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Dealing with 'western classical music' in Indian music schools. A case study in Kolkata, Bangalore, Goa and Mumbai

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Informationszentrum (IZ) Bildung
E-Mail: pedocs@dipf.de
Internet: www.pedocs.de

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Musikpädagogische Forschung
Research in Music Education

Jens Knigge
Anne Niessen
(Hrsg.)

Musikpädagogisches Handeln

Begriffe, Erscheinungsformen, politische Dimensionen

Music Education: Concepts, Practices, and Political Dimensions

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BERND CLAUSEN & SEBANTI CHATTERJEE

Dealing with 'Western Classical Music' in Indian Music Schools. A Case Study in Kolkata, Bangalore, Goa and Mumbai

Summary

This article summarizes the design and results of an efficiency study that accompanied a skill-enhancement project for Indian teachers of Western classical music in selected cities in India, undertaken by the Goethe-Institut Kolkata from 2009 to 2011 in collaboration with the University of Music Würzburg. At the same time it contributes to a segment of comparative music educational research with an interdisciplinary approach to provide further thoughts on a methodological and theoretical foundation in comparative music educational research. The framework of this case study is a challenge for the researcher since it evokes right from the beginning various prejudices ranging from postcolonial criticism to political intentions and workouts of (German) development policies and so forth; however, by understanding comparative research as the careful evaluation of one's diversity of experience by acknowledging that this music praxis has roots in the past as well as in the present leads to an adjustment and a holistic understanding of this segment of music education in India.

Preface

Ian Woodfield (2000) opened up a lot of sources in his research on the musical life in the Anglo-Indian society in the second half of the 18th century. The numerous material he compiled under various topics clearly show how prominently so-called Western classical music was produced and appreciated by certain social groups in India, particularly in Kolkata.[1] The author sketches a scenario of private and institutionalized music praxis in colonial India, whose protagonists maintained contact with Europe on one hand and tried locally to adjust to various circumstances such as climate, diseases and instrument repairs on the other hand. Looking at India today Western

[1] The name Kolkata replaced 2001 the old (colonial) spelling Calcutta and will be used throughout this article as well as Mumbai for Bombay and Chennai for Madras.

classical music in its rituals and social framework did – despite all changes in Indian society since 1947 – not simply vanish after independence but seem to continue in a gestalt that carries tokens of the past and the present.

This article contributes to a segment of comparative music educational research with an interdisciplinary approach. It focuses on an efficiency study that accompanied a skill-enhancement project for Indian teachers of Western classical music in selected cities in India, undertaken by the Goethe-Institut Kolkata from 2009 to 2011 in collaboration with the University of Music Würzburg. First some brief remarks on comparative music education as well as the framework of this research will be given, followed by a draft of selected findings, also from the viewpoint of social studies. A conclusion will summarize the outcomes of this research to provide further thoughts on a methodological and theoretical foundation in comparative music educational research.

1. Introductory Remarks

Prior to the main topic of this article, a few remarks need to be done that sketchily refer to comparative music educational research and face inevitable questions concerning studies in this segment of development aid, too.

Since in Germany research in this area is scarcely visible and lacks so far an elaborated theoretical and methodological discourse that on one hand enhances a broader perspective on formal and informal learning settings in different cultural contexts and on the other hand seeks to experiment with various methodological approaches, the following should be understood as a case study. Its design refers to a definition of comparative research in music education as stated in a recent study on traditional Japanese music in Japanese schools as a multi-methodological and interdisciplinary approach (Clausen, 2009), briefly summarized: in comparative research in music education the subject matter has to root in a close examination of cultural contexts. Apart from giving the researcher the opportunity to get familiar with various aspects of the discourse *in toto*, comparison appears as part of diversity of experience. To meet and verify the stipulation stated in Clausen (2009, p. 36) that the codependency between the three levels data collection, data analysis and theory construction should be viewed from an understanding of music learning as a cultural phenomenon, this case study provides a multi-methodical approach with a longitudinal research design. However, compared to Clausen (2009) the benchmarks of this survey are quite different.

