

The guru recontextualised? – Teaching and learning North Indian classical music in a western professional training environment

Huib Schippers, Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre

Introduction

In the literature on Indian music and ‘world music education,’ the time-honoured system of *guru-śisya-paramparā*¹ is often quoted as *the* perfect example of a close relationship between master and pupil to perpetuate a predominantly oral musical tradition. There is some justification for this: North Indian classical music has been successfully passed down as an oral tradition through *guru-śisya-paramparā* for many centuries, and has remained a vibrant and living tradition to this day. However, with drastic changes in economic and social conditions in India (e.g. Jain, 2005), the spread and increased uptake of Indian classical music in the West for over half a century (Farrell, 1997), and emerging critical voices amongst contemporary Indian students, new conditions and contexts have arisen that challenge a system essentially based on a court patronage environment.

In terms of training professional musicians, the College, School, Academy or Conservatorium context is perhaps the most relevant new context to consider. In North India, a large number music schools for beginners and amateurs have been established over the past hundred years on the basis of the groundbreaking work of V.N. Bhattachande and D.V. Paluskar, such as the Gandharva Mavidyalaya. For those who have the ambition, the talent and the perseverance needed for professional training, there are schools established by individual artists, and institutions such as Sangit Research Academy in Kolkata, Sangit Natak Akademi in Delhi, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai. The former frequently use group teaching, Indian notation (*sargam*), and standard curricula, while the professional courses often try to emulate the traditional *guru-śisya-paramparā* setting, although some notation, group instruction, and particularly the use of recording equipment is widespread.

Meanwhile in the West, over the past 30 years full degree courses have emerged in the USA and Europe. These form a fascinating meeting ground between Indian traditional transmission on the one hand, and the essentially nineteenth century, European ideas on education and training that characterise the conservatoire on the other (cf Schippers, 2004). This paper will

¹ The system bears great resemblance to its Muslim counterpart: *ustad-şagird*; much of what I argue about musical transmission in this paper would also apply to that setting.

consider some implications of that encounter by examining a typical setting in this new context: an intermediate *bansuri* lesson by the renowned flute master Hariprasad Chaurasia at the Rotterdams Conservatorium in the Netherlands. It will do so from the perspective of a number of explicit and implicit choices that are highlighted when music is taught outside its culture of origin: approaches to cultural diversity; issues of tradition, authenticity and context; and dimensions of teaching and learning, including oral, holistic, and ‘intangible’ aspects.

Background

To this day, the guru is at the centre of Indian perceptions of learning music, as is evident from the prominence of the guru in the CV of virtually every musician, and as a recurring theme in discussions amongst Indian musicians, students and music lovers. Interviews with great musicians and books on Indian musicians abound in references to revered masters (e.g. R. Shankar, 1969; Bhattacharya, 1979; Sorrell, 1980; Chaudhuri, 1993; and A. Shankar, 2002). As Neuman states: “Whether a musician is considered great, good, or even mediocre, he will (in the absence of anyone else) establish - so to speak - his credentials as a musician on the basis of whom he has studied with and whom he is related to” (1990, p. 44). Although it can be argued that some of this holds true for students of ‘gurus’ in western classical music as well, it stands to reason that it is more prominent in Indian music, as it does not have at its base a canon in the sense of an established body of works that can be accessed independent of the teacher. The guru embodies the tradition, which, ideally, is slowly and beautifully assimilated through a long, close relationship.

However, given the situation that in most contemporary learning situations in India and abroad there are constraints on availability and time, there is a need to look more critically at the great institution of *guru-śisya-paramparā*. Societal changes challenge the relationship Neuman describes as “devotion of the disciple to his guru and the love of the guru for his disciple” in its “ideal form and essential nature” (1980, p. 45), and Slawek reports to be “of a spiritual nature. The guru is likened to a god, and the disciple must fully submit to him” (1987, p. 2). Such a relationship does not easily flourish in hectic, contemporary life.

