

PHILIP TAYLOR

London

MOZART IN MADRĀS: GLOBAL LEARNING AND WESTERN ART MUSIC

The dusty, humid city of Chennai (formerly Madrās) in South India offers a vibrant soundscape of honking traffic horns, Tamil film songs, rhythmic drumming of sacred ceremonies and sing-song cries of street vendors. If adding the choral polyphony of Byrd and Palestrina to the mix seems incongruous, rehearsing Renaissance motets with a chamber choir of Indian students serves as a reminder of how Western art music continues to flow into diverse global contexts. Having introduced my choir to the opening of Vivaldi's *Gloria* one evening, I found myself a day later sitting in a smart café listening to a synthesised string arrangement of the same composition filtered through the loudspeakers. From the communal experience of choral singing to the ambient soundtrack of global café culture, this contrast poses important questions about the ongoing globalisation of Western art music, and the consequences of these changes for music education.¹ How does this musical tradition operate as a mode of knowledge and human communication in an increasingly pluralistic world culture? How do the concepts and practices associated with the European canon of great composers and their masterworks translate into new educational environments? In what follows, I first discuss the role of Western art music in contemporary society before moving on to address these issues by reflecting on my experiences of teaching undergraduate students in India, through a collaborative partnership between KM Music Conservatory, Chennai, and Middlesex University, London, UK. Considering the ways in which meanings are constructed through this tradition in a non-Western environment reveals both the vitality of Europe's musical heritage and some of the pedagogical issues at stake in the diffusion of the art form around the world.

Behind these questions lies the emerging agenda of internationalisation in higher education, which in recent years has exerted a particularly profound impact on teaching and research in European, North American and Australian

¹The author would like to thank Jeremy Woodruff, François Evans and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments during the preparation of this essay. I use the concept of 'Western art music' here with specific reference to the content of undergraduate music education, in this case music in Europe from the medieval era to the early twentieth century. In India, the formulation 'Western classical music' is used as a much broader stylistic category, including for example the symphonic and choral sounds associated with film soundtracks.

institutions.² Universities increasingly orientate themselves towards growing markets of prospective students in Asia, Africa and South America, as the sector undergoes a relentless process of corporatisation. Whilst the financial and ideological imperatives behind this trend are transparent, the consequences are less certain for the role of the modern global University, and in particular the future of arts and humanities subjects such as music. In the UK, the expansion of the international student market has occurred in parallel with a series of funding crises that have adversely affected those disciplines considered to be less economically viable. The closure of several university music departments, including most recently at my alma mater, indicates the extent to which fluctuating economic conditions have been allowed to damage the provision of music education.³ As universities seek to resolve the question of whether their function is the democratic fostering of knowledge or the corporate delivery of skilled work to the global labour market, the study of music as traditionally conceived will continue to face uncertainty.⁴ For Western art music in the twenty-first century, already coping with the loss of its pre-eminent status in both academia and mainstream culture, internationalisation thus generates challenges as well as opportunities.

As well as transforming the contemporary higher education landscape, the demographic, technological and communicative changes associated with globalisation have also affected the ways in which music is conceived as an academic discipline, and the cultural practices associated with the teaching of Western art music. Well-documented paradigm shifts in musical studies have exposed and critiqued the values that shaped the Western musical tradition and its associated methodologies, and the ways in which these beliefs have been promulgated in the classroom.⁵ The influence of cultural studies has added important new perspectives on music's interactions with issues of race, class,

²For further discussion of the internationalisation trend, see: R. YANG, "University Internationalisation: Its Meanings, Rationales and Implications", *Intercultural Education*, XIII, 2002, pp. 81-95; PH. G. ALTBACH - J. KNIGHT, "The Internationalization of Higher Education: Motivations and Realities", *Journal of Studies in International Education*, XI, 2007, pp. 290-305. For a valuable critical survey, see F. HALLIDAY, "The Chimera of the 'International University'", *International Affairs*, LXXV, 1999, pp. 99-120.

³In the last decade music degrees have been abolished at Exeter University (2004), University of Reading (2005), University of Roehampton (2009), University of East Anglia (2011) and Lancaster University (2013).

⁴J. B. G. TILAK, "Higher Education: A Public Good or a Commodity for Trade? Commitment to Higher Education or Commitment of Higher Education to Trade", *Prospects*, XXXVIII, 2008, pp. 449-466.