The skill-enhancement project as well as this study results from the initiative "Culture and Development" by the Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan of India. It "aims to provide professional qualifications, to advise and support the formation of regional networks and create cultural and social platforms". (GI, 2011a)

> "The culture initiative is active in four spheres:
> 1. Capacity development
> 2. Educational consulting/educational cooperation
> 3. Creation of cultural spaces
> 4. Cooperation with civil society" (GI, 2011b)

In the outline of these activities the Goethe-Institut Kolkata planned to support the teaching of so-called Western classical music in Indian music schools that exist since the beginning of the 20th century in various Indian cities. These music schools are self-financed institutions and share their efforts towards teaching Western and sometimes also Indian musical instruments. 2009 the Goethe-Institut asked for a feasibility study to map the terrain and assess the achievability of prospective activities.[2] This was the beginning of a project that was later named by participants of the project as *Sur Sangam – Sharing Western Music*.

The realization of such a project does not seek to restore a former condition (an impossible attempt). Turning to this music practise arises in its unquestionable existence. That Western classical music is practised in India (also in hybrid forms like Bollywood etc.) is beyond doubt. However, from a critical viewpoint this observation leads to two fundamental considerations:

Firstly, there is the question regarding the terminology, more precisely, the understanding of what is termed as Western *classical* music in India. This phrase was yet not subject to any crucial review, which however does not imply that the one and the same meaning can be assumed on both the Indian and the German side. (In course of this article a first approach to this multifarious matter will be done.) Lakshmi Subramanian (2008, 2006) has already given an overview on this matter from the perspective of Indian music concerning Karnatic music. She shows that these discussions leap

[2] The following music schools were involved in this project: Calcutta School of Music (est. 1915), Kolkata Music Academy (est. 1983; 2009), Melhi Metha Foundation Mumbai (est. 1995), Kala Academy Goa (est. 1952), William Joseph Academy Bangalore (est. 2003), Bangalore School of Music (est. 1987).

back into the 1900s up to the 1940s.[3] Subramanian's findings as well as those of Amanda Weidman (2006) are not only a good starting point to look closer at the clearly different situation between Chennai and e. g. Kolkata[4], but creates a critical awareness to the concept of 'classical'. During research this aspect appeared clearly visible when the musical repertoire was discussed with the informants. Here 'classical' seemed quite clearly and mostly associated with the First Viennese School. Although that assumption needs further clarification, the music repertoire as well as the overall image of Western classical music with all its social connotations and certain attitudes supports this hypothesis.

Secondly, the state and situation of Indian music traditions is continuously present in the entire research process.[5] While issues regarding the importance of learning traditions like that of the *guru shishya paramparā* in the teaching of Western classical music emerge, rather critical questions appear regarding the fact that a German institution would mean to support the teaching of Western musical instruments – such as this one: Why should Western classical music be encouraged in India, while the Indian classical music a) is the music of the nation, b) needs to be promoted in the first place? These and similar questions reveal a necessary awareness of cultural influence in development cooperation in general.[6] Moreover, in such questions a series of assumptions concerning 'music *culture*' and 'music *tradition*" lurk behind. Not only its suitability has to be questioned against the background of definitions of the term *culture* itself (Wimmer, 2005; Baecker, 2001). The presumed 'here-and-there-dualism' (*here* Indian classical, *there* Western classical music traditions[7]) itself is highly questionable: Does it actually manifest itself in this shape, or is it an outside synthetic, even Eurocentric construct and concept of thinking, and is this distinction simply my problem? (Clayton, 2007) No exhaustive clarification of this and similar questions can take place at this point because a careful examination that also refers to recent postcolonial studies would

[3] Somehow her findings show similarities to Gramit (2002).

