... nothing into Western classical just basic, if you have a music period, you have, that is all. AB, teacher/performer

To ensure a comprehensive exploration of educational backgrounds, I intentionally included two participants who had unique educational experiences such as home-

schooling or attending an open school. Among them, EC's journey represents an intriguing end of the scale, offering distinct insights into alternative forms of education. By including participants with diverse educational backgrounds, we can gain a more holistic understanding of the impact of different learning environments on their musical journeys. When I asked about music education in his school, EC answered –

> I had to leave school to learn music… I went to school till 11th and then the syllabus got bit more serious from 12th. Like, the school had to give, conduct tests and exams repeatedly. So, I had to take a decision to quit school then. That's when I enrolled myself in home-schooling and for my 12th I studied on my own. EC, student/performer

EC made the decision to quit regular school to focus mainly on music, another example of individual agency on the part of my participants. 11th and 12th Class in India are the two years before joining an undergraduate programme or Bachelors, so EC was leaving at a point that those on the more 'traditional' educational trajectories would consider to be most crucial. This point that EC makes also highlights that he was unable to major in musical studies in school and hence had to leave school to make more time for music learning.

JB studied in an open school and was taught Indian songs. There was a slight undertone of dissatisfaction when JB spoke about the lack of other styles of music being taught in school.

> School had a lot of Indian music. [Okay] and the teachers kept changing because it was an open school. [Okay] so, we had... and we did a lot of yoga and just Indian songs. JB, student/performer

The perception of Western classical music in India raises a significant question, particularly within the postcolonial context. One might assume that Western classical

music, being rooted in colonial history, may not enjoy widespread popularity. However, the landscape has evolved due to globalisation and the emergence of a growing middle-class community. Access to a diverse range of music genres and styles has become possible and is even considered desirable. The next chapter delves into these dynamics, exploring the influence of postcolonial concepts on the perception of Western classical music in India.

Another crucial aspect of the music learning experience, which has yet to be discussed, is private music lessons. These lessons play a central role in the participants' musical journeys, primarily because of the lack of quality Western classical music education in schools. With a scarcity of dedicated higher education institutions for Western classical music in the country, music board exams such as those offered by Trinity College of Music, London, the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), and the London College of Music serve as the primary qualifications for both teachers and students engaged in private lessons.

All the participants in this study have engaged in private music lessons, as these have been the primary avenue for advancing their musical proficiency. In almost all case, exams from the boards above were integral to the experience. By pursuing these exams, the participants have been able to reach Grade 6 and above levels of musical competence.

The reliance on private music lessons and external music board exams underlines the need for a more comprehensive and accessible infrastructure for Western classical music education in India. It highlights the importance of creating

opportunities for students to receive quality instruction and obtain recognised

qualifications within the country. Addressing this gap in music education is crucial to

nurturing a vibrant and thriving Western classical music community in India. JH was

preparing for an ABRSM exam when I interviewed her.

> So, I am right now aiming for Grade 8 to do under ABRSM. JH,
> student/teacher

While the majority of the participants have given grade examinations, there are

several points made against the examination boards.

> Well, I've done I don't know Trinity Grade 7/ 8 or I you know, yeah ABRSM or
> whatever it is. I think that those have made the, I think the general Indian
> mentality can, oversimplification here, is that there's a sense of achievement
> when you have a certain grade or a certain degree or a certain sense of this.
> And if we can get past that and say that hey actually, you know what when
> we're talking about art and music or anything actually when you say, you talk
> about any field. SH, performer/teacher

SH raises a crucial concern about the examination boards that can potentially limit

the learning experience for Indians studying Western classical music. He sheds light

on how the focus on obtaining degrees, certificates, and qualifications, which is

ingrained in the Indian mentality, can narrow the scope of musical education. SH

expresses the desire to see learning extend beyond the confines of examination

boards.

SH advocates for a broader approach to learning that encourages creativity, artistic

expression, and a deeper understanding of Western classical music beyond the

parameters set by examination boards. This broader perspective would enable

musicians to cultivate a more comprehensive and enriching musical experience. By

nurturing a learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, and artistic

exploration, aspiring musicians can flourish and unlock their full potential.

AG critically lays out some key arguments against the examination boards.

> Our whole problem in India is that we get trained with Trinity we had trained with ABRSM. So we get trained in a very strictly UK or I would say European system… the only reason we're even having this conversation and the only reason we are talking about Western classical music in India is because of those methodologies of study like a because of ABRSM and Trinity… Okay, the only reason Western classical music, even the term exists in India just because of education because of ABRSM and Trinity. If music schools did not teach Western classical music then all the pianist's and all the singers and all the whatever violinists who teach at the schools would be out of a job, right? And then what would they do? They wouldn't really be able to make a living playing those pieces. So, then they would adapt, they would adapt they would play different kinds of music, new age music, even rock music or even maybe their own compositions… AG, performer/teacher

Within the Indian context, SH highlights the colonial aspect of Western classical music, particularly in relation to the syllabus which is predominantly white and European. He delves into the problematic nature of the term "Western classical music" itself. SH attributes the creation of this term to the examination boards and emphasizes how it has constrained the creativity of both teachers and students, limiting their engagement with this art form. He suggests that these exams have failed to adapt and cater to the unique needs and aspirations of students and teachers alike.

This critical observation made by SH resonates throughout the study, and its significance is further explored in the subsequent discussion chapter. Unpacking the points raised by SH invites a deeper analysis of the limitations imposed by the examination boards and the implications of a syllabus that predominantly represents the white and European tradition. This prompts a broader reflection on the decolonization of music education and the need for a more inclusive and diverse curriculum that reflects the rich cultural heritage of India. AG then goes ahead to describe in hypothetical terms what the music scene in India might be like without the term Western classical music.

> Without those two, Western classical music in India would be non-existent which might even be a good thing. So, basically, I think the future of classical music in India is that it needs to shut down, like it needs to fall apart. [Okay] But not by the way not mind you not the training itself not like learning the violin and not like learning how to sing. I don't mean that that should stop. [Yea]. I'm talking about like very only learning that specific form of repertoire and only thinking of those as the great as always look always having the same progress of learning Baroque music and classical music and like always thinking in that on that terms. AG, performer/teacher

He challenges the very notion of learning music solely for the purpose of preparing for exams, advocating for a more comprehensive approach to Western classical music education in India. He envisions a rebuild of Western classical music in the country with an open-minded attitude that goes beyond exam-oriented learning. While AG's points are thought-provoking, it is important to consider the challenges inherent in learning music without some degree of structure. The scarcity of qualified teachers and quality music education in schools further complicates the realisation of this vision. However, conversations with the participants have highlighted a perceived need for new avenues and innovative methods of learning within this art form.

Exploring these challenges and possibilities forms a focal point of the next chapter, where the study aims to contribute insights and potentially offer solutions. Understanding the prevailing attitudes towards cultural activities and the arts is essential in acknowledging the unique obstacles faced by aspiring musicians and artists within the Indian educational context. The subsequent sections of this study will delve deeper into these challenges, shedding light on the broader landscape of arts education in India and exploring opportunities for growth and recognition.

Several themes have emerged thus far, including the influence of religion, as demonstrated by VM's utilisation of religious catholic masses to conduct choirs. Additionally, the role of language has surfaced, with music classes often involving singing English songs when not focused on Indian music. Furthermore, choral music has emerged as a prominent theme, illustrating its significance in the music education experiences of the participants. The next section of this study will further explore these themes, drawing out additional insights from the participants' experiences with learning through choral music.

4.3.5 Music Education through choirs

It is notable that most of the participants have engaged in choral activities in school, church or somewhere else. The previous section highlights that a fair number of participants started their music education by being part of school choirs or choral ensembles in school. Due to this theme's relation with the previous theme, certain quotes are repeated to be analysed under this section.

> Yeah, as soon as I started, I started with electronic keyboard with Trinity, I joined the church choir there… AB, performer/teacher

AB joined the church choir shortly after starting his music lessons, performing for various events in school. FM's participation in singing musicals and taking on the lead roles opened an avenue for him to engage thoroughly with Western (Classical and Musical Theatre) music. He is currently training to be an Opera singer in Germany, and it is interesting that he played the lead in musicals or took solos in the choirs. FM claims that he was 'always into music', thus displaying his relationship with music and the sense of identity.

> So, I mean I was always into music, like in the sense, I always was in the choir in school. I always sung musicals and I was always the so to say lead …

FM, performer/student

Other participants also began their journey in Western classical music through choirs. AH was introduced to music through the school choir. However, it is important to note that in this context, it is Western classical music that he was first introduced to through the choir in his school.

> When I was in my 8th standard, 8th -10th, I was in the school choir, so, that is all what I was introduced to music… AH, teacher/performer

DC shares a similar experience of starting Western classical music through her school choir. She was also in the church choir which gave her the platform to step into the field of Western classical music.

> So, my first exposure to Western music was during my school days when I was part of choir…Yeah, and when I, I have been part of church choirs, but it is not really a church choir as you see in other places it is just a little one. DC, performer/student

In Catholic or Christian schools, choral singing holds a significant role, with choirs performing during morning assemblies and various school events. VM reflects on how this provided a crucial platform for him to step up and take on the responsibility of conducting these choirs. He describes moments where he "kind of took the lead," "went on [his] own," and learned on the go, showcasing his individual agency in seeking opportunities for growth and learning. Through this experience, VM gained a deeper understanding of the conductor's role and responsibilities.

VM has turned his passion into a profession, serving as a teacher and conductor in a school setting. The experiences of individuals like VM highlight the broader role of choirs in fostering a love for music, developing leadership abilities, and empowering students to pursue their musical aspiration.

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Yeah, so I kind of I didn't get trained with singing, But I joined a choir when I was in actually in school. I used to sing in the choir… we had music till class Four, after that, there was no music but we had I mean all these annual days and this day and that day and some Masses in school, where, I kind of took the lead and I ended up even training people for like choirs and conducting and all those things. So, I kind of just learnt on the go, and, so then this teacher who I used to, you know work with in school for choirs, you know, she had the mount "Mary Basilica Choir", and she invited me to come and sing over there. She gave me a solo and things like that, and then I realized you know, what a conductor needs to do and what a choir is, and so I went on my own and I started training the voice in school to sing… VM, teacher/conductor

After his conducting experience in school, VM began working with a number of

choirs. The quote below indicates that he was busy with these conducting jobs. His

brief stint with the adult choir was the first time he worked with singers that were

mostly older than him.

[S]o, I taught choir over there, I took two middle choirs and one Junior choir [Very nice] and then they, they added, they added the, they wanted me actually for Senior Choir also, [Ok] but I couldn't do that, It was clashing with my Musical Theatre classes, [Okay], and then, they wanted me to do the Adult Choir.[Ah-ha] So that was also quite successful, I did it for the first year and then I had to leave, but it was fun. You know, for the first time, like I was actually, there was only one person in the Choir who was younger than me. VM, teacher/conductor

To continue with VM's interview, he talks about Indian music sung in choral style.

Mehli Mehta Music Foundation (MMMF) is solely a Western classical music school

and VM wrote a piece for the young children to perform.

[N]ever did the Mehli Mehta Music Foundation actually perform an Indian piece, [Yeah], in any of the Indian languages, [Yeah]. So, I actually got them to, I wrote a piece for them, for Orchestra and Choir, called a Little Bollywood Music, [Yes], with a medley of songs that were picturised on kids or kids who sang them in Bollywood [Cheerful Yeah] and, and everybody loved it. Like that is a showstopper. VM, teacher/conductor

The piece was well received by the audience. It is interesting to see how this

'Western' tradition of choral singing is adapted to the local taste.

IB's grandmother was a conductor who led IB also to join a choir and try singing,

which then she pursued further.

> [S]he(grandmother) was a conductor of the choir so she noticed that a very young age that I had very good pitch that I kept it. So, she decided to tell my mother to try and put me in choir and I did that and singing sort of stuck. IB, Student

SH spent a few years in America and had access to choirs but as a Hindu he had fewer opportunities as these were mostly church choirs and he did not feel it was part of his culture.

> Since I was also in America, I did have some opportunities to do bits of choir singing. I mean it wasn't as extensive as say a normal umm person who would go to choir and church etc and things like that because that wasn't a part of our cultural environment. SH, performer/teacher

I unpack the choral tradition in India in the following chapter referring to work by Indian researchers and academics. When discussing choirs, the theme of religion makes an appearance and it is worth discussing it in some detail, seeking to contextualise the relationship between religion and music further.

4.3.6 Religion

To gain insight into the religious backgrounds of the participants, it is crucial to consider the broader religious context within India. The secular nature of the country plays a significant role in shaping this particular study. In the forthcoming chapter, a deeper exploration of the concept of secularity in the Indian context will be undertaken, as it differs from the Western understanding of the term.

It is noteworthy that among the participants, fourteen individuals come from a Hindu background, constituting the largest single group within the study. This demographic composition reflects the prevalence of Hinduism in India and highlights the need to examine how religious beliefs and practices intersect with music education

experiences.

Understanding the diverse religious landscape of India is essential for comprehending the multifaceted aspects of music education within different cultural and religious contexts. By acknowledging these dynamics, the study aims to shed light on the interplay between music, religion, and education, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and the broader music landscape in India. Of them, RH was able to access Western classical music performance opportunities only by playing at various Christian church events.

> Yeah, so I have learnt Western classical music, played a lot in the church because at least at that time, that was where most of the Western classical music activities were possible. RH, teacher/performer

She also felt that religion could potentially exclude those who do not practise it and be a barrier when accessing Western classical music education.

> While my family itself did not have so much of an issue, sometimes there would be church members, I think, who would find it a little odd that a non-Christian was playing their music at festivals or events but we personally as a family, they didn't have any, in fact we enjoyed participating in the community music there occasionally there were like questions of conversion, but I don't think that happened after I turned 17. RH, teacher/performer

This quote highlights the complexity of the speaker's experience as a non-Christian engaging with church music. It indicates that while there may have been some reservations or scepticism from certain church members, the speaker's family was supportive and appreciative of their involvement in the community music. The mention of questions related to conversion suggests that there may have been moments where the speaker's participation in church music raised curiosity or raised concerns among some individuals. However, as the speaker grew older, it seems that these questions or pressures diminished, allowing them to continue their musical pursuits without significant challenges related to their non-Christian background.

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The family of this participant has made sure that there is no issue with playing in the church even though they belong to a Hindu household. With the diversity of religion in India, it is interesting to see that people from different religions and faiths can engage with Western classical music.

However, when discussing Western classical music in India, we cannot overlook the stereotype that the Parsi and Catholic communities dominate any engagement with Western classical music. One remarkable facet of India's multicultural mosaic is the Parsi community, whose roots can be traced back to the eighth to tenth centuries when Zoroastrian refugees fled religious persecution in Persia, settling in India (Palsetia, 2001, p. 60). Under British colonial rule, the Parsis, particularly in Bombay, sought to align themselves with British interests and establish their modernity by embracing European culture, education, and music (Palsetia, 2001, p. 60).

A notable aspect of this cultural assimilation was the Parsi community's affinity for Western classical music. Kapoor (1984) notes that during the colonial era, piano and violin lessons were considered obligatory in many upper-middle-class Parsi and Christian households, underscoring the deep-rooted influence of Western musical traditions (para. 13). This affinity for Western classical music was further exemplified when the renowned soprano Emma Albani performed in Bombay in 1914, garnering appreciation from Parsi women adorned in beautiful pink sarees who embraced her typically English repertoire (Suntook, 2017, para. 14). This historical backdrop set the stage for a lasting passion for Western classical music within the Parsi community.

Interestingly, the Parsi experience in India finds resonance with that of the Goan

Christian community. Goa's historical association with Portuguese colonialism and

the successful introduction of Catholic Christianity into the region have led to the

interchangeable use of labels such as Goan, Christian, and Catholic (Booth, 2008, p.

124). Just as Parsis developed a cultural connection to Western music, both

classical and popular, Goan Christians and Catholics too shared a similar affinity for

Western musical traditions (Booth, 2008, p. 124). Despite their distinct historical

backgrounds, religions, and societal roles, both Parsis and Christians found a

common cultural thread in their appreciation for Western music, reflecting the

pluralistic and inclusive nature of India's cultural heritage. This illustrates and

confirms the general assumption that Christians and Parsis in India are the two

religious groups that engage most with Western classical music. These historical

dynamics underscore how Western classical music found resonance within specific

Indian communities, reflecting a complex interplay of colonial influences, cultural

assimilation, and the evolution of identities. The relationship of these groups with the

colonisers and Western classical music is something that I will explore in more detail

in the next chapter as it is an important theme in the postcolonial context, but the

basic assumption of the authors quoted above was also reflected strongly in the

backgrounds of some participants in the study.

> My cultural background is that I am a Parsi, I come from a religion that is a
> very INTO Western classical music… FM, student/performer

FM stresses 'into' to make it explicit that this perception of the Parsi community

being involved in the Western classical music scene in India is widespread. He is

directly identifying with a religion rather than one of the other communities to which

he belongs. One of India's notable Western classical musicians, Zubin Mehta, who is a world-renowned conductor, comes from a Parsi background. FM goes on to claim that when he was accepted into a Conservatory in Vienna, he would be the second Parsi after Zubin Mehta to pursue higher music education abroad. Despite him being self-deprecating about his identity in many respects, in the interview he looked rather proud and pleased with himself.

> Me being me putting it on social media, telling everybody and oh I've got into you know what second Indian after Zubin Mehta and all that bulls*** and then all of that, you know… FM, student/performer

Very interestingly FM, talks about his experience when asked to sing in a German Church when studying in Stuttgart.

> [a]nd people ask me, one German teacher asked me he said, F how do you feel coming from a totally different religion a different culture and standing in a church with you know, it can be the most Orthodox Church and you are singing this ancient Holy music… It's his culture and it's a very difficult question. It's for me when it comes to that kind of Sacred Music I just sing. I mean I sing from my heart. Whatever I sing is in from my heart. I don't think that oh, this is Jesus Christ. I'm praising his God and not my God and my culture it's against my culture and all. No, I don't even it's never occurred to me until someone asked me this question. FM, student/performer.

This quote sheds light on FM's personal approach to sacred music and their ability to transcend cultural and religious boundaries through the act of singing. Elsewhere in his interview, FM mentions that he is a Parsi priest and that this has not been an obstacle for him as he navigates around difficult questions posed to him about religious influences. He has never looked at Western classical music as 'Christian' or 'Catholic' music, which may go some way to explaining why FM's anecdote about his experience in Stuttgart indicates that he is not thinking of his specific culture or God

when singing Western classical music. The quote encapsulates the perspective of FM who is questioned about their experience as a person from a different religion and culture singing sacred music in a church. They recount how a German teacher posed a difficult question regarding the emotional impact of performing ancient Holy music in a church setting, considering their own cultural and religious background.

During discussions about Indian classical music, an intriguing revelation surfaced from one of the participants, JB. She disclosed that she made a deliberate choice to pursue Western classical music exclusively instead of Indian classical music due to an internal religious conflict she experienced. This distinction is crucial as JB specifically refers to Karnatic classical music, a genre deeply intertwined with religious content, unlike the more hybrid nature of the Hindustani tradition.

As a Christian, JB encountered challenges in reconciling her religious beliefs with the religious aspects prevalent in Karnatic classical music. This conflict led her to opt for Western classical music, which presented a different cultural and religious framework that aligned more comfortably with her Christian faith.

> I used to learn Indian classical music and after so, I used to love it after a certain point I realised that I was I found too much meaning in the words and almost worship the Gods that I was singing to or playing to and then I thought okay, you know, I this is not my voice. I want to do Western classical music. JB, student/performer

JB's journey in Indian classical music led her to develop a deeper understanding and sensitivity towards its religious connotations. This realisation prompted her to make a significant decision – to commit herself to a musical path that resonated more easily with her religious beliefs: Western classical music. She came to a point where the

religious conflict became a hindrance to her continued pursuit of Indian classical music, as she felt it would be inauthentic for her to carry on.

It is important to note the contrast between JB's experience and the stories shared earlier in this section. RH, coming from a Hindu background, did not encounter any conflicts while playing Western classical music in churches. Similarly, FM, a Parsi, did not associate their solo performances in a German church with specific gods or religious connotations. These examples demonstrate the individual and nuanced ways in which musicians navigate their relationship with music, spirituality, and religious affiliations. FM, a Parsi, also did not think of Gods or religion when singing as a soloist in the German church.

When talking about Christians and Catholics SM, a Catholic from Mumbai talks about the stereotype of Catholics in Mumbai not being fluent Hindi speakers: these families usually conversed in English and attended masses in English too (which, as I will discuss in the next chapter, also helped them affiliate themselves with the British in the colonial period). This influenced the music he listened to growing up, in order to affiliate himself and draw connections with the language.

> [M]ainly exposed to old Bollywood music and all that which like because it was a Catholic family, we are notorious for speaking very poor Hindi and regional languages. So yeah, I blame my mother for that. SM, performer/teacher

We have seen that a number of participants accessed Western classical music through participating in church activities, events or festivals. In AB's case, as noted above, his parents aspired for him to play in church.

> So, here I was put into music because my parents were into church music. So, my parents' basic idea was to make me play for the church… AB, student/performer

In some cases, religion was also an enabler. Some participants began their musical narratives in the church. Singing in choirs and playing with said choirs was the first and important chapter in AH's musical journey. It was the first opportunity for her to sing and gain performative experience.

> My first exposure was in the church like through church music. That is where I started exposing my voice and getting to know what it is like performing. So, yes it did start in the church. AH, teacher/performer

For JB, her initial and critical music learning began in the church also. Partaking in these musical activities helped her with both her technical skills and her musical understanding.

> Actually, church was the main source of my musical education. Just playing a lot of hymns learning to read, learning the style of the music... JB, student/performer

JB's journey highlights the complexity and personal nature of the connections between music and religion. It showcases the varying responses individuals have to religious elements present in different musical traditions. Each person's experience is unique, shaped by their own cultural background, personal beliefs, and interpretations of music's spiritual dimensions.

These diverse experiences underline the multifaceted nature of musical expression and the ways in which individuals negotiate their musical identities within the context of religion. It invites further exploration into the intricate interplay between music,

spirituality, and personal belief systems, enriching our understanding of the complex tapestry of musical experiences across diverse cultures and traditions. The theme of religion has exposed a range of experiences – the participants have different approaches to their religious belonging and identity, and this has different impacts on their relationship to Western classical music.

4.3.7 Social context

We now turn to the social status of those pursuing Western classical music; the social expectations and norms that support or challenge the agency of the participant; and how engaging in Western classical music might reinforce or challenge social norms. EC had to leave school and turn away from 'academics' in order to focus solely on music.

> I left most of the important, most of the important things like academics and sports. Yeah, I left them all. I even took a gap year after my 12th just for music. EC, student/performer

Here, EC demonstrates his agency by convincing his parents of his decision. He talks about how 'academics' are considered to be 'most important things', but this only serves to underline his going 'against the grain'. As noted earlier, the arts are not considered as a serious area of education in India, and EC's parents were sceptical about his decision.

> My parents were a bit sceptical about letting me take this path but then I convinced them, so they are very supportive now. EC, student/performer

AH describes the challenges in pursuing music and the perception in the wider community of what it meant to study music. She felt that 'society' criticized not only her but also her parents and discouraged her from a career in music.

> [I]nitially when I was young, people were like why are you doing music. Why don't you do an MBA or something like that because you don't have job opportunities and what are you going to do with your music and even my parents felt, faced this challenge that what are you doing with music, and you are ruining your child's career and all that stuff… AH, teacher/performer.

JH's church community were not aware of pursuing music as a profession due to their lack of experience of people taking it up professionally. However, she came to terms with that perception after realising that it was rooted in a lack of awareness.

> I used to go to a church and then some of my friends like some would be kind of pulling my leg oh J is a professional musician and all. And then I would feel kind of bad but then later I would really understand I would really you know… JH, teacher/performer

Most of the participants in the study identify as musicians. AB, who teaches and conducts a school choir, is known as a musician among his social circles and in some cases, even beyond. When asked if he identifies as a musician, he says

> [Y]es, when people see me, they know me as a musician not as anybody else. AB, teacher/performer

AB's identity in music is also associated with his musical roles – teacher, performer and conductor – and it is the way he describes himself. While Classical music in the west is currently facing the charge of being 'elitist' and inaccessible, in India, AB finds a more positive sense of being 'elite'.

> See now when I say, when people ask me what am I doing I immediately tell I am a musician. Surprising for me that in India they ask me what type of music are you focussing into. So, when I say the name Western classical, they keep me immediately at a higher level. "oh, this is a learned guy, this is a learnt musician". AB, teacher/performer

When AB explained to me the hierarchical perception of Western classical music in India, there was a sense of achievement and pride in his voice – a happy smile. There is a sense that Western classical music brings him a status. As discussed in the earlier chapters, during British rule, only certain people from selected Indian groups, mostly Parsis and Christians, were able to mingle with the British colonisers; through this, they achieved a higher social status. These communities were deemed as higher class, and their identities were reflected in the choice of music. Some of this perception seems to have trickled down to the post-colonial era posing challenges which will be discussed in the following section.

In this quote, AB reflects on their experiences when discussing their profession as a musician in India. When asked about his occupation, he promptly respond by stating that they are a musician. However, AB expresses surprise at the follow-up question commonly encountered in India: "What type of music are you focusing on?" He finds it unexpected that people in India inquire about the specific genre of music he specialises in. This line of questioning differs from their experiences elsewhere, where the broader term 'musician' suffices without delving into the specific genre or style.

When AB mentions their focus on Western classical music, he notes a distinct reaction from others. The mere mention of Western classical music immediately places him in a higher regard and garners a certain level of respect: 'oh, this is a learned guy'. The response from individuals in India indicates that Western classical music is perceived as a more elevated and prestigious form of musical expression.

This quote also highlights the cultural context in which the participant operates as a musician. It points to the importance placed on genre specialisation and the recognition afforded to those engaged in Western classical music within the Indian music community. The reaction of others suggests that Western classical musicians are perceived as 'learned' and knowledgeable, elevating their status in the eyes of the public. The quote sheds light on the cultural dynamics and social expectations surrounding musicians in India, emphasising the significance of genre identification and the associated levels of expertise and prestige.

4.4 Challenges around access to resources, teaching and performances opportunities

Kathakali Chanda, in her interactions in India with various people from the Western classical field finds that the elitist connotation of this art form has percolated further through society with the help of globalisation. In an interview with Neil Nongkynrih, founder, director and conductor of the Shillong Chamber Choir, he stated,

> "Western classical has a following predominantly among the Parsi and Christian populations and is emerging within the bourgeoisie in Delhi and other cities. I think most young Indians who learn [it] come from affluent backgrounds." (Chanda, 2014)

In the same article, one parent commented that is easier in India to buy a cello for a child than finding a cello teacher. Vaidyanathan (2011) affirms that the cost of tickets to attend Symphony Orchestra of India concerts means that the audience at many of these concerts are from the wealthier end of the social spectrum.

In the present study, SM's parents were already paying for lessons and hence, paying extra for instruments, instrument repairs and maintenance was a challenge. He discusses how financial barriers restricted his learning experience. He was learning on instruments that were inadequate and, when preparing for concerts, shelling out money for accompanists' sessions too. This perhaps contributed to limiting his performance opportunities; certainly, for SM, money was a 'big barrier'.