Critical reflections on the guru are virtually non-existent from Indian sources, as they are socially unacceptable in music circles. It is common to idealise the guru as a person who generates divine musicianship in his pupils as a matter of course. However, most gurus find it understandably difficult to live up to this profile. In public and writing, students will generally exalt the source of their musical skills and understanding. From private, oral reports (several anonymous sources, personal communications, 1975 – 2005) one learns that many gurus may act like demi-gods, but in fact they have changing moods, weaknesses, and oversights. They

are in effect human, in addition to being sometimes sublime musicians. They expect complete surrender, but they may take on students without clear plans regarding fitting them into their busy schedules or by appointing capable substitute teachers. As one irate tabla player remarked during a conference on the topic at NCPA in Mumbai: “Many gurus live in the twenty-first century, jet-setting around with their electronic toys, but they expect their students to live in the nineteenth century” (oral communication, 1998). Although gurus are idealised in public, on closer examination, not all seem to be ready or capable of assuming the full onus the position implies. On the other hand, the system - with its intimate lifelong link with a personification of a specific tradition - has functioned well enough to make the music survive over centuries, so we may as well consider its weaknesses an integral part of the tradition. But there can be little doubt that *guru-śisya-paramparā* is at crossroads.

In discussions on the key characteristics of *guru-śisya-paramparā*, concepts that emerge frequently are tradition, authenticity, context, orality, holistic learning, and intangible aspects of Indian music, often contrasted with the emphases in formalised Western teaching, with its canon, modernity, and rational, analytical and notation-based learning. But what happens if we transpose learning Indian music to the western conservatoire system, which can be traced back some 200 years in its present form (Weber, 2005)? Examining this encounter - or even confrontation - of cultures has the potential of bringing out subtleties in our understanding of learning Hindustani music today, which may point to ways forward.

A case study

An attic room in a building that formerly housed pilots for Rotterdam harbour is now part of Rotterdam Conservatoire, where Indian classical music was established as a degree course by Joep Bor in 1987. The guru, Hariprasad Chaurasia, is seated on a simple, armless chair. On the floor in front of him are an electronic *tamburā* for the drone, an electronic *tabla* for rhythmic support, and five degree students with their instruments, in a semicircle. Hariprasad Chaurasia has been the artistic director of the Indian classical music degree course since the 1990s. As he is a touring musician with obligations in India as well, he concentrates his teaching during two periods in the year: a short stay in December, and a longer one in the period from April to June. During the rest of the year, the flute students are taught by Henri Tournier, the assistant teacher, who has a background as a professional flautist and long-time student of Chaurasia.

On paper, the curriculum that lies at the basis of the program in Rotterdam is shaped along the same lines as other subjects in Western classical music conservatoires. Gaining respectability by emulating the established curricula may have been a motivating force for this format.

Interestingly, it has profited from the fortuitous coincidence that one-on-one teaching features heavily in both western conservatoire training and Indian classical music. In fact, the dominant conservatoire practice of one-on-one teaching prompted Chaurasia to change his teaching style, as he had previously been teaching predominantly in small groups. An important change to the learning process compared to the Indian system is constituted by regular exams in front of a committee, which in effect significantly undermines the absolute power of the guru. All subjects in the curriculum have been customised for Indian music students: Indian music history and raga analysis, *tablā* as a second instrument, Hindi as language, and Indian cultural history as background, creating a further deviation from learning all aspects of music from a single, unchallenged source. These elements form the basis of a BA curriculum over eight semesters, with a nominal study load of 840 hours per semester, 1680 hours per year, with the possibility of a subsequent two-year MA program.