[4] In this context see also the work on South Indian violin by Lalitha (2004).

[5] See also Anderson (1980) and Dhananjayan (2007).

[6] For a recent approach in German research see the micro-study by Berndt (2010).

[7] Based on various interviews Lavezzoli (2006) describes the contact between Western (Classical) and Indian Classical music in a general, but distinct way. Concerning the guitar see Clayton (2009), for the violin Weidman (2009).

have to be considered, too. However, respondents as well as researchers in this project very often raised these issues naturally.[8]

Indian musicians practicing Western classical music choose teaching as a medium of instruction in order to also involve a greater number of people in this profession. The pedagogic layout has been institutionalized or standardized across the country by the age-old examination systems conducted by the Trinity College London (TCL) and the Associated Board of Royal School of music Britain (ABRSM). However, if the music education project of the Goethe-Institut (2009 onwards) is to be taken into consideration then this entire process of pedagogy comes to be questioned.[9]

2. Project and Research Design

These preliminary considerations are constant companions throughout the research. They also shaped the project and the research design of *Sur Sangam*. Figure 1 gives an overview on the course of the project.

Three in-vivo-codes and one separated code as results of the feasibility study (2009) as well as two keywords as results of the literature survey on Indian publications helped to identify facets of general pedagogy and teaching Western classical music in India. These findings provided a basis for the design of the skill-enhancement project that stressed on various areas of instrumental pedagogy. It contained of three in-job training modules (2010) conceptualized by staff members of the University of Music Würzburg. 13 participants attended seminars, instrumental lessons and sat in on class in various German music schools around Würzburg for almost 30 days. One-week modules B and C happened in India and were also conducted by German teachers focusing on topics such as doing chamber music, planning and evaluating a lesson, methodical approaches in teaching, body awareness and use of (body)percussion. The aim was to deepen previous learning contents from the other modules and address issues of adjustment to Indian circumstances, for instance through model classes.

[8] In regard to this perspective that also touches possibilities and limits of so-called intercultural contacts see Kurt (2007) and Pietra & Cambell (1995).

[9] See Abrahams (2005).