> [T]he actual performance of the music always required accompaniment and that was I mean, fair enough you know you had to pay for it and my parents were not always, you know, they were already paying for lessons. So that was kind enough. So, I would say definitely like my money was a big barrier. But my parents, they are happy for me to learn but they were not happy to spend money on, you know in long-term investment and you know like 200 bucks, you know a week was okay for a violin lesson that was you know what how much they were willing to spend. But whenever it came to an instrument, so I had to suffer on very poor instruments. SM, performer/teacher

This quote sheds light on the financial constraints faced by the speaker and their family in supporting their musical pursuits. It highlights the balancing act between their parents' willingness to invest in their education and the limitations they faced in terms of long-term financial commitments. SM's mention of the poor instruments highlights the impact of financial constraints on the quality and progression of their musical journey.

The quote provides insight into the challenges individuals may encounter in accessing necessary resources for musical development. It reveals the importance of financial support in acquiring suitable instruments and accompaniment, which can significantly impact a musician's progress and overall musical experience.

Additionally, it points to the complexities and compromises that individuals and families navigate when pursuing artistic passions within financial constraints. The data of this study also brought to light various other challenges and barriers faced by the participants in accessing or engaging with Western classical music. Instrument maintenance and repair was a challenge for some of the participants, SM recalls his initial struggle –

> I remember my first flute teacher calling my flute a tin can, I was like shocked because you know, I was you know, that was my flute and it was such a big deal to me. But yeah, that was one challenge was getting instruments. These instruments obviously to repair them and service them. I pretty much had to learn myself how to fix saxophone and fix clarinets and that kind of things because [it's expensive?] It was not possible. I mean, nobody knows how to do this stuff really, right. [Yeah, so there is that also] For flute there is nobody absolutely. So, if it if I had a leaky flute, I would just try to manage…FM, performer/teacher

SM's drive to learn how to repair and service his instruments is evident and, in this particular case, was born out of necessity. He did not have a choice, both because it was expensive and also because he did not know anybody who could do it for him, at that point. SM's experience highlights the importance of having access to suitable instruments for musical development and the challenges that arise when financial resources are limited. The incident with their flute teacher underscores the emotional attachment individuals can develop to their instruments, making derogatory comments particularly hurtful.

Moreover, SM's self-reliance in learning instrument repair showcases their determination and resourcefulness in overcoming obstacles. It sheds light on the lack of accessible repair services and the need to take matters into their own hands to ensure the functionality of their instruments.

Some participants had other challenges when it came to resources. Due to the lack of exposure of Western classical music and limited number of expert teachers, SPC claims that he was familiar with only three composers.

> I wasn't exposed to Western classical music on whole. In India, it's just saying as WCM comes up with Mozart, Beethoven and Bach that is it. So, I knew those three composers only. SPC, performer/teacher

Above, I quoted an anecdote about the difficulty of accessing a cello teacher in India; certainly, accessing teachers for Western classical music was a challenge for the participants in this study. While some participants travelled to other cities to learn, others learnt via the internet and YouTube. EC claims to be self-taught as he had no teacher.

> And then I was pretty much self-taught for like eight years then until my eighth grade, I had no teacher. EC, student/performer

He did not have access to a music teacher and claims he would have attained higher levels faster if he had an accessible teacher. By accessible he means easy to travel to, as he mentions in his interview that he travelled overnight to another city for violin lessons.

> [t]he one main thing is that I didn't have a very accessible teacher. I never had a very accessible teacher. If I had a teacher I might have had like a better exposure and faster improvement. EC, student/performer

AH is primarily a teacher and would like to continue her own learning. However, she is unable to progress and update her own knowledge. She did eventually find a teacher in the UK and began online lessons for piano.

> [l]ack of good teachers in India and Hyderabad that I am unable to progress with my learning process in India. AH, teacher/performer

The difference in teaching and learning styles was problematic to some of the participants. FM was rather vocal about how in this already challenging landscape of limited teachers, certain teachers did not support him to grow and develop his singing skills.

> … I knew that I had it in me somehow, I just knew that I was in a sense because I, I just felt it… but I was never told, that was the problem. I was told many mean things. I was told that I'm not ready. [Okay] I was told that I am too frivolous, I was told that when I sing, N used to tell me when I sing I sound like, you know Radhiwala (street hawker) used to tell me that I'll be only ready when I'm 28, 27/28 to go and study. I was never really encouraged. I was never really, told, no one really told me. Wow, you're good. FM, performer/student

This also affected his confidence. He goes on to say…

> K had told me that in front of everyone. She said that FM you know, it's best if you don't use my name in public because I don't want to be associated to your standard of singing. So, I said, okay and I was 21 at that time. She said this in front of like I don't know 15 people… when I look back it was a very embarrassing and a pivotal moment and but at that time, I just brushed it off. FM, performer/student

A lot can be unpacked here in terms of approach to music, examples of problematic pedagogy and practice, and the vulnerability of young musicians. As a result of this experience, FM turned to teaching himself through YouTube videos, later winning a place to study singing in a European conservatoire.

4.4.1 Lack of opportunities to engage with performance

With India's only symphony orchestra, Symphony Orchestra of India, being based in Mumbai, and with other cities not having the infrastructure to host the orchestra, many Indians from other states are not able to experience an orchestral performance first-hand. AH states that, in Hyderabad, there is very limited exposure either to

attending concerts or performing in them.

> Well, I am not so much of a performer here as I mentioned before. Exposure of Western classical music is very very minimal here like really minimal. There are hardly any events that happen connected to Western classical music in Hyderabad. So, the approach is low so that is the reason performance as such is not a great thing in my books… AH, teacher/performer

Apart from the choirs in some of the cities, a few chamber groups, and access to Western classical music mostly through private lessons, there are not enough opportunities for young people in India to engage with Western classical performances as a performer or even an audience member. In order to address the lack of resources and to access performance and learning opportunities, many participants have travelled or migrated from their hometowns or cities to other urban centres. They have also drawn on technology and, in particular, the internet to overcome some of these challenges, which opened up other possibilities in respect of Western classical music and how the participants experienced it.

4.5 Opening up possibilities for Western classical music through experience.

4.5.1 Travel and mobility

The theme of travel and mobility emerges as a significant factor influencing the participants' pursuit of music in this study. It serves not only as a determining factor but also as an enabler for their musical development. Many participants have had to undertake journeys, either through relocation or travel, to access performance opportunities, teachers, expertise, and higher education in music.

For instance, participants hailing from smaller cities like Pune in Maharashtra and Erode in Tamil Nadu have chosen to move to larger cities such as Mumbai and

Bangalore. They have made these relocations in order to gain access to better educational opportunities and a more vibrant arts scene. Smaller towns often lack a viable infrastructure for Western classical music performances and have limited or no higher education institutions supporting Western classical music. This limitation extends to Indian classical music and dance education in some cases as well. Given these circumstances, it is understandable that the participants are drawn to larger cities like Mumbai, where the resources and opportunities for their musical pursuits are more abundant.

This observation highlights the logistical and practical considerations that shape the participants' choices in pursuing music. The need to seek out larger urban centres with established music scenes and educational institutions reflects the participants' commitment and dedication to their craft. It also underlines the importance of access to resources and exposure to a broader artistic community in nurturing their musical development.

> So, I was born and raised in Hyderabad and my family comes from a little bit of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. And essentially, we are all south Indians and there is a lot of Indian music in the family. RH, teacher/performer

RH's family's travel history is an example of the internal migration in India and how this influences their musical tastes and musical narratives. In her interview she speaks about how her multi-cultural and lingual household also enjoys a variety of music. This section talks about other such travel-based influences and backgrounds of the participants.

The participants from smaller cities such as Pune (in Maharashtra) and Erode (in Tamil Nadu), for example, moved to bigger cities such Mumbai and they and

Bangalore to access higher education and also a more vibrant arts scene. In most cases, smaller towns do not have a thriving scene for Western classical music and there are no higher educational establishments catering to Western classical music in smaller towns. In some cases, there are no educational establishments for Indian classical music and dance either. The attraction of travelling to Mumbai from smaller cities seems logical given that, for example, the Symphony Orchestra of India, which is India's only symphony orchestra is based in Mumbai. FM moved from Pune to Mumbai for higher education and better opportunities.

> So, I moved to Mumbai and I did a lot of things, studying mass media and journalism. FM, student/performer

> I'm from a small city called Erode next to Coimbatore. There is hardly any Western classical music going on there… And then I was pretty much self-taught for like eight years... Then for my 8th grade I had a teacher in Coimbatore… Then after that, I started going for classes in Bangalore. EC, student/performer

The significant challenge of not having a teacher has been overcome through mobility and travel. In EC's case, it is necessary for him to travel in order to realise his aspirations of learning music, and his decision to commute to bigger cities for lessons is another example of individual agency. Phrases such as 'hardly any Western classical' and 'pretty much self-taught' gives an overview of the state of Western classical music in Erode, the city where EC is from.

Among some of the participants, there is also an assumption that Indians tend to prefer moving abroad (usually Europe, America, Canada or Australia) in order to pursue higher music education. A possible reason for this is the history of travelling musicians during the British Raj – such musicians that performed in India would also

teach or coach when they stopped *en route* to the east or to Australia. The preference to move abroad for further and higher music education is usually more marked in those who reach a certain level of musicianship and are seeking to further their musical understanding and knowledge. These tendencies are found in the interview data in, for example, this comment from AB:

> … people when they start WCM, they think okay India is not the best, I have to migrate to other countries. So, when they reach a point, they don't prefer staying in India, they just go abroad. AB, performer/teacher

A number of participants noted that there are limited teaching, resources, expertise and opportunities available after reaching a certain level of musical development. EC, who travelled from Coimbatore to Bangalore for violin lessons, and later completed his higher musical exams through ABRSM and Trinity, is now pursuing a Bachelor of Education course in Germany, as there were no courses for higher education in music teaching available in India.

Despite their experiences or aspirations to explore opportunities elsewhere, these participants also possess a strong sense of wanting to return and give back to their home cities or towns. Their motivation is rooted in the desire to ensure that others in their communities do not have to face the same challenges they encountered when accessing musical education.

The idea of giving back indicates a deep sense of gratitude and a commitment to make a positive impact on their local communities. These participants understand the difficulties and limitations faced by aspiring musicians in their home cities or towns, particularly in terms of accessing quality musical education. By aspiring to return and contribute to the music scene in their hometowns, they aim to provide

opportunities and support for future generations of musicians.

One specific example mentioned is EC, who expresses a keen interest in working with the string program in Tamil Nadu. This demonstrates a focus on a particular area of music education and a dedication to nurturing talent within their own community. By specialising in the string program, EC aims to bring expertise and resources to Tamil Nadu, ensuring that aspiring string musicians in the region have access to quality instruction and opportunities for growth. As noted above, he is currently enrolled at a German University.

> And many people, many musicians are now heading up abroad to study. Some of them come back to teach and that's quite a good thing… my main aim is that I want the string programme to like develop more in Tamil Nadu. So, that is why I want to learn more so that I can offer more. EC, student/performer

It is very interesting to note this desire on the part of participants to nurture Western classical music in their own community. Their experiences of accessing music teaching and opportunities have also perhaps influenced them and highlighted the potential to set up something in their hometowns or cities. In AB's case, he wants to start an institution for music.

> So, now what people are having in Bangalore, I would like to give the same thing in Pondicherry. I would start an own institution on my own so that is my plan or action or whatever. AB, student/performer

Once again, this comment illustrates this agency of the participant.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, families in India tend to travel or migrate to bigger cities within India for higher education, better work opportunities, quality of life, and marriage, among other reasons. Due to this internal migration, some

participants have a multi-cultural upbringing which influences their outlook. Being introduced to the many cultures and kinds of music generates an inclination to try new genres and styles, thus creating an avenue for DC (for example) to take up Western classical music while being a south-Indian but being brought up in a different part of the country.

> Basically, I am a south-Indian, but I have been born and brought up in Mumbai. And so, we do speak Tamil but like we have a very different language, a very different way of speaking Tamil back in Mumbai and you know, it has a lot of influence of Hindi and Marathi. DC, student/performer

Similar experiences are shared by other participants who also highlight musical influences that are a result of shared cultures. This particular quote from DC where she introduces her background as a South Indian who was born and raised in Mumbai. She acknowledged her connection to the South Indian culture and language, specifically Tamil. However, she emphasises that the Tamil spoken in Mumbai differs significantly from the traditional form due to the influence of Hindi and Marathi languages. DC's quote sheds light on the complexities of language and cultural identity in multicultural urban settings. It exemplifies the dynamic nature of languages, which adapt and evolve based on interactions with other languages and cultures. She highlights a point discussed earlier in the chapter about how the household becomes a melting pot of cultures, thus impacting their approach to different styles of music or cultures or languages. It suggests that her identity is shaped by the blending of different linguistic and cultural influences, representing the multicultural nature of their upbringing in Mumbai.

In her studies about the Indian middle class, Aslany (2019) points out that 10% of the population can be categorised as upper-middle class and that 90% of upper-middle

class families have at least one member who has a university degree that lets them access better jobs. A few of the participants in this study come from the upper middle-class community and these participants have had the opportunity to travel either to Europe or America for higher musical education and, in some cases, holidays. Their experiences abroad have informed and influenced their perceptions of music and music education. As part of this study, I was also keen to interview those Indians who pursued higher music education in American or European conservatoires. SH is one such Indian who has had a multi-cultural upbringing and has also lived in other countries for studies or because his family has travelled.

> So, I was born in America and I was there until I think I was about 12/13 and then I moved to India, my parents are both Indian. And... South Indian actually. And so culturally, I am south-Indian and then I stayed there until I went to a conservatoire in India and then made me then come to London. So, I am culturally quite mixed here and there. Yeah. SH, performer/teacher

Born in America, SH's lived experiences are different from the other participants in the study, who were all born in India. However, he still considers himself to be south-Indian culturally – that is an identity he claims. This mix of cultures seems to give him the benefit of approaching music from various angles and perspectives.

BB makes a point about the lack of connection towards Western classical music in India as a result of limited exposure to it. It makes it difficult for people to connect with it, and her life was changed by exposure through a trip to Europe.

> Well, I actually think it's really hard for people to relate to Western classical music, for people who have not been exposed to it or who don't have an appreciation for it naturally or anything like that or I find it. I find that it would be hard for them to like it unless, though it was hard for me too to like it initially like until. So, in 2016 like 2017 or something, we went to Europe and

then we went to like Mozart house, Beethoven house, Haydn House and in all of these places we saw like one opera and like two other concerts and then, that's when like my mind was like whoaaaaa!!, I love this actually, when I start appreciating it. Also, looking at the history and like the stories behind everything helps you appreciate the actual pieces and everything. BB, student/teacher/performer

BB shares their perspective on Western classical music and highlights the difficulty for individuals who have not been exposed to it or do not naturally appreciate it to relate to this genre. She also acknowledges that, initially, she herself found it challenging to develop a liking for Western classical music until a specific experience changed their perception. It was during her transformative trip to Europe in 2016 or 2017 that her mindset underwent a significant shift, and she was deeply drawn to and appreciative of Western classical music. She emphasises that gaining an understanding of the history and stories behind the music played a crucial role in her newfound appreciation. By delving into the context surrounding the compositions and composers, she was able to develop a deeper connection to the music and its artistic significance.

This quote suggests that exposure to live performances, visiting historical sites associated with renowned composers, and exploring the narratives behind the music can be transformative in cultivating an appreciation for Western classical music. It highlights the power of experiential engagement and the role it plays in shaping one's perception and enjoyment of a particular genre.

Her personal journey reflects the potential impact of immersive experiences and contextual understanding in fostering a love and appreciation for Western classical music. It highlights the importance of creating opportunities for individuals to engage with the genre beyond mere exposure, allowing them to delve into its rich history and stories to develop a more profound connection with the music. It is important to note

that not all the participants have had this experience: does this mean that their experience is not holistic? Does this undermine their understanding and experience of Western classical music? I would argue that this view and perception cannot be generalised as it would undermine the experiences of those participants who have not been able to travel and attend a concert in Europe. I would also argue that the 'authenticity' of this experience is as important as the experiences of the other participants and their musical journeys. This 'authentic' experience, and the questions it raises, will be further challenged in the discussion chapter. Not all Indians have access to travel abroad to experience Western classical music in its 'actual' or 'natural' setting. This could be due to financial capital or status. These participants are perhaps forming their own narrative of engaging with Western classical music without the first-hand experience of listening to an orchestra live in a Western country. I would further argue that their experience is also authentic and simply different from those who have had the opportunity to experience live performances in a Western context. Globalisation has created new avenues and ways to have authentic experiences of various musical styles and cultures, whatever the location.

4.5.2 Internet, technology, and globalisation

In this study, technology has emerged as a key theme that has clearly made an impact on the participants' musical narratives. Access to Western classical music has been dramatically altered by the internet and creation of platforms like YouTube, which have opened up a whole new world of performance for aspiring musicians. It has also enabled the participants to identify inspiring musicians and follow them on various social media platforms.

just like I keep watching YouTube videos of like professional opera singers and like I look at their lives and I'm like, Ah! I want that. BB, student/performer/teacher

By watching videos of professional opera singers, BB gains insights into their lives and careers, which evokes a sense of aspiration and ambition that might not otherwise have arisen. Her interest in observing professional opera singers on YouTube demonstrates the accessibility of digital platforms in providing exposure to various aspects of the music industry. Through these videos, they can witness the skill, charisma, and lifestyle of opera singers, which fuels their own aspirations. This quote highlights the role of media and online platforms in shaping individuals' dreams and ambitions. BB's fascination with professional opera singers serves as a source of inspiration and motivation for her own musical journey. It shows how digital resources can provide opportunities for individuals to engage with and be influenced by professional artists, even from a distance. As we saw earlier, BB's travels in Europe were a formative moment in providing her with the experience of watching opera live in a theatre: the internet has allowed her to follow up and build on that initial experience.

Even before YouTube, the internet had been an important source of musical resources to some of the participants: SM reflects on the transformative impact of the internet on his ability to access music. He expresses his excitement about the advent of the internet and how it opened up new possibilities for them to obtain music. The following quotes highlight this theme.

I mean, the moment the internet came, you know, I found I was able to get, you know, get music. And I was so thirsty, I used to scour the internet everyday - mp3.com and all that – for recordings that I could get for free,

SM describes his intense desire and thirst for music, using the metaphorical language of being 'thirsty'. He recounts his daily routine of diligently searching the internet, particularly on websites like mp3.com, in the quest to find recordings that he could acquire for free. This demonstrates his enthusiasm and dedication in seeking out music resources that were accessible within his means. SM also highlights the limitations of music streaming before the emergence of YouTube, he mentions that prior to YouTube, the options for listening to music were severely restricted. He recalls the frustration of being able to stream only short snippets, typically around 30 seconds, leaving him longing for more substantial musical experiences. His emphasis on the transformative role of YouTube suggests that the platform played a significant part in expanding his access to music. It symbolises a turning point where he could finally enjoy the opportunity to listen to full tracks and explore a wider range of musical content. It demonstrates the profound impact of the internet, particularly platforms like YouTube, in revolutionising the way people consume and discover music.

SH talks about how his initial engagement with YouTube led him to start learning music. It is notable that YouTube is consistently referenced as an important means of accessing Western classical music for the participants in this study. An interesting thing in SH's case is that he had picked up playing the guitar, but he did not have the theoretical knowledge of chords or harmony.

YouTube was quite new at that point of time. It had only been on for a few years – like two or three years. And there was like this explosion of

information that was suddenly there and I saw a couple videos about harmony and I was, like, wow, that's really interesting, and I could play the guitar, but I could not tell you what a chord sequence and how that – what that – meant harmonically. These things started to interest me. SH, performer/teacher

We have already noted that FM turned to learning through YouTube after a challenging incident with his teacher. The self-agency is evident in his case.

Anyways, but I started teaching myself through YouTube, through master classes, through repertoire. FM, student/performer

In JH's case, watching videos played a significant role in her music education, enabling her to learn independently: another example of individual agency.

I am self-taught or watched videos. JH, teacher/performer

The scarcity of Western classical music concerts in India had a significant impact on the participants' access to live performances. AG, in his quote below, specifically highlights that, as a classical musician, he had not experienced a live Western classical music performance until he started his studies at a conservatoire. This emphasises the importance of media platforms, particularly YouTube, in the narratives of the participants. The quote implies that prior to the availability of online platforms, such as YouTube, opportunities to attend Western classical music concerts were limited in India. This lack of access to live performances restricted the participants' exposure to the genre and their ability to witness the artistry first-hand.

Surprising thing is, until I went to college, I'd never seen a classical guitar concert, or anything live, it was all YouTube. AG, performer/teacher

The emergence of media platforms, particularly YouTube, provided a vital alternative for the participants to experience Western classical music. It became a valuable resource to explore and engage with the genre through recorded performances, educational videos, and tutorials. These online platforms filled a void and served as a means for the participants to access the music they were passionate about, despite the scarcity of live concert experiences in their local context.

The internet, in some cases, was not only used to access videos on YouTube and learn from them: FM also used the medium to contact and connect with his role models in the opera world. These connections were wide ranging: he managed to get a reply from the American mezzo-soprano Joyce Didonato and, through that, also have the opportunity to meet her in person.

> And that's when I started to actually teach myself through YouTube, and see videos, and I started writing emails to Diana Damrau, Bryn Terfel and Joyce Didonato and who else I wrote, Deborah Voigt, I wrote an email to her an email with "Hello, I am F. I am from India. can you please help me?" The only one who had replied was Joyce Didonato. FM, student/performer

From a different perspective, RH talks about how the internet has played an important role in her understanding the history of music. RH discusses the transformative impact of the internet on her understanding of music history. Prior to the internet, her access to information was limited to the books that were available to her. However, with the advent of the internet, her access to information and insights about music history significantly expanded. She suggests that the internet provided with a wealth of free and easily accessible information on music history for the first time. This abundance of online resources empowered her to explore and delve deeper into the subject matter, shaping her curiosity and influencing the critical

questions she wanted to ask. The internet served as a catalyst for her intellectual growth and development, enabling her to broaden her knowledge and expand her understanding of music's historical context. She explains that the free availability of information on the internet informed the kinds of critical questions that she wanted to ask about the history of music and her own education.

> [I]n terms of understanding the history of the music itself that I was playing, I picked it up through curiosity and reading from, like, books that my parents would bring home. Or later on when I was 17/18 the internet came around but till then, like, no one asked or actually told me about, say, the composers, history or women in music, which is a huge part of it, right? Like, being a woman yourself, you would want to know why you are only taught male composers? RH, performer/teacher

RH discusses her journey of understanding the history of the music she was playing. She describes how her curiosity and access to books brought home by her parents initially contributed to their knowledge in this area. However, it wasn't until she was around 17 or 18 years old, with the advent of the internet, that she was able to delve deeper into the history of music. Prior to the internet, RH had limited exposure to information about composers, the history of music, and the contributions of women in the field. She expressed a sense of realisation that the representation of male composers dominated her music educational experience, and she was not adequately exposed to the contributions of women in music. This realisation is particularly significant to RH, as she identifies as a woman herself, highlighting the importance of gender representation and inclusivity in music education.

Her emphasis on the internet coming into her life at a later stage suggests that it opened up a world of knowledge and information that was previously inaccessible to her. It enabled her to explore and learn about diverse composers, the historical context of music, and the significant role of women in shaping the musical

landscape. This sheds light on the RH's journey of self-education and the pivotal role that the internet played in expanding her knowledge and understanding of music history. The fact that RH specifically highlights the issue of gender balance as an example of how her understanding grew as a result of the internet also shows the significance to her of diverse representation and the need to explore untold stories and perspectives, particularly concerning women in music.

Apart from emails, YouTube and various websites, one medium of learning and teaching that has not been discussed so far is videoconferencing. AH, who is a singing teacher, not only teaches her students via videoconferencing but also is continuing her own lessons with a teacher in the same way. She feels she needs to stay updated and 'equip' herself both as a teacher and singer, and this technology enables that.

> Okay, I would like to first of all equip myself with this properly, so, I am doing lessons with my teacher on Skype. AH, teacher/performer

Looking back, a few of the participants spoke about the lack of access to music via the internet during their adolescence. NH and CH had found it difficult to watch videos or listen to music online which would have perhaps influenced their approach, or the speed of their musical development and learning. NH is currently a teacher and finds that her students have easier access to media for learning than she did; CH mirrors this experience.

> [L]ot of theory that I learnt was discussing among students then the Internet, the boom was much later. Right now, it is very easy, there was no YouTube at that time. Yeah, the Internet and it was not so easily accessible. So yes, I faced a lot of problems because I probably didn't start off at a good place. NH, teacher

So, frankly, talking of today's generation, they have the internet, which is always supporting them in every, one or second point. So, those days, I'm sure you also know, so I learnt from sister. So, then, internet is, computer itself is a, you know, rich [person's] thing, so internet was out of point. So, then, the only source is what the teacher is giving you – information and other sources. You get to see some books in the classroom, you pick them and start reading it, and those books were very know, you know, not easy to get. They don't give it out. To get more knowledge outside, there is no one to guide you, basically. Being a WC, very, very new to India. [Yeah] I am talking about 2005/6/7. This internet is, like, from 2013 properly used broadband. [Okay]. That's the, that's one big getting the information in a broad way was always a challenging part in those days. CH, teacher/performer

CH also raises interesting points one about how his music teachers never lent him books the books from their classroom, and it was hard for him to find books. Secondly, he also touches on an important point about financial capital: at the time he was learning, having access to a computer meant that you came from a rich family: every family would have been able to afford a computer or broadband connection and the lack of this option had an impact on CH's musical experience. Financial status or class emerges as a sub-theme under many main themes, especially the challenges caused by lack of financial capital. It is striking that it is an integral part of the narratives of many of these young people learning and engaging with Western classical music in India. His comments underline the significance of the internet as an emancipation from the problem of scarce resources that are tightly controlled by a teacher or other authority figure.

4.6 Western classical music in Indian film and television industry

One of the interview questions focussed on understanding widespread perceptions of Western classical music in India: the view of the 'person in the street'. The initial answers of most participants began with a comment on the poor understanding of Western classical music in the wider populace:

> I don't know if people would even answer because Western classical isn't as prominent today. TB, performer/student

> They only know Tom and Jerry music it is like Western classical. AB, performer/teacher

> We do not know about it. AH, teacher/performer

This suggested that the common person in the street would have no idea or knowledge about Western classical music, but after probing further, a few of the participants alighted on the example of film music and how Western classical music is part of the film industry.

> I think they probably think of some film tracks from the 70s and going forward because I think a lot of Western violin began to be used like at that stage of Indian cinema or also like given current film music and maybe they would just want to know more about what it is. RH performer/teacher

Orchestras record the background score for many Indian films and according to Arnold (1991), even before the Indian independence, Goan and Parsi musicians who specialised in Western classical music were present in the Indian film industry, supplying this need. Thus, in a sense, Western classical music existed in the Indian film industry without the general public realising this.

> I also feel like if we're really going back to the regular people who don't go to concerts but listen from existing media that they have at home, they might not really know. They might just think it's like foreign music, but they might not know like things about the genre. RH, performer/teacher

In the discussion about the perception of Western classical music as "foreign music" in India, RH sheds light on its "otherness" within the Indian context. This distinction emphasises that Western classical music stands apart from the traditional musical genres of India. However, it is important to recognise that the influence of Western classical music can be heard in India's film music. To further explain the role of

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Western classical music in the Indian film industry, scholars such as Gorbmann (1987), Kalinak (1992), and Morcom (2017) have explored this phenomenon. They argue that while Western classical music may not have been fully embraced as a symbol of Indian culture, its incorporation into film scores reflects a concept of "culturally neutral universal modernity" (Morcom, 2017, p. 215). This notion acknowledges the global spread of Western music and its integration into various cultural contexts, including India's film industry. The use of Western classical music idioms in Indian film scores represents a blending of cultural influences and highlights the impact of globalisation on music. It demonstrates how elements of Western classical music have been embraced and adapted within the Indian context, specifically in the realm of film music. This integration speaks to the broader trend of cultural exchange and the cross-pollination of musical traditions in a globalised world. By acknowledging the incorporation of Western classical music into Indian film music, we gain a deeper understanding of how this genre has found a place within the cultural fabric of India, despite its "foreign" origins. This recognition challenges the notion of Western classical music as an exclusively Western art form and highlights its ability to transcend cultural boundaries and resonate with audiences worldwide.