The class examined in this paper consisted of a lesson dedicated to raga Bihag, a traditional late evening raga, which Hariprasad classified loosely as ‘a little complicated’, and appropriate for a mixed-level group. Within the 45-minute lesson, he dealt with *ālāp*, the introduction to the tonal material, *jor*, a continuation of *ālāp* with a pulse, and then a composition in medium tempo, going up to fast tempo. In schematic form, the recorded class proceeded like this:

Table 1: Progression bansuri lesson Hariprasad Chaurasia, Rotterdam Conservatorium, May 8, 2003

<i>Time (min:sec)</i>	<i>Action</i>
00:00 – 00:20	Checking the tuning of the flutes and electric <i>tamburās</i>
00:20 – 01:30	Playing the ascending and descending scale of raga Bihāg
01:30 – 08:30	Playing <i>ālāp</i> , the slow introductory part to the tonal material of the raga, with the teacher showing a phrase, and the students copying him as exactly as is within their capabilities
08:30 – 10:00	Copying phrases one by one
10:00 – 13:40	Playing together again
13:40 – 29:17	Playing <i>jor</i> , an introduction with an added pulse, but no rhythmic structure yet. Pattern of imitation continues. Chaurasia occasionally sings phrases in <i>sargam</i> (using note names). Some phrases are repeated several times. Chaurasia indicates pulse by tapping the flute with his ring.
29:18- 29:45	Setting the tabla machine to medium speed composition in <i>tintāl</i> (about 5 seconds per 16-beat cycle)
29:45 – 33:20	Playing <i>asthāyi and antarā</i> , the fixed parts of the composition already learned during earlier lessons, followed by <i>tanās</i> one by one, then together, supported by Chaurasia singing the notes.
33:20 - 40:25	Students are told to “improvise something” one by one. Chaurasia comments “very good” after both successful and less successful attempts.
40:25 – 42:20	Speeding up the composition to approximately 3 seconds per 16 beat cycle and bringing the lesson to an end two minutes later.
42:20 – 43:00	Chaurasia expresses being content with the achievement of the students, and briefly discusses the time of day the raga is played (late evening).
43:00 – 45:30	Chaurasia introduces the researcher and asks each student to introduce himself.
45:30	End of video recording

From observing the footage and analysing the subsequent interview, and taking into consideration the background sketched earlier in this paper, it is relatively simple to describe the choices made in the music transmission process coherently. To do so, I will use seven pairs of concepts dealing with dimensions of the actual teaching, less explicit concepts that inform the teaching such as tradition, authenticity and context, and finally the setting of the learning environment in its culturally diverse context (cf Schippers, 2005).

Written - aural

The transmission process observed is entirely aural. No notation is used by either the teacher or the students. This is how Chaurasia prefers music learning to take place. He does observe that Westerners take time to learn in this way, because they are not used to it. He relates memorising music to the way it is subsequently used in performance, by stating that the remembered piece of music in the mind forms the basis for improvisation (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:24). Chaurasia is sensitive to the situation of the students at the conservatoire: “I don’t want anybody to use [notation], but I’m not here all the time, so they have to record and they have to write” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:22). He indicates that he does attach value to writing as a means to ensure preservation of the material. Rather strikingly, he prefers writing to recording, because he ascribes greater longevity to written music than to sound recordings, presumably based on perceptions of vulnerability of tapes, and perhaps limited familiarity with digital storage.

This picture corresponds largely to the attitudes that can be encountered in the professional training of Indian classical musicians at large. Despite attempts to notate Indian music from the nineteenth century (Farrell, 1997, pp. 67-68), and the major influence of the impressive collections of notated compositions by V.N. Bhattacharya (1860-1936) on music tuition at more basic levels, the emphasis in professional training remains on aural transmission, with occasional use of notation as support. It is well established that this makes excellent sense from the perspective of the fluid nature of the music, and this is maintained in the new context. An interesting emerging perspective in the teaching of Indian music over the past decades is the rise of recording lessons to compensate for less extensive exposure to the guru. In this context, sitarist Arvind Parikh refers to “having the guru in one’s pocket” (oral communication, 1996). There is little doubt that referring to recordings of lessons and performances is of great importance in perpetuating the tradition of Indian classical music, but the exact long-term implications of this are still unclear.