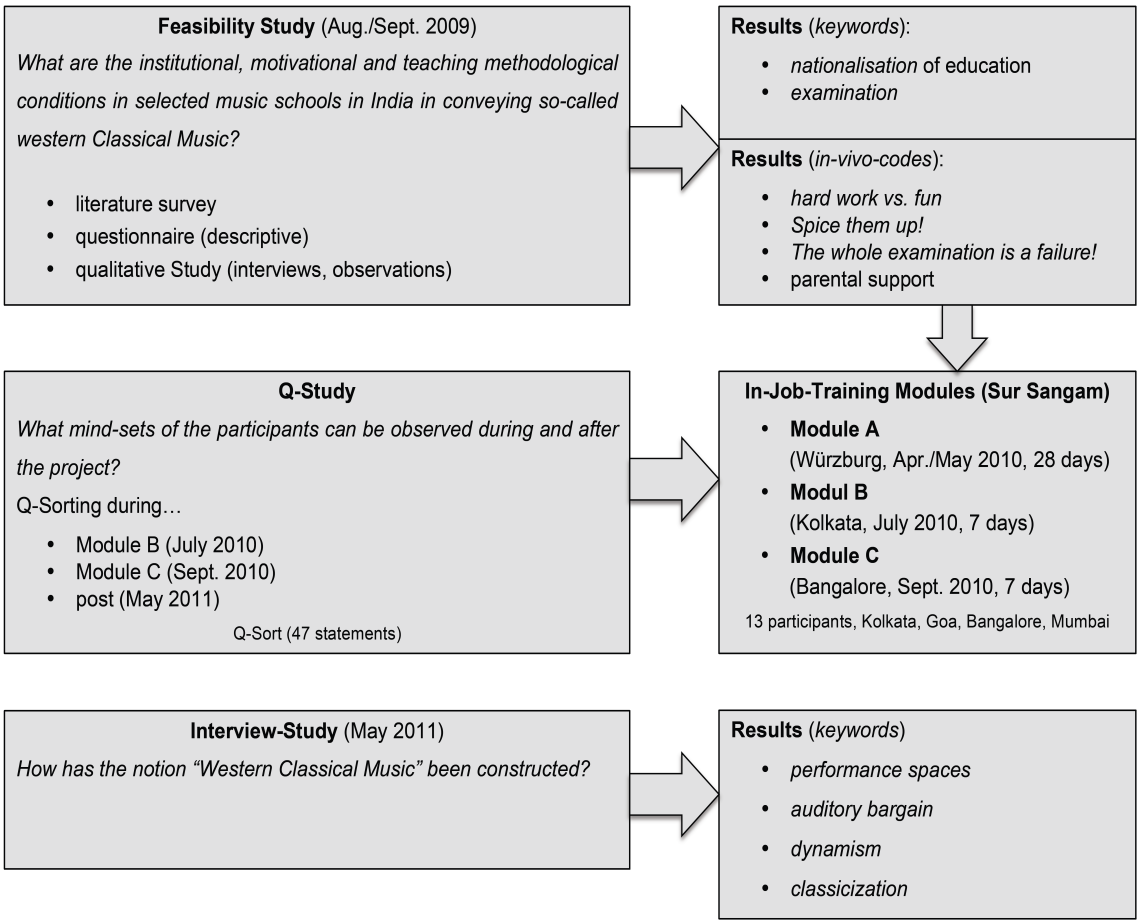

Figure 1: Project Overview

An evaluation investigated the progress of the group with the following research question: *What mindsets of the participants can be observed during and after the project?* To break down this broad question, we referred to Q Methodology (McKeown & Thomas; Brown, 2005, 1997, 1993).[10] Based on the findings in the feasibility study a bipartite Q Sample with deductive generated statements of hybrid types was put together.[11] The sample contained statements by the teachers from the feasibility study and from the 1st module plus excerpts from the literature survey and was carefully verified with two assistants of this project as well as two German music educators involved in the skill-enhancement. All 13 respondents sorted during module B and C (see figure 1) in individual sessions and again in May 2011, six

[10] For a music related study see Edington (2005).

[11] Hybrid type means a sample that uses statements taken out of different sources.

months after the last teaching input. Despite the small group of people[12] investigated here, the mindsets that were found suggest that the participants overall picked up the music methodological approaches offered by the German colleagues and try to adjust these to Indian circumstances. However, the results also show that concerns and doubts that were stated in the feasibility study stayed.

At this point it was necessary to pull in another perspective, more precisely that of Social Studies. This was the moment when an interview study followed up after six month of module C. The following chapter summarizes some of the outcomes.

3. Terms and definitional possibilities

The results of the feasibility study, especially the analysis of the Indian pedagogic literature as well as the qualitative study (see figure 1) lead on one hand to the assumption that also music education (at least in Western classical music) in India believes in a rather result-oriented approach where the final goal is an examination.[13] The interview study of 2011 as well as the observations during the skill-enhancement project on the other hand evokes (at least from an Indian perspective) an image of German music pedagogy that seems more hidebound and looks at subtle ways of approaching music alongside introducing methods of dealing with music and representation of music. But before making any quick assessments about the nature of pedagogy prevalent in India, one needs to delve deeper into the dissimilarities rooted in the various cities that make up India. Out of the four chosen cities of our study (Mumbai, Goa and Kolkata, Bangalore) the different institutions follow an internal pedagogic instruction as well. The internal principles of each school have a lot to do with personal goals and certain policies of the respective institutions. This works in tandem with the standardized pedagogic layout that complicates the system of music education relevant to Western classical music.