RH's observation about the 'otherness' of Western classical music in India provides a prompt to explore its presence in Indian film music. The scholarly perspectives of Gorbmann, Kalinak, and Morcom provide insights into the incorporation of Western classical music into Indian film scores, revealing the complex dynamics between global musical influences and local cultural expressions. This exploration contributes to a broader understanding of the role and impact of Western classical music in the Indian music industry and its significance within the context of cultural globalisation.

In India, however, colonial rule and the various Indian musical cultures have shaped this process, and the medium of cinema has been prominent in it – a theme I will unpack in the next chapter.

In this chapter, the focus has been on providing a glimpse of the emerging themes that have surfaced through the interview material. Due to the constraints of space and time, only select examples that effectively represent these themes have been included and analysed. The purpose was to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of the overarching patterns and ideas that have emerged from the interviews. However, the exploration of these themes does not end here. The subsequent chapter delves deeper into each of these emerging themes, allowing for a more extensive examination and analysis. The next chapter will delve into topics such as the influence of religion, the role of families in shaping musical experiences, individual agency, the dynamics of teaching and learning, the impact of virtual cultures, and the influence of socio-economic capital. By examining these themes in greater detail, a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and the broader context of Western classical music in postcolonial India will be attained. Furthermore, the discussion expands beyond the immediate findings of the study. It aims to unravel the wider implications and significance of engaging with Western classical music in the specific context of postcolonial India. This exploration seeks to shed light on the multifaceted role that Western classical music plays within the Indian cultural landscape, considering the historical, social, and cultural factors that shape its reception and impact.

5. Ecosystem of Western classical music in India

> For Deleuze, what establishes echoes between music and philosophy is the setting into motion of elements such that they are not subsumed within a logic of representation. Referring to philosophy as an 'unvoiced song', he notes that philosophy has the same feel for movement that music has. And hence for him it is not a question of applying one to the other, but rather of one thing folding into the other. (Buchanan and Varghese K, 2021, p.90)

In the initial two chapters, I delved into research conducted by scholars who have examined the history of Western classical music in India. Their work provided valuable insights into the broader context of Western classical music's presence in India, as well as the state of music education in the country. These chapters also aimed to shed light on the various musical, cultural and social identities at play and highlighted the existing gaps in understanding that my research aims to address.

Before commencing the wider discussion, it is worth recalling the aims of this study and the key questions that are at the core of this research. The primary focus of this study is an exploration and evaluation of the cultural and social identities of young Western classicals musicians in India. Through this exploration, we gain a more comprehensive picture of the distinct paths and influences that shape these young musicians' development, highlighting their significant presence within Indian's vibrant music scene. Specifically, the study aims to delve into, and scrutinise, the intricate factors and variables of childhood and adolescence with a particular focus on the role played by parents in shaping these individuals. Additionally, it aspires to influence the landscape of Western classical music in India by engaging with? educational policies and societal attitudes, thereby leaving an impact on the way this style of music is perceived within India's cultural fabric.

The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What are the key factors and enablers that influence young people in India to pursue Western classical music?

2. What are the nature and narratives of musical, cultural, and social identities of young Indian people engaging in Western classical music?

3. What does 'engaging with Western classical music' in a Postcolonial India imply?

The primary research inquiry pertaining to the factors and facilitators influencing young individuals in India to engage with Western classical music has been extensively examined in the Findings chapter. This chapter comprehensively scrutinised the salient themes arising from the research data, which were analysed in the preceding section. These themes were deliberated upon across two distinct segments, with the first segment centered on the accessibility of Western classical music vis-à-vis cultural capital, while the second segment delved into the avenues that foster engagement with Western classical music through experiential means.

The initial segment, scrutinising the cultural capital aspect of the participants, was further subdivided into discrete sub-sections, encompassing aspects such as familial influences, the agency and impact of siblings, music education both within school settings and through private instruction, involvement in choral music, religious affiliations, social milieu, and the multifarious challenges associated with accessing requisite resources, pedagogical guidance, and opportunities for performance. Under the purview of the second thematic category, namely 'opening up possibilities for Western classical music through experience,' an in-depth exploration was

conducted, encompassing facets such as travel and mobility, the role of the internet, technological advancements, and the broader implications of globalization, in addition to the infusion of Western classical music within the Indian film and television industry.

This current chapter will draw on the data and the themes that emerge from the Findings chapter and address aspects of the second and the third research questions, unpacking the emerging eco-system of Western classical music in India, in which the participants of this study are active contributors, engaging with this music by listening, performing, teaching, learning, and sharing.

The first section, labelled 'Individual', is dedicated to examining various factors that shape the participants' musical journeys. This includes an examination of the influence of family dynamics, religious beliefs, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural capital on their engagement with Western classical music. Additionally, this section explores the themes of class and identity, shedding light on how these factors intersect with their musical pursuits. Moving on to the second section, the focus shifts towards exploring the diverse musical learning ecologies in which the participants are immersed. This encompasses an exploration of both formal and informal learning environments, as well as the growing influence of virtual platforms in music education. Moreover, attention is given to the local networks that support or, in some cases, lack support for Western classical music. By examining the local musical landscape, a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and challenges within their immediate communities is obtained.

The third section of the chapter turns towards the national structure and scene of Western classical music in India. Here, the emphasis lies on unpacking the system of UK music board exams and its impact on musical education. Furthermore, the vibrant realm of film music in India is explored within the context of Western classical music. By addressing the national landscape, a broader perspective is gained, shedding light on the overarching structures and influences that shape the participants' musical journeys.

In conclusion, the chapter culminates by raising the question: "Who does Western classical music belong to?" By posing this query, I aim to critically reflect on the cultural ownership and appropriation of Western classical music within the Indian context. This final exploration serves to spark a dialogue on the complex interplay between Western classical music and the diverse cultural scene of India, ultimately inviting a deeper understanding of its place and relevance in the participants' lives and the broader society.

5.1 The Individual

Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (Rousseaux, 2018), as discussed in the Literature Review chapter, this study positions the individual at the centre of the model. This framework is particularly relevant to the current research, as it recognizes the significance of the participants' individuality as the focal point around which all other discussions revolve. To comprehensively explore the participants' characteristics and expand on the insights obtained in the previous chapter, the following sections will delve into various aspects, including family dynamics, class, socio-economic and cultural capital, as well as identities. These factors will be

carefully examined to gain a deeper understanding of their influence on the individual and their experiences, providing context to enrich our findings.

5.1.1 Class, Family and Capital

In the previous chapters, an observation has been made regarding the backgrounds of the participants in this study, namely that a significant majority of them hail from middle-class or upper middle-class upbringings. The Indian middle class is an important part of Indian society and culture, but it is not easy to define (Joshi, 2017). The term implies that the society is divided into three classes – elite or upper class in the top tier; subaltern or lower class at the bottom and a middle class in between. Joshi (2017) claims that in reality no society has such straightforward and rigid divisions, it is used more figuratively to describe a group which is positioned between the most affluent and the least privileged. It is composed of people—often salaried professionals—who are reasonably well off but not among India's richest. Through cultural politics and various other activities, educated middle class, Indians have been able to set themselves apart from both the upper and lower classes. The context of colonialism, indigenous hierarchies, and various local histories have all shaped the nature of the Indian middle class as much as any colonial class model. This middle class acquired its distinct significance through a history that encompasses colonialism, nationalism, and desire for upward social mobility. The concept of middle class is fluid and complex, shaped by these factors that go beyond a simple three tier model of classes. The Indian middle class was formed through a variety of discourses about the nature of society, politics, culture, and morality in both colonial and post-independent India. Joshi (2017) suggests that these efforts gave the middle class its shape and form and may be understood as an instance of

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, which posits that children from middle-class and upper middle-class backgrounds enjoy distinct advantages due to the accumulation of cultural capital from their parents and immediate social circles.

Bourdieu's (1993) theory highlights that individuals raised in these socio-economic strata are more likely to inherit a wealth of cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences from their families, which subsequently serves as a valuable asset in various aspects of life, including education and the acquisition of different forms of capital. The accrued cultural capital plays a pivotal role in shaping their aspirations, attitudes, and access to opportunities.

As beneficiaries of cultural reproduction, these individuals often find themselves in a position of advantage when it comes to gaining educational opportunities, networking with influential connections, and navigating various social spheres. Their exposure to enriching cultural activities, access to quality education, and familiarity with norms and practices deemed prestigious within their social milieu further fortify their position of advantage. Bourdieu (1993) further advances the notion that children inherit their parents' cultural capital. According to his theory, both social class and educational attainment strongly correlate with individuals' engagement in cultural activities. In the context of this study, music lessons, performances, and access to resources such as musical instruments and relevant books all fall under what Bourdieu would define as 'cultural capital.' Additionally, the participants' religious backgrounds have emerged as significant influencers in this research, potentially bringing forth other specific forms of cultural capital.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the various influences impacting young individuals, I refer back to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model (Fig. 1), which was discussed in the literature review. At the heart of this model lies the individual, surrounded by the microsystem comprising family, friends, school, and close peers. Before venturing into broader social settings, including school, individuals primarily reside within the microsystem of their inner circle of families and close friends. It is within this intimate environment that their initial experiences begin shaping their self-identity—a recurring theme in this study.

The interactions within the microsystem play a fundamental role in moulding the participants' beliefs, values, and behaviours, thus influencing their perspectives on music education and self-expression. These formative experiences within the close-knit social sphere contribute significantly to their personal growth and development, laying the groundwork for their future engagement with music and its educational journey.

By embracing Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and integrating Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, we gain insights into how various factors, such as social class, education, religious background, and the microsystem, converge to shape the individual experiences of the participants. This holistic approach enables a deeper exploration of the multifaceted nature of music education and the significant role that different influences play in shaping young musicians' pathways and self-identity development.

Continuing the exploration of themes from the previous chapter, the influence of

family, including parents and siblings, and their agency in pursuing Western classical music emerges as a significant factor. In the literature review chapter, I briefly discussed the concept of the family script (Borthwick and Davidson, 2002) and script theory (Byng-Hall, 1995, 1998). Byng-Hall cleverly employs the metaphor of a play staged in a theatre to illustrate family life, wherein the script symbolizes the array of possible actions and dialogues that unfold when family members interact with one another. Each family member, according to Byng-Hall, assumes a role guided by the family's expectations, collectively termed as the family script.

A prevailing trend among the majority of my participants is that they hail from what can be described as a 'musical family.' They elaborate on how their parent(s) and/or siblings engage in music learning, though not necessarily limited to Western classical or Indian classical music. Music education is actively nurtured within their homes. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that this pattern is not universal: some participants have no family members directly involved in music, and for others, exposure to music occurs indirectly through their families' participation in church music and religious activities. An essential observation drawn from the research data is that traces of music often form an integral part of the ongoing family identity - it is embedded within the family script. This cultural transmission of music within the family environment plays a vital role in shaping the participants' musical inclinations and motivations, ultimately influencing their journey in Western classical music.

By delving into the family script and understanding the dynamics of musical engagement within the family, we gain insights into how family values and traditions contribute to the participants' musical pursuits. This awareness sheds light on the

interplay between family and music, underscoring the broader impact of family agency in shaping the participants' musical identities and aspirations. The study conducted by Mitra and Arnett (2019) delves into the intricate phenomenon of 'Life Choices of Emerging Adults in India,' offering insights into the profound influence of parental expectations and the prevalence of family obligations in shaping career trajectories. Throughout the research, a crucial developmental aspect during the adolescent stage for a significant portion of the Indian population becomes evident— the quest for parental validation.

Of particular interest is the researchers' observation that when parents refrain from objecting to seemingly unproductive pursuits, commonly referred to as 'timepass' activities in the Indian vernacular, these pursuits take on a unique sense of rarity and value. This intriguing finding suggests that the absence of parental disapproval bestows significance upon such activities, leading to a distinct perspective on how young adults perceive and engage in them. By delving into the complexities of family dynamics and parental expectations, the study highlights the critical role parents play in shaping the choices and aspirations of emerging adults in India. The quest for parental approval acts as a potent motivator, influencing their career decisions and life paths. Moreover, the researchers' keen observation regarding the significance of 'timepass' activities sheds light on how societal norms and family contexts intertwine to influence the perceived worth of different pursuits.

To illustrate this notion, a participant from Chennai exemplifies the prevailing perception in India regarding music and its pursuit as an educational trajectory - 'no one at home is against him learning music'. He reveals that his family exhibits no

opposition to his musical endeavours. This particular revelation highlights a widely held perspective in the Indian cultural milieu, wherein music is commonly regarded as an unorthodox and impractical career option, lacking the serious consideration accorded to more conventional pathways. The participant further elucidates that his social circle advises him to secure a degree as a contingency plan in the event that his musical aspirations fail to materialise. Consequently, choosing music as a vocation emerges as an exceptional and conspicuous choice in the Indian context, distinctly contrasting with the predominant inclination towards pursuing established professional pathways such as engineering, medicine, or law.

Such a cultural landscape underscores the deeply ingrained societal norms and cultural expectations prevalent in India, which favour and prioritise traditional occupational domains over creative pursuits like music. This prevailing cultural inclination often presents a significant challenge for individuals who decide to follow their passion for music, as their chosen path deviates conspicuously from the established norm. As a result, some of the participants find themselves navigating a distinct set of obstacles and facing unique hurdles along their journey. The societal perspective on careers and professions in India exemplifies a broader sociocultural context within which career decisions are made. The perceived hierarchy of professions plays a pivotal role in shaping occupational choices, making it more challenging for unconventional career paths, like music, to garner the same level of acceptance and recognition. This prevailing attitude often casts a shadow on alternative career choices, leading to a sense of uncertainty and self-doubt among those pursuing their dreams in creative fields, including the participants of this study.

The study by Mitra and Arnett (2019) poignantly captures the dominant influence of

family obligations and parental expectations in shaping career trajectories. It sheds light on how familial pressures and traditional expectations can steer individuals away from pursuing careers in music and instead towards more conventional paths. This inherent tension between personal passion and societal norms creates a poignant struggle for many musicians in India.

A telling example from the study is the experience of SM, who expressed feeling excluded at times within his family due to his chosen path as a musician. This sentiment reflects the prevailing cultural climate, where the recognition and acceptance of creative pursuits like music are often overshadowed by the prominence given to more traditional and mainstream careers.

> There's always ridicule from family, from I mean, some of it is gentle, some of it is, a lot of it is this thing but it does get to you from time to time. However, light-hearted it may appear to be you know, like you really wonder sometimes, is there something wrong with me to like this… SM, performer/teacher

Being questioned about their decision to take up music as a career is common to my participants and this mirrors the experience of others who are pursuing Western classical music. In an interview with the Indian Express, Patricia Rozario, for example, who is one of the two Indians to be awarded the Fellowship from the Royal College of Music in London, reports a similar narrative as my participants.

> Coming from India it was a big challenge to act and be a character in operas. People took time to take me seriously. As an Indian, I was treading a certain path, which not many have. (Indian Express, 2014)

Some of the participants, however, are happy to be seen as different because of their choice to pursue music. They are proud of following their passion and what it represents in the face of the doubt of peers and parents. Currently, there is little

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research data that discusses and analyses the success rate of musical careers in India – and, naturally, any examination of professional musical life in India would need to be aware of the many different forms a career in music might take. Exploring in detail the full gamut of formal and informal music education in India is beyond the scope of this study. However, as one of my research objectives was to influence in some way the policy makers and educators to consider music education as an integral part of education, I would hope that this study might help by paving the way for further research and study on formal and informal music education in India and, more specifically, in Indian schools. It would also be beneficial to map the musical career paths of those who access formal music education and compare it with those who do not.

5.1.2 Religion and Class: Is Western classical music Christian?

In India, Western classical music as a sharing of culture is evident in the Parsi and Christian communities. It is a form of communication that comes along with sharing a language, promoting connections and roots to ancestors, and cultural histories. As mentioned in the analysis chapter, the Western classical music traditions in India were, for a long time, strong in the Christian and Parsi community. Individuals belonging to the Parsi or Christian (Goan and Anglo-Indian) communities share distinct narratives compared to those from other backgrounds. However, it is important to recognize that the influence of religion extends beyond just these communities. Other participants in the study may not come from a Christian background but still have their narratives shaped by religious beliefs. For example, some individuals may have initially pursued Indian classical music due to their religious upbringing, which emphasises the importance of arts as a form of spiritual

expression. The interplay between Western classical music and Indian classical music is another fascinating aspect to explore within the context of religion and culture. Participants with diverse religious backgrounds may have encountered a fusion of musical styles, creating a rich tapestry of cultural exchanges and artistic innovations. Furthermore, the study's findings shed light on how Western classical music serves as a bridge between different cultures and belief systems, promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding. To fully grasp the broader implications of these narratives, it would be beneficial to delve deeper into the personal stories and experiences of individual participants. Understanding how music has shaped their lives, beliefs, and identities can provide insights into the role of Western classical music as a dynamic force in shaping India's cultural landscape. Some of the participants started as Indian classical musicians as a result of their religious upbringing.

> I grew up in a Tamil Brahmin family, so there's always this love for the music in our family, but it was usually more towards film music. They still want me to pursue film and I mean eventually actually that led to me learning Karnatic music singing because that was usually the first preference. HC, Performer

For HC's parents, pursuing film music was a safer option as they were aware of it, in contrast to the not-so-familiar Western classical music. For HC, hailing from a Tamil Brahmin family, it challenged the usual stereotypes to learn Western classical music in a context that allied it more with the Parsi and Christian communities. While HC's family's aspirations for his career trajectory remained resolute, his exploration of Karnatic music singing evolved into a cherished and personal pursuit. It emerged as an interconnecting bridge, allowing him to establish a profound sense of cultural belonging and to forge a link with the ancestral heritage of his Tamil Brahmin lineage. In his book, *A Southern Music: the Karnatik Story*, T.M. Krishna highlights

the problematic caste structures that still exist in the Karnatic music world.

> Caste, as all of us know, is a socio-hierarchical norm that has been part of Indian society from time immemorial. It could not have but influenced Karnatic music, its social identity, the thought processes and behavior of its practitioners and patrons…From the advent of the Kutcheri till today, Karnatic music has been dominated by the Brahmin community, both in practice of the art and in audience composition. (Krishna, 2013, p. 336)

Krishna (2013) here highlights the inextricable link between the caste system in India and Karnatic music. He suggests that caste divisions have not only influenced the music but have also had a profound impact on those involved in Karnatic music. Furthermore, he emphasises the historical and continued dominance of the Brahmin community in this musical tradition, both as performers and as the primary audience. This connection between caste and Karnatic music underscores the complex interplay between music, culture, and social structures in India.The deeply entrenched caste norms may influence the creative choices, themes, and interpretations of musicians, subtly shaping the artistic expressions within the genre. Similarly, the audience's cultural conditioning, influenced by caste affiliations, could contribute to specific preferences and expectations in their appreciation of Karnatic music. Ajotikar (2021) discusses caste in Post-colonial India and the political ramifications on Marathi theatre in the west of India. Among such other scholars, Qureshi (1991) also discusses tensions that prevailed between the Muslims and upper caste Hindus in Hindustani Classical music, and the issues of class and castes within it. HC was the only one of my participants to mention his caste explicitly. While this is not something that is pursued in the present study, it would be an interesting exercise to map the overlapping social structures between caste and Western classical music. As noted above, HC challenged stereotypes in his pursuit of Western classical music. However, an argument can be made that being from a

Tamil Brahmin family, it was not his caste per se but the greater cultural and social capital of belonging to a higher class that enabled him to access Western classical music. Perhaps, Western classical music, despite all its problematic connotations, has the potential of 'blurring caste stereotypes' (Avis, 2017, p. 156).

Coomi Kapoor, in 1984, made a comment about how in earlier times, every upper middle class Parsi or Christian home would have compulsory piano lessons. Caplan (2020) writes that the identity formation of the Anglo-Indian community in India was based on their desire to ally themselves with European culture because one side of the family, usually the paternal side, was itself European. Further findings from his and Marsden's (2018) research also explain the discourses around Parsi and Christian communities and their relationship with Western classical music.

> Historical associations with Parsi and Catholic communities were still present in the scene, although many people told me that this was changing, and that Western music was attracting attention from Hindu and Muslim middle classes. (Marsden, 2018, p. 133)

> These communities mobilised the significance of Western classical music within broader conversations about modernity and universalism while also positioning it in relation to situational and local relations and interactions. (Avis, 2017, p. 234)

FM talks about his Parsi background when he says, 'I come from a religion that is very INTO Western classical music'. His way of expressing this idea gave the impression that he believed this stereotype of Parsis is well known. The Parsi community, followers of Zoroastrian religion who emigrated to India from Persia, embraced European culture, education, and music in order to be allies of the British and considered themselves as an elite (see also Palsetia, 2001).

> Indeed, through cultural, economic and religious exchanges, Western musical practices became important for minority communities including the Anglo-Indians, Parsis, Portuguese-Goans, and Baghdadi Jews. These communities used Western art music to express and delineate community identity, religious orientation, as a means of allying themselves with the British and other European powers, as well as a mode of socialising in India's metropolitan centres. The Parsi community in Bombay, for example, embraced European culture, education and music, and mobilised this as a way to ally themselves with British business interests as well as to present themselves as a transnational, modern elite… (Avis, 2017, p. 36)

In this instance, I would therefore draw comparisons to Chinweizu's notion of 'Calibans vs Ariels'. In this book *Decolonising the African mind* (1987), Chinweizu talks about these characters from *The Tempest* and how Ariel is eager to seek his master Prospero's approval and learn and adapt the mannerisms and ways of the imperialists, while Caliban resists, seeking to overthrow Prospero; in Chinweizu's analogy, Prospero represents the colonisers. This may be a more speculative point, but I see similarities between Chinweizu's concept of 'Ariels' and the Parsi and Christian communities that sought the allyship with the British colonisers during the time of the Raj. I am not claiming that the Parsis and Christians were not, in reality, anti-colonial but however if they continue to dominate the field of Western classical music, it may continue to be seen as inherently colonial as a result of that history, and the Caliban(s) will struggle to fight this perception regardless of other considerations.

SH points out the generalisation that Western classical music in India is closely associated with Christianity. While my study is not intended to represent wider trends, it is the case that the majority of my participants are in fact Hindus or were raised as Hindus.

> Because I think there was the heavy ties and in India at least still, where Western classical is associated with a very Christian identity and if we can get

away from those labels, yeah and say that actually mainstream... when I say mainstream what I mean is just that the majority population can accept it and say it's not just an idea. It's actually acceptable by a larger population as an art form that's just beautiful because it's just music and it's not it's not about any particular religion or something like that. I think that would be the next step in demystifying or taking the thing away from one pocket of society. SH, performer/teacher

SH's perspective on Western classical music finds resonance among most participants in the study, as he believes that this genre transcends specific religious or community ownership. Instead, he advocates for it to be open to anyone who chooses to engage with it and wishes to learn, play, or sing it. SH's work within Indian communities reveals a positive trend of wider acceptance of Western classical music as an art form, making it more accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds. By moving away from labelling and stereotypes, SH emphasizes the importance of recognising Western classical music as an art form that can operate in different contexts. This shift aligns with the notion of studying cultures in a processual manner, allowing Western classical music to integrate into the mainstream of Indian society without being confined by cultural boundaries. This broader acceptance fosters cultural inclusivity and facilitates cross-cultural exchange, promoting appreciation of diverse artistic expressions. SH's proposition encourages Indian society to appreciate Western classical music for its intrinsic beauty and artistic value, rather than interpreting it as a cultural representation of a particularly religious group, or of the West. He feels that the majority population should embrace and acknowledge it as a form of art that holds intrinsic beauty, rather than viewing it through the lens of religious identity.

However, in the context of this study, only one participant is Parsi and seven are Christian. In the aforementioned Facebook groups for Western classical musicians in India, members come from diverse religious backgrounds, which highlights that the

Western classical music in India is no longer restricted to the Parsi and Christian communities but is accessible to those from other religious backgrounds as well. It is, however, important to note that in certain Indian cities, like Mumbai, the Parsi community still financially supports the major art and cultural centres. The National Centre for Performing Arts is funded by Parsi philanthropists – the current chair of NCPA and the associate music director are both Parsis. Avis (2017) states that while the Parsi and Christian communities mobilised Western classical music in India they also supported other art forms and cultural activities such as film music, Indian classical music, and others.

> it is also important to note that members of both the Parsi and Baghdadi Jewish communities were also heavily involved with film music, Indian classical music and other cultural activities. Their involvement with Western art music should be understood as part of a broader network of arts patronage that was not only influenced by 'European' values but a more general interest in the arts. (Avis, 2017, p.37)

It may seem from the participants in this research that, in contemporary India, the agency of Western classical music does not lie only with the Parsi and Christian communities: it has slowly begun spreading to other communities. However, the gatekeepers and the financial power in some instances still lies with some of these communities.

When we discuss themes around religion, it is important to highlight current events in India. I mentioned earlier that India is a secular country. In an Indian context, secularism means more than just separation of religion from state; rather, it means that no religion is prioritised, and that all religions are treated equally. This is an important, and crucial, distinction. India being a multicultural state needs secularism as a uniting factor. However, in contemporary India, politically, this notion of unity is

under serious threat. Narenda Modi, from the Bharitya Janata party (BJP), the prime minister of India at the time of writing, was elected to power in 2014 and with him rose the spirit of Hindu nationalism linked to the conservative, right-wing, ideals of the BJP party. The party is closely linked to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which is a Hindu nationalist organisation. Under this regime of Hindu nationalism, and with the rise of right-wing extremism which seeks to attack the very delicate fabric of unity among religious communities by targeting minorities (Clayton, 2001), any aspect of culture that is perceived as 'colonial' or 'European' faces considerable animosity. While this does not directly affect this study or the participants, minority communities in India fear being alienised. There is also a sense of confusion that, on the one hand, the BJP government promotes Indianness and Hindu nationalism, while on the other it also would like to see India as a global superpower by attracting foreign investors and seek globalised capitalism (Avis, 2017). As part of the Narendra Modi's aim to promote the domestic manufacturing sector and increase investment in India, 'Make in India' was launched in 2014 and the practical consequences for Western classical music in India can be seen in the high taxation for musical concerts or performances that are not 'Indian'. The political situation in India is of critical importance and warrants careful consideration in this study, as there is growing apprehension and tension among minority religious communities. Additionally, it is essential to recognise that Western classical music holds a minority position within the diverse musical communities in India. This could be a potential and important further study – unpacking the religious and political tensions of contemporary India, and what they mean for music in India, both Western classical music and other musical genres.

5.1.3 Socio-economic Capital

Bradley Shope (2008) used Pierre Bourdieu's tools to comment on the place of

Western classical music in the social hierarchy of the arts in India:

> As Pierre Bourdieu teaches us, there is often a social hierarchy in the arts,
> aesthetic appreciation of which corresponds to a social hierarchy of the
> consumer. Taste is linked to markers of class. Inherent in an appreciation of
> Western classical music in India was knowledge of its unmatched exclusivity,
> exceptionality and rarity. (Bradley Shope, 2008, p. 274)

This perception mentioned by Shope arises from the historical context of Western

classical music being associated with European culture, and its dissemination in

India may have been limited to certain privileged social circles.