Analytic – holistic

In descriptions of aural traditions, it is often taken for granted that these are also predominantly holistic: real repertoire (rather than didactic pieces) is used, which is rarely analysed or explained for transmission. In fact, this is a fallacy: the transmission of South Indian music is very structured, yet tends to be entirely aural, while training in Japanese *shakuhachi* is based on notation, but entirely holistic. In the training of Hindustani musicians, however, the two do seem to coincide largely. Few gurus explain in great detail the rules of ragas, the underlying structures of improvisation, or even the parts of the development of a raga in performance beyond the basics. Limited conscious awareness of these issues may be due to assimilation from a very early age, when music can be learned as a language, without being aware of the grammar.

This does not necessarily constitute a weakness in the system of transmission, however. It has perpetuated subtleties that are difficult to explain. As Van der Meer has commented “I often tried analytically to understand what happens. The only way, however, appeared to be simply imitating the teacher without thinking. After having learnt this in a practical manner the analysis follows easily” (Van der Meer, 1980, p. 139). Paradoxically, as many students will relate, holistic teaching in fact challenges and stimulates independent analytical activity. Just as extensive use of notation allows laziness in musical memory, excessive explanation understimulates independent analysis, which may subsequently be applied to other but similar challenges. Moreover, the confusion that arises from a holistic teaching strategy can be a valuable tool towards mature and creative musicianship.

Transplanting the music to a conservatoire does not necessarily change that situation. The recorded lesson shows an almost entirely holistic approach. Hariprasad does not make any comments beyond a non-committal “very good” at the attempts of the students to follow him or improvise. Hariprasad confirms his adherence to this approach in the interview: “I don’t explain much, but I am playing.”

It would be too simplistic, however, to call his approach entirely holistic. Hariprasad consciously shows the development of the raga in slow motion. “When I teach them, I go very slowly. I show them how to go from note to note” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:22). This actually implies an analytic strategy. The same goes for the fast improvisations known as *tānas*. Chaurasia indicated he does not explain the structure of these to the students, but gives them examples so they can work out the structure for themselves (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:26).

Although it is not demonstrated in the lesson, in the interview Chaurasia indicates that he checks and corrects improvisations by the students, until they do not make certain mistakes anymore, for instance in prescribed note order, when they create new free or fixed improvisations (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:25). He also corrects mistakes in approach to sound, for instance when the quality of the tone is derived too much from Western music (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:27).

In the interview, he makes clear that he explains theoretical aspects of music as well:

Sometimes I explain about the raga. When I start teaching the raga, I explain about the *chalan* [characteristic melodic movements], about *asthāyi* and *antarā* [fixed parts of the composition], about *vādi*, *samvādi* [emphasised notes], about the timing of the ragas. (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:02)

The latter occurs briefly at the end of the lesson, when he asks the group at what time of day this raga should be played. Although the picture is somewhat clouded by the structure of the curriculum, in which analytical aspects of the training of the musician have been delegated to specific modules, we can establish that in this case study, the emphasis is clearly on a holistic approach, but it does display elements of analytical approaches.

Tangible - intangible

Every musical tradition has a balance between tangible aspects of music making, such as technique, instrumentation, and repertoire (particularly in the western classical canon) on the one hand, and on the other less tangible aspects, such as improvisation, expression, aesthetics, and social or spiritual values underlying the music. In institutional environments, the emphasis often shifts to tangible, measurable, analytic aspects of teaching, while in the much more individual *guru-śisya-paramparā* there is more room for intangible elements. In an exploratory (and admittedly crude) manner, the difference in emphasis between the two systems could be represented as in the following table:

Table 2: Aspects of learning highlighted and underemphasised in *guru-śisya-paramparā*

<u>GSP emphasises</u>	<u>GSP tends to neglect</u>
<i>Discipline of practice</i>	<i>Structure of practice</i>
<i>Knowledge of traditional material one tradition</i>	<i>Comparison material from various traditions</i>
<i>Technique through hard work/trial and error</i>	<i>Technique through explanation</i>
<i>Insight into musical meaning</i>	<i>Analysing musical structure</i>
<i>Learning fixed compositions and improvisation</i>	<i>Freedom in improvisation</i>
<i>Playing complex structures</i>	<i>Understanding complex structures</i>
<i>Oral perception</i>	<i>Analysis</i>
<i>Learning to perform by doing (implicit)</i>	<i>Understanding structure of performance</i>
<i>Humility</i>	<i>Confidence</i>
<i>Anecdotes about great musicians</i>	<i>Historical background of the music</i>
<i>Understanding tone</i>	<i>Knowledge of swaras and śrutis</i>

Not all of these can easily be observed from the recorded class. As Chaurasia spends most of the lesson showing the students the way through the melodic material of the raga, the emphasis seems to be on tangible aspects. However, there are several pointers towards the intangible as well. Chaurasia indicates that the reason for playing with the students is technique, but also sound production and colour.