[12] The pool of 13 participants was indeed too small for a factor analysis. However, efficiency studies using Q methodology in such a comparative setting are subject to the same conditions stated in Clausen (2009, pp. 9-36).

[13] Examination turned out to be a vital aspect in the literature survey of the feasibility study as well as the Q-Study. It should be mentioned here briefly that it is embedded in a thickly described discourse in Indian pedagogy (Aggarwal & Aggarwal, 1990; Gupta, 2008; Mary & Seetharam, 2009; Mittal, 2008; Rangarajan, 2009; Sivaswarooop, 2009; Srivastava, 2006; Tomar & Shamar, 2008; Tiwari, 2009).

Evaluating the reception of music pedagogy enmeshed in Sur Sangam was put under the fundamental research question in this part-study, which is to explore how the notion of 'Western classical music' has been constructed and modified over time.

Out of thirteen semi-structured interviews with all participants during a research trip in spring 2011 the (text) narrative analysis shaped four key terms that help to give an answer to this question. This ethnography however elaborately discusses the terms *performance* and *dynamism* since it has evolved from standpoint of this project primarily. The other two terms, *classicization* and *auditory bargain*, help in informing and implicating the hurdles and buoyancy associated with the teachers' training project endeavour in India.

3.1 Performance spaces

Performance spaces are no longer confined to the churches, embassy gatherings, private dinner parties and concert halls, as Woodfield (2000) was able to identify. These continue to hold significance but new spaces catering to the needs of the urban middle class youth seem to seize uncharted terrains for making music and spectators. Performers of Western classical music are visible in parks, gardens, various competitions and festivals. Furthermore, if one locates Western classical music within the umbrella of Western music, then the performance spaces include pubs, shopping malls and stores as well. The shift is conspicuous even in the selection of pieces in the music programs. The trend today is to offer a new repertoire of Western classical music well suited to the *auditory bargain* (see 3.2) expected by the spectators. The training directed their attention towards performance. Some quotes of the respondents concern patterns of performance as well as politics of performance (which deals with representation of musicians).[14]

> "I want to learn a lot more about how to harmonize a melody, how to put a tune to music, chords. One of the German professors, A. B. taught us so much in a month; maybe here it would take us 10 years. She introduced us to the world of the composers, all the little frills here and there – what made Mozart compose – the mood prevailing in the 17th/ 18th century. I wish to have her once more especially in the piano section. She teaches

[14] Anonymized data.

> how to perform on stage. She provides an inside view for example a singer standing at the window calling out to her friend/lover. With each kind of music she gave us its corresponding mind image (emphasis added). She taught how to play perfectly and how it's not about the notes out of the book alone." (Interview L.F.; 5/5/11)

With on-going developments in the country like the endeavour of the National Centre for Performing Arts' establishing the Symphony Orchestra of India (2006) and the formation of the India National Youth Orchestra (INYO) by Vijay Upadhayay and Sonia Khan (2010), this 'Indian mentality' can be re-evaluated by the music educators in a positive direction perhaps. INYO has members who surpass the category of 'youth' however the term is probably included to symbolize futuristic implications that the category breeds. There remains an implicit politics of performance within the Symphony Orchestra of India because the majority of the members are Russians. This would need further interrogation. This is primarily because SOI concerns itself with the playability of each orchestra members' determining the standard of the orchestra. The overwhelming Russian representation is triggered by the Chairman having Russian interpersonal connections. (Personal ethnography)

Concerning other modes of evaluation as opposed to the sole reliance on the examination, one respondent spoke about the importance of performance in this setting as follows:

> "They should be evaluated on the basis of their performances. They have a good feeling that I am playing. My wife performed only twice on stage. She tells me how difficult she finds it to go back on the stage. Students should be rotated. I was fortunate to perform all throughout'. He emphasizes on the importance of a rotating platform where not only the best reigns the stage, rather whoever is motivated to perform is encouraged to take the plunge." (Interview A.R.; 5/5/11)

The changing trend, more specifically an imaginary conceptual map common to both the performers and the spectators, which we call an auditory bargain, can largely be located.