Despite grappling with mixed messages from their family and peers, the participants'

musical tastes and engagement with Western classical music appear to elevate their

perceived hierarchical position. NH's quote below echoes a similar experience to

AB's and raises several thought-provoking points. NH notes that people's perception

of learning the piano has evolved over time, with a growing appreciation for both the

act of learning music and the art of teaching it. She further highlights that in the past,

learning the piano was considered a pursuit limited to the 'rich' and upper class,

imbuing it with a certain prestige.

In previous chapters, I have already discussed the dynamics between the middle

class and upper class, and NH's observation adds another layer to this conversation.

She points out that nowadays, more people across all social classes in India can

access piano lessons, leading to an increased appreciation and availability of music

education. As a result, NH finds that her engagement with music affords her a

certain level of respect in her community and in broader Indian society.

The passage also opens up a discussion about the reasons behind this sense of pride and respect. One aspect to consider is whether the admiration stems from the presumption that Western classical musicians must come from higher socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds, or if it is related to the fact that this music is 'Western' and typically associated with white performers. This topic of 'ownership' of Western classical music is complex and warrants further exploration, which I will address later.

By delving into the nuanced experiences and perceptions of participants like NH, we gain insights into the evolving landscape of music appreciation in India. The changing accessibility and recognition of Western classical music challenges traditional notions of exclusivity and cultural hierarchy, leading us to ponder the intricate dynamics of identity, socio-economic status, and the influence of cultural origins in shaping musical preferences and societal perceptions. This paves the way for a deeper exploration of the complex interplay between Western classical music, its practitioners, and the broader socio-cultural context in India.

> Because now I tell anyone... When people ask me what I do, I say I teach music. I mean they are like okay but if I say I am teaching the piano or I teach Western vocals and the reaction is like WOW really. Because earlier, few years back, if you one would say I teach the piano 'oh, you teach CASIO' you know. But now people are beginning to appreciate, and piano is something that from the beginning the rich could only afford to learn it isn't it? It was only; it was limited to the upper class, piano. And now it is easily accessible you know to all almost all classes… it has that some kind of respect. NH, teacher

5.1.4 Identities and Individual Agency

At the core of this research lies an in-depth examination of the intricate web of musical, cultural, and social identities exhibited by the participants. To comprehend

these multifaceted identities effectively, a conceptual division under distinct headings and themes was employed. However, during the process of unravelling the participants' identities, it became evident that musical, cultural, and social aspects intertwined and converged in numerous areas. As a consequence, disentangling these diverse facets of identity proved to be an arduous, but also potentially misleading task. In reality, participants' holistic identities encompass a confluence of musical, cultural, social, and even national identities, alongside those shaped by various religious traditions, which, as demonstrated, significantly impact musical matters.

Organising this chapter presented a unique difficulty due to the constant intertwining and blending of the musical and cultural identities of the participants. A practical approach to understanding musical identity is to view it through the perspective of how music and the individual interact, a concept introduced by MacDonald, Hargreaves, and Miell (2002). My analysis of the participants' data motivates me to expand upon this idea. Participants interact with music and culture in various settings, ranging from formal educational environments to informal ones. Therefore, delving into 'the music' cannot be completely separated from considerations of culture and context.

In order to scrutinise these interactions and the experiences of the participants in detail, I have adopted O'Neill's concept of music learning ecologies, as elucidated in the second chapter. This framework provides a comprehensive approach to understand the intricate dynamics that underlie the development and negotiation of musical, cultural, and social identities within diverse contexts. By adopting this

perspective, we gain insights into the interplay between individuals and their musical-cultural-social milieus, shedding light on the nuanced nature of identity formation in the realm of music and culture.

5.1.4a Individual Agency

Individual agency is a crucial concept to consider when examining music education in India. As demonstrated by the experiences of VM and EC, when confronted with a lack of formal opportunities and resources, individuals have taken the initiative to assume control and develop their own musical education. VM embraced the chance to lead music for religious masses in schools, and EC made the decision to quit regular school to focus primarily on music – both of which are instances of individual agency. This demonstration of individual agency is not an isolated case, as several other participants have encountered similar limitations concerning resources and opportunities. These distinctive circumstances have motivated them to become teachers and student/performers, taking the lead in learning and teaching music in their own unique ways. This has empowered them to explore diverse learning environments and reconsider traditional educational frameworks. What supports this agential response to facing these barriers, in some cases, is the yearning to engage with this music and be driven by curiosity.

5.1.4b Indian classical music and other genres

Karnatic music is still performed predominantly in the context of Hinduism, which can create certain tensions for those of other faiths. JB, who comes from a Christian

background, loved and learned Indian classical music until she realised that singing or playing this heavily Hindu music made her feel like she was worshipping the (Hindu) Gods that she was singing to. This realisation made her step away from Indian classical music and continue, instead, with Western classical music because it was aligned with her Christian faith. A few of the participants however still engage with Indian classical music as performers, teachers and students at the same time as they work in Western classical music, and this can result in a complex interplay of identities.

> And yeah, sometimes. So why is it that is because this factor called enculturation. So, I am completely enculturated into the Indian thing. So, definitely I don't have it a thing for Western. So, my perception lens have more Indianess than the Westernness. So definitely like I don't, I cannot say western music belongs to me. Maybe, I'm trying to but right now I feel I'm more Indian with a global perspective. SC, performer/teacher

SC, who sings both Karnatic and Western classical music, finds that his identity is more Indian than Western. His perception of being more Indian can be further unpacked– what is it to be a true or authentic Indian? According to Bhabha's idea of hybridity, there is no pure or authentic Indian-ness or Western-ness. We could argue that SC's lens of viewing the world is Indian (and he is an Indian national) which makes Western classical music 'other', something that cannot belong to him. But other comments by HC indicate that this identity fluctuates depending on the situation and context.

> So, there are only like a handful of composers that actually I want to play and listen to a lot. So, most of, probably does this like what tell 10% of like the whole classical music I've actually listen to it and mainly focus on. And that probably comes from my musical background before coming here. All of the progressive metal pieces require this huge technical difficulty in physical physically difficult pieces, and those that kind of impresses me and those are the pieces I actually choose in WCM like Chopin, Liszt Etudes, Beethoven Sonatas. And so that's kind of my area, Virtuosity like striving for that. It's kind of my thing. HC, performer

The whole notion of Indians learning Western classical music, which still seems niche in some contexts, is further challenged by HC. Before joining KM Music Conservatory, he listened to progressive metal – a genre that he is still keen on pursuing. This musical taste of HC reminds us that there is of course a myriad of styles and genres intermingling in India including – Indian Indie, Indian rock, Indie pop among others. HC, hailing from a Tamil Brahmin family, learning Western classical music in a context where it sat predominantly with the Parsi and Christian community, was challenging the usual stereotypes.

> It's just interesting because coming from Western classical background now Indian classical music is much more improvisation based and Melody driven. So, I usually listen to it in order to find ideas for improvisation for it has much more rhythmic complexity as well. So, getting ideas to incorporate those rhythms in Western classical or right now, I'm also learning Jazz so in jazz improvisations and stuff. That is helping me a lot. SPC, teacher/performer

SPC takes various improvisational elements from Indian classical music and Jazz and adapts them into his own playing. This is a clear example of hybridization and the malleable nature of identities (Denora, 2000): SPC fuses together these musical methods to form his own distinct musical identity.

The external conditions such as cultural, environmental, and social conditions in the musical communities the participants have grown up in, shape their musical identities. These quotes highlight that in the making and developing of their own identities, the participants have shown that they have agency and that many are not afraid of eschewing the stereotypes.

Additionally, Avis (2019) suggests that Western classical music and Hindustani classical music have complex, intertwined histories. In the 19th century, Western

musical values influenced Indian classical music such as the Violin being adopted into the Carnatic music tradition (Weidman 2006). The Western musical values influenced Indian classical music, aiming to elevate its status and differentiate it from folk music. This modernisation process, influenced by colonial ideologies, still affects how these musical traditions are perceived today, oversimplifying their rich diversity (See Subramanian 2006).

5.2 The Local

5.2.1 Local Networks

Hyderabad, while having a small Western classical music community, has private music teachers who prepare their students for ABRSM or Trinity College of Music exams. In contrast, Chennai and Mumbai boast a slightly more active Western classical music scene, surpassing the musical presence in Hyderabad. Music Palace, a renowned musical instrument and book shop in Hyderabad, holds nostalgic memories for me, as it was a delightful treat as a child to be surrounded by an array of instruments like Violins, Guitars, Flutes, keyboards, Sitars, Veenas, Tablas, Mridingams, and various musical accessories. In Chennai, Musee Musical stood out as the go-to shop for instruments and music lessons. Similarly, in Mumbai, Furtados became the preferred music shop for everyone. Whenever I visited Mumbai, I would seize the opportunity to gather music books for my sister and her students, as finding books for Western classical music was not an easy task and purchasing them online through platforms like Amazon could be quite expensive. Shops like Furtados play a significant role by offering a wide selection of musical books to aid aspiring musicians. Notably, Kawaii pianos have established showrooms across the country where they showcase musical performances and sell

pianos. These establishments contribute to the growing local networks and facilitate access to instruments and resources for musicians in their localities.

Another common feature among the cities of Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad is the presence of choral communities. In Hyderabad, there are a few choirs, mainly catering to adults, such as Deccan Voices and Festival Choristers. I had the opportunity to perform with the Festival Choristers as an alto and cellist during my time in Hyderabad. The rehearsals for Festival Choristers typically start in late September, leading up to their performances during advent and Christmas. The rehearsals, held at a central location in a school, gather both men and women for two hours on weekday evenings. Many members are skilled at sight-reading, and the conductor guides others in learning their parts. They also spend time working on intonation and the pronunciations of the words, following the conductor, and singing with a small ensemble – usually an electric piano or keyboard with guitars, drums and some string players. The choirs' Christmas performances are highly anticipated and serve as a highlight of the festive season in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. In Mumbai, there are choirs like Stop-Gaps, formed by Alfred D'Souza, and Living Voices Mumbai, formed by Blossom Mendonca, among a few others, which participate in various festivals and events across the city. I had the opportunity to sing with the Living Voice choir and Symphony Orchestra of India, conducted by Karl Jenkins, during one of my research trips at NCPA. They rehearsed intensely and impressed the audience and orchestral musicians with their fine musicianship. Bengaluru is home to one of the country's renowned male choirs, Bangalore Men, conducted and directed by Jonas Olsson. Some members of the choir, including Jonas himself, also teach at the Bangalore

School of Music. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to conduct one of their

Christmas Carols performances in a shopping mall in the city. I saw first-hand that

the choir formed a close-knit community of singers and musicians, connecting

through their shared interests in singing and choral music. These choral communities

play an integral role in enriching the musical landscape of their cities, fostering a

sense of unity and camaraderie among musicians, and creating memorable

experiences through their performances at various festivals and events. Their

collective passion for choral music nurtures a vibrant musical culture in each city, a

network that contributes to the overall emerging Western classical music community

in the country. Chatterjee (2023) in her book, Choral Voices: Ethnographic

Imaginations of Sound and Sacrality, talks in depth about the choral traditions in

India with a focus on Goa and Shillong.

> Appropriation of Western classical music has taken on many forms and has of course become embedded in different places. The genres that have come together to generate a repertoire is indicative of the processes. Choral tradition is just one of the forms of Western classical music whereby voice and the vocalization technique find prominence. Through musical borrowings, there is an innovative range of cultural confluences located in different regions. One cannot deny the traces of colonial intervention in either Goa or Shillong, but the proficient adaptation and constant experimentation in musical styles speak of a certain kind of artistry that surpasses the imitative quality associated with an interpretation of a musical tradition born out of fractured lineages. (Chatterjee, 2023 pg. 10)

The quote underscores the diverse cultural contexts in which Western classical

music has found acceptance and adaptation. Chatterjee (2023) stresses the

complexity and strong integration of this appropriation process across different

regions. The combination of various musical genres has resulted in a diverse and

extensive musical collection, illustrating the dynamic nature of this process. It

specifically highlights the choral tradition, where vocal techniques are central. This

process of borrowing and integrating musical elements leads to distinctive and

inventive cultural blends in various geographic settings. While acknowledging the historical impact of colonial intervention in places like Goa and Shillong, the quote emphasises the profound adaptability and ongoing experimentation in musical styles. This creativity and versatility display a certain kind of artistry that goes beyond mere imitation. Despite the traces of colonial influence, the musicians in these regions have developed their own distinct musical expressions, surpassing the notion of a mere copy of Western classical music. Their adaptation and experimentation demonstrate a unique artistry that emerges from the fusion of Western classical music with the local musical traditions, resulting in an enriched and culturally diverse musical landscape. the diversity of religious backgrounds among the members of choirs such as Living Voices, Stop-gaps, and Bangalore Men adds a fascinating dimension to their musical communities.

As previously highlighted, opportunities for Western classical music performances are notably limited across the country and can vary significantly among different cities. However, in postcolonial India, one consistent avenue for performances in all these cities are the foreign language and cultural centres, such as Alliance Française and Goethe-Institutes. These centres regularly host a diverse array of performances to commemorate significant dates and events, inviting local communities to partake in these cultural experiences. Simultaneously, these performances serve as an effective platform for promoting the language teaching services offered by these centres. I recall one of my early performances in Hyderabad, which took place at an Alliance Française event held in a grand private hotel with a large reception. Additionally, in various Indian cities, the last Sunday of June is marked as World Music Day, celebrated in collaboration with Alliance Française and other cultural

organizations. Musicians from France, Germany, America, and other countries, tour different cities in India, to present their performances and provide masterclasses from time to time. Additionally, on occasions performances, movies and plays are screened at these centres. (See Lazarus, 2018) The consistent support and presence of foreign language and cultural centres play a vital role in fostering cross-cultural exchanges and enhancing the exposure of Western classical music to diverse audiences in India. These events not only enhance the local musical landscape but also create opportunities for international collaborations, enriching the musical experiences of both performers and audiences alike. Although not British, these institutions are European designed to promote European culture that can be further investigated.

5.2.2 Music learning ecologies

This section will draw from Susan O'Neill's (2015) study, *Mapping the musical learning ecologies*, which provides an account of the current research and a framework for understanding the complex ecologies involved in Western classical musical learning in India. According to O'Neill, the identities of individuals engaged in music learning are not isolated but rather shaped by interconnected networks of people who share specific ideas and practices. These networks are characterised as having structural and cultural boundaries, yet they are not completely closed off, allowing for interaction and exchange of knowledge (O'Neill, 2017, p.79). Examining the data analysis conducted in this study, specifically the themes identified in the previous chapter, it becomes apparent that certain key factors and enablers significantly influence the participants' identities. These factors play an active role in shaping the participants' sense of self in the musical realm. It is

important to note that the learning systems in which these individuals are involved are intricate and delicate. They are highly sensitive to the participants' own sense of agency and responsibility. In other words, how individuals perceive their ability to take action and their willingness to take ownership of their musical development greatly impact the learning systems they engage with. This perspective underscores the dynamic nature of musical identity formation, emphasising the interplay between social networks, personal agency, and the learning environment. I unpack some of these learning ecologies below.

5.2.2a Formal and informal learning environments

In the previous chapter, significant attention was given to exploring the diverse learning environments in which the participants engaged. While the informal learning experiences within the participants' homes, involving interactions with siblings and parents, were noted, the discussion also touched upon a prominent theme: the lack of resources and access to Western classical music and the implications of this. One key aspect that emerged from the data was the participants' shared experiences of inadequate music education in schools. They described the quality of music education provided within the school system as generally poor. This finding highlights a significant gap in formal music education, particularly regarding Western classical music. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the limited opportunities to learn and engage with this genre during regular school hours. As a result, the majority of the participants reported that their learning in Western classical music predominantly took place outside of the school setting. They mentioned dedicating their evenings or weekends to pursuing their passion for Western

classical music. This reveals the participants' strong personal motivation and determination to seek out opportunities for musical growth beyond what was provided within the school curriculum. The participants' narratives shed light on the complex relationship between limited access to music education in schools, the perceived poor quality of such education, and the subsequent reliance on extracurricular learning opportunities. These insights underscore the vital role that out-of-school activities, such as private lessons or independent study, played in their musical development. By considering the lack of resources and access to Western classical music within both school and non-school settings, the analysis chapter highlighted the challenges faced by the participants in their pursuit of musical learning. The broader educational landscape should be considered and the disparities in music education provision, particularly with regards to Western classical music, needs to be addressed to ensure a more inclusive and comprehensive learning experience for all aspiring musicians.

In Vishal's study titled 'The Face of Music Education in Schools in India' (2015), he arrives at the conclusion that music education in most Indian schools is of poor quality. This conclusion aligns with the views expressed by all the participants in the present study. In India, music and the arts are often perceived as hobbies or leisure activities rather than as integral parts of formal education. The lack of music education is not specific to Western classical music alone but encompasses all genres. This underwhelming experience has significantly impacted the participants' musical narratives, as they had to overcome the barriers presented by the substandard quality of music education available to them. Consequently, their identities have been shaped by and reflect a strong drive to pursue music despite the

challenges they face.

While the lack of resources mentioned earlier encouraged some participants to develop their musicianship in unexpected ways, the more significant aspect of identity formation arose from the absence of resources, which allowed certain participants to become musical leaders within their respective contexts. For instance, VM took the initiative to train people for the school choir and prepare music for events at his school. This sense of agency, not just for himself but for the entire school community, helped him develop leadership skills, ultimately leading to his career as a music teacher and conductor. This theme of assuming leadership roles within the local musical context is evident among many participants.

With the exception of a few participants who have had access to higher music education abroad, the institutional cultural capital for most participants is limited to music board exams such as ABRSM, Trinity College of Music, and the London College of Music, among others. These UK board exams are treated as awards and qualifications. They serve as the primary means for individuals learning Western classical music in India to assess their progress and gain formal recognition. Some teachers organise public recitals for their students before the exams to help them cope with performance nerves and anxiety, thereby contributing to the visibility of Western classical music in India. However, while India has national board exams and universities dedicated to Indian classical music, there is no equivalent institution specifically focused on Western classical music within the country. As mentioned earlier, KM Music Conservatory in Chennai is one of the few higher music education institutions in India that caters to Western classical music. The high fees create a further socioeconomic divide between globally oriented middle-class individuals and others. The emphasis on profit-driven model along the tensions with teaching Indian

classical and Western classical music, pedagogic methods, cultural values and the historical impact of colonialism on Indian musical institutions such as KM Music Conservatory is only briefly discussed by Avis (2019). However, this particular area could benefit from further in-depth research. The implications of relying on institutions and structures from outside India for musicians' musical identities are complex and warrant further examination, particularly in the context of postcolonial considerations.

At KM Music Conservatory, students are taught both Western classical and Hindustani classical music. There is a student Hindustani vocal ensemble that is not typically found in the tradition of Hindustani classical music. Avis (2019) sees that this Hindustani ensemble is similar to the KM Chamber Choir.

> This locates the tuition of Hindustani classical music at KM in a history of musical encounters and institutional contexts that have encouraged adaptation of the ways in which it is performed and taught… (Avis, 2019)

In his paper, *Bi-musical curricula and abyssal thinking: The case of KM Music Conservatory, India*, Avis also highlights some tensions of teaching two different styles of classical music and the pedagogic styles. The clash between the Western teachers wanting to 'encourage critical thinking' (pg. 40) and the Indian teachers seeking to stay rooted in the *gurukul* system, is evident at KM Music Conservatory. However, there is value to both these outlooks and methods of teaching music. As a student of KM, I was able to enjoy the overlapping of musical teaching styles, which enabled me to learn more about my voice and technique.

The majority of participants have received education in schools in an urban setting: a mixture of private and public schools. Only three participants from Chennai come

from a government school, which would put them in a different category in terms of socio-economic background and access to culture. These three participants are members of the Sunshine Orchestra and in another study conducted by Avis (2017), he interviews young people from this orchestra and discusses their musical and cultural experiences. He writes:

> They (members of the sunshine orchestra) are considered 'deserving poor' and of low social status because of their socioeconomic backgrounds and the status of musicians. However, they often circulate in high social networks' blurring the boundaries between the rich and the poor. (2017, p. 138)

Rupert highlights that the significance of Western art music has as much to do with local concerns and social dynamics as it does with overarching narratives about 'Western cultural hegemony'. These opportunities were available to the members of the Sunshine Orchestra because they are part of a group founded by the well-established and famous Indian music director, A R Rahman, who also founded the KM Music Conservatory. Interestingly, in this study, the members of the Sunshine Orchestra were the only participants whose interviews were in a mix of Tamil and English. Since they studied in Tamil medium schools, they were not fluent in English. However, their engagement with various visiting music faculty at KM Music Conservatory, with which the Sunshine Orchestra is associated, helped them develop their English-speaking skills. Most of the staff that teach Western music at KM Music Conservatory, including visiting teachers, are predominantly white and or have had higher music education abroad. This may establish expectations among the students that study here about where the agency for this music lies and who it might 'belong to'. While these are issues for all musicians engaging with Western classical music, the impact on individual identity may be especially significant for the members of the Sunshine Orchestra. I try to unpack this later in the chapter.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note the particular position of these musicians from poorer socio-economic backgrounds in the context of the evolving status of Western classical music in India, and the support of individuals like Rahman.

5.2.2b Virtual culture and online communities

The previous chapter brought to light the importance of technology, internet, and globalisation to this particular study, with the focus on the experience of the participants. Over the past two decades, the advent of innovative and increasingly potent digital technology has brought about a transformative shift in the domain of music perception and reception worldwide. The proliferation of digital technology has opened up new avenues for musicians and music enthusiasts alike. With the rise of digital platforms and streaming services, access to an immense variety of musical genres and artists from across the globe has become effortlessly attainable. Using the internet and apps like YouTube has enabled participants and provided them with opportunities to access music from around the world. As a result, listeners in India can explore and appreciate a vast array of musical styles that were previously out of reach or restricted to select circles. And since some of the participants were not able to get resources like sheet music and books in India, the internet opened avenues by giving them access to find resources from further afield. Recall that SM uses words such as 'scour' and 'thirsty' when discussing accessing music over the internet, indicating the sense of a need that is served by the internet. The usage of these words is also a reflection of what the other participants experienced in expressing the lacunae which is filled by the internet.

> Says Veda Agarwal, a classical guitarist from Pune: "There's a before-and-after-YouTube story in the history of Western classical music in India. I know

of people in small towns who watch videos of the masters at play and find online tutorials. I have picked up lessons on YouTube and taken classes on Skype." (Chanda, 2014)

As we have seen, due to the lack of teaching resources, participants also used YouTube videos as a means to self-teach Western classical music prior to which was the *Cassette* culture (Manuel, 1993). This active learning is key to the participants and is an important enabler for them to learn and engage with Western classical music. In working this way, they embodied the role of the teacher and student simultaneously. Veda Aggarwal, in an interview with Chanda (2014), speaks about his own learning through the internet and specially from YouTube. In a personal conversation one of the music teachers from Hyderabad, who is also a performer, mentioned that they were using videoconferencing to teach students from Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru online even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the global rise in online learning and teaching. They had also started learning piano from a teacher based in the UK via zoom and skype lessons. For this study, the internet was another means to find and connect with my participants.

Young (2020) talks about different kinds of knowledge, highlighting notions of experiential and institutional knowledge. Experiential knowledge is that which you learn from your life experiences, for example though immediate family or peers, and the situations you find yourself in. Institutional knowledge is the knowledge you gain from formal education. Some of the participants had limited exposure to in-person performances and other interactions and as noted above, formal education was also hard to come by. In other words, both experiential and institutional knowledge was lacking. Thus, these virtual platforms were especially significant in enabling them to access a vast variety of performances across the widest possible range of musical

genres and contexts is especially, thus helping their learning and development in Western classical music, but also shaping their musical identities in a global context.

It is important, however, to recognise that access to computers and technology in India is a reflection of socio-economic status. Having internet and a computer (desktop or laptop) could indicate they are more affluent families and reflect the privilege of middle class. In her study, Sharma (2015) highlights the role of the internet in promoting the values of the middle class. Access to global trends and sharing information transnationally is possible for the middle classes in a way that it might not be for other socio-economic groups. In his paper, 'The paradox of the BJP's stance towards external economic liberalisation: why a Hindu nationalist party furthered globalisation in India', Arulanantham (2004) states that the middle class saw a significant rise under the rule of Rajiv Gandhi (Congress Party) in the 1980s as a result of 'the consumption-led growth pattern and the steps taken towards deregulation' (2004). He further writes -

> The middle class came to believe in modernisation and rapid development and sought wider consumer choice including access to imports.
> (Arulanantham, 2004, p.11)

While technology for most participants has been a useful tool in accessing Western classical music, it is important to note that technology is not used uncritically. SM highlights how he is not keen on joining certain apps like Instagram because of the particular restrictions they place on interaction. In his case, the resistance comes from the one-minute limit on videos that was current at the time of my interview with him. He observed that, because of this limit, people tended to use everything apart from the actual music to sell their music. He questioned the possibility for meaningful musical content in the context of the one-minute limit:

> [Yeah, everything has to be instant] Yeah, and like there's a big resistance to join Instagram because first of all, like, you see that people use everything besides music to sell their music, you know, the content of the music is not really at the forefront always. It is a lot of like pictures, you know, filters and one-minute bytes of music, you know it can only be about impressing you know, the whole bigger picture is always going to be looked over. SM, performer/teacher

SM's criticism of Instagram brings to mind the notion of 'virtual culture', that is, the norms of behaviour associated with the internet and the online world. Mitra (1997) in his paper *Virtual commonality: Looking for India on the Internet,* explores the multiplicity of voices, and imagining India as a 'virtual culture' in the online space.

> The term internet has become a generic label that refers to the electronic system and space where many people can present their ideas to produce a new computer reality which is the sum of the various opinions, ideas, practices, and ideologies… (Mitra, 1997, p.58)

Social media has played a pivotal role by encouraging individuals with shared interests to be part of online groups on Facebook thus creating this strong sense of virtual community with further implications for musical identities. There are Facebook groups for Western classical musicians in India. This is another example of connectedness and relatedness.

> This idea of *relationality* has been extended beyond the sense of connectedness that is created through social interaction alone to recognize various ways young people engage with non-human, multimodal, and technological objects and the significance of these in their everyday lives within particular landscapes—including musical landscapes in today's digital age. (O'Neill, 2017, p. 86)

O'Neill further states that combining connectedness with digital technology make it exist in dual state, either on or off. Mitra (1997) explains that it is community members' interactions on the internet that hold together these internet communities. He adds that these interactions also indicate the direction in which these groups are

heading. It is clear from the responses of my participants that online groups for Western classical music exist, and are significant, in India and there is scope for further research to understand the relationship between digital technology, connectedness and how this impacts the lives of these young Indian musicians. Not all the participants had a local peer group or community that shared similar musical interests. However, to shape their identities through shared musical allegiances, the advent of new technology has facilitated a global interconnectedness. Now, individuals from any corner of the world can forge connections with others based on their shared interests, similar allegiances, and mutual appreciation for specific types of music. This digital landscape has transcended geographical boundaries, enabling like-minded music enthusiasts to unite and interact, irrespective of their physical location.

Even renowned institutions have embraced this global means of communication in music. Symphony orchestras and opera houses, institutions steeped in tradition, have adapted to the digital age to reach wider audiences. One such example is the esteemed Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, which has embraced live streaming to bring all its captivating concerts to audiences worldwide through digital platforms. There are also other orchestras such as Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra who have specific online material recorded specifically. Similarly, the legendary operas staged at institutions like the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Covent Garden Opera in London are no longer confined to their traditional venues. These operatic performances can now be accessed on the internet, transcending geographical boundaries, and enabling music lovers from all corners of the globe to revel in the beauty and artistry of these masterpieces. This digital

transformation has unlocked new possibilities for cultural exchange and appreciation. Music lovers from diverse backgrounds and regions can now witness performances that were once restricted to the privileged few attending exclusive events. As a result, a broader audience can immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Western classical and popular music, gaining a deeper appreciation for these art forms. Auh and Walker (2017) suggest that musical identity is now a global phenomenon where individuals from any country can form musical identity groups with anyone, anywhere in the world. Moreover, musicians can now post their own compositions and performances on the internet for anyone to see and enjoy.