I play with them, so they can get the sound of the instrument, the beauty of the notes, and they can also watch me, how I blow. This is a very difficult part: how I blow and how I make my fingers move on the flute. [...] You have to lift half finger to get half notes and then to create microtones through your blowing. So they have to watch when I play. If I just sing, they will never have the idea of the technique of the instrument. (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:05)

Chaurasia indicates the students also have to learn to control the colour of the sound, for instance when they play a note by covering half a hole, which does not naturally sound the same as a completely covered hole.

They have to find the way how to make the sound equal. Like they were playing two *madhyams* [the fourth step in the scale, which occurs both in natural and augmented form in raga Bihag.]. If you play *śuddhā* [natural] madhyam, then you have to cover half. It should sound the same when you open the note to get *tivra* ma [augmented madhyam]. The same quality of sound. (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:08)

In the interpretation of raga, he uses a metaphor to illustrate how masters are allowed to take certain liberties with going in and out of mood (*bhav*) when interpreting a raga: “When you see the moon temporarily hidden from view by clouds, then it looks even brighter when it reappears. This is called *avir bhav – tiru bhav*” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:16; cf. Sanyal & Widdess, 2004, p. 170). In a further comment, he goes into the metaphysical:

They also have to understand that you don’t have to tune the instrument, but you have to tune yourself. The instrument itself, the flute, does not need to be tuned, but if you are not tuned here (inside), then you cannot play in tune.” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:16)

Comments such as these are quite common in Indian classical music transmission. Like in many other traditions, metaphor is used frequently in order to make the student understand essential aspects of the music that defy rational description. In India, Chaurasia spends time on discussing the background of the music in terms of stories on famous musicians. In Europe, he concentrates on the sound. He believes the students get sufficient background on Indian culture through television (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:34). This may seem a somewhat meagre source of in-depth understanding; perhaps Chaurasia deems a modest grasp of Indian culture adequate, or considers that the culture is embodied in the musical practice itself. All in all, on the basis of the recorded lesson and the interview, the emphasis seems to lie in the middle area between tangible and intangible.

Static Tradition – constant flux

Indian classical musicians have a somewhat ambiguous attitude towards tradition. On the one hand there is an almost blind respect for the achievements and the masters of the past, who are attributed qualities that go far beyond those that can be demonstrated. In a negative interpretation of this approach, there are many in each generation who assert that Indian music is in decline. On the other hand, a good number of senior musicians express the view that Indian music only gets better, and emphasise the fact that Indian music is a living tradition.

While change is acceptable and in fact appreciated within certain limits amongst Indian musicians, Westerners learning Indian music tend to be very conservative. If we consider the generation of Western students after the initial confusion of the 1960s, i.e. coming to Indian music primarily for its musical attraction, a striking feature in these musicians is that many value the ‘pure tradition’ very highly. This even influenced the revival of older musicians and ancient traditions in India, such as the austere *dhrupad* style. To this day, many Western students tend to be more conservative than their peers in India when they perform in the tradition, especially when they have learned from a guru who has been abroad for many decades, and has largely kept the approach and aesthetics of his time learning and performing in India. On the other hand, there are many western Indian music students who also experiment outside the Indian classical framework, for example in fusion or ‘new age’ music.

Although he himself has been involved in musical projects mixing traditions, Chaurasia emphatically does not use non-Indian or contemporary cultural influences in his teaching. He perceives that students are coming to him to be taught purely classical music, which is also the music he learned, particularly from his guru Annapurna Devi (who is the sister of Ali Akbar Khan and the former wife of Ravi Shankar).