3.2 Auditory bargain

The trend today is to offer a new repertoire of Western classical music well suited to be expected by the performers as well as by the spectators. Auditory bargain describes this dialogue between the performers and the audience on one hand and between the different performers on the other hand. This makes the entire concept layered. In fact the understanding achieved by the spectators would differ greatly in most cases from that of the performers. It seems appropriate here to borrow Saussure's notions of signifier and signified to understand this process of representation: Performers and spectators are so-called signifiers here, and the abstract conceptual map auditory bargain is the signified. In the process of auditory bargain, the parties involved engage in a critical negotiation in an attempt eventually to arrive at a desirable consensus regarding the concert schedule and choice of musical renderings. The latter being the code that in due course shapes the meaning of this endeavour. This is because of the arbitrary relation between the signifier and signified. For example, one of the respondents from Mumbai (a teacher at the school) while talking about annual student concerts stressed that it is the teachers who select the pieces for the respective students at par with their perceived musicality. Most often they play examination or grade pieces from TCL or else there are teaching books by John Thompson and Leila Fletcher that the institute follows. Also, compositions from the Baroque period are performed if the pupil shows musical competence. In Kolkata a pattern can be seen during the monthly classical guitar concerts. Every month someone plays Romanza or pieces by Antonio Lauro or Nick Powell. The ones who can exhibit certain skills prefer to attempt Augustín Barrios, Andrés Segovia and Leo Brouwer that too the same compositions that their teachers or seniors have played earlier. Embedded in auditory bargain a process of 'classicization' happens and refers to the above mentioned question where notions of the 'classical' can be observed.

3.3 Classicization

This is the most crucial term and it is borrowed from Partha Chatterjee (1993).[15] At the outset it should be made clear that the very term Western

[15] See also Subramanian, 2006, p. 144. By now this term is being used to describe similar phenomenon in other cultural settings, e. g. see Largey (2006) or Stone (2008).

classical music appears to be ambiguous. For the Western counterparts to whom we owe the origin of this canonical music, it is simply referred to as classical music. Within academic discussions, a nuanced terminology seems to be European art music. However, this does not mean that the music the Indians refer as the Western classical music is any different from the aforementioned ones. There is a linguistic gap and unfortunately it does not stop there. The classical for most Indians would comprise the classic period in music history or better still the compositions before the emergence of the modern period, which the Indians sometimes refer to as neo-classical as we noticed. The research sites have revealed up to this point the possibility of multiple notions of classical within the concept of classicization ensconced in the Indian fabric. For instance, Goa with its Portuguese heritage has choral music and instrumental music as an integral feature. Singing and catechism dates back to Fr. Francis Xavier (1506-1552). By 1545, Parish schools became popular all over Goa (Cabral E Sa, 1997, p. 319). Here Partha Chatterjee's term classicization, where select aspects of a culture are elevated because it is in sync with the national cultural formation, becomes absolutely pertinent. The process of classicization is someway linked to a substantial and insubstantial heritage such as institutions, music instruments or individual biographies and (family) narrations, most likely both.

For Mumbai, one of the respondents said that majority of parents play an important role. In Bombay there are Goans and Parsis, so most likely children are more exposed to Western music than others. They look at it in a different way than the parents at Kolkata. It also depends on the exposure to Western classical music, Indian classical music and art and the family atmosphere. (Interview T.B; 4.5.11)[16]

The Tagore household patronized Western classical music, and lot of it was imitated and remodeled according to music demanded by the theatrical performances. In fact, in 1881 Bengal music school was established in Kolkata, where vocal music and drawing room instruments were taught with the help of books and according to a system of notation (Tagore, 1963, p. 50-89). Also Oxford Mission, founded in the 1880's, made outstanding contribution to the city's musical growth under the mentorship of Father Theodore Mathieson. The latter still being quite involved in the education of orphans by encouraging them to learn a Western music instrument. One