⁵P. BOHLMAN, "Musicology as a Political Act", *Journal of Musicology*, XI, 1993, pp. 411-436; C. SMALL, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1998; B. NETTL, *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections in Schools of Music*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 2007.

gender and sexuality. As well as a response to art music's changing role in Western society, one of the features of this critical reorientation has been a shift in how the West's cultural heritage is perceived to relate to the diversity of musical experience in the rest of the world.⁶ The blurring of conceptual boundaries within and without the academy has reached the point where it seems untenable to maintain categories of Western/non-Western or musicology/ethnomusicology with any degree of certainty, developments exemplified in the recent expansion of ethnomusicology to incorporate Western art music as a viable field of enquiry.⁷ Together, these developments form a healthy corrective to the damaging legacy of cultural superiority and universalist values attached to the art form, which were influenced by the colonial desires of nineteenth-century Europe.⁸ Western art music can now take its place as one of the world's artistic traditions, engaging with other systems and practices on even terms. What remains to be seen is how this reconfiguration will affect our teaching of music history, particularly when this learning takes place outside the traditional geographical domains of classical music culture.

For some, art music appears to have paid a high price for losing its dominant status in Western society during the twentieth century. During this period the collective framework surrounding the European literate music tradition, comprising performers, listeners, institutions and the educational paradigms that sustain music in its ideal imaginary form, occupied an increasingly marginalized presence in public life. The consequences of these changes continue to shape the discourse around classical music in areas such as broadcasting, concert programming and government arts policy. A shrinking role for art music in schools and universities has been accompanied by decreasing support from the state and general public, trends that are at least in part ascribed to the inexorable onslaught of mass-produced, commercial popular music. This climate of fear – whether real or imaginary – has prompted a series of eloquent and vigorously argued studies devoted to

⁶ *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation and Appropriation in Music*, ed. by G. Bonn and D. Hesmondhalgh, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000; T. D. TAYLOR, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2007.

⁷ See J. P. J. STOCK, "New Musicologies, Old Musicologies: Ethnomusicology and the Study of Western Music", *Current Musicology*, LXII, 1997, pp. 40-68; L. NOOSHIN, "Introduction to the Special Issue: The Ethnomusicology of Western Art Music", *Ethnomusicology Forum*, XX, 2011, pp. 285-300.

⁸ This doctrine of superiority is explored further in J. BECKER, "Is Western Art Music Superior?", *Musical Quarterly*, LXXII, 1986, pp. 341-359.

defending and promoting the significance of art music.⁹ As Lawrence Kramer argues,

the energies of this music are still vital; its value is still inestimable. The trick is to unlock the energies and recover the value. What's needed for that is a way to refresh listening: to reconnect the listener with a community and culture of listening, and to do so as far as possible without anxiety or defensiveness.¹⁰

The idea seems to be that art music's diminishing contemporary status can be bolstered by rethinking its fundamental aesthetic and humane qualities, and reaffirming its value through the turbulent changing social conditions of Western modernity.

The intended audience for this line of argument is unclear, however, as most Western readers will already be convinced of the value of studying and practicing art music, and may merely be seeking validation of their existing listening habits. Notions of unlocking, recovering and refreshing imply a process of cultural renewal that operates against an acknowledged background of profound loss. More pertinent here is the question of how classical music can appeal to listeners, or listening communities, who have never experienced this loss in the first instance. Perhaps it is possible for new listeners to appreciate art music in the twenty-first century without first experiencing and acknowledging the Western anxiety identified by Kramer? (And who wants to study an art form in crisis?) As one influential reviewer has argued, by promoting solutions to perceived problems surrounding art music, there may be a danger of rejuvenating the same elitist connotations that have contributed to its downfall.¹¹ Perhaps these texts do not so much reflect an egalitarian campaign of "classical music for all" as the desire of an out-of-touch elite to preserve cultural space for their esoteric interests in a dying art form.