However, Chaurasia does not consider the tradition that he teaches static, but rather as in constant flux on a firm basis of unchangeable aspects: the fixed parts of compositions, and the way of moving melodically in the raga as established within each distinct tradition (or school). He has an uncommonly positive approach to the music of the young generation: “It has very much changed, it is becoming more and more beautiful. The younger generation are making it more and more beautiful [...] They are creating their own thing” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:12). Chaurasia expresses the view that merely repeating one’s predecessors is not enough: creativity is an essential aspect of the North Indian tradition: “This is the beauty in classical music” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:14).

If we consider the material he teaches, however, we find that it is very strongly traditional. His movements in Bihag are the ones we find in renditions of most traditional masters, so it makes sense to place his approach to this area in the middle area between static tradition and constant flux, with perhaps a slight leaning to the latter to account for the strong concept of a living tradition.

Original context – completely recontextualised

Indian classical music has gone through massive changes of context, especially in the past century. From a court tradition for predominantly connoisseur listeners, and, in vocal music, also a significant courtesan tradition, which also drew a knowledgeable audience (Van der Meer & Bor, 1982, pp. 59-60), it has moved to much wider and more diverse audiences. In that process, the position and lifestyles of successful musicians have changed drastically. The development of mobility through travel, amplification, broadcasting and the recording industry have created a new reality for musicians in India, and with it, affected the possibilities for teaching. Various aspects of this process have been documented, for instance by Shankar (1969), Van der Meer, (1980), Neuman, (1980), and Farrell (1997). Simultaneously, long-term patronage in one place virtually disappeared with the courts and the houses of the affluent *zamindars*. This created new challenges for the prolonged exposure traditionally associated with *guru-śisya-paramparā*. Famous musicians have busy schedules, and often move all over India, or even the entire globe.

In the interview, Chaurasia gives strong hints of trying to recreate an Indian context, but he also seems to be aware of new realities: “I’m trying to make them Indian. When they pick up the bamboo they should look like Indian. Their sound should sound like Indian. That’s what I’m trying to do.” But he relates this less to context than to actual musical skills and properties. Moreover, he indicates that he spends little time on teaching his students about behavioural codes amongst musicians, which he finds they pick up themselves from being exposed to Indian culture away from the conservatoire (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:10).

Chaurasia does not see any problem in one of the great questions and challenges of multicultural music practice and cultural identity: students from other cultures learning Indian music. He mentions that there are a number of Western musicians who have reached a high level of proficiency: “If you close your eyes, you will feel that this music is played by Indians” (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:22), provided they have learned properly. In that way, he ‘deproblematizes’ the discussion that has raged previously on white jazz musicians or Asian string players and pianists: he feels the proof is in the sound.

Although the setting is Western and contemporary, Chaurasia chooses to refer to his system of teaching at the Rotterdam Conservatoire as *guru-śisya-paramparā* (Chaurasia, 2003, 0:22). Without a concerted effort to achieve this, there appears to be a definite leaning towards emulating an ‘original context’.

(Reconstructed) authenticity - New identity

The term authenticity is frequently used in describing musical practices, but often with unclear or even contradictory meanings. It can refer to an attempt to exactly recreate a previous musical experience following ancient scores and using period instruments (as in the European early music movement from the 1950s), and it can also be applied more abstractly to following established rules and approaches to playing. In rock music, however, authenticity refers to a vitality and originality of expression (Cook, 1998, pp. 13, 11). In that way, we see that authenticity means ‘trying to copy’ in one type of music, and ‘emphatically not trying to copy’ in another: reconstructing in one, and striving for new identity in the other.

Authenticity is a complicated issue in the context of Hindustani music. Very few musicians try to reconstruct the performance practices of earlier decades. Old compositions are greatly respected, and remembered and performed as they have been handed down. However, the performance format, particularly of instrumental music, has evolved significantly over the past 100 years, informed but unchallenged by respect for earlier performance practices. There is a strong sense of awareness of authenticity, but mostly in the sense of being true to the spirit of the tradition. Most musicians seem to believe that there is a core of Indian music that should not be touched, which includes traditional *ragas*, *talas*, and compositions, the careful exposition of the tonal material of the raga in *ālāp*, and the aesthetics and expression of every raga, referred to as *rasa* or *bhav*.