[16] A complete history of institutions of Western classical music in India, including the Bombay Chamber Orchestra (est. 1962) and the National Centre for Performing Arts (est. 1965) has yet not been written. For Kolkata see e. g. Marshall (2000).

of the respondents who was not directly involved as a participant, but as an interview partner during the research, recalls a memory during his time being a pupil at this school:

> "I remember as a child even before I had held my guitar; I grew up listening to the orchestral musical practices of Oxford mission. I used to play with my friends in the garden adjacent to it but slowly I realized that the music rather than the game dragged me to the garden everyday." (G.T.; 14/10/11)

Thus, what can be seen here is, that the cultural affiliations and colonial influences of a particular city have made the spread of this particular genre of music distinct. Somewhere, these ancestral notions continue amongst the contemporary music teachers and performers well evident in their musical tastes and renderings.

3.4 Dynamism

Dynamism refers to the new approaches and endeavours undertaken by enthusiastic groups, patrons and music lovers alongside a global initiative in comparative music education. Technological intrusion in the acoustic world generating a completely different music needs to be understood in the context of dynamism as well. To trace the changes in teaching method, one of the respondent's comment is quite sufficient:

> "I see some Wurzburg in Kolkata. It has enriched me a lot. I found new areas of interest and shared those with other teachers and my students." (Interview A.G.; 20/5/11)

Regarding the best access to listening another response is most appropriate.

> "Internet is more flexible because the rest are fixed (classroom limited to what I have/ may not have the CD/DVD you want/world space radio would give what it gives/attending live concerts may not have the works you like/home environment and others also). If I want to listen to Beethoven, I go to you tube and ask my students to do exactly that." (Interview A.T.; 5/5/11)

When discussing aspects that the musicians felt immediately necessary for further progress, one respondent from Mumbai desperately wanted viola and cello in his string ensemble because it is difficult to make music with only violin students and he mentioned a cello instructor who had come from abroad to train them. Such trainings and master classes he felt enabled

the music teachers to acquire confidence. Another respondent from Mumbai feels that the Indian government should encourage Western classical music, offer scholarship and make it a part of school curriculum. Few of them have recently started implementing documentation, lesson planning and transformation in their teaching methods. Dynamism appears here mirrored in their self-awareness as teachers, for the teachers. When they were asked about the use of other mediums while teaching, one respondent's remark put it all together.

> "I have attempted teaching them with songs / body percussions / poetry / creative writing / painting (with kids). We get interesting and varied responses. It helps the child to improve his/her performance and it helps me to understand the child." (Interview N.; 6/5/11/)

Thus one very essential aspect emanates from the above activity. Holistic education makes one sharp and well equipped to adopt an interdisciplinary attitude within performing arts.

The Indian music teachers are fascinated with improvisation and the hidebound approach of introducing music to small children and find Kodály's method particularly effective. When they were asked if reproducing the piece was enough, one respondent intelligently pointed out to me the banality of the very question.

> "No (small laugh), that would stop the creativity. You call a musician an artist. An artist is one who creates, not one who reproduces. Music is an art form therefore one's feelings play a key role and thus reproducing the piece is not enough. Compositions are encouraged at all levels." (Interview, A.R.; 5/5/2011)

Still reticence amongst the teachers regarding permitting their students to attempt compositions can be sensed. This is because here, at the initial stage, technique and scales assume central importance in order to excel in examinations.