One notable element of this classical-music-in-crisis discourse, then, is its insular European and North American focus. Limited consideration is given to the historical and present day realities of Western musical practice in a broader

⁹ J. JOHNSON, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002; L. BOTSTEIN, "Why Music Matters", *Musical Quarterly*, LXXXVII, 2005, pp. 87-97; P. MAXWELL DAVIES, "Will Serious Music Become Extinct?", 2005 Royal Philharmonic Society Lecture (http://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/index.php/audiences_and_debate/lectures/rpslecture2005/), published in *Music Education in Crisis: The Bernarr Rainbow Lectures and Other Assessments*, ed. by P. Dickinson, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2013, pp. 99-114; L. KRAMER, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009.

¹⁰ KRAMER, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* cit., p. 16.

¹¹ R. TARUSKIN, "The Musical Mystique: Defending Classical Music against Its Devotees", *The New Republic*, 22 October 2007. Republished in R. TARUSKIN, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2009, pp. 330-353.

international context. For, whilst art music's traditional role appears to be threatened at home, its global appropriation continues to grow in scale and significance.¹² The same developments in digital culture and social media implicated in the weakening of the tradition are also enabling a wider appreciation than ever before of all musical forms, including Western art music. In India, the debate finds its cross-cultural equivalent in growing concerns over young people's dwindling appreciation of Hindustani and Carnatic classical music. Ironically the influence of Western music (including art music) is perceived as part of the problem here, though admittedly to a lesser extent than the pernicious dominance of Bollywood film music. Hence, the perception of crisis is not an exclusively Western concern, but part of a worldwide quandary relating to future mediations between different forms of traditional, commercial and art musics and their roles in shaping personal, local and national identities.

The relationship of these issues to music in higher education takes on a fresh hue when looking back at Europe from beyond its frontiers. The KM Music Conservatory (KMMC) of Chennai was established in 2008 to provide new opportunities for Indian students to access formal music education. In addition to a range of part-time preparatory courses in vocal and instrumental tuition, the institution currently offers undergraduate courses that are validated by Middlesex University, UK, as part of a bachelors degree in music. In this transnational programme, students study Western and Hindustani classical music alongside audio technology, combining practical and academic study in a bi-musical curriculum that aims to foster an understanding of two significant world music traditions. Such an integrated approach poses exciting creative opportunities as well as significant pedagogical challenges, as students become simultaneously acculturated to two contrasting musical systems.

KMMC's founder and principal, composer Allah Rakha Rahman, the so-called Mozart of Madras, holds iconic status in his home country as an emblem for the cultural achievements of modern India. His eclectic approach to musical style, described as 'truly postmodern as well as transnational', has transformed the sound of Indian films and led to international commercial success, typified by his Oscar-winning soundtrack to the 2008 film, *Slumdog Millionaire*.¹³ The cross-cultural sound of Rahman's music is mirrored in the educational philosophy of the Conservatory, which is cosmopolitan rather than

¹² See G. BIANCOROSSO, "A Global Vernacular? Musings on European Art Music in Hong Kong", *Musica Docta. Rivista digitale di Pedagogia e Didattica della Musica*, III, 2013, pp. 101-105.

¹³ G. BOOTH, "That Bollywood Sound", in *Global Soundtrack: Worlds of Film Music*, ed. by M. Slobin, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 2008, p. 108. Rahman's use of Western orchestral and choral arrangements is evident in his collaboration with Scottish composer Craig Armstrong for the soundtrack to *Elizabeth: The Golden Age* (2007).

adhering to an existing model of Indian music education. Extra-curricular ensembles include a Sufi Qawwali group and a Hindustani classical ensemble, in addition to the Western chamber choir mentioned above. For many of the predominantly urban, middle-class students at the Conservatory, Western music invokes connotations of social prestige and economic opportunity – a form of exotic cultural capital – alongside potentially off-putting elements such as staff notation and tonal harmony. KMMC therefore represents a recent Indian manifestation of two well-established global trends: the prominent role of Western musical paradigms in the development of formal music education in colonial and post-colonial emerging nations, and the global influence of Western musical styles through the dissemination of commercial film soundtracks.¹⁴ The Conservatory's distinctive profile in India is enhanced by its relationship with the city of Chennai, South India's cultural capital and the home of historic institutions for Carnatic classical music and Bharatanatyam classical dance, neither of which are formally taught at KMMC. Representing a departure from traditional models of music pedagogy in India, the challenge for this new institution is to offer an education that contributes effectively to regional and national musical culture whilst also offering students greater access to more established global networks of qualifications and employment.