As we have seen from the comments of Chaurasia, there is very little impetus to try to reconstruct the music from the past. Although musicians will treasure and learn from recordings of old masters, literally reproducing these in performance is in fact considered poor musicianship. On the other hand, great value is attached to remaining true to certain rules and values, particularly in early musicianship, with an emphatic personal stamp at more advanced stages of learning. In this way, North Indian music can be considered to take on a new identity with every new generation of musicians in a way that strives for ‘true to self’ authenticity more than ‘true to historical practice,’ so the balance would tilt towards new identity.

Monocultural - transcultural

When a musical form travels and takes root outside of its culture of origin, it is partially defined by its relation to its new cultural context. A useful way of describing this context is to distinguish between four basic approaches to cultural diversity: a monocultural approach, in which the dominant culture is the only frame of reference, a multicultural approach, in which cultures exist side by side without much contact between them, an intercultural approach, in which meetings and exchange are actively stimulated, and a transcultural approach, in which the characteristics and values of music merge at a profound level, so that the individual components can no longer be distinguished.

The situation regarding the approach to cultural diversity is quite clear. Chaurasia gives evidence of an emphatic attempt to recreate 'Little India' in Rotterdam. Within the template outlined above, that would constitute a multicultural approach. With most its curriculum tradition-specific, Indian music is quite insular in the western conservatorium context. Chaurasia does refer to his own intercultural musical experience, but this is not what the students are coming for, and it is allowed amongst students, but not especially stimulated.

Conclusions

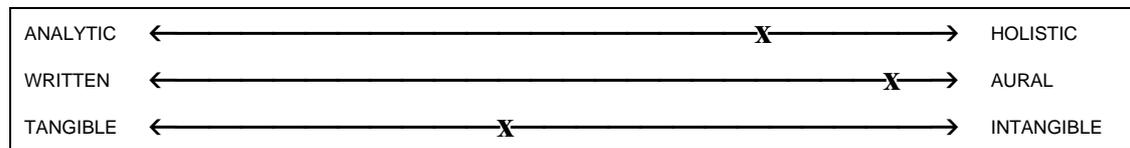
When Indian music education started travelling to the West at a large scale, from the 1960s, it found fertile grounds for establishing itself on its own values. There was great openness to the merits of Indian culture. Consequently, there was little incentive to mix extensively with the host culture. Although there are many unmemorable and a few memorable encounters of Indian and Western musicians, including those of Ravi Shankar with Yehudi Menuhin, Ali Akbar Khan with John Handy, and Zakir Hussain with John McLaughlin, the emphasis seems to have been on maintaining the pure tradition as an island in the new host culture, which would qualify as a multicultural approach within the terminology of his paper.

This certainly appears to be the case with Chaurasia's teaching in Rotterdam. In terms of approaches to tradition, authenticity and context, Chaurasia also follows practices and views common to the culture of origin; a strong emphasis on Indian music as a living tradition, a tendency to maintain a *guru-śisya-paramparā* context, and authenticity in the sense of honouring the past and being true to contemporary environments. And even the strategies for teaching - aural, holistic and between tangible and intangible - are only marginally different from the practices on which it is modelled, which is quite striking in an environment where the norm is notation-based, analytical and tangible.