The participants in this study, however, see technology first and foremost as a tool for accessing Western classical music. In a secondary way, it enables them to form networks and communities, supporting those on- and off- line. Talking about connectedness offline, HC talks about the network in which he participates with his pianist friends.

> So especially all my pianist friends we're like continuously… so we actually speak about at least one composer once a day at least... HC, performer

HC highlights the identity he shares with his pianist friends and how this is supported by regular discussions about music and composers. In a sense, this suggests that he and his pianist friends share a badge (Firth 1981) of musical tastes in relation to composers. This sense of a 'badge' of belonging can also be applied to the wider virtual community of Western classical musicians discussed earlier. The sense of 'other' seems to help strengthen and form the identity of the participants in this study, and that is something I recognise from my own experience. In my own family, my

sister and I are musicians, but all but one of my cousins are engineers, and one is a physicist. Growing up, I had no friends within my immediate friend circle who were taking music, dance, and art lessons as I was. I was therefore very aware of my 'otherness' in relation to my friends and family who were non-musicians. Clarke (2008) suggests that experiencing 'self' is not possible without the experience of 'others' and the crucial experience of 'difference'. This idea of 'us' and 'them', leads to the many possibilities of what marks the personal and the social aspects of identity, and it can also be related to the othering of Western classical music in India.

It is imperative to understand the evolving nature of how musical traditions are passed down and shared within society. It highlights the increasing role of "imagined others" (Dueck, 2017) in this transmission, referring to musicians and musical practices that are not physically present in the immediate community but are known through various mediated forms like recordings, publications, and performances that are widely circulated. Traditionally, when the participants of this study learn to make music, they would primarily familiarise themselves with the musical practices of their family members, the local community, the school, the church etc. However, with advancements in technology and mass media, they now have the opportunity to learn from and be influenced by musicians from distant and unfamiliar places as well. This engagement with music and musicians beyond their immediate social groups helps them expand their understanding and appreciation of diverse musical traditions. By attuning themselves to the styles and techniques of these distant others, young musicians both acknowledge the existence of broader networks of musical circulation and extend these networks by incorporating new influences into their own music. The process of mutual attunement among these musicians from

various social groups can be seen as an essential aspect of contemporary identity formation. As they integrate different musical elements into their own practice, they are shaping their unique musical identities, drawing from a rich tapestry of cultural influences. Furthermore, this engagement with diverse musical traditions can foster a sense of allegiance or connection among musicians across different communities. It promotes a shared interest and appreciation for music, creating a form of cultural bonding that transcends geographical and social boundaries. This in turn helps form the emerging ecosystem of Western classical music.

5.3 The National

This section endeavours to provide a macro-level examination of Western classical music in India, delving into its multifaceted presence and influence within the country's cultural scene. Having unpacked individual instances and localised perspectives, the following section seeks to illuminate several themes that have shaped the discourse surrounding this musical tradition. Firstly, it explores the position of Western classical music with a thorough investigation of Postcolonial India, elucidating the historical context and unveiling the enduring impact of colonial heritage on the adoption and reception of this musical genre. Subsequently, it examines the ramifications of the presence and significance of UK music Board exams in India. An exploration of wider perceptions towards Western classical music then follows, unravelling the sociocultural factors that engender and influence their attitudes. Lastly, I consider the question of ownership, examining the manifold cultural affiliations and dynamics that contribute to Western classical music's integration into the heterogeneous tapestry of Indian musical traditions.

5.3.1 Western classical music in Postcolonial India

The cultural arena in which this study takes place plays a crucial role in shaping the musical identities of the participants, directly addressing the third research question. India's cities exhibit varying degrees of multiculturalism, and Mumbai, in particular, stands out as a prominent example. Being the financial and entertainment capital of India, Mumbai is also among the world's top ten commercial centres in terms of global financial flow (Nakaskar, 2011). This city offers a cosmopolitan lifestyle, attracting people from diverse cultural, financial, and religious backgrounds, making it a melting pot of cultures and influences.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, Mumbai is not only the heart of the Hindi film industry but also houses the National Centre of Performing Arts (NCPA), the home of India's only national orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI). Despite its status as the national orchestra, it is notable that the SOI predominantly consists of Kazakhstani musicians, with only a limited number of Indian musicians actively participating. This situation could be seen as a reflection of Mumbai's cosmopolitan environment and the city's cultural diversity. The presence of many international musicians in the orchestra mirrors the multicultural nature of the city itself, attracting talent from around the world. This amalgamation of musical expertise enriches the city's artistic landscape and adds to its vibrant musical scene. However, there is also a dearth of Indian musicians at the level required for participation in a national symphony orchestra operating on Western terms. This observation points to the more complex issues of musical education, training, and opportunities for aspiring Indian musicians. It calls attention to the challenges faced by local talents in reaching the standard expected for a national symphony orchestra, which primarily adheres to

Western classical music conventions.

This small number of Indian players in SOI underlines the importance of promoting

musical education and training opportunities in Western classical music for Indian

musicians. While the cosmopolitan nature of Mumbai enriches its musical

ecosystem, fostering the growth of local talents is equally vital to achieve a more

inclusive and representative musical landscape. By nurturing local talents and

providing them with opportunities for musical development, Mumbai can further

strengthen its musical identity and celebrate the rich diversity of both Indian and

international musical traditions within its boundaries. K.N. Suntook, the current Chair

of the NCPA, in an interview with Forbes India, says-

> "You can blame me for that," … When we started auditions in 2005, we heard
> dozens of Indians. And all I heard Marat [Bisengaliev, musical director of SOI]
> say was '*nyet, nyet*' [Russian for no]. My vision, and that of Dr [Jamshed]
> Bhabha [NCPA founder], was to create a professional orchestra of excellence.
> We were going to settle for nothing less." (Chanda, 2014)

Richard Bratby (2019) in his article about the SOI writes –

> In truth, in 2019 (and discounting the blood-and-soil closed shop of the Vienna
> Philharmonic) it's a rare orchestra that isn't multinational. The Berlin
> Philharmonic has players from more than 25 countries. In a city as
> kaleidoscopic as Mumbai, an orchestra containing 26 nationalities (including
> nine Britons and a sizeable Kazakh contingent) feels entirely appropriate.
> (Bratby, 2019)

Also, in support of this sentiment, Marat Bisengaliev says,

> "It's an international art form; it's not an Olympic team. It's not a national
> endeavour to have everybody in the orchestra be of Indian origin. Other
> countries where local nationality plays a part don't do so well." (Chanda 2014)

The presence of the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI) in Mumbai raises important

questions and tensions that warrant further consideration. One crucial issue revolves

around the role that an orchestra should play in India. Is its purpose primarily to project India on the international stage, displaying the country's prowess and cultural richness to the world? Alternatively, should its focus be on promoting and celebrating the diversity of music within India, reflecting the nation's unique musical heritage? Moreover, there is a question of whether orchestras should simply cater to elite audiences in cities like Mumbai strive for greater accessibility and engagement with a broader spectrum of the Indian population.

The term "Kazakhstani Indian national symphony orchestra," as used by Dinshaw when speaking to Marsden (2018), points to the dominant presence of Kazakhstani musicians in the SOI. This fact may lead to tensions and challenges for the general Indian public, especially those who do not come from elite or upper-middle-class backgrounds. It would be interesting to see what it means for these audience members to see a predominantly white or foreign orchestra in Mumbai, calling itself the Symphony Orchestra of India. Does it resonate as a representation of India? Is there a disconnection that could lead to questions about the orchestra's identity and how it relates to the cultural fabric of the country?

When talking about performance opportunities for Indians with the Symphony Orchestra of India, Marsden (2018) comments,

> The SOI represented the only large-scale opportunity for professional music performance in Mumbai at the time of research. The Bollywood industry allowed a number of musicians to earn a living through performing, however, this was not regarded in the same light as Western classical musicking. Many musicians earned their living from teaching or from unrelated jobs. (Pg 133)

While the scope of the present study does not delve deeply into unpacking these tensions around the Symphony orchestra of India, it is essential to acknowledge their

existence. The comments made by the participants in the study reflect the complexities surrounding the representation and purpose of the SOI. These tensions hint at the need for further research to explore and understand the broader societal implications of orchestras in India and their role in shaping musical identities and cultural perceptions. A more extensive investigation could explore how orchestras, particularly the SOI, achieve the delicate balance between celebrating international talent, showcasing India's musical capabilities globally, and remaining rooted in the local cultural context. Addressing these tensions may involve fostering more diverse representation within the orchestra, creating opportunities for Indian musicians, and promoting meaningful connections with a wider Indian audience.

5.3.2 UK Music Board Exams

The UK Music Board exams have featured strongly in my participant interviews. There are several UK-based music exam boards including the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music, Trinity College London, London College of Music among others, that conduct yearly or quarterly exams, both theory and practical.

The process, with an usher guiding the student to an unfamiliar exam hall and the student supplicating to the examiner sitting in judgment, creates an unequal power dynamic that echoes historical colonial practices. This format not only fails to foster an environment of equality and mutual respect but also hinders the development of creative and critical thinking in the students, as it reinforces a one-sided approach to evaluation. In these exams, students are encouraged to adopt a submissive demeanour, diligently listening to the examiner without causing any annoyance. Additionally, there is only one examiner who assesses all instruments and voices.

Reflecting upon my personal experience of undertaking these exams in India, I only encountered one female examiner among many. These examinations are often regarded as the ultimate objective, as no comparable examinations or opportunities exist. Also, it is worth noting that these same ritual aspects apply in the UK, but they are 'read' differently in Kolkata as compared with Cardiff.

While these exam boards can be considered to be critical props supporting the Western classical music ecology, participants expressed apprehensions about the restrictive and limited nature of these exams. One prominent issue highlighted was the narrow focus on exam-oriented learning, which fails to provide participants with opportunities to explore and expand their understanding of this art form beyond the requirements stipulated by the examination boards. These grade exams encompass both practical and theoretical components. The practical examinations are administered once or twice a year when a certified examiner affiliated with the board travels to various regions of India to conduct in-person evaluations. Typically, these exams take place in private music centres equipped with the necessary facilities, such as an upright piano and a designated waiting room overseen by an usher. Each student is assessed based on their performance of three (sometimes four) examination pieces, most of which are predetermined from a prescribed syllabus, as well as scales, arpeggios, and additional components such as ear-training tests or aural examinations.

AG voiced his critical perspective on music board examinations, remarking:

> Our whole problem in India is that we get trained with Trinity; we had trained with ABRSM. So, we get trained in a very strictly UK or I would say European system…

AG's observations shed light on a significant and concerning issue in the context of Indian music board exams. Despite India being a post-colonial nation state, the examinations are still taught and conducted within a European colonial framework. This perpetuates the influence of colonial ideologies and practices in the country's music educational system, reflecting a lack of progress in decolonising pedagogy. The presence of consistently white, typically male examiners further compounds the problem. Their representation as the authority figures in the examination process serves as a distressing reminder of the colonial era when European powers held dominion over Indian affairs. This not only raises questions about the lack of diversity and representation in the examination process but also highlights enduring power dynamics that have roots in colonial history. Moreover, the highly structured and ritualistic nature of the exam process resembles the UK board examinations, which were originally established during colonial times. The use of such a format perpetuates a colonial legacy in the education system, rather than embracing and celebrating India's rich cultural heritage and diverse musical traditions. It echoes Kok's (2011) point highlighted in her essay, "Music for a postcolonial Child," wherein she elucidates,

> My early musical education was a process that did not much foster intellectual curiosity and musical activity, but one in which I was taught to think in terms of cultural, national, ethnic, and economic hierarchies (Kok, 2011, p. 83).

Similar to the experiences of the participants, she highlights that that her early music education did not prioritise the cultivation of active musical engagement (in India this would be due to the lack of opportunities to do so). The ABRSM and UK board exam culture instead reinforced the ideas of superiority and inferiority.

Given the burgeoning middle class and increased exposure to Western musical

genres and styles facilitated by globalisation, India, to some extent, constitutes an ideal market for these UK-based music board exams. However, it is deeply problematic that these exams inadvertently establish cultural and economic hierarchies. Kok (2011) also touches upon the examination process itself, which encompasses "beating time to playing pieces from the Western classical canon." Only recently have these board exams begun to diversify their syllabi. (I was recently approached by one such music board to research and compile a list of composers of colour for inclusion in their syllabus.) In the following quote, Kok vividly describes how the symbols associated with ABRSM exams left an impression on her:

> "The wealth of signs and symbols both intimidated and impressed us; the entire process involved international travel, expensive hotels, embossed certificates and Her Majesty's patronage. Our minds registered the quantitative evaluations as reliable indications of each candidate's worth and degree of 'Britishness' in activities ranging from beating time to playing pieces from the Western classical canon... I was, in short, imbibing postcolonial values alongside note values, chord progressions, melodies, and rhythms prescribed by the ABRSM as suitable for my level of skill" (Kok, 2011, p. 83).

Kok's observations deeply resonate within an Indian context. Many teachers and students take pride in laminating and framing their ABRSM certificates, which are printed on thick paper and bear the examiner's signature, the ABRSM seal, and the names of the institutions comprising the Associate Board of Royal Schools of Music. These certificates are then displayed on walls. I vividly recall my own delight upon seeing the name of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (formerly known as the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama) on these certificates in India. For me, it symbolised a connection between the two physical countries that held personal significance—an integral aspect of my identity. Kok aptly captures the problematic nature of these practices and signifiers within the postcolonial context. Marsden (2018), in her research also highlights this.

A personal account of a musician who felt restricted by her national identity has been provided by Roe-Min Kok, a pianist and scholar born in Malaysia. Kok correlates her own desire to become a musician, to learn the piano and do her ABRSM12 grades, with a deeper desire to 'become British' (Kok 2011:82). This desire echoes a theme common in post-colonial theory, described by Robert Young as a postcolonial 'desire to become white' (Young 2003:23), a condition he suggests is part of the process of negotiating between layers of different value systems, changing race and class by assimilating the dominant culture (2003:33). Marsden, 2018

During a conversation with another participant, MM, the topic of discussion revolved around the business model employed by these exam boards and the effectiveness of their exams in cultivating a student's comprehension of Western classical music or music in general.

It provides certification, and it is a business that's it, it doesn't do anything for student development the syllabus itself doesn't push the child to achieve an international level of understanding, there is no input or care from them to actually develop anything here that's all on us anyway and they are ridiculously expensive… MM, teacher/performer

MM comments on the exam boards as a "business" is telling: in effect, students pay for certification, not for learning and the syllabus does little to widen the learning of the students. Given the scarcity of opportunities for students to explore, perform and engage with Western classical music in India, the nuances of ABRSM examinations take on even greater importance. There is significant scope for the exam boards to address the broader needs of musicians in Commonwealth countries, which are only partially met by the current approach.

There is also the lack of accessibility due to the cost of these exams. With the ABRSM, a Grade 1 practical exam costs £50 which goes up to £150 for a Grade 8; the theory exams are similarly priced, and one cannot gain a Grade 8 ABRSM exam without also gaining a Grade 5 theory. The average salary in India according to the

world workers index is 45000 INR and an LRSM exam costs 58300 INR. It would be useful to further delve into the number of students appearing for these exams across the Indian subcontinent each year and the fees that are generated through this. Who truly benefits more from these UK based board exams - is it the Indians giving these exams or structures like ABRSM, Trinity College of music?

> India is better off with its trained teachers developing proper 'syllabuses with the goal to develop the students to a real artistic understanding, with genuine care and concern for the students growth and not just to make money, people trust the brand name and it is seriously letting them down. Basically, I think anyone who has studied properly can create their own syllabus in India for Indians and it will be much better than what ABRSM is providing. MM, teacher/performer

There is also a further discussion to be had about music teachers' development and skills enhancement in India. ABRSM and the other exam boards have courses for teachers, with assessments and certification, but these are again based on the European traditions of music teaching. Without researching and developing a strong understanding of India's needs for Western classical music education, there is a sense of a lack of sensitivity to difference on the part of the UK Music boards. MM believes that India will be *better off* with creating its own music board exams.

SH introduces another dimension of the Indian context, emphasising the sense of achievement experienced upon successfully passing these grade exams, which have become the primary method of assessing Western classical music in India, as previously noted. SH encourages aspiring musicians to go beyond these exams, surpassing the three pieces they learn each year solely for the purpose of examination. He urges young musicians to question the field and cultivate curiosity. On a practical level, SH notes that posing more questions about music and delving deeper into its intricacies will foster musical growth.

I think the general Indian mentality can, oversimplification here, is that there's a sense of achievement when you have a certain grade or a certain degree or a certain sense of this. And if we can get past that and say that hey actually, you know what when we're talking about art and music or anything actually when you say, you talk about any field. There's the depth and there is the breadth of field and you need people who can give you a very helpful understanding of the field not just a one-dimensional "I've heard these pieces in this particular grade syllabus so, this is what this is" and if we can get away from these platitudes and encourage educators and teachers to for themselves to kind of discover more and being curious to say that hey, I'm not really sure about this. [Yeah] I think if we can allow people to do that, there will be more growth immediately and what just I think the curiosity of the subject should be that we don't know, hence we want to seek and not that we know so we want to impart that would be my thing. SH, performer/teacher

AG discusses how Mexican orchestras not only perform works by renowned composers such as Beethoven or Mozart but also incorporate regional and national music, thus representing their own culture and traditions. While there are a few examples of this in an Indian context—such as Ravi Shankar's Sitar Concerto for sitar and orchestra and works by Indian composers that align with Western classical music—there exists immense potential for Indian policy makers to build on.

There are significant underlying matters that demand attention and resolution in this context. The UK board exams play a crucial role in supporting and nurturing the emerging ecosystem of Western classical music in India. These exams provide opportunities and platforms for young musicians to engage with this musical style, which would otherwise be limited or in some cases non-existent in their local or national communities. However, the current UK-based colonial-style examination boards will perpetuate British colonial influence and its structures unless they are substantially reformed.

In considering the notion of a postcolonial national music board, it becomes crucial to recognise and engage with not just Indian classical music but the myriad of folk and traditional music in India. Again, this presents a complex situation as a postcolonial Indian government seeks to foster the growth of Western musical traditions, which may be perceived as borrowed or foreign. Policy barriers, such as the higher Goods and Services Tax (GST) imposed on Western music concerts compared to Indian music concerts, further add to the challenges faced by Western classical music in India. This tax disparity raises questions about its impact on music access and the possibility of being influenced by political agendas.

The aim of this research is not exclusive promotion of Western classical music, but rather on creating a comprehensive musical infrastructure that resembles the concept of the 'third space,' as articulated by Bhabha (1994). This 'third space' represents a zone where cultures intersect, coexist, and engage in negotiation. Such an infrastructure is envisioned to cater to the diverse needs of a globalized India. Given the growing interest in music from various cultures among middle-class Indian households, it is imperative to adopt an inclusive, postcolonial approach to music education in India. This approach should encompass a wide array of musical genres, including Indian classical music, while embracing indigenous pedagogical methodologies.

Furthermore, it is essential to underscore the significance of an inclusive and culturally sensitive evaluation system within this broader educational framework. India, as a postcolonial nation with a vibrant cultural identity, should strive to create an educational environment that authentically reflects its unique heritage.

Empowering musicians from diverse backgrounds and fostering the preservation and development of Indian musical traditions can be effectively achieved through initiatives aimed at decolonising music education and reforming the examination boards. Such changes would not merely validate and promote India's musical heritage but also stimulate creativity, cultivate critical thinking, and nurture an appreciation for cultural diversity among those students who are learning music. By recognising historical injustices and embracing India's postcolonial identity, the music education system can play a pivotal role in providing an inclusive, equitable, and culturally enriched learning experience for all students, irrespective of caste, class, religion, or gender.

It is important to emphasise that learning and teaching the history of Western classical music is not an academic exercise; it carries profound political and historical implications. Therefore, decision-making in this regard should be approached thoughtfully, aligning with and reflecting India's distinctive local, regional, and global identities. When instructing music history beyond the Western context, it should be viewed as an opportunity to construct a comprehensive global narrative that transcends oversimplified dichotomies between the West and the East. This narrative seeks to create a space where cultural boundaries are porous, allowing for the amalgamation of cultural attributes and the space for differences.

5.3.3 Tom and Jerry Music: The 'man in the street's perspective'

Marsden (2018) in her study found that when she arrived in Mumbai in 2014, the Western classical music scene was small, apart from the exception of the Symphony

Orchestra of India (SOI).

> I noted how a small number of individuals, communities, and locations
> supported almost all activity; I would see the same faces again and again, at
> concerts, in rehearsals, at lectures, and so on. A city of upwards of twenty
> million people soon felt like a village, within which factions, smaller groups
> and communities with various allegiances were roughly grouped according to
> geographical location, to leading personalities, and, to a lesser extent,
> religious communities. (Marsden, 2018)

The participants who come from urban and suburban settings, give a personal

insight about what general assumption of where Western classical music sits within

Indian society, referring to their social circles.

> The only place is in the conservatory. Outside conservatory is there's not
> much of a presence and though now it's changing, like people from KM are
> performing outside and you know trying to make the present. So, I guess first I
> would like to start making a presence you know. So maybe if there are more
> people we could reach out to or like more media people supporting it and you
> know giving it a little bit more support. That could strengthen the roots of
> WCM in India. JC, performer/teacher

In India, there is a prevailing lack of awareness of Western classical music among

the public. However, despite this, Western classical music has found its way into the

heart of Indian film music, whether in Bollywood or the other regional film industries.

This integration can be traced back to the late colonial era, when musicians who

were part of colonial popular culture transitioned into the film industry, particularly

after the advent of sound cinema in 1931. The presence of these musicians allowed

Indian film music directors, who were well-versed in Indian classical music, to

collaborate with professional Western classical musicians. As a result, orchestral

arrangements became a prominent feature in Indian film music, reshaping the

musical landscape (Morcom, 2017). Interestingly, many of these skilled musicians

hailed from Goan Christian and Parsi communities.

This cultural amalgamation raises important questions about the perception of Western classical music in India. One might assume that after the colonial period, Western classical music, being associated with the history of colonialism, would not be a popular genre in postcolonial India. However, with the onset of globalisation and the rise of the middle-class community, access to a diverse range of musical genres and styles has become possible.

Despite the increasing exposure to various musical genres, Western classical music still struggles to gain widespread popularity in India. One of the key reasons, as discussed in previous chapters, is the lack of opportunities in terms of qualified teachers, resources, and financial support to learn and pursue this genre. As a result, many aspiring musicians are discouraged from exploring Western classical music as a serious option, which hinders its growth and popularity. While the influence of Western classical music in Indian film music is evident, the genre's broader acceptance and adoption in mainstream Indian society remains relatively limited. The challenges faced by aspiring Western classical musicians, coupled with the historical associations tied to colonialism, have shaped the way it is perceived in India's cultural landscape. However, with increasing exposure to global influences and a growing middle-class, there is hope that Western classical music may find a more significant following in India in the future.

As this study focused solely on the experiences and narratives of its participants, it faced limitations in capturing the perspectives of the wider Indian population. Conducting interviews or interactions with individuals who were not regular audience members at the selected performance venues in the chosen cities presented

challenges in recruitment. Additionally, ensuring the data collected was representative and not wildly idiosyncratic posed further difficulties. Nonetheless, the study attempted to explore the participants' perception of how the 'common man' in India views Western classical music. One of the interview questions directly addressed this topic: 'What would a person on the streets of India have to say about Western classical music? Would they know what it is?' The responses to this question revealed intriguing insights.

Two quotes from the participants indicated that English language (American and British) pop music is much more widely accessible in India compared to Western classical music, and that the accessibility of pop music from the Global North, where the artists and musicians are predominantly white and from Western countries, seemed to lead the general public in India to assume that this music is synonymous with Western classical music. It seems that the broader Indian public often associates Western classical music with the popular music they encounter from the West. In doing so, they might overlook the distinct and complex nature of Western classical music as a genre, with its rich historical traditions and unique characteristics. Even after one participant, JC, joined KM Music Conservatory, Western classical music continued to be perceived as just another part of the wider category of 'white person's music'. This observation underlines the need for greater awareness and education about Western classical music in India to distinguish it from other genres and to appreciate its cultural significance and artistic depth.

> Their answers will be whether you know Adele or MJ or like basically what we call pop music. That is Western classical music for them… even when I first came to KM, I even thought it is that because my background of listening was MJ and those people… problem of the terminology… when we talk about this

> Western classical like that emphasis is always, oh, it is a white person's thing. It is not really an Indian thing… JC, performer/teacher

The encounters that BB has had with people, including prospective students, who confuse pop music with Western classical music, are indeed fascinating. BB chuckles as she recounts the amusing instances of such misunderstandings:

> Hmmm, their answer will probably be like like pop music related. They'll be like, oh Justin Bieber. (laughs) I'll be like no because that's actually happened to me a lot. Like I had a student like she came to just meet me and stuff. And then she asked me she wanted to learn like pop music, but she thought that was WCM and so she asked me to sing a song not a piece like just sing a song. I sang a jazz song and then her mom was like wow that is true Western classical music, and I was like, no it really it isn't. Yeah. BB, performer/student

Western classical musicians in India have occasionally displayed a condescending attitude towards Bollywood film music, and other genres - they are considered to be of 'poor quality' unlike classical music (Marsden, 2018). However, this attitude is gradually evolving as new hybrid ideas emerge through the blending of musical styles. The Shillong Chamber Choir stands as one such example of this transformation. In her paper titled 'Performing Bollywood Broadway: Shillong Chamber Choir as Bollywood's Other,' Sebanti Chatterjee (2020) delves into the choral music field in India, focusing on the Shillong Chamber Choir and how they achieved national fame by incorporating Bollywood music into their repertoire. Chatterjee's paper explores how the choir's introduction of medleys of Bollywood songs resonated with the Indian audience, showcasing the harmonious merger of choral renditions of Bollywood music with various other forms of entertainment. This fusion of musical styles challenges traditional notions of what constitutes 'true' classical music and embraces a more inclusive and dynamic approach to musical expression. As musical boundaries continue to evolve, such examples of hybridity in India demonstrate the transformative power of cultural exchange and creative

exploration. By embracing diverse influences and acknowledging the inherent value in different music styles, India's musical landscape becomes richer, more inclusive, and attuned to the changing tastes and sensibilities of its audience.

They only know Tom and Jerry music it is like WC. AB, performer/teacher

Another participant in the study made an interesting reference to the background scores for the classic cartoon Tom and Jerry when describing how the 'person on the street' perceives Western classical music. Although the participant laughed while making this comment, it underscores how perceptions of different kinds of music can easily spread through popular culture. Tom and Jerry episodes are widely distributed in India and often feature examples and parodies of Western classical music. For instance, the episode 'The Cat Concerto' (1947) includes Franz Liszt's Hungarian Dance No. 2, while 'The Holiday Bowl' (1950) features Johann Strauss' 'Die Fledermaus'. These instances show how exposure to such references in popular media can shape people's perceptions of Western classical music. Dr. Luis Dias (2022), an ardent musician who established the Child's Play India Foundation in Goa, providing quality Western classical music tuition to children from underprivileged backgrounds, has noted these musical references in Tom and Jerry. This light-hearted comment by the participant highlights how perceptions of music can be built up and sustained through such global cultural influences.