The popular connotations of Western culture in India are evident in the interplay between A. R. Rahman's media image and the mythology surrounding art music. The 'Mozart of Madras' label was coined by *Time* magazine in the early 1990s and subsequently adopted by the media in India and abroad, invoking notions of virtuosity and prodigious genius.¹⁵ Whilst the composer himself dislikes the label, Indian and Western journalists alike seem compelled to define modern Indian creativity in relation to elite European culture, reflecting the imbalance that persists beneath globalisation's democratic veneer. The West's desire to familiarise an alien cultural form combines with India's strive for integration into mainstream global (i.e. Westernised) mass culture. Having previously dismissed the 'Mozart of Madras' phenomenon as a populist appropriation of serious music history, I have instead begun to consider how such broader public meanings attached to classical music might be incorporated into classroom learning. Discussing Mozart's popular reputation with students in lectures has proved a useful starting point for stimulating responses on the links between representations of the composer's image and the body of knowledge generated by scholarship on his life and music. The

¹⁴ On the former, see the collected papers in "Second Biennial Conference of the East Asian Regional Association of the International Musicological Society (October 2013): 'Teaching Western Music History in 2013 in East Asia'", *Journal of Music History Pedagogy*, IV, 2013, pp. 319-344.

¹⁵ Numerous examples are found in print and online media, including the BBC radio programme *The Mozart of Madras* (BBC Radio 2, 28 February 2011).

resonance of Mozart's name reflects his symbolic global presence and the ongoing ability of the European classical tradition to define notions of quality in contemporary musical culture. By relating aspects of Mozartean historiography and reception history to the processes of twenty-first-century mass culture, students can be encouraged to engage with issues of canonicity and the formation of reputation as an ongoing process occurring in India as well as in the rest of the world.

The global spread of Western musical culture is not a new phenomenon, but a multifaceted historical process that must be understood against both mainstream European music history and an understanding of past encounters between local, regional and national musical practices.¹⁶ In India, the dominance of the Hindustani and Carnatic classical traditions has ensured that Western music has not exerted the same homogenising influence as has arguably been the case in parts of East Asia, Africa and South America.¹⁷ The strength of Indian cultural nationalism in the twentieth-century pre- and post-independence era relied on both the promotion of native artistic traditions and a conscious suppression of the influence of Western cultural forms. However, the combined forces of colonialism, Christianity and more recently, globalisation, have seen Western music manifested in a variety of more localised contexts in Indian society, from the early modern era to the present day. Successive waves of Portuguese, Dutch, French and British colonialism from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries left behind traces of a cultural legacy alongside their more immediate economic and political impact. For example, European music was heard in the liturgical polyphony of Catholic churches in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Portuguese Goa, in the amateur chamber music performances of eighteenth-century Anglo-Indian colonial society, and in the early twentieth-century classical music broadcasts of the British-controlled All India Radio.¹⁸ In each of these instances the presence of Western art music can be explained by its role in specific social practices that were grounded in European value systems: in enhancing the rituals of Christian worship; as a civilising communal amateur leisure activity; and as a medium for propagating the cultural principles of imperial public information broadcasting.

¹⁶ See N. COOK, "Western Music as World Music", in *The Cambridge History of World Music*, ed. by P. V. Bohlman, 1st ed., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 75-100.

¹⁷ S. MELVIN - J. CAI, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese*, New York, Algora, 2004.

¹⁸ See V. A. COELHO, "Connecting Histories: Portuguese Music in Renaissance Goa", in *Goa and Portugal: Their Cultural Links*, ed. by J. C. Borges, Delhi, Concept, 1997, pp. 132-147; I. WOODFIELD, *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Society*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 76-148; D. LELYVELD, "Upon the Subdominant: Administering Music on All-India Radio", *Social Text*, XXXIX, 1994, pp. 111-127.