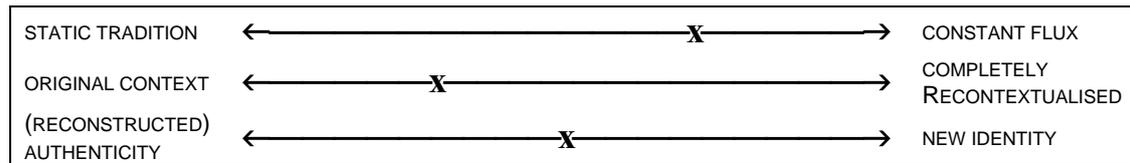
Overall, we can establish that the system of musical transmission used by Hariprasad Chaurasia is quite close to the traditional system of professional music transmission used in India. The views advocated by Chaurasia demonstrate awareness of the new setting and type of students he deals with in the West, but the Conservatoire setting has not had a great deal of influence on the teaching practice, except for, ironically, the reinstatement of one-on-one teaching, considered an essential feature of *guru-śisya-paramparā* by many. If we visualise the picture that emerges from the seven pairs of concepts in this specific situation as places on continuums, we encounter a pattern as in the table below:

Table 3: Seven-Continuum Transmission Model: Learning bansuri at Rotterdams Conservatorium

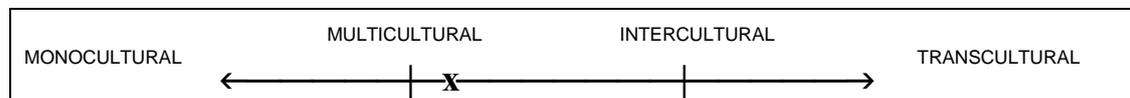
Learning Process



Issues of Context



Approach to Cultural Diversity



This model is essentially value free. The positions on each continuum do not represent right or wrong approaches to teaching, but choices made for a particular music in a particular setting, as we have seen from the descriptions above. The total picture that emerges from this discussion of transmission in North Indian music leads to some interesting considerations on music education in East and West. Formal music education in the West tends to concentrate on the subjects in the left-hand column at the expense of some more ‘musical’ approaches. Recently, however, Western educators have begun to look at systems of music teaching that take the musical practice as its basis (e.g. Elliott, 1995). These are often more holistic in approach, as is the traditional *guru-śisya-paramparā*. Reversely, Indian musicians and musicologists have been considering more analytical approaches to teaching the basics of music since the late nineteenth century, and with an increased sense of urgency in recent decades. There has been a growing need for structures of music education that are more time-efficient (through a more analytical approach, or by using technical aids – such as walkman or

minidisk), especially in the initial stages, with an education modelled more on *guru-śisya-paramparā* at advanced levels.

Such an approach makes considerable sense. As a performing art, Indian classical music has so far maintained its status as one of the world's great musical traditions: trying to preserve what is great, but adapting to the circumstances of musical realities of the times. As a teaching art, Indian music needs to be flexible in the same way, continually seeking the balance between holistic and analytical approaches to teaching. That does not mean that the great institution of *guru-śisya-paramparā* needs to be abandoned. But it may stand to benefit from some sensitivity to changing environments and modification in an effort to preserve what is best in Indian music, both in India and in the West, where institutional contexts – perhaps counter-intuitively – are likely to prove the most viable way of preserving a living, vibrant tradition.

Associate Professor Huib Schippers is Director of Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University. He has over thirty years of experience with learning, teaching and performing Indian classical music: first as a student of sitarist Jamaluddin Bhartiya and sarod maestro Ali Akbar Khan, then as teacher at the ISTAR School for Music and Dance, the Amsterdam World Music School, and the Rotterdam Conservatorium. Huib has performed across Europe, in India, the US, and Australia. Other experiences that have informed this paper include learning, observing and teaching at the Ali Akbar College of Music, CalArts, the Sangeet Research Academy, NCPA, Musikhochschule Basel and Dartington College of Arts.

The recorded class took place in the afternoon of May 8, 2003, in the building of the Rotterdam Conservatorium known as the Loodswezen, now part of a major World Music and Dance Centre (www.wmdc.nl). Six students took part in the class: four regular students in the degree course with three to six years experience on the instrument, the assistant teacher Henri Tournier (also an established silver flute player), who has been playing for ten years, and a visiting, Indian long-term amateur student from the United States. The choice for a single, static camera position contributed to an undisturbed, natural transmission process. The lesson was immediately followed by an interview with Chaurasia, investigating his views on what he just taught, and the underlying choices he made in relation to options outlined in this essay.

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