Throughout the study, it has also become evident that the middle class's cultural capital allows them transnational access to music, which has significant implications both for access and the reinforcement of a modern, cosmopolitan identity. This cultural capital, gained through exposure to diverse musical genres and international influences, enables the middle class in India to embrace a more cosmopolitan

outlook and engage with a broad range of musical styles. As the middle class has access to global musical content, including Western classical music, it fosters a sense of openness and appreciation for diverse cultural expressions. This exposure reinforces a 'modern' identity, one that embraces cultural diversity and cosmopolitan values, and distinguishes them from more insular perspectives. It is important to highlight that in this case, the term modern has no biases of valuing Western practices as progressive. P. Ewing (2002) has critiqued the distinctions of modernity and tradition that positions the West as the sole exemplar of development unlike developing countries. This study does not engage with that rhetoric but instead seeks to challenge it by showcasing the Indian middle class's identity as a modern one that is insular.

So far in this study, it is evident that the cultural capital of the middle class gives them access to music transnationally, and this is significant both in terms of access and in reinforcing a modern, cosmopolitan identity. However, as NH, in the quotation below, highlights the issue of class that I have examined in the previous chapters and earlier in this chapter. She then goes on to talk about the parents' perspective that if their child is able to play a 'movie' song then that would also be considered as Western classical music.

> Just any common man? [AA: Yeah] Depends what class that person is. If it is someone educated or… or somebody from the upper class and all. Ummm, I think they might be a little unresponsive because that is, it is because the perception of instrument learning over here is that my child or I can play a song, a movie song. That is it. So, Western Classical is actually, not many people are aware of it. NH, teacher

ANC's comment below raises a crucial point that aligns with an issue mentioned

earlier in the thesis: India's musical landscape is incredibly diverse, brimming with a vibrant mix of Indian classical, folk music, film music, and many other genres. Due to this rich array of musical styles, it is entirely possible that not every Indian has had the opportunity to experience Western classical music. ANC's questions "why should one listen to Western classical music?" and "what is special about it?" carry significant weight in this context. While globalisation has increased accessibility to various musical genres and cultures, it is essential to acknowledge that certain social, cultural, and economic barriers persist, hindering many individuals' exposure to Western classical music in a country like India. Despite the rise of the middle class and increased access to diverse content, not everyone will have the means or opportunities to explore or engage with Western classical music for many reasons including the busy musical landscape in India.

ANC's observations invite critical reflection on whether it is necessary for every Indian to engage or associate with Western classical music. While promoting musical diversity and encouraging exposure to various genres is beneficial, it is equally crucial to recognise and respect individuals' cultural preferences and backgrounds – to allow people the freedom to choose the styles that resonate with them the most. Ultimately, the goal should be to cultivate a broader understanding and appreciation for all forms of music, fostering a society that values diversity and embraces the unique cultural tapestry that is music in India.

> They will ask me what WCM is… then they will ask what is there in this to listen to. What is special about this music. AC, performer/student

In the early 2000s, the reverse parking signals for cars and trucks in India were not

just simple beeps but, rather, they were short instrumental music pieces. This ranged

from film music to popular tunes and extracts from Western classical pieces took

their place in the mix. One melody that could be heard often is *Für Elise* by

Beethoven. Similarly, famous compositions by Mozart (such as *Eine Kleine*

Nachtmusik) would be featured in adverts or Hollywood movies.

> They will probably say nothing. [Okay] but actually I believe people know
> more about WCM than they know. Than they think they know because they're
> exposed to it quite a lot everywhere. They don't know, Trum tra trum (sings
> Eine Kleine) is Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. They just hear it and it's so popular,
> but they don't know what it is. JB, performer/student

There is a shift in the attitudes towards Western classical music in India due to a

growing understanding and access to different styles of music, as DC reports:

> Nowadays, I also find that people are trying to become more accepting
> towards WCM because like there are two or three concerts that I have done in
> Chennai so far and obviously they have been all houseful and also people
> have started liking it and then they come and say like, you know, if you're
> doing any more such concerts, please let us know I am finding things and
> perspectives are changing a lot. DC, performer/student

Bearing in mind the earlier discussion of 'white' music, it is tempting to speculate

whether more audience members seeing an Indian – someone who looks like them -

performing Western classical music, helps them to connect with it more. The sense

of poor representation in the genre is one is reported by a number of participants,

and resonates with my own experience, and experiences of colleagues and former

course mates. Furthermore, with more performances, globalised access and new

musical ideas in abundance, Indian audiences would develop a taste for Western

classical music and, as DC mentioned 'accept' it more, if they saw themselves

represented in it.

> Well, first of all, I'm wondering if I can translate that in Hindi or Telugu, but

There are Bollywood and other regional films that have scenes with orchestras, and it is interesting to note that more of this is now 'homegrown'. *Yuvvraj* is an excellent example of a Bollywood film embracing orchestras not only in the background score but also as part of the storyline of the film. The score for this film is composed by A R Rahman who is also the principal of KM Music Conservatory; the music was recorded by the Chennai String Orchestra and includes some Western classical music pieces such as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The female protagonist of the film is a cellist, and she is seen playing with an orchestra; most of the cello music was recorded by my own cello teacher, Eilidh Martin, a Scot who lived and worked in India at that time.

Opera has been compared to Bollywood, on the basis of similarities such as the duration, drama, and grandeur. It has also been referenced as a genre in Bollywood and other regional films, with operatic motifs or quotations sprinkled across various film scores, often for particular dramatic effect. One example would be the film *3 Idiots* (2009) which includes *Un bel di* from the second act of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. Perhaps thinking about these references in popular Bollywood culture, IB suggests that opera might be the first thing that will come to an Indian person's mind when asked about Western classical music.

Western classical music? I think they say I think they'll automatically think Opera I think that's the first thing that will come to somebody's head like Western classical music. I guess would be something I had all English related

because if you asked anyone, they're gonna be like, it is just English music essentially. So, I think that's what they would say about a WCM. IB, performer/student

There is some research on the role of orchestras in Bollywood and other regional Indian films such as 'Orchestra and Song' by Padmanabhan (2017), and 'The Hindi Film Orchestra' by Morcom (2017). However, there is potential to study the impact of the transnational styles of contemporary Bollywood on wider musical trends in India. As Morcom notes:

> More middle-class Indian children are learning western classical music or instruments as well as, or instead of, Indian classical music. Thus, western classical music in India, in the context of globalization and India's rise to (potential) global superpower status, may be seeing a shift in its sociocultural and political space, a form of prominence and visibility that did not exist in sound cinema, and was in fact more a characteristic of colonial India. Such a change would run counter to the focus on Indian musical traditions as emblematic of the Indian nation that has existed from before Independence. However, in films at least, western classical music continues to exist in a strongly Indianized paradigm. (Morcom, 2017, p.222)

SH detects a similar change in the position of Western classical music in India and also notes the significance of the rise of the middle class. His view, as an Indian musician working in Western classical music, is shot through with optimism.

> I think in the last 10 years or 15 years, there's this massive influx of middle class, which has the dispensable income to be able to actually go and enjoy these theatre and Opera and Symphonies and chamber music concerts that I think there's a massive growth right now, which will be great to see where it's going to go. SH

All of these developments problematise the notion that Western Classical music is simply 'white' music with limited resonance in the Indian context. One musician in particular has had extraordinary influence in bringing Western Classical music into

the public consciousness in India: A R Rahman.

5.3.4. Agential role of A.R. Rahman

A.R. Rahman is a name that resonates with every Indian household, a figure whose music saturates the fabric of daily life. His melodies can be heard in living rooms through TVs and radios, to celebrations at weddings and other events where his music becomes an integral part of the festivities. Even in the hustle and bustle of daily commutes, Rahman's music finds its way into everyday life through mobile phones, autorickshaws and car speakers. With a far-reaching impact, his music can also be heard in cinemas. His musical repertoire is diverse, blurring boundaries, blending different genres and styles (Trilok 2021, Beaster-Jones and Sarrazin 2017). His musical education also included the Trinity College of Music exams through Musee Musicals at the age of 13. Moreover, Rahman's music has played a significant role in promoting Indian culture and heritage on the global stage with his Oscar awards. The following report of Rahman's return from the Oscars ceremony in Los Angeles gives a sense of his cultural significance and following.

> At 2:30 a.m. on the morning of 26th February, when A.R. Rahman returned to his house in Chennai, his two Oscars in hand, it seemed as if half the city was awake. They greeted him at the airport with drums and music. He shouted 'Jai Ho' to them. The posse followed him home, where the trees were covered with lights; the streets were lined with firecrackers that were burst the moment his car was seen in the distance. A makeshift stage was set up outside his gate, where a live orchestra of drums was playing to the hundreds gathered there to greet the main from their street, their city, their country, who had shown them that anything was possible… The crowd did not leave, they refused to do so until Rahman returned to them with his Oscars. (Mathai, 2009)

I grew up listening to songs composed by A R Rahman, from the films *Roja*, *Rang de Basanti*, *Lagaan*, *Jodha Akbar, Dil Se, Taal* among many others. In 2008, shortly

after completing my junior College education at the age of 17, my mother came across a newspaper article that announced the inauguration of the KM Music Conservatory, the music school established by A.R. Rahman. My sister and I were drawn to KM Music Conservatory not only because of the reputation of its director, A.R. Rahman, but also because it was the first of its kind in India to provide advanced education in Western classical music.

> The cross-cultural sound of Rahman's music is mirrored in the educational philosophy of the Conservatoire, which is cosmopolitan rather than adhering to an existing model of Indian music education. (Taylor, 2015)

Rahman's intent with the school was to establish an educational platform wherein students could acquire proficiency in both Western and Indian music, alongside music recording technology. The institution, KM Music Conservatory, encompasses a diverse curriculum of audio engineering, composition, and the study of a variety of musical instruments. It currently offers undergraduate courses, validated by Middlesex University, that combine Western and Hindustani classical music with audio technology as part of a bi-musical curriculum. Morcom (2017) talks about KM Music Conservatory and A R Rahman specifically in her paper discussing Orchestras in Bollywood films:

> There are signs that Western classical music is gaining something of a mainstream prestige in India, at least in the use of Western classical instruments and styles in Indianized forms and contexts. A R Rahman has set up his own KM Music Academy [sic] where students can learn western classical and popular music as well as Indian styles. Indian orchestras such as the Chennai String Orchestra and the Symphony Orchestra of India, relying on large numbers of foreign players and paying them western salary levels, are well-funded. (Morcom, 2017, p.222)

Morcom mentions in the quote above about the reliance on foreign musicians to record Western classical orchestral film music. Foreign nationals are required to be paid a minimum of $25000 around £20,183 annually as per the immigration laws in

India. Rahman wanted an orchestra in Chennai, one that he forms and can employ for his work and performances.

> The lack of an Indian symphony orchestra has hit Rahman every time he has needed to travel abroad, to London or Prague, to record a film score. "Even Iraq has an orchestra!" he exclaims. "I'd always think: 'Why can't this happen in India?' But being an introverted composer, I thought I should just do my job and somebody else would start one." Nobody did, of course. "I kept hearing rumours—that a corporate house was starting an orchestra, that kind of thing," Rahman says. "Then, when nothing happened, I decided to give it a go myself." (https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/9HtUzbJMhoLDMRWu4KIqhJ/AR-Rahman8217s-new-symphony.html)

Furthermore, he also had an objective of making Western classical music education more accessible and affordable to Indians in India. Combining the two – a need for a home orchestra and affordable Western classical music education, he formed the Sunshine Orchestra, consisting mostly of underprivileged young people from nearby areas, including a government-funded school. These young musicians were selected through auditions and taught violin, viola, cello, and double bass. To encourage attendance, the teachers provided them with breakfast before classes. Over time, the orchestra grew significantly and began performing not only for recording sessions of film scores but also at award ceremonies, cricket tournaments, and other events. The initial batch of young musicians now play professionally as members of the Sunshine Orchestra. He broadened the horizons of these young people from financially challenged communities by introducing them to orchestral instruments. An argument can be made that this is similar to the El Sistema music education movement in Venezuela, with which it shares some features. However, as mentioned earlier, Rahman's motives to set up Sunshine Orchestras were more focussed, namely, a means to help the film industry in Tamil Nadu and the young people from these communities.

> 'Originally, the Sunshine Orchestra had fourteen children,' says Jyothi (staff at KM). 'But today we have sixty. The children used to learn only strings, but now we've added brass and woodwinds too. And they've played all over the world. On MTV, everything.' The orchestra performed with AR at the United Nations General Assembly in August 2016. 'They get fabulous exposure. Not just they, but everyone who comes here.' (Trilok, 2021)

The young musicians of Sunshine Orchestra are gaining appreciation and fame through the support of their principal, A.R. Rahman. KM Music Conservatory's success and the orchestra's fame are closely intertwined with the popularity of Bollywood and regional film music, as well as the international acclaim achieved by Rahman himself. (Avis, 2019). The combination of various factors such as India's music gaining prominence globally, the influence of Indian film music, the artistic legacy of A.R. Rahman, and the association between Indian and Western music education as seen taught in various music schools in India, has led to the success of KM Music Conservatory. Rahman has attained worldwide recognition primarily due to creating music that combines Indian and Western influences while upholding an uncompromising standard of quality. His distinctive fusion style is organic than forced. Rahman has contributed significantly to music education in India by providing a setting for aspiring musicians from India to learn both Indian Classical (Hindustani) and Western Classical in the same place. This symbiotic learning has also generated music which merges stylistic elements of these genres. Opera India is one such example – it endeavours to enhance the accessibility of operatic music to the Indian audience while also creating a new musical genre as an inherent outcome. Taylor (2015), who taught at KM Music Conservatory, writes,

> Music has been a key driver of these changing attitudes to tradition, globalisation and westernisation, seen for example in the work of AR Rahman, one of the most visible and successful examples of the projection of Indian culture onto the world stage. Incorporating elements of Indian, Arabic,

north African and Western musical styles, Rahman's eclectic film scores transformed the sound of Bollywood cinema in the 1980s and 90s, introducing innovative choral and instrumental arrangements, digital sampling and synthesised sound. His more recent work has applied this distinctive style to western English language films, most famously the double Oscar-winning soundtrack to Slumdog Millionaire. Since working at KMMC I've come to understand Rahman's profound significance as a cultural icon in India: as students say, 'Music is my religion, and Rahman is my God'.

The work of A. R. Rahman exemplifies the transformative power of music in shaping attitudes towards tradition, globalisation, and perhaps westernisation. It is essential to have a distinction between globalisation and westernisation. Westernisation might suggest the adoption of Western cultural norms and values completely. However, Juluri (2004) suggests that when it comes to Indian culture production, audiences in India are able to maintain its unique cultural identity and perspectives while still finding ways to embrace globalisation. This idea is strongly represented in A.R. Rahman's music and approach. As a prominent advocate of projecting Indian culture on the world stage, Rahman's fusion of diverse musical styles breaks down barriers and fosters cultural exchange. His film scores, blending traditional Indian music with modern elements, have revolutionised Indian cinema and garnered global acclaim. Rahman's venture into English language films, including the double Oscar-winning soundtrack for "Slumdog Millionaire," further strengthens his status as a musical trailblazer with a wide appeal. In India, he is revered as a cultural icon, stimulating pride and a sense of nationalism as can be seen in his Vande Mataram album (Juluri, 2004).

> Rahman's global profile, and the transnational sound of contemporary Indian music, gives KMMC a slightly dislocated identity in terms of its local, civic function in Chennai and its relationship to Indian musical traditions. Chennai is an important centre for the ancient South Indian genres of Carnatic music and Bharathanatyam dance, neither of which are taught at the conservatory. We do, however, have a Qawwalli ensemble, which performs the Sufi repertoire close to Rahman's own spiritual and musical interests. (Taylor, 2015)

The KM Music Conservatory in Chennai has a unique identity shaped by the global recognition and acclaim of A. R. Rahman, as well as the transnational sound of contemporary Indian music. This identity is characterized as "slightly dislocated" in terms of its local and civic function within Chennai and its relationship to traditional Indian musical traditions. Although Chennai is renowned as a centre for South Indian music genres like Carnatic music, and Bharatanatyam dance, KM Music Conservatory's curriculum takes a different approach. The conservatory focuses on a transnational perspective, reflecting the global influence of Rahman's work and contemporary Indian musical practices.

5.3.5 Is it truly 'Western' Classical Music?

Upon relocating to Scotland in 2011, my initial references to the genre of classical music as "Western classical music" elicited considerable attention and curiosity among those around me. They questioned the rationale for using the term "Western" in conjunction with classical or art music and even to this day, I occasionally encounter such questions. Although I have previously addressed my motivations for employing the term in this thesis, it warrants further exploration.

Avis (2017) sheds light on some of the issues associated with the usage of the term "Western classical music," highlighting its problematic nature due to its explicit linking with Europe and European culture (Stokes, 2008). This label has the potential to impose limitations and be an oversimplification from a cultural standpoint, yet a significant portion of my research participants comprehend and identify with this music through this specific terminology.

The choice to use the term "Western classical music" in the present research requires some scrutiny because of the possibility that it may inadvertently reinforce Eurocentrism, thereby marginalising the diverse musical traditions and heritages that exist outside the Western world. Acknowledging this concern, I now seek to delve deeper into the implications and perceptions associated with this label, uncovering the nuances and complexities it entails in relation to musical identity and cultural understanding. The term's historical context and its resonance within different social and academic circles also demand examination. However, most of my participants know and understand this music with this term and gave an interesting insight into its use.

> That's a problem with the Western word because Western classical music doesn't belong to the West. I don't, I actually don't even think people call it Western classical music anymore. At least when I was in the US, when I was studying in college, no one referred to this music as Western classical music. The only it was actually officially called Art music, you know, even in the textbooks… you know, I could say that I'm playing classical music. I'm playing music from Chile and what is Western about it. There is nothing Western about that particular piece? It is like a Chilean folk song on the guitar. For example. [Yeah] So, I if I had to describe it, I would say it's classical music and it's Chilean in in nature. [Yeah] in its background and I would still not call it Western classical music but I have, I have trouble answering these questions because I personally never use the term Western classical music. AG, performer/teacher

AG presents a compelling argument questioning what makes music 'Western'. In the context of India, the use of the term 'Western' carries significant implications as it immediately alienates this musical style due to its historical association with colonialism and Western cultural dominance but also because of the inherent connotations associated with the word 'Western' itself. AG, having experience in performing classical music from various parts of the world, rejects the use of this term when discussing such music, problematising its categorisation.

Furthermore, AG's perspective highlights an essential aspect of the ongoing debate concerning the terminology "Western classical music." It is no longer confined solely to European origins but has evolved and grown in diverse countries, including those that have undergone a postcolonial transformation. These countries have incorporated elements from this musical genre while infusing it with their distinctive musical traditions, effectively making it their own.

However, in India, the relationship with the UK during the postcolonial era has rendered the adoption of "Western classical music" even more contentious. One plausible explanation for this complexity lies in the rise of Hindu nationalism, which has sparked clashes with certain cultural and religious practices perceived to be linked to the West, such as Christianity. This clash has contributed to a nuanced and challenging engagement with the music genre, resulting in a unique perspective within the Indian context. The case of India in an era of Hindu nationalism serves as an illustrative example of how postcolonial dynamics and religious-cultural factors can influence the reception and interpretation of this musical style in different contexts, with implications for fostering cross-cultural understanding and inclusivity within the world of music.

> That's a very interesting question and to answer this question, I have really tried a lot because I wanted to see like what, what context, I mean for because only if people you know are open to the fact that you're playing this music, will they actually see beyond it and actually see if they enjoy the music itself. But you know so often, you know, if it's something that people can't identify, that they think that they can't identify with or from a community that they don't identify with, then they will shut themselves out from it. So, I want to find out where those lines are drawn like. [okay] So, we did this experiment that was when we did these public performances. I don't know if I told you… [Yeah, in train stations and stuff] Yeah, yeah, so we played a bunch of

different stuff and, but I didn't get to interview people after that. I would have liked to do that. [Okay] But definitely, you know when you when you kind of play it for people and you know, don't put a high price on it and don't portray yourselves as you know, elite or something then it makes the music more accessible and the music can have exactly the same content, be played exactly the same way, but you know, it's how you present the non-musical aspects that are sometimes more much more powerful, you know. So if you show up in a you know, coattails and all that, I don't think like many people are going to feel that it's for them. They might still appreciate it. But, you know not, not in the same way. They won't identify with it. SM, performer/teacher

I don't think Western classical music has any cultural connection. I think it is a connection to do with methodology. It's about how you think about music? [Yeah] So tomorrow I could sit and I could for example, write an Indian piece and it would still be within the same sphere. [yeah] not because of the piece I wrote but because of the way I wrote it. If it's notated and if it's written for an instrument that's a part of the Western classical circle and it has certain features. If I think of phrasing, if I think of structure the same way that Western classical musicians think. AG, performer/teacher

Both AG and SM have had access to higher music education in Europe. This has evidently made an impact on their understanding of the terminology and the problems of ownership that surround it. AG's quote raises the question of what Western classical music is. What are the parameters of a Western classical composition? What are the key components of this style? Does it go beyond using a musical score in the European style and what that entails? And what do these questions mean to an Indian composer?

AG's perspective on Western classical music centres around its methodological traditions rather than cultural affiliations. According to AG, the essence of this genre lies in the approach to music, rather than being tied to a specific cultural background. AG emphasizes that the key factor is the way musicians think about music, particularly the approaches they employ in composition and performance. The crux of AG's argument is that tomorrow he could compose an Indian piece, and it would

still fall within the realm of Western classical music. This connection would not be due to the piece's content or thematic elements but, instead, due to the shared approach used in its creation. The crucial aspects would involve notating the music and writing it for an instrument traditionally associated with Western classical music. Furthermore, AG underscores the significance of certain features that align the Indian piece with the Western classical circle, such as phrasing and structure, which s/he thinks about in a 'Western classical' way, bridging the gap between seemingly distinct musical traditions.

AG's perspective challenges the conventional notion of cultural origins in music and highlights the unifying role of practices and approaches. Shared practices, such as notation and specific musical elements, allow for cross-cultural integration within the Western classical music framework. This broader perspective encourages a more inclusive understanding of music that transcends cultural boundaries, paving the way for compositions that enrich a more broadly-conceived classical music landscape. AG's insights offer valuable contributions to the ongoing discourse on music, inviting musicians and scholars alike to explore the interconnectedness of diverse musical traditions and methodologies in the pursuit of artistic expression.

SM's quote highlights the issue of people failing to connect with music, leading them to distance themselves from it. SM believes that finding ways for people to connect with both the performers and the music is essential. According to SM, one of the key issues here is the perception in India of Western classical music as an elite art form. Accessing performances of Western classical music involves expensive tickets, inaccessible venues and elite attitudes. These create barriers for many individuals, which SM attempted to break down with public performances in accessible locations

like train stations, seeking to make the music more approachable. Similar issues of accessibility and elitism are observed in Western countries, such as the UK, regarding Western classical music. This raises the question of how to make this genre more inclusive and appealing to a broader audience, whatever the cultural context. It also draws attention to the position of Karnatic classical music in India, where the music's accessibility is hindered by the casteism (Weidman, 2006), and social stratification attached to it.

T.M. Krishna, a well-known Karnatic singer and activist, is part of a committee organising the Chennai Kalai Theru Vizha (Chennai Street Arts Festival) with the specific aim of making music and art accessible to all, without any caste, social, or economic barriers. This initiative reflects a parallel effort to address the issue of exclusivity and foster greater connection between diverse communities and classical music.

Initiatives like the Chennai Street Arts Festival seek to promote inclusivity, paving the way for a more profound and meaningful engagement with Indian classical music for people from all walks of life. The barriers to accessibility in Western classical music in India and in Global North countries mirror the challenges present in Karnatic classical music due to the association with elitism and casteism or classism.
I continue the discussion of finding connections between an Indian identity and Western classical music in the next section.

5.4 Who does this music belong to?

> It belongs to the West in the sense that everyone can study it even can explore it. But just like how Westerners come to India to learn to culturally

learn Indian Classical Music. I think, the western music belongs to the West and we are just foreigners. But anyone can do it, anyone can pursuit in fact like the South Asians. (Yeah) they are… they're really really good at it now. EC, Student

It is evident that the discussion of Western Classical music in an Indian context cannot be separated from its historical ties to the country's colonial past. As mentioned earlier, Avis (2017) argues that the use of Western classical music as a form of philanthropy in postcolonial countries raises significant concerns. Several studies, including those by Willson (2011, 2013), Baker (2014, 2016), McGuire (2009), and Rosabal-Coto (2015), have explored the problematic aspects of employing Western art music in philanthropic projects, which range from cementing problematic power structures to enacting 'white saviour' narratives. However, to fully comprehend the nuances and implications of Western Classical music's presence in India, one must consider the specific Indian context and the musicians involved in such endeavours. In recent years, certain events have surfaced that highlight the complex association between Western classical music and concepts of civilisation and missionisation in India. One notable example is the visit of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to various Indian cities in 2014, which garnered attention with the headline, 'India gets a taste of western classical from Scottish Symphony Orchestra,' as reported in *the Guardian,* talking about the BBC Symphony Orchestra's visit to a few Indian cities in 2014. This headline itself reflects the way Western classical music is perceived and portrayed in India, from a Western perspective. The choice of words like 'taste' implies an exotic and fleeting novelty that Indian audiences are experiencing, perpetuating a colonial mindset of the West as the source of cultural refinement. Such portrayals reinforce the historical power dynamics between colonisers and the colonised, subtly suggesting that Western

Classical music is a mark of sophistication and progress, which Indian audiences are lucky to get a 'taste' of. Moreover, the event's philanthropic aspect raises questions about the intentions behind such cultural exchanges. While the symphony's visit might have been intended as an act of goodwill, using Western classical music in this manner could inadvertently reinforce a hierarchical view of culture, wherein Western art forms are positioned as superior and deserving of charity, while Indian musical traditions may be overlooked or undervalued. Another article in *The Herald* included examples of the classic tropes of civilisation and missionisation critiqued by Avis.,

> There, in sweltering heat, she (Nicola Benedetti) played to four classes of 50 children with RCS students - Alice Allen, Sam Watkin, Wen Nang and Gongbo Jiang - before taking part in an evening masterclass.

In this same article, however, Nicola Benedetti speaks out about the lack of education covering the history of British Empire in the UK and how she believes that children in the UK should learn more about this. She goes on to say that,

> The fact is our country now is multicultural and that's for a number of reasons, but our own history is a significant reason. If we're not taught to connect with that, what hope have we got. It's ridiculous and all of it makes my skin crawl.

In the documentary that followed this Indian tour of the BBC SSO, Nicola Benedetti made a more nuanced assessment of the tour:

> India has its own popular music and its own classical music. We are not bringing something that they need. We are bringing them something else that is great, to approach it any other way is patronising and ridiculous. (BBC Arts 2015)

While statements like these are important, the UK media coverage around this tour did not amplify these sentiments of Benedetti. It is imperative to approach these

musical exchanges with sensitivity and awareness of their historical and cultural implications. While Western Classical music undoubtedly has its merits and should be celebrated, it should not be used to undermine or overshadow the rich musical heritage of India. Instead, a more equitable and respectful dialogue? between different musical traditions can foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation without perpetuating colonial narratives. By critically examining the context and intent of such cultural exchanges, we can strive for a more inclusive and mutually beneficial musical interaction.

As evidenced in previous research in this area, there is very little understanding of how these issues are understood by Indian musicians themselves. In the present study, the participants offered a diverse array of perspectives and thought-provoking answers on the question of who Western classical music 'belongs to'. One particularly striking viewpoint shared by many participants was that Western classical music does not exclusively belong to any specific group but is open to anyone who engages with it. This inclusive perspective challenges traditional notions of ownership and highlights the idea of music as a cultural practice.