As well as illustrating some of the ways in which Western music has infiltrated Indian society, this historical legacy hints at some of the broader considerations bound up with the task of (re)introducing the art form to students in the twenty-first century. This music is not socially or politically neutral, but carries with it the implications of past human activity that continue to shape present day concerns. This situation is complicated by the lack of any coherent national policy for arts education in India. Despite the subcontinent's rich cultural heritage, the arts and humanities have a marginalised presence in India's higher education system. Music is considered a low priority for public funding, given the pressing challenges of economic development, and the higher education options for young people interested in music are extremely limited. It is in this context that transnational educational partnerships between Indian and Western institutions have a role to play in increasing capacity and improving standards. There is, however, a delicate balance to be struck.¹⁹ In the case of KMMC, the process of developing an innovative model of education for aspiring Indian musicians is tempered by the administrative requirements of a British university's quality assurance framework. There are clearly benefits for all involved in the collaboration: Indian students experience an education that would otherwise be difficult to access; Indian and international faculty learn from sharing knowledge in a new cultural environment; the host institution offers an 'international standard' of education (with tuition fees to match); and the Western validating institution gains a rewarding cultural connection, a new source of revenue and a potentially lucrative market for future international students.

Nevertheless, the spectre of neo-colonialism looms behind the internationalisation trend, as disparities between Western educational infrastructures and those of emerging nations are exploited to serve the economic interests of the former. There is also a risk that aspects of academia taken for granted in the West are assumed to be universally applicable, and hence readily transferable to the host culture. University degrees are increasingly designed as an export commodity to be packaged and delivered around the world, whilst international students become global consumers, paying a premium for the prestige branding guaranteed by a Western education.²⁰ For those of us involved in teaching Western art music, the

¹⁹ For analysis of the cultural implications of transnational partnerships, see: G. MCBURNIE - CHR. ZIGURAS, *Transnational Education: Issues and Trends in Offshore Higher Education*, London - New York, Routledge, 2007; F. HUANG, "Internationalization of Higher Education in the Developing and Emerging Countries: A Focus on Transnational Higher Education in Asia", *Journal of Studies in International Education*, XI, 2007, pp. 421-432.

²⁰ PH.-M. NGUYEN - J. G. ELLIOTT - C. TERLOUW, "Neocolonialism in Education: Cooperative Learning in an Asian Context", *Comparative Education*, XLV, 2009, pp. 109-130.

challenge is to adapt course content and methods to the unique context of the host country without diluting the value of the subject matter or, worse, adversely distorting the development of Indian music education. The aim must be to inculcate a deep comparative appreciation of the richness of Europe's musical heritage whilst equipping students with the critical and technical skills they need to make effective contributions to a globalised twenty-first-century musical culture.

Teaching Western classical music in a non-Western environment urges reflection on the fundamental character of the art form, as well as an acceptance of responsibility for how it is presented to students learning about it in depth for the first time. But in doing so, is it possible to effectively define this music as a distinct cultural tradition?²¹ I would venture that at a general level it is possible, and necessary, in order to give students a comparative awareness of different musical systems, as long as this is accompanied by an understanding of the historical contingency of the processes under discussion. A cursory list of attributes of the musical practices crystallised in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries might include the following: a more marked distinction between the activities of composition and performance; a complex system of written notation; an emphasis on harmonic and motivic development as the central paradigm for musical structure; a self-perpetuating relationship between ensembles and their associated musical genres, such as the symphony orchestra and the string quartet; a powerful work-concept based on a canon of great composers and the objectification of their output through publication, performance, criticism and analysis; and a public concert culture of physically restrained, intellectual contemplation.

Collectively, these elements exerted a strong unifying force that was disseminated across parts of America, Africa and Asia as part of the cultural influence of European colonialism. As a result, Western music played a powerful role in shaping global musical practice during the modern era, particularly in relation to the provision of music education in schools and universities.²² Untangling content from methodology for teaching purposes is complicated, then, by the fact that many indigenous world music traditions have been irrevocably transformed by regulatory pedagogical practices inherited from the European period of common practice. Even the English language concept of 'classical' has shaped musical practice beyond Europe's

²¹Two different methods of defining Western art music are adopted in the following studies: B. NETTL, "Mozart and the Ethnomusicological Study of Western Culture (An Essay in Four Movements)", *Yearbook For Traditional Music*, XXI, 1989, pp. 1-16; H. POWERS, "The Western Historical Canon as Exotic Music", *Il Saggiatore musicale*, VIII, 2001, pp. 51-61.