3.5 Summary

The interview-study shows that the project seems to have structured thought processes and made teaching approach more nuanced and confident. This self-assured attitude together with a modified perspective on music teaching can also be seen by comments that refer to comparison with

other countries or to one's own experiences in other contexts such as the following one:

> "I think we are quite well advanced. I mean, if you compare us to China and Japan then it is very different. I went to Lisbon to study music and had a Chinese roommate. Now I mean no offence. I find them very mechanical, there is so much of technique, technique and that's it. I think in Goa people focus on feelings and that's how each one is different from the rest. Playing from the heart is necessary. I also played with the Bangalore orchestra. They are a little more advanced in the sense they go places and that excites them. We no longer have the brass section. We play only for Goa. Before we went to Pune and Bombay but now we have a limited orchestra. In Bangalore, they also invite other artists to play for them maybe through interpersonal relations, money, I do not know exactly." (Interview M.G.; 5/5/11)

Noticeably prejudice can be traced in this statement. Respondents from Bangalore and Kolkata also came up with similar observations about too much technique and mechanisation in the performance of Japanese and Chinese musicians. Could this be due to the inclusion of few compositions by Asian musicians in the syllabus of TCL and ABRSM diploma examinations? Perhaps looking at them, the musicians here realize how the unavoidable trap of not having conservatory training in music and sufficient competition certificates or performance opportunities stagnate their growth as a musician par excellence despite having necessary skill and the love for Western classical music.

The four keywords as extracted results of the interview study stand in an analytic relationship. They act as interrelated benchmarks that define the discourse not only concerning the notion of Western classical music, but as a vignette to the project, to describe music educational processes with a comparative perspective. Auditory bargain together with the various performance spaces as distinct segments of Indian society are continuously intermingling. As a repeating cycle of (re-) constituting classicization that shapes Western classical music as a cultural praxis as such, inputs like those of the Sur Sangam project challenge the participant's self-awareness on all levels and makes them also a vibrant part of dynamism.

4. Concluding remarks

The concluding remarks will be separated in those that are related to the Sur Sangam project and those that concern comparative music education as part of music educational research.

During the feasibility study we tried to ascertain the broader context of Western classical music praxis in Indian music schools in selected Indian cities. The consequences of the demands of a growing financially well off social group that sends its children off to learn violin, piano or guitar forms (besides being part of an educational and with-it a social upgrade) not only a segregated cultural space with distinct interrelated benchmarks, but also puts an aspect in the foreground that was coded in an output orientated attitude in music teaching. The latter one, being the one and only clearly visible component of – generally speaking – Indian education and as such linked to examination pervades the skill-enhancement project like a leitmotif. The Q study that turned towards the mind-set of the participants shows that, although the measurements within the skill-enhancement project seem to be somehow successful on the level of methodological inputs, a rest of uncertainty concerning the adjustment of one’s own experience to the Indian fabric remains. Speaking of Sebanti Chatterjees four key-terms, Sur Sangam is an active vehicle in understanding dynamism in the context of contemporary music scenes in India. Yet the study shows at this point that the implementation of what the participants had experienced is stimulating their self-awareness as musician as well as their image of Western classical music. That supports the observation of the Indian musicians being at a crossroad.

In regards to comparative research in music education it should primarily stressed out that a project like this is definitely a challenge for the researcher since it evokes right from the beginning various prejudices ranging from postcolonial criticism to political intentions and workouts of (German) development policies and so forth; however, by understanding comparative research as the careful evaluation of one’s diversity of experience by acknowledging that this music praxis has roots in the past and the present leads to an adjustment and a holistic understanding of this segment in music education in India. This study shows again that what Schubert (2005, p. 29) calls the enhancement of presuppositions as well as political, social and individual conditions during data collection is important. In other words, the complexity and not the reduction of observations of pedagogical processes should be the center point of comparative research in

education. This counts especially for music learning, if music and music learning is been understood as part of cultural practice.

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Bernd Clausen
Hochschule für Musik
Hofstallstr. 6-8
D-97070 Würzburg
Email: bernd.clausen@hfm-wuerzburg.de

Sebanti Chatterjee
Centre for Studies in Social Sciences,
R-1 Baishnabghata Patuli Township
Calcutta, West Bengal 700094
India
Email: sebanti@gmail.com