One participant, DC, noted this explicitly. According to DC, practising and interacting with Western classical music can lead to a deeper understanding and connection with the art form. She suggested that through increased awareness and exposure, individuals can find acceptance within Western classical music, just as she did. For DC, this acceptance was a transformative experience, as she revealed an earlier comment about discovering that her singing voice was better suited to Western classical music. This realisation provided her with a sense of belonging, as her voice

found resonance and expression within this genre. Her experience resonates with other participants in the study. The concept of 'belonging', in the context of music, takes on a deeper significance here, transcending mere ownership or cultural boundaries. It becomes a profound emotional connection between the musician and the art form, where the music becomes a vessel through which one's identity and voice find validation and affirmation. By acknowledging that Western classical music can belong to anyone who engages with it sincerely, the study sheds light on the power of music to foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. The realization of belonging experienced by DC and others exemplifies the profound impact that music can have on individuals' identities and voices, making Western classical music a shared and inclusive practice for all to cherish and participate in.

> it's not part of our culture but I guess any person was able to practise it, I guess WCM belongs to that person… it's just that people are unaware. I'm sure like if people start getting aware about WCM because I guess even, they'll find acceptance in that. DC, performer/student

Awareness of Western classical music among the general Indian public is low, as we might expect, and this is related to the fact that access to Western classical music depends on the socio-economic capital of the person. Since it is mostly the middle-class and the upper middle-class society that have access, it follows that not many people are aware.

Upon returning from the UK, SPC, an Indian musician, brought with him a fresh perspective on the Indian audience's appreciation of songs with lyrics. He observed that the Indian audience tended to connect deeply with songs when they could understand the meaning behind the lyrics. Armed with this insight, SPC sought to

challenge his audience by introducing them to the captivating world of Western

Classical songs, which often lacked familiar lyrics but were rich in storytelling and

emotions.

During his performances, SPC artfully presented Western Classical pieces that

evoked various stories and moods. Instead of merely performing the music, he

actively encouraged his audience to delve into their imaginations and explore the

narratives and emotions hidden within the melodies. By doing so, he opened up

avenues for the audience to connect with the music on a personal level, even without

explicit lyrics guiding them. This approach served as a bridge between the culturally

distinct forms of music, allowing the Indian audience to embrace the essence of

Western Classical pieces beyond their linguistic boundaries.

SPC's intention went beyond a one-way performance; he sought to create a dynamic

and interactive musical experience. By encouraging the audience to contemplate the

stories and emotions conveyed through the Western Classical music, he empowered

them with agency in interpreting the art form. This act of shared exploration and

understanding fostered a sense of ownership and active participation for the

audience. They were no longer passive listeners but co-creators of the musical

experience, infusing their unique perspectives and emotions into the music. Thus,

SPC's understanding of the Indian audience's preference for lyrically meaningful

songs led him to create a transformative musical experience. By introducing the

audience to Western Classical music's storytelling, he invited them to connect with

the music on a personal level. Through this interactive approach, he empowered the

audience with agency and ownership over their interpretations, fostering a richer and

more inclusive musical understanding.

> Personally, everyone because I didn't find it difficult to connect to WCM if if you know how to connect to it, of course. Because after coming back to main thing I'm facing in India from a perspective of audience is they get easily connected to music which has lyrics or which has a vocal line but instrumental music is not much appreciated, which I feel it's just a lack of awareness or how to enjoy your how to connect it because otherwise it's easily connectable and this time when I performed in Ahmedabad I actually kind of it sounds stupid but I made few stories and asked them to look at the piece for what I'm performing through that perspective just for once and then find a of perspective of their own and they were able to do that. SPC, teacher/performer

With Western classical music being heavily embrocated in postcolonial studies and bearing the connotations that Avis sets out, it is interesting to note that some of the musicians I interviewed made statements that problematise some of these negative connotations. BB makes an interesting point about this music belonging to anyone who 'associates' with it in a positive way.

> Like, anyone who sings, I mean performs it, listens to it, appreciates it. Anyone who like has any sort of association with it in a positive way. BB, performer/student

The point that JB makes below is one of the key arguments that is integral to this study. She argues that everyone should have access to music and knowledge regardless of their social, cultural, or socio-economic background.

> I think Rahul said, music is music. It's like knowledge. You know, you don't say this knowledge is only for this person. It's it's really it depends on what the person wants to know. He just wants to know it and it should be there for him to know it's free to everyone. It's not something that is limited according to cultural upbringing or whatever. Music is music. JB, performer/student

IB's perspective on learning Western classical music emphasizes the notion that

access to this art form is not solely determined by social or economic barriers, but rather by the individual's willingness and agency to engage with it. While acknowledging the existence of challenges that many face in pursuing Western classical music, IB highlights the empowering idea that anyone who possesses the desire to learn and embrace this genre can find a way to do so.

> I don't think it belongs to anyone. I think it's there that it's easily… like you said it's easily accessible to anyone who wants to learn and if you're willing to learn it, then the like some part of it belongs to you. I guess if you're willing to. Yeah, maybe like it's not like Bollywood or like Indian music as such but I think that even over there like even Bollywood music is listened to over there and here also it's come so it's like an interchange right? I mean, it's not like I mean it belongs to a certain culture, but it doesn't mean that it can't be shared. IB, performer/student

IB highlights the transformative power of personal choice. It shifts the focus from external barriers and constraints to the internal motivation and determination of the learner. This perspective encourages individuals to take ownership of the music, fostering a sense of responsibility for their own growth and development. IB's assertion does not negate the significance of addressing social and economic challenges in promoting inclusivity within Western classical music, but by nurturing agency and choice, individuals from diverse backgrounds can find a sense of belonging within the Western classical music community and participate, through an 'interchange' in the dynamic evolution of musical tradition. Western classical music, with its centuries-old history, continues to adapt and grow through the contributions of individuals from various backgrounds and cultures.

None of this is to deny the essentially European origin and connotation of Western

Classical music, with all the problems that brings: while ANC did not experience any barriers learning Western classical music, he considers, perhaps with a degree of irony, that this genre 'belongs' to Germany. Although he has never felt that he is learning 'someone else's' music, this is perhaps because he has the agency to learn and engage with it. In his case, since he is one of the Sunshine Orchestra musicians, he had access to free tuition and resources at KM Music Conservatory and his desire to learn seems to have overcome the idea that this is someone else's music.

> **ANC**: Oh, I think it is German.
> **AA**: So, you think it is German and you think it is the music of white people?
> **ANC**: Yes.
> **AA**: Did you ever get this feeling that this music is not part of my culture?
> **ANC**: No, I don't feel like that… To learn I didn't have any barriers. So, I have never felt that I am learning someone else's music because I want to learn it.

JH's musical learning began through the various church and religious activities. She uses words such as *real thing* and *really need to know* in reference to Indian and Western classical music. This perhaps shows that she holds the classical music of India and West as the key aspects of those cultures. However, her view is that this should not constrain us:

> It is not about culture. It is about somebody who wants to learn the real thing about music. That is what I feel. Like, okay probably if I would say this day and in India if you really need to know music you need to learn either the Hindustani or Karnatic. And probably in the west it would say learn that kind of a music but then being in it is not about the culture alone. You can be exposed to any kind of music you want to. Something, which really interests you and doing something like this, is yeah. JH, teacher/student

Her striking expression "It is not about culture" indicates that, for her, the primary motivation for learning music should not be restricted by one's cultural background or heritage. Rather, she advocates for a broader and more inclusive approach to music education, one that transcends cultural limitations.

AH is a music teacher who teaches piano and singing. She takes a practical approach to the question highlighting that there are many Indians who are professional Western classical musicians.

> I wouldn't say it would be a very a very biased answer saying it belongs to the west because there are lots of Indians who have also mastered this art. So, well originating, it does originate from a certain place but it ... music in general is not nobody owns music actually speaking. AH, teacher/performer

She begins by expressing hesitation about providing a biased answer regarding the ownership of Western classical music. She acknowledges that while the genre may have originated in the West, it would be unfair to claim it solely belongs to that region. She points out that many Indians (Zubin Mehta, Patricia Rosario among others) have also, in her view, have become masters of this art form challenges the notion that ownership can be tied to a place of origin. This broader perspective emphasises the notion of music as a practice that transcends cultural, social, and geographical barriers.

RH in her quote below also echoes the beliefs of the other participants: that music, regardless of its genre or origin, belongs to everyone.

> I believe that any kind of music belongs to everyone. Having said that, right now because there are lots of like debates and dialogues about where music comes from, who created it and who it's for. There might be like like divided views about the very question that you asked, and I think it's like with any kind of music there are, there are still issues of people accessing them. So, people... there is a tendency to feel that it belongs to the upper class and it doesn't help that most of the concerts which happen are still catering to people who can afford to go to them or [yeah] and in settings that other people feel inferior attending. So, I think that's the general assumption, but I also feel like that's changing a lot. I think we're in a very different place now than we probably were 10 or 15 years ago. So, I cannot speak much about other cities because I've not been there it wouldn't be right to say anything. But at least in Hyderabad, I think for a while, maybe certain religious communities felt it belonged more to the church. [Uh-huh] But then again, the

teachers themselves never had a problem sharing music with everyone. So, I think those are just those were probably social perceptions and I think some of those are even breaking now. Yeah, and I think there are quite a few other programmes where people with lesser access can learn an instrument or learn to sing or attend a concert. [Yeah] I'd say every music belongs to everyone and it's just a matter of demystifying it and breaking like you know, the artificial things which surrounded it. RH

Despite the clear barriers to participation, RH notes that attitudes toward music accessibility are changing. Over the years, the music landscape has evolved, making it more inclusive and open to diverse audiences. The belief that music belongs exclusively to certain social or religious groups is gradually giving way to a more inclusive approach and she is optimistic about the evolving music landscape in her city.

SM discusses the religious connotations of Western classical music and some of the unhelpful labels he perceives. He believes that Western classical music belongs to anybody who is curious and wants to discover it. He agrees that in the early 20th century, this music was dominated and controlled by the upper class in Western countries. However, he believes that this is changing even though there are hurdles in the Indian context – with religion, elitism, and other social barriers. According to him, Western classical music is beautiful and when we step away from labels and religious undertones, it can be accepted by the larger population.

I think now it belongs to anybody who is curious and discovering and wants to be and just wants to discover. I don't think it's anybody's now. I think there were, I mean maybe until I would say the early 20th century. Where most people would argue that there was, held it was a tight held thing in upper Western classical Society. How it's still it's still very steeped in that culture, I'm not going to lie. It's very, there are massive hurdles still… in India within Mumbai and Pune even in Hyderabad and Bangalore and Chennai there are now these small movements now that are coming out and saying that it's going forward. But again, it's all about identities, isn't it? I think that there are

levels even if I have to say in Western, in Western world, it's about upper society and in India, Western classical is about now getting away from just being the Christian art form. Because I think there was the heavy ties and in India at least still, where Western classical is associated with a very Christian identity and if we can get away from those labels, yeah and say that actually mainstream... when I say mainstream what I mean is just that the majority population can accept it and say it's not just an idea. It's actually acceptable by a larger population as an art form that's just beautiful because it's just music and it's not it's not about any particular religion or something like that. I think that would be the next step in demystifying or taking the thing away from one pocket of society. I don't know that might that might be kind of controversial but I don't want to say that but... SM, performer/teacher

Following on from the discussion in earlier sections of this chapter, VM's notion of 'the elite' can be interpreted as the Parsis, Christians and others from upper middle-class backgrounds continue to hold powerful positions. Hence, they only promote or support those from similar backgrounds.

I think it belongs to everybody. Unfortunately, there are people who are in, who are in very high, you know respect positions for Western classical who. Who, keep it, who keep it for people like them, you know the elite. VM, teacher/performer

SC feels that Western classical music does not belong to a particular country. However, he also highlights his concern about the potential danger this might pose to local cultures and society. He says that Western music can be used as a pedagogical tool in India as part of a wider music education, but he is wary of Indian classical music being replaced by Western classical music.

I mean, I think it doesn't belong to a specific country. But I feel, see if you see classical music in as such like we Indians have a classical music like two different classical music. Western countries have Classical Music… in China everyone is learning Western classical music. Like more Western classical performers are coming from China than Western countries itself. So, I feel that's a danger to the culture and the society because they need to find their own music and maybe Western can be learning. Like even in India. I feel you shouldn't replace Indian Classical with Western. [Oh yeah] So that is my perspective. SC, performer/teacher

As SM delves deeper into the 'Europeanness' of Western classical music, he grapples with questions of cultural appropriation and representation. For him, the historically dominant narrative of Western classical music being synonymous with high culture and sophistication has obscured the diverse musical traditions and expressions from other parts of the world, including India. He contemplates the impact of this perceived 'Europeanness' on the perception of music's wider value and significance. This broader perspective encourages us to move beyond the limitations of historical biases.

> It has come from the from Europe and there's no denying that you know, it is one of the things that the European identity is so kind of associated with and I think that's one of the struggles here because I feel, I feel a uncomfortable promoting Western classical music when you know, there's no funding for Indian classical music and there's not no funding right now, but there's not enough funding for Indian classical music. And definitely there could be more of that before, you know, we start talking about Western classical music, but having said that you know, there's the stuff to be gained from both. But also … when I, I spent those years in London, there was a lot of the big realisation of how... how colonialism has kind of screwed with India's identity and Western classical music was associated with the communities that were sort of Western, I guess. Like the Catholic community of which I'm a part and the Parsi Community, you know, which were kind of closely working with the, with the British which is which was a little bit of a troubling realisation. Especially, since I'm quiet, I was always quite patriotic and considered myself like a true blue Indian… so that was a struggle actually, that identity crisis, because you know, I I didn't want to be seen that way and yet I'm playing this Colonial music and enjoy it. SM, performer/teacher

SM's point about finding that 'enjoying' playing Western classical music is problematic because of the colonial past, is rather important. While most of my participants are not too concerned about where this music comes from because they are able to relate to it directly and identify with it on their own terms, SM highlights the tension of enjoying and learning Western classical music as an Indian due to the

history. Also, since he was raised as a Catholic, he was aware of how the Christian and Parsi communities associated themselves with the British during the Raj. However, it should not be ignored that it was only after he went to London that he 'realised' how problematic it is to play this music. It was the pursuit of music that took SM to the UK, where he realised this part of his musical identity and experienced a post-colonial awakening.

SM's experience mirrors my own. For me, it happened a few years ago when I was asked to research folk, classical, film and pop music in India and the more I explored this, the more I learned of many of the folk traditions that were reduced to mere traces in the busy musical landscape of India. A sense of guilt overcame me, as an Indian that is passionate about the arts, and I thought I should be finding ways of preserving these various traditional Indian folk musical forms through documentation rather than investing time exploring Western classical music in India. After having conversations with my supervisor and engaging further with my data, I realised that my present research is also a strong reflection of my own musical narrative and identity. The participants of this study also engage with Western classical music and, importantly, there is not, at present, a wealth of research in this field. However, it is important to note my position as a researcher who shares identity similarities with the participants, and a sense of connectedness with their identities. There is almost no research undertaken by an Indian who has pursued higher education in Western classical music in a UK conservatoire.

Going back to SM's comment about the identity crisis, I noted that he still plays and enjoys Western classical music. While there is the postcolonial hangover and a tension between his patriotism for India and his love for Western classical music,

they are both an intrinsic part of his musical, cultural and social identities – giving

him a sense of power and agency.

JC sets the question in a wider, global context:

> I don't think it belongs to someone; I think it is for everyone. I think this this this term WCM that term needs to be removed, it is just music that is it. But I think I think someone is keeping it still there because it's not really a West thing anymore right? Because after this Globalisation, everywhere it is there. You go to China, you go to Korea, like everywhere it is there. So, I think it is a wrong terminology so you need to change that because it is everywhere. It is not really... JC, performer/teacher

The term globalisation recurs in this study: when talking about music as a global tool,

an interview in Serenade magazine includes this quote from a young upcoming

violinist, Ritu Gopal. She says:

> The world is becoming a global village with more people from different backgrounds associating together without egos. I also believe that Music has a global aspect to it which can create collective consciousness and positive energy all over.

One of the participants from Marsden's (2018) study, Maria, offered the most

critically nuanced view, indicating an awareness of the colonial history of the British

in India and the role music played in that history. She problematised her own position

as a British music educator teaching Western music in vulnerable communities

within that context:

> It has a lot of cultural baggage with it. And when you bring over Western music you are interfering with the culture, but it has already been interfered with so much that I don't think you can have those worries in the same way as if India was untouched by British influence. We are in a global environment now, where they can access the internet, and yeah, we have been there for 200 years already, and now it's a different kind of relationship. [...] But yeah, you do worry about the whole post-colonial thing, you think, are we just going in, are we just going back and telling them what to do all over again, is it a form of musical bossiness? I don't know. But Joe said, if you do take it in that sort of view, you have to look at it as following through with that help. Where you created a problem it's like readdressing it. I don't know. There is a lot of

politics involved. (Maria 2014. Personal communication, 28 September).
(Marsden, 2018, p205)

This section highlights some key points about the ownership of Western classical music. Participant responses reveal nuanced and complex thinking around the perceived 'ownership' of Western classical music in India, further reinforcing some of the earlier discussion around identity, but placing this in a much wider context. Crucially, they problematise the simple notion that Western classical music is solely a postcolonial hangover in India.

5.5 Conclusion

In this comprehensive discussion, a thorough exploration of the intricate relationship between music and various dimensions of life in India has been undertaken across diverse thematic domains. The narratives and experiences of the participants have proven to be invaluable resources, offering profound insights into the intricate complexities that underlie musical identities within the country. At the heart of this research lies a profound recognition of the indelible impact of cultural and social capital on the musical journeys of these individuals. Factors such as class, family background, and access to resources have been revealed as pivotal determinants, shaping the trajectories of their musical journeys. It is worth noting the significant influence that the availability and quality of music education exert on the formation of their musical identities, while socio-economic variables wield substantial influence over their aspirations and pursuits within the realm of music. The theme of religion has also emerged as a distinctive strand, particularly in relation to Western classical music and its association with Christianity. Our exploration delved deep into the intricate dynamics of religious and class influences, elucidating their profound effects on the participants' engagement with this specific musical genre. Furthermore, the theme of identity and individual agency has been subjected to in-depth scrutiny, underscoring how the participants' choices and experiences are intricately interwoven with their self-identity. Their narratives poignantly exemplify how they navigate their musical trajectories with a keen sense of agency, aligning their choices with their deeply-held beliefs and aspirations.

An additional noteworthy revelation has been the significant role played by local communities and networks in nurturing musical development. Both formal and

informal music learning ecologies were explored, emphasising the profound impact of local traditions and support systems. In the contemporary digital age, the ascendancy of virtual culture and online communities has become increasingly influential in shaping musical experiences. The transformative impact of technology on musical practices and identities in modern India is evident. The chapter delved into the historical context of Western classical music in Postcolonial India, shedding light on the enduring ramifications of colonialism on musical perceptions and practices. Additionally, the influence of UK music board exams on the participants' musical identities was thoroughly examined, highlighting the substantial impact of these widely recognized and prestigious examinations on the pursuit of Western classical music within India.

Lastly, we closely examined participants' perceptions of Western classical music among the broader Indian populace, underscoring the imperative need for a broader cultural appreciation and cross-cultural understanding. Throughout the comprehensive exploration in this chapter, a central question arises regarding the ownership and cultural belonging of Western classical music in the Indian context. This exploration challenges entrenched notions of musical exclusivity and opens other areas of research in this field. Amidst the variety of themes explored, the concept of fluidity emerges as a unifying thread, connecting disparate elements within the discussion. The fluidity of identities and cultures is acknowledged as a fundamental characteristic, profoundly influencing how the participants respond to external influences and navigate through the myriad complexities of their musical choices and life circumstances.

Given the inherently fluid nature of identities, a longer-term engagement with the participants and their musical journeys, encompassing diverse settings, would have been advantageous. However, this limitation is addressed in the subsequent chapter, which outlines the constraints of the study. As anticipated, our exploration has sparked numerous additional questions, suggesting fertile ground for future research endeavours.

6. Conclusion

> A thesis about Western art music in India will never just be about Western art music; rather it will be about how it is experienced, negotiated, disseminated and positioned in relation to broader ecologies, discourses as well as agency. Western art music's significance lies in the multiple and constantly shifting meanings it simultaneously holds, lending it a dynamic rather than static quality. (Avis, 2017, p. 234)

The purpose of my study was to identity the main factors than enabled the young musicians in India to pursue Western classical music; to unpack the musical, cultural and social identities of these young people, and to understand what it means to be a Western classical music practitioner in postcolonial India. Below I outline how and to what extent these questions have been addressed or explored through this thesis.

I began the thesis with a selection of vignettes sketching various musical experiences in India and other situations through my personal lens, as an Indian learning Western classical music both in India and in the UK. I presented the questions that emerged through these various musical experiences which led to the motivation for this study. I briefly then reflected on my positionality as a researcher in this study which I returned to later in the methodology chapter. As an Indian who spent her initial years learning Indian classical music and then pursued Western classical music, I shared a connectivity with the participants of this study and my own experience overlapped with theirs in certain key respects. Using the term Western classical music throughout this study has been a conscience choice in an attempt to reflect the original contributions of the participants, and to differentiate it from the already strong Indian classical traditions of Karnatic and Hindustani styles; however, as we have seen, it is a contested term, challenged by some of the participants of the study.

The exploration of Western classical music in India presented a unique challenge due to the scarcity of literature in this specialised field. Acknowledging this limitation, I undertook the task of expanding my research to contextualise the study within a broader framework. To achieve this, I embarked on an extensive literature review, delving into pivotal texts and studies that offered invaluable insights into the subject matter. Two seminal works that formed the bedrock of my research were "Western Classical Music in Mumbai: Global Music, Local Meanings" by Marsden (2018) and "The Significance of Western Art Music in Contemporary India" by Avis (2017). These studies provided valuable perspectives on the intersection of Western classical music and its relevance in the Indian context.

In addition to these foundational works, I drew upon a compilation of essays featured in "The Handbook of Musical Identities," skilfully edited by Hargreaves, MacDonald, and R. Miell (2017). This compilation proved to be a treasure trove, enabling me to extract significant concepts related to musical identities. Some of the key notions that emerged from this source included the dynamics of connectivity within musical experiences, the existence of multiple musical identities within individuals, the influence of family script theory on musical development, and the intricate relationship between music and self-identity.

Furthermore, I was keenly aware of the aspect of postcolonialism in shaping the discourse surrounding Western classical music in India. To address this vital aspect, I engaged with selected works by prominent thinkers such as Bhabha (1990, 1994), Spivak (1988), and Chinweizu (1987). Their perspectives on postcolonialism helped me gain a deeper understanding of the historical and socio-political implications,

enabling me to place my study within a broader and more meaningful context.

By weaving together, the insights garnered from these diverse sources, I aimed to enrich the discourse on Western classical music in India, providing a comprehensive and informed outlook on the subject. My research aspired to contribute not only to the specific field of study but also to the broader understanding of the complex interplay between music, culture, identity, and postcolonial legacies in a global context with a focus on India.

I then moved on to unpack the methodology and research design of the study. After highlighting the various issues pertinent to this study, such as its underpinning epistemological stance and ethical implications; I gave a detailed report on the study design, including the method of data collection; locations, institutions and participants that were part of the pilot and main stud; data analysis; and my intention to contribute to the process of decolonising methodology. The qualitative nature and idiographic approach gave me, as the researcher, the ability to contextualise the life experiences of the participants and their identities without the need to force them into a totalising narrative or theory.

For me, the most stimulating part of the process of writing this thesis was the analysis of the data gathered. By working through transcripts of the semi-structured interviews of my participants and applying the techniques of open and axial coding, I was able to identify key emerging themes. This was especially rewarding because some, but not all, of these themes reflected ideas that had already emerged in the existing literature; likewise, some, but not all, were related in some way to my own

experience. The findings chapter was purposefully data-heavy in order to ensure that

the participants' voices were strongly present in the thesis or – to put it another way

– to give the data the space to lead the study. I began to answer the first two

research questions in this chapter, without discussing in too much detail the

emerging themes. Following this, in the next chapter, I discussed in more detail the

emerging themes such as the agency of participants' families, the role of cultural and

social capital, and the status of music education. I attempted to connect the

narratives of the participants through the merging of identities (musical, social and

cultural) and the emerging ecology of Western classical music in India. I continued to

make further connections with their identities and the postcolonial context in which

the participants are located.

Throughout the thesis, I have sought to draw on my own experience where this has

been appropriate, taking care not to allow my own experiences to overshadow my

participants, but recognising my particular position as a reflexive researcher.

6.1 Findings

6.1.1 Expanse of Western classical music in India

Through the narratives of the participants, the literature review, and my wider

contextual reading, it is evident that Western classical music exists more widely in

India, and that there are more people engaging directly or indirectly with it, than the

extant research would suggest. Due to the rapid and recent rise of the middle class,

grown from 24 million people in early 2000s, to 72 million in 2011 (Kharas, 2011),

more people are engaging with Western classical music and other cultures. In this

globalised setting, along with a massive middle class, Western classical music is

only going to gain more interest. In India, as in many contexts around the world, it is, however, rooted in colonialism and imperialism, which is deeply problematic, notwithstanding the many initiatives looking at decolonising this music.

Taylor (2015) proposes that the impact of globalisation, along with digital, demographic, and communicative changes, has significantly influenced the academic study of music and culture, particularly within the realm of Western classical music and its traditions. This influence has caused a paradigm shift in how the cultural heritage of the West is perceived in relation to the rich diversity of music found around the world. According to Taylor, these developments collectively address and rectify the historical notion of the superiority of Western classical music. In my current research, I strongly concur with Taylor's perspective, but I also delve deeper into the complexities of this matter in an Indian context, challenging the longstanding notion of Western classical music's inherent superiority. My study aims to shed light on the intricate aspects that contribute to this perception of superiority and explore alternative viewpoints that promote a more inclusive understanding of music from various cultural backgrounds. However, achieving this comprehensive re-evaluation will require substantial reforms, particularly in the context of the UK Music board exams. Furthermore, accessibility plays a pivotal role in this endeavour. Making Western classical music more accessible to individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and regions is essential in breaking down barriers and facilitating a more equal engagement with this musical tradition. Embracing diversity in Western classical music education not just in India but also in the 'Western' world will enrich the musical landscape with fresh perspectives and voices.

6.1.2 Key influencing factors

Some of the key factors that influence the participants to pursue Western classical music range from religion to family script from particular learning ecologies to specific element of accrued cultural or social capital. However, there are varying levels of influence from these factors changing from participant to participant based on their habitus, capital and situation. The agency of the individuals is a strongly recurring theme, but I also show how cultural and social capital gave the participants different degrees of access to Western classical music, based on their socio-economic backgrounds and family circumstances. Apart from three participants, the majority of my participants come from middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds, and this already gave them a different position and status. I have not explicitly unpacked caste in my study, due to its complexity and the fact that it was only occasional mentioned by the participants. However, based solely on the interviews I have undertaken, I would speculate that access to Western classical music is more likely to be influenced by social class than caste.

6.1.3 Identities

One of the most important findings to emerge from this research is that the various identities that I set out to explore in this study - musical, cultural and social, merge into one another when moving from one context or situation to another. The merging of these identities also highlights the core understanding of identities – they are fluid. Given that participation in music is a key influence in the development of an individual's musical identity, it is worth noting that the key factors that affect access to Western classical music also influence the identities of the participants.