²²A. ALTER, "Gurus, Shishyas and Educators: Adaptive Strategies in Post-Colonial North Indian Music Institutions", in *Music-Cultures in Contact: Convergences and Collisions*, ed. by M. J. Kartomi and S. Blum, Basel, Gordon & Breach, 1994, pp. 158-168.

borders, for example by conflating a variety of traditional and courtly Indian musical styles into categories of Hindustani and Carnatic ‘classical’ music whilst simultaneously excluding a range of genres deemed to be ‘non-classical’.²³ Again, those responsible for international developments in music education must find a way to maintain sensitivity to these contexts without allowing post-colonial guilt to limit the possibilities of art music’s worldwide educational value.

These issues are not, of course, limited to musicology as an academic discipline. Whilst the ideological baggage surrounding the Western canon of dead, white, male composers has been extensively unpacked in musicological discourse, the echoes of nineteenth-century musical-museum culture continue to inform much of the character of the modern, international, classical music industry, influencing the ways in which the repertory is appropriated around the world. Recent research by The British Council, for instance, revealed that symphony orchestras have been reluctant to develop educational outreach projects in India due to a fear of promoting an ‘elitist and out of date image’ of the UK.²⁴ This might seem disheartening, but it arguably tells us more about classical music’s problematic role in contemporary Britain than it reflects public sentiment in India. Recent developments suggest that Asian audiences respond enthusiastically towards the wider dissemination of Western art music. European cultural organisations such as the Alliance Française and Goethe Institut regularly support European classical musicians travelling to India for successful concert tours and artistic exchange projects.

In April 2014 the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra undertook a two-week tour of India supported by the British Council, accompanied by conductor and composer James Macmillan and violinist Nicola Benedetti, presenting sell-out concerts in Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. With a programme that included Mozart’s *Violin Concerto No. 5*, the opportunity of using the visceral experience of live virtuoso performance to reinforce classroom teaching was too good to refuse. Students taking my music history course were primed a few days before the Chennai concert with explanations of the rondo structure and exotic ‘Turkish’ passage in the concerto’s finale.²⁵ Attending the concert with students was a privilege, as I was able to experience the familiar rituals of orchestral performance through the eyes of the uninitiated,

²³ M. H. ALLEN, “Tales Tunes Tell: Deepening the Dialogue between ‘Classical’ and ‘Non-Classical’ in the Music of India”, *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, XXX, 1998, pp. 22-52.

²⁴ BRITISH COUNCIL, *Re-Imagine: Summaries of Sector-Wise Research*, PDF publication at the web page *Re-Imagine: India-UK Cultural Relations on the 21st Century* (http://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/britishcouncil.in2/files/sector_summaries.pdf, accessed 22 Nov. 2015).

²⁵ B. SZABOLCSI, “Exoticisms in Mozart”, *Music & Letters*, XXXVII/4, 1956, pp. 323-332.

whispering answers to questions on conducting and interpretation between movements of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4*.

The concert also served as a useful reminder for students of the peculiar social conventions that often colour public performances of Western art music. Advance publicity stated that a strict, black-tie dress code was to be observed, which, aside from transgressing basic human rights in the 35°C heat of a Chennai spring, seemed to make a rather blunt statement about the social status of the expected audience. On the night, although the dress code was unenforced and largely ignored, the concert hall was segregated, with the ground floor reserved for corporate VIP tickets and the rest of the audience relegated to the circle. These decisions, taken by the concert promoters in Chennai rather than by the BBC, undoubtedly reflected the unique nature of the event and the perceived prestige of Western art music culture for the Indian urban elite. The effect, however, was to reinforce problematic issues of access and exclusivity inherited from the European concert tradition. Accompanying my students to the event produced conflicting feelings, as a renewed conviction of classical music's value was set against an awareness that, in a Western context at least, this music often carries with it connotations of social privilege. A salient point here is that these elitist connotations were not the work of the orchestral musicians or management, but were operating in conflict with the main aims of the tour.

Alongside the public concerts, the orchestra carried out an exhaustive schedule of educational outreach work, including free performances for thousands of underprivileged schoolchildren in each of the three cities, and a series of lectures, masterclasses and composers' workshops for our students at KMMC.²⁶ For the musicians themselves, the spirit of discovery and exchange that permeated the tour seemed to dispel any fears of elitism. In the words of Nicola Benedetti, "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".²⁷ If evidence was needed that Western art music has a global future, it was clear from the enthusiasm and engagement of both orchestral musicians and students in sharing their passions for music-making and cultural exchange.