Participants' reflections on their interactions with music and culture in a social context helped me understand more about their identities. They also showed the characteristics of multiple identities, particularly when participants undertook the different roles of teacher, student, and performer. Multiple musical identities of the participants in respect of engaging with Indian classical music, and Film music (including Bollywood and other regional film industries), alongside Western classical music also made an appearance. A sense of collective identity and group identity is also evident in the interviews, reflecting the online Facebook groups for Western classical musicians, and the particular communities of the music schools in which they study.

In exploring the cultural and social identities of the participants, I draw in a limited way on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (1993, p.9). One example is the discussion on how the religious backgrounds of some participants influenced their choice to pursue Western classical music, and additionally, helped shape their musical identities.

6.1.4 Self-Agency, and Ownership over Western classical music

The participants have, in many situations, expressed their agency through learning and engaging with Western classical music. Most strikingly, participants navigated the complex issues around the colonial dimension of Western classical music with an approach that could almost be described as 'having their cake and eating it'. While most participants fully understood and accepted the colonial taint that might affect the music that they loved, and some made a detailed critique of structures like the UK-based exam boards for music, most of the participants rejected the idea that this

music is foreign but instead, they engage with it as their own, taking ownership as musicians and global citizens.

6.2. Recommendations for future research and change

One of the objectives of my research was to have an impact on the landscape of Western classical music in India by influencing educational polices and societal attitudes. Due to the magnitude of India as a country, it will take more than one idiographic study to effect the change I would like to see. Nonetheless, below are a few of the suggestions and recommendations I would like to make based on this study and the literature reviewed. I have also explored potential further research that could be undertaken to build on the work begun in this study.

6.2.1 A National framework for music: a musical reform in India

This study about Western classical music in India is not directly arguing for more accessible Western Classical music education in India. However, I would invite educational and cultural policy makers to consider the great potential and need for India to create a framework that supports a holistic approach to music education not just Western classical music but other genre, such as Jazz, Flamenco, Pop, Rock etc. As noted above, the growth in the number of the middle-class families who are engaging with other cultures indicates that there could be a market, as well as a musical and philosophical need for such an initiative

The UK Music Board exams play a significant role in India's music education. However, the format, reminiscent of colonial practices, creates an unequal dynamic,

hindering creative thinking and lacking diversity among examiners. These exams focus narrowly on exam-oriented learning, limiting musical exploration. They are costly, raising accessibility concerns. The study suggests a need for culturally sensitive and inclusive music education, including Indian music board exams and teacher training programs that honour India's musical heritage. Challenges include policy barriers and taxation disparities favouring Indian music concerts over Western classical ones. The colonial implications of the practices of UK based music board exams are problematic in many ways. The hierarchy of a white examiner assessing a student's musical ability on the basis of three pieces, usually composed by white composers, is a practice that needs to be critically examined, reviewed and updated. Recently, I undertook some research for one of the exam boards to look for vocal music by composers of colour to add to the syllabus. This is certainly a step in the right direction: I think if there were more composers of colour (including Indian composers) in the syllabus, it might open up other avenues for the Indians who sit for these exams. This could be a possible future study to research and compile a list of Indian composers and compositions in the Western classical music. Having Indian examiners might help reduce the taint of colonialism that affects the current approach. Efforts are currently being undertaken by organisations such as International Society of Music Education (ISME) South Asia to research and develop general musical education provision in India, but an Indian music examination board would be a significant step towards addressing these issues. Western classical music demonstrates a notable capacity for coexisting harmoniously with and incorporating influences from a wide array of musical traditions. Embracing this characteristic fosters a collective sense of unity and appreciation for the extensive musical heritage, encompassing all styles and practices. Encouraging students to

explore the intricate interactions between various classical music traditions contributes to a comprehensive and well-rounded musical education, nurturing creativity, adaptability, and a deeper comprehension of cultural diversity. By acknowledging the multifaceted nature of classical music traditions, we empower aspiring musicians and educators to make substantial contributions to the global musical landscape. An inclusive and open-minded pedagogical approach enables students to realize their artistic identities while recognising the interconnectedness and shared principles among diverse musical cultures. Consequently, we prepare a new generation of musicians who are adept at navigating the complexities of the contemporary musical landscape, bridging gaps with an understanding and respect for cultural boundaries. The study advocates for a postcolonial approach to music education, fostering inclusivity, cultural sensitivity, and the preservation of Indian musical traditions while embracing global influences. The goal is equitable and culturally enriched learning for all Indian students.

As part of further researching the Western classical musical scene in India, based on the current study and other studies, the individual identities of Indian musicians could be further explored. When interviewing my participants, I would have liked the opportunity to delve more deeply into issues that I did not address here, such as the instruments they chose to study, and the relationship between instrument and musical identity. For example, when I was interviewing singers, issues emerged around vocal technique for those who had learnt Indian classical singing (I briefly touched on this in relation to one participant) and build on Weidman's brilliant research about the female singing voice in South India. However, to explore these more specific issues in more detail would require a separate study. This study could

usefully inform the development of an Indian board for music examinations.

6.2.3 Equal access to music education

My study offers indicative evidence that there is a lack of resources including

qualified teachers, sheet music, books, instruments, Western classical music schools

and affordable music tuition. As mentioned in the study, there are national and state

level institutions that cater to Karnatic and Hindustani classical music but there are

less than a handful that provide Western classical music tuition. Additionally, these

few institutions have very high fees.

Music education in the schools attended by the participants varied from private

classical guitar lessons to group singing. There are initiatives such as the Childs Play

Foundation and Sunshine Orchestra that bridge the class and socio-economic gap

through social development music projects. However, more support could benefit

these initiatives and the overall picture is extremely inconsistent, to say the least.

Folkestad (2000) proposes that national identity is constructed on the different

cultural and ethnic identities within a given region. When talking about India, Farrell

(2001) suggests that it is unrealistic to speak of India's music as one because there

are many musics present. Folkestad argues that there is an issue in the process of

creating a national educational system, as it may fail to capture the majority of

cultural and ethnic identities in large-scale geographical areas that are combined to

form one nation.

I would argue that with robust research and resources, there is potential for

improving India's music education; not necessarily by the creation of one educational system, which might fall foul of the issue that Folkestad identifies, but perhaps a number of related and coordinated educational initiatives. Either way, based on the findings access to quality music education in India needs addressing. Further research could aid in understanding the requirements of such musical initiatives, tailoring them to suit the needs of an average Indian student. This further research can also help create performance opportunities, jobs, and community building projects.

6.2.4 Postcolonial tensions and Awareness around perpetuating stereotypes

This study has revisited some of the existing stereotypes about Western classical music in India and surfaced the postcolonial tensions that exist around this practice in India. Indian musicians, teachers and organisers, who teach, perform and organise Western classical music festivals or performances, should be aware of the problems that surround this music and the potential for elitism. If this music lies beyond gates that are guarded by elite gate keepers, then, in addition to it being considered 'Western' (that is, 'not-Indian'), it also will be deemed to be elite and exclusive. Effort should be made to demolish the class-based hierarchies that exist in the field of Western classical music in India. A further study, capturing and understanding the audience perspectives, would be beneficial in unpacking more of the postcolonial tensions discussed in this study. It would help make the case for those Indians wanting to perform Western classical music in India and build diverse audiences. The current study applied work by certain south-Asian scholars to establish a postcolonial frame for discussing the data and participants' narratives. However, there is still a dearth of literature by Indian scholars. While it could be

argued that this study is, at some level, a 'Western' study, I, as an Indian scholar, would disagree, as my research is focussed on capturing Indian musicians' narratives and finding a way to let their experiences speak in a way that avoids, so far as possible, any colonial implications. My aim through this study is not to decolonise this practice but to make space for a different, emergent (Manjunath, 2023) and dynamic understanding of the role of Western classical music in India.

6.3 Significance to the discipline

This significance of this study lies in making audible some of the unheard voices in Western classical music education globally. The themes emerging from this study have all been considered in different contexts prior to the current thesis, but this work brings them together to understand a new issue – that of Western classic music in India. The emergent themes that are addressed in this study can hopefully provide a critical understanding of the identities of the participants and those that share similar narratives. The musical, cultural and social identities of Indians learning Western classical music have not been investigated before, but this research is only the first step. As noted above, the unearthing of the identities of these musicians, in this specific geographical location, has opened avenues for further research in this area.

6.4 Limitations of the study

My positionality as a researcher from a similar background as the participants was both advantageous and disadvantageous. It was advantageous since I was able to build a strong connection with the participants, easily gaining their trust to share freely their views and opinions. Sharing similarities with the participants also posed the danger of submerging them in my own narrative. I have sought to draw on my

own experiences where this felt right, while always keeping the participants front-and-centre in the discussion.

Having completed this research study, I would certainly take the opportunity to change aspects of the process were I to have the opportunity to research this again. Since the study is idiographic in nature and does not seek to represent the views of the entirety of India's population, it feels limiting. Combining some quantitative methods – such as an online survey – with the detailed interviews would have provided further background data against which to set the identities of the individual musicians in the study. The notion of 'survivor bias', in other words, the lack of formal opportunities encouraged my participants to find imaginative ways to overcome the barriers they faced but I am only able to interview the ones that 'survived': I have not been able to access the experience of those who did not begin or continue in music, because of those barriers.

A more extended longitudinal study would have allowed me to examine in more detail how my participants' identities are shaped and change over time. Given the fluid nature of identities, this would undoubtedly have enriched the study. I would have also liked the opportunity to further compare and contrast the narratives of my participants with those from similar situations in other postcolonial, South-Asian or South-East Asian countries.

The current study is not situated in one robust theoretical framework, notwithstanding some reference to the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu: the central concept of musical identity is itself a fluid one. This could be seen as a weakness, but it might also point to the potential or need for new theoretical frameworks that suit the needs

of researchers of colour in studies that are not based in the Global North.

6.5 Impact of the study

The present study will contribute to a growing area of research of postcolonialism in music. As noted in a previous chapter, fluidity is at the core of the research - fluidity in identities, fluidity in musical genres existing in the same space, fluidity of cultures, fluidity of research methodologies, fluidity of storytelling. It will, in a modest way, open doors to more ethnographic research in the field of Western classical music in India by Indian scholars.

6.6 Concluding thoughts

> We need to be asking who the key players are, and we need to reconsider which voices are not being heard. In order to fathom these matters, we need to understand how our fields of inquiry have been shaped over time. (Kidman, 2018, p. 1)

Smillie (2020) points out that through investigating, questioning, and analysing an issue, one is given a platform and an opportunity to make a change in the world, irrespective of the size or scale of that change. There is, therefore, a significant responsibility on the researcher. In the case of this study, I had an opportunity to unpack identities and the postcolonial understanding of Western classical music practised by young people in India. This research considers cultural, social and musical identities and places them in an Indian context, but perhaps more significantly, the voices of the participants in this study are not those typically heard in the 'mainstream' world of academia. This study therefore creates an opportunity for me, as an Indian researcher and scholar, to give a voice to participants who I recognise as friends and colleagues. In a small way, this is an attempt to break the imperial and colonial barriers of academia.

"The singer alone does not make a song, there has to be someone who hears."

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Example of Open coding

Open	
Challenge - access to expert training	
Music a self-enriching tool	
Ownership over music (WCM) (Music for all)	
elitist nature of WCM(belongs to upper class)	
Religion connections (WCM and Churches)	
sharing music irrespective of labels	
Ownership over music (WCM) (Music for all)	
Challenge - why not Indian classical music	
Childhood/upbringing - cultural upbringing (ICM)	
Parents narrative - Mum wouldn't consider herself a connoisseur	
Common man's belief /general social perception (WCM different culture)	
Diversity in Bollywood film music (acceptance)	
Development with age (changing preferences and interests and capacities)	
Development over age (cultural knowledge?)	
Role of parents (mentoring the practice)	
Role of parents (value the support)	
Teacher identity (motivating students)	
Impact of early musical training (HCM not pursuing)	
Group learning / teaching (Hindustani classical music)	
music as a means to understand culture (Indian CM)	
Identity struggle (between ICM and WCM)	
Family traditions and history (ICM grandparents)	
ICM in Indian families (heritage)	
Mobility and travel (localities of family)	
musical upbringing (music played in the house)	
Early musical experiences (radio) (means of listening to music)	
Sibling's influence (sister learned piano in US)	
Family narrative (playing duets with sister)	
Religion (learned WCM in churches)	
Key influencers (parents)	
Secondary influence (sibling)	
ICM learning style (group)	
Social musical interactions (group learning)	
Challenge - lack of technical training	
Developing listening skills (WCM long pieces)	
Music as a tool for activism	
ICM history (learning behind closed doors)	
ICM (lack of technique in playing violin)	
WCM in Indian film industry	
Religion (WCM perceived as Christian music in India)	
WCM (exam-centred approach)	
Learning WCM (exams as incentive)	
Individual agency (seeking performance opportunities)	
individual agency (take music beyond weekly activity)	
Diversity in WCM repertoire	
Challenge - lack of performance opportunities	
Challenge - lack of diverse performance opportunities	

Social interaction (crave having an active musical community) RH 21

Personal ambition - research culture, access, inclusion in respect to music and education

2

Appendix 2 – RCS Ethics form

Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Application for Ethical Approval of Research

1. Category of Applicant

☐Staff   ☒Research Student (PhD)

☐Taught Postgraduate Student   ☐Undergraduate Student

School School of Music

2. Applicant's Details

Researcher's Name   Ankna Arockiam

Supervisor (Name/Email)   Stephen Broad

3. Study Details

Title of Study (50 words max)   Exploring the musical, cultural and social identities of young Western classical musicians in Indian metropolitan cities.

Module (where relevant)

Version of application (first, second, third)   Choose one

Details of any linked application

Outline the aims and objectives of the study (400 words max)

The performing arts in India is dominated by its indigenous classical tradition and contemporary Bollywood (with influences drawn from various Indian and Western influences). There is not therefore a significant Western classical/contemporary music presence due to existing cultural preferences. This study strives to explore the factors influencing the formation of identity of young musicians in India training in Western classical music. The participants are drawn from multiple metropolitan Indian cities, at a range of ages and stages, drawn from a number of contexts, include music schools.

Building on and in response to the data gathered and analysed from the MPhil study, this PhD study would aim to:

•   Shape and impact the landscape of Western classical music in India by influencing educational policies and societal attitudes
•   Unearth and critique the culture and social identities of young Western classical musicians
•   Interrogate, in particular, the factors and variables of childhood and adolescents (role of parents etc.)

4. Research Participants and Recruitment

Indicate here the population(s) from which you intend to sample, and your proposed method of recruitment.
List any inclusion and exclusion criteria. Attach copies of any materials (e.g., letter, email, poster) you plan to use to help recruit participants.

Since my last visit, the themes of the study have changed. Hence, I will be interviewing some of the previous participants again to explore these new areas. The Western classical music community in India is rather small and very well connected. Therefore, I have employed the snowballing method to identify other participants.

Does the research involve work with children or vulnerable adults? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If 'Yes' are you currently registered with the PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups) scheme?
☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

Does the research involve the co-operation or authorization of any external groups or bodies? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If 'Yes', please attach copies of letters of support from the relevant organisations.

5. Methodology and Procedure

Provide a brief overview, and attach any relevant materials (e.g., questionnaires, electronic links). (400 words max)

This study uses the qualitative methodology of semi structured interviews. The semi structured interviews will give me the freedom to explore beyond the determined set of questions, while ensuring consistency across the interviews.

Summary: check all that apply

☐ Questionnaires (please attach copies of each in the format they will be presented to participants)

☒ Interviews (please attach a summary of topics to be explored or an interview schedule)

☐ Focus Groups (attach materials and/or a summary of topics to be explored)

☐ Experimental/Laboratory procedures (attach details)

☐ Other (describe here and attach details)

Do you intend to use questionnaires or other materials that are copyright? ☐ Yes   ☒ No

If 'Yes' do you have permission to use these materials?   ☐ *Yes*   ☐ *No*

Will participants receive any compensation, reimbursement or payment
for their participation (including course credits)?   ☐ Yes   ☒ No

If 'Yes' please provide details Course credits

6. Ethical Issues and Risks

Please outline below the key ethical/risk issues associated with this study, and indicate how these will be addressed (400 words max).

Based on the nature of the questions being asked (see attached) there are miminal ethical issues and risks associated with this research study. All interviewees will remain anonymous and I will seek not to use identifying information. The data wil be treated with sensitivity.

Applicants should be specific regarding the risk issues (such as when working with vulnerable adults and/or children - particularly instances where a Disclosure check would be required), and are advised to consider BERA guidelines where appropriate http://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf .

Is there a risk of any participants experiencing either
physical or psychological distress or discomfort as
a result in taking part in the study?   ☐ Yes   ☐ Possibly   ☒ No

If 'Yes' or 'Possibly' please attach a risk assessment form.

Will researcher(s) be at risk of sustaining either physical
or psychological harm as a result of involvement in the
study?   ☐ Yes   ☐ Possibly   ☒ No

If 'Yes' or 'Possibly' please attach a risk assessment form.

7. Good Ethical Practice Incorporated into Study

Consent Form? (please attach a copy)	☒ Yes	☐ No
Additional oral explanation for participants? (please attach script)	☒ Yes	☐ No
Additional oral consent?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Participants offered opportunity to decline to take part?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Participants told participation is voluntary?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Expert advice available if required?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Participants informed there may be no benefit for them?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Participants guaranteed confidentiality?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Participants guaranteed anonymity?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Provisions of the Data Protection Act met?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Safe data storage secured?	☒ Yes	☐ No

If the procedure involves deception, will explanation be offered following participation?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ N/A
If the procedure involves observation, will consent be obtained from participants?	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A
If the procedure involves questionnaires, will the participants be informed that they may omit any items they do not wish to answer?	☐ Yes	☐ No	☒ N/A
If the procedure involves interviews, will the participants be informed that they do not have to answer, and do not have to give an explanation for this?	☒ Yes	☐ No	☐ N/A

8. Applications to External Ethics Committees

Will an application be made to an external ethics committee?	☐ Yes	☒ No

Please note that approval should normally be obtained from the Royal Conservatoire Ethics Committee before making applications to external committees.

9. Applicant's Declaration

☒ I declare that the proposed investigation described in this application will be carried out as detailed and that if any changes to the procedures are planned, written permission will be sought from the Royal Conservatoire Ethics Committee.

10. Supervisor's Declaration

☐ I declare that I have read the application carefully, including attachments, and I am satisfied that it meets the required standards.

Supervisor (signature): Date:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: This application has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Signature:_____ Date:_____

CHECKLIST

Have you included…?

Completed copies of this form?	☒ Yes	
Signatures of applicant and supervisor?	☒ Yes	
Participant consent form?	☒ Yes	
Participant Information sheet?	☐ Yes	
Copies of any questionnaires?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A
Outline of any interview topics or an interview schedule?	☒ Yes	☐ N/A
Outline of any focus group topics?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A
Copies of any stimulus materials?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A
Copies of any experimental protocols for laboratory work?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A
Copies of any required risk assessments?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A
Any other materials required?	☐ Yes	☒ N/A

Letters from organisations indicating permission has been granted to co-operate with study?

☐ Yes ☐ N/A

Appendix 3 – Participant Information sheet

Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Participation Information sheet

Researcher's Name: Ankna Arockiam

Title of study: Exploring the identities of young Western classical musicians in Indian cities.

Aims and objectives of the study: The performing arts in India is dominated by its indigenous classical tradition and contemporary Bollywood (with influences drawn from various Indian and Western influences). There is not therefore a significant Western classical/contemporary music presence due to existing cultural preferences. This study strives to explore the factors influencing the formation of identity of young musicians in India training in Western classical music. Building on and in response to the data gathered and analysed from the MPhil study, this PhD study would aim to:

- Shape and impact the landscape of Western classical music in India by influencing educational policies and societal attitudes
- Unearth and critique the culture and social identities of young Western classical musicians
- Interrogate, in particular, the factors and variables of childhood and adolescents (role of parents etc.)

What I would like you to do:
I would like you to take part in an interview, which would last around 30-45mins. It will be audio recorded and transcribed, but it is confidential. The interview would focus on your experiences and opinions.

Anonymity and confidentiality:
You will remain anonymous, and I will give you a pseudonym if I refer to anything you say. Any information provided that is confidential will not be used and information will be stored securely in a password-protected account and is covered by the data protection act. It will be deleted 12 months after the successful completion of my PhD.

Refusal to participate/withdraw from the project
You are free to refuse to take part in the project without giving any reason. If you

agree to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw from the project without giving any reason. There are no financial benefits for taking part in the project.

Thank you for agreeing to do this interview and please do not hesitate to ask any questions or doubts that you may have regarding the project.

Contact Details

Researcher: Ankna Arockiam

Supervisor: Stephen Broad

Appendix 4 – Interview schedule

Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

Research Aims/ Questions and Interview schedule

Research Aims

- Shape and impact the landscape of Western classical music in India by influencing educational policies and societal attitudes

- Unearth and critique the culture and social identities of young Western classical musicians

- Interrogate, in particular, the factors and variables of childhood and adolescents (role of parents etc.)

Research Questions

- What are the key factors and enablers that influence the young people in India to pursue Western classical music?

- What are the nature and narratives of musical, cultural and social identities of Indian young people engaging in Western classical music?

- What does 'engaging with Western classical music' in a Postcolonial India imply?

Interview Schedule

1. Tell me a little about your cultural background. Talk to me about your musical upbringing?
   Sub questions - What is the kind of training you received; did you learn music in school? How do you think Western classical Music is understood in the school system?

2. Did you face / Are you facing any barriers/restrictions to learning music? / Do you find it challenging to pursue Western classical of music?
   Sub questions - Was Western classical music easily accessible for you?

3. How does Western classical music influence other aspects of your life? For example: your friends' circle is different. (In group – out group)
   Sub questions - Do you think playing/singing Western classical music has put you in a different position than those of your friends/social circle who don't access it?

4. Is music part of your identity? Tell me more about that for e.g. Over the years that you have undergone training, how has Western classical music influenced how you see yourself and your life?

5. Who does Western classical music belong to, do you think? Do you ever feel that Western classical music is not 'our' music as in music of our culture?
   Sub question - Have you had an Indian classical training or lessons in any other genre before? Are you still pursuing it? How do you feel about it?

6. How does the person in the street (common man) see classical music in respective city?

7. Where do you think Western Classical music is heading? What would you want from it?

Reserve Questions

- Society: how do you engage with the society? In group, out group
- Musical tastes – experience of culture and society as a result of these tastes
- What is your engagement with music? Listening, performing
- How do these above discussed topics influence your identity?
- If you do, why do you think it is important for you to identify as a musician and are you comfortable with that identity?
- Role of Western classical music in an Indian context
- How long have they been part of an institution is it similar to how it seems on the outside?
- What are your next steps? Is music part of that journey?
- Any particular factors/people that influenced you to choose to study Western Classical music?
- Tell me about your musical tastes. Does this influence other aspects of your life?

Appendix 5 – Consent Form

Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Research:

Researcher:

Please tick as applicable

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Participant Information
Sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the
information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I am free to
withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and that there is no
financial benefit to taking part. ☐

3. I understand that any information given by me in relation to this study
may be included in the <u>PhD study</u>. ☐

4. I understand that I will remain anonymous in the research and that any
information that is confidential will remain so. ☐

5. I understand that all data will be stored securely in a password-
protected account and is covered by the data protection act. It will be
deleted 12 months after the successful completion <u>of the PhD</u>. ☐

6. I give my consent for the researcher to interview me. ☐

_____ _____ _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____
Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Contact Details

Researcher: Ankna Arockiam
Supervisor: Stephen Broad

Appendix **6 – Transcript excerpts**

Interview with RH

RH: So, I was born and raised in Hyderabad and my family comes from a little bit of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. And essentially, we are all south Indians and there is a lot of Indian music in the family. And it is kind of been a part of like everyday family routine to have a little bit of singing or listening to music and even like cultural activities... do have music involved in them. So, while my family is not particularly inclined towards those customs and traditions, they have always loved music. So, I say that is an integral part of our culture.

AA: And can you talk me through your musical upbringing?

RH: So, I began listening to music when I was really little. My parents would go for a film and sometimes take me along and I would just listen to like absorb all the soundtracks of the songs that were there, and the radio would always be playing at home. So, I started singing pretty early on when I was about four there would be pop songs on the radio and I would sing along and at that time my sister was learning to play the piano and while my cousins were learning Indian music. My parents for some reason really took to the Western music also because my sister was learning the piano in the US at that time. And when we got back to India they thought it would be nice for us to play duets on the violin and piano. So that is really how I began umm learning the violin and we fortunately found a tutor who could come home and give me lessons once a week. And so my formative years were between ages 7 - 12 after which I didn't have music formal training other than several masterclasses and occasional lessons in Mumbai. Yeah, so I have learnt WC played a lot in the church because at least at that time that was where most of the WCM activities were possible and I also learnt some Indian vocal music in Hindustani and Karnatic.

AA: So you would say that the main influences for you to take up music were your parents?

RH: Yes, yes.

AA: Great, Okay. And can you tell me more about the musical training you received?

RH: So, a little before that I began the violin I was learning Hindustani vocal music and this was mostly in a group setting where I learnt the basics of various Raags and also learnt singing. So, while I didn't receive a much individual attention, it was still a really nice way to work on my voice and enjoy the social environment of the lesson. Ummm, I began the violin when I was 7 and I had home tuitions. This was in WCM and in retrospect I realise I didn't have a lot of technical training in my early years of learning but there was a lot of musicality that was inculcated and I was also part of my tutor's orchestra. So, that gave me sense of umm community participation and I also was able to try a variety of music. I also did the exams umm at that time I did Trinity College of music examinations. I did skip a few grades but overall I would say my early years were focussed a lot on learning to play the instrument, trying various pieces and also umm like somewhat expanding my repertoire and a little bit of my technical on the instrument.

AA: That's fine. And how do you feel about Indian Classical Music?

VM: They are also stuck up, but I think in, I really appreciate Indian Classical music. [Yeah], it's far more complicated, I think than Western Classical Music. It just has a lot of different things. [Yeah], and, And I enjoy it and but I think that Indian classical music is more clearer in terms of its communication of mood, [Ok], communication of emotions, because you listen to a piece and the Raag kind of dictates what the music is going to be like, and Western Classical Music, until you reach the point of modes and all that. [Yeah], You don't really, you don't really get that point. So that's why, that's why people don't understand it.

AA: Interesting, Okay. And in India where you think Western Classical Music, what direction is it taking?

VM: I think it's; I think there's a rift. [Okay], there are people like Suntook and the Symphony Orchestra of India, that is making it very elitist, at the same time appearing to be very, you know, [Yeah] You know, for the people [I know what you mean], I mean just for example Zane Dalal, Zane Dalal has all this understanding Opera, and understanding this and that, all these talks that he has, which is great, which is good they have to do it. [Yeah], The good thing about Symphony Orchestra is that, they went out and started performing at a space that is actually not meant for Western Classical Music like The Prithvi Theatre. [Yeah], they also agreed to do an open-air concert and things like that. So, they are also changing in a way, but the very fact that you are The Symphony Orchestra of India and there are only like nine or ten people, ten Indians in your entire Orchestra that just speaks volumes. [It does], then when somebody, when somebody questions Zane Dalal at a workshop and said, "I don't see any Indians in your Orchestra" and he said that "It's not about being white or brown. It's about we don't have the level right now, that, that we can actually have people there", but I know for a fact, there are Indians who are paid much less than the foreigners who come, [Yeah], So, now how are you going to say that it's the ones whom you have taken into the orchestra, you know, I mean, there's some kind of dignity that you have to. They are not going to do things full-time for you, if you are not going to pay them, how much they would get otherwise?