Nonetheless, the task remains of engaging students with Western art music during the weeks when a live symphony orchestra is unavailable to enhance learning. One approach could be to set aside the more problematic

²⁶ On the social function of the contemporary symphony orchestra, see T. K. RAMNARINE, "The Orchestration of Civil Society: Community and Conscience in Symphony Orchestras", *Ethnomusicology Forum*, XX, 2011, pp. 327-351.

²⁷ PH. MILLER, "Nicola Benedetti: 12 Days that Changed Her Life", *Herald Scotland*, Friday 11 April 2014.

aspects of the historical contexts outlined above, and instead to focus attention on the potential for the creative and vocational application of skills and techniques that have been derived from the tradition. For example, our vocal students training in the European *bel canto* style gain a distinctive technique and timbre that can become a unique attribute in the competitive Indian commercial music industry. Likewise, principles of Western orchestration and pastiche composition can be integrated with local musical idioms and applied to the creation of distinctive soundtracks for film and television. And yet, a skills-based approach that disengages technical knowledge from an understanding of the musical traditions on which it is based only provides half of the story. Indian students who make a serious and sustained engagement with Western art music as performer and listener also inevitably engage with historically conditioned aspects of European thought and behaviour. A student learning a Schubert *Lied*, for instance, not only overcomes challenges of vocal technique, language and ensemble musicianship, but also grapples with the interpretative field of nineteenth-century emotional subjectivity, creating and embodying an artistic persona through the combined music-poetic voice presented in the composition. The student is also likely to be acculturated to a range of formal performance norms (dress, body language, manner of introduction, bowing and receiving applause) that, far from being culturally neutral, promulgate a particular way of thinking about music inherited from the nineteenth-century European concert tradition. Performance practice, then, is irrevocably bound up with the process of knowing and creating music history, as each new interpretation contributes to the ongoing processes of the music's reception and cultural influence. Furthermore, a sense of historical perspective is particularly crucial in an international context, so that students are in a position to make informed choices about the values and meanings of the music around which they hope to build a career.

As well as in the lecture hall, the power of Western art music to function as global knowledge in India has particularly struck me during visits to a public library. Anna Centenary Library in Chennai is one of the largest libraries in South Asia, established by the Tamil Nadu state government in 2010 with a series of bulk purchases from international publishers, including a substantial music collection high up on the sixth floor. Here, 'music' primarily means Western art music, with thousands of texts on Western musicology, theory and performance practice, most of which appear never to have been taken off the shelves. The library symbolises the challenges at the heart of India's rapid urban development: a wonderful investment in education has been undermined by political instability, as the current state administration has withdrawn support for the library. An ongoing court battle means the library remains in limbo, with no membership procedures, lending facilities or accessible central record system; a monolithic collection of knowledge unable to effectively serve the public. I take groups of students on research visits to

the library, partly to supplement the print and online resources available at our institution, but partly also to share with them the sheer variety and depth of knowledge that can be derived from studying art music. As the only way to locate resources is to browse the shelves, students must spend time physically interacting with the printed material, which can be something of a shock to the system for a generation attuned to research through a laptop interface and search engine. Witnessing the combination of intrigue and trepidation as curious students sift through weighty musicological texts is a reminder of the sheer power of shared human thinking about art music through time, and the necessity of disseminating this information as equitably as possible.

Looking ahead, it seems certain that the ongoing diversification of global musical styles, practices, scholarly methodologies and sub-disciplinary identities will make it increasingly difficult to maintain a coherent approach to Western art music in undergraduate learning. Fears concerning art music's survival can be alleviated, however, if institutions ensure that students receive a coherent and meaningful education that places the Western tradition in an appropriate context in relation to musical experiences around the world. We should envisage a higher education system that prepares students for an increasingly diverse global musical landscape whilst also instilling a sense of the inherent value of all classical music traditions, Western, Hindustani or other. A consideration of the broader global phenomenon of Western art music suggests that the malleability of the tradition, and its ongoing ability to generate immanent meanings in contrasting cultural environments, has proved to be its core strength throughout recent centuries of world history. Efforts to promote understanding of Western art music should therefore encourage a more rounded engagement with all aspects of the art form as a global cultural practice, explaining the ways in which it continues to operate as a vital form of human knowledge about the world, shaping and reflecting the full diversity of our global social, political and cultural values.