

## *IBDP Extended Essay History*

**Title** – Understanding the Changes in the Public Space of Carnatic Music, a traditional Indian performing art

**RQ** – “To what extent did the advent of mass media and the Madras Music Academy structurally transform the system of Carnatic music from court to plebeian culture?”

**Word Count** – 3985 words

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## Glossary of terms

1. *Raga* - a particular musical scale with 7 distinct notes.
  - a. *Janaka Raga* - Also known as parent ragas or *melakarta* ragas, there are 72 in total and encompass the variety of ragas in Carnatic music.
  - b. *Janya Raga* - Sub-ragas that are derived from the 72 janaka raagas.
2. *Nagasvaram* - A double reed wind instrument.
3. *Tavil* - a two sided percussion instrument.
4. *Dolu* - a smaller double sided percussion instrument.
5. *Mantras* - Sacred poems with a religious intent.
6. *Talam* - A rhythmic beat used while singing compositions to maintain a consistent tempo.
7. *Veena* - A multi stringed harp-like instrument.
8. *Mantras* - religious hymns or poems.
9. *Kriti* - a type of Carnatic music composition that consists of a chorus, and generally 2 sub-choruses.
10. *Keerthana* - another type of composition that is framed by a chorus, and followed by a sub-chorus and several stanzas.
11. *Pundit* - a religious priest who performs worship of deities in a temple.
12. *Devadasis* - traditional temple dancers.
13. *Oduvars* - traditional temple singers/performers.
14. *Talam* - a system of rhythmic beats for measuring the tempo of music.

## Introduction

Carnatic music originated in Southern India around 11th century<sup>1</sup> C.E., and operated in a traditional and highly exclusivist space till the advent of the public space. Indian Carnatic music is an oriental style of music that was traditionally performed in Royal Courts and Hindu Temples till the 18th century. The aristocratic-centric model that patronized musicians was a form of cultural hegemony, a 'system of alliance that allowed the monarchy of aristocracy to win over sub-groups within a kingdom'.<sup>2</sup> Carnatic music as a performing art functioned in a specific manner due to its system of patronage in aristocratic court culture. Notable patrons of Carnatic music included the aristocratic lineage of the Marathas in the Kingdom of Thanjavur. Temple music traditions were upheld as their religious nature offered scope for devotees to express *Bhakti* - music as a medium to express devotion towards religious deities. Following the dismantling of the royal patronage system in mid 18th century, concert-style performances were sustained due to the *Bhakti movement*, 'a mode of religious expression popularized in Southern India'<sup>3</sup>. However, this structure underwent a fundamental transformation in the 19th and 20th centuries, primarily due to the emergence of mass media, the establishment of the

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold, A. (2000). The Garland encyclopedia of world music: v.5: South Asia: the Indian subcontinent. *Choice Reviews Online*, [online] 37(10), p.246.

<sup>2</sup> Lears, T. (1985). The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities. *The American Historical Review*, [online] 90(3), pp.23, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Terada, Y. (2008). Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" and Its Performance Practice. *Asian Music*, [online] 39(2), p.135.

Madras Music Academy<sup>4</sup>, and the All India Radio (AIR) in 1938<sup>5</sup>. The aim of this essay is to analyze the transformation of Carnatic music from performance in exclusive aristocratic royal court and temples to secular public concerts that emerged as a consequence of the advent of Madras Music Academy and AIR. The transformation is seen exclusively from court culture exercising cultural hegemony, a system initially defined by Marxist thinker Gramsci<sup>6</sup>, which was affected by the public space. In the context of the transformation of Carnatic music from its system of patronage, and viewership, certain questions arise. Hence my research question: **To what extent did the advent of mass media and the Madras Music Academy structurally transform the system of Carnatic music from court to plebeian culture?**

This research question is worth investigating because there has not been much exploration in the factors resulting in this transformation. Journal articles such as 'One Hundred Years of Music in Madras'<sup>7</sup> by Kathleen L'Armand and Adrian L'Armand and 'Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India'<sup>8</sup> by Yoshitaka Terada, for instance, have not evaluated Carnatic music in the model of the bourgeois public space. Although a

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<sup>4</sup> Musicacademymadras.in. (2019). *Music Academy*. [online] Available at: <https://musicacademymadras.in/> [Accessed 6 Nov. 2019].

<sup>5</sup> Prasarbharati.gov.in. (2019). *All India Radio | Aakashvani | Prasar Bharati*. [online] Available at: <http://prasarbharati.gov.in/AIR/index.php> [Accessed 8 June. 2019].

<sup>6</sup> Ramos, Jr., Valeriano. 1982. "The Concepts Of Ideology, Hegemony, And Organic Intellectuals In Gramsci'S Marxism". *Theoretical Review* 27: p.7.

<sup>7</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.411. doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>8</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2).

general study conducted on the shift from 'Court to Academy'<sup>9</sup> by Lakshmi Subramanian acknowledges this transformation, it does not evaluate the AIR as a significant factor.

A significant source of the conceptual underpinnings of this essay is 'The Transformation of the Public Space'<sup>10</sup> by Jurgen Habermas, which introduced the bourgeois public sphere as a framework to evaluate the economic public sphere. A research paper by Naomi Miyamoto perceived the bourgeois sphere in the context of art: he elaborated that 'art and music have been emancipated from the traditional authorities and have obtained their own positions in society'.<sup>11</sup> This framework is supported by Lakshmi Subramanian's argumental analysis and Raymond E. Ries's perspective on the *Bhakti Movement*. Archives of Madras Music Academy are used as evidence to understand the secularization of Carnatic music. Finally, the primary source 'Oriental Music in European Notation'<sup>12</sup> by Chinnaswami Mudaliar, is considered as a pivotal classification and reestablishment of Carnatic music as an educational curriculum. However, a limitation of Mudaliar's work is the scope of compositions that he classified; he was unable to accommodate for the rise in the number of ragas and compositions in the 20th century<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatik Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2).

<sup>10</sup> Habermas, Jürgen. 1991. *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Space*. Cambridge: MIT Press Paperback Edition.

<sup>11</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.102.

<sup>12</sup> CHINNASVĀMI MUDALIYĀR, A. M. 1893. [*Oriental Music In European Notation. A Monthly Periodical ... With Words [Chiefly Telugu] In English, Telugu And Tamil Characters. No. 1-6.*]. 1st ed. Madras.

<sup>13</sup> van der Meer, Wim. 1986. "Hindustani Music In The 20Th Century". *Asian Music* 18 (1): 209. doi:10.2307/834168.

# Chapter 1: Cultural Hegemony in the Carnatic Music

## Patronage System in Temples and Royal Court Culture

The aim of this chapter is to establish the nature of the temple music traditions that existed from the 13th century<sup>14</sup> and the music patronage system that existed in Thanjavur till the 17th century<sup>15</sup>. This time period is significant as it defined the structure of Carnatic music under a monarchy of aristocracy. The music patronage system in Southern India relied on two limited exclusivist systems - Temples and Royal Courts<sup>16</sup> - both of which were controlled by the *dominant*<sup>17</sup> class. Gramsci's model of cultural hegemony dictates a coercive imperative over a general consensus of a public sphere due to the leadership and control of the aristocratic class over the bourgeoisie<sup>18</sup>. Consequently, the structure of the Carnatic music concerts in Royal Courts and Temples was highly traditional and exclusivist in nature<sup>19</sup>. The structure of Carnatic music in this restricted space is supported

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<sup>14</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.109.

<sup>15</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatik Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.126.

<sup>16</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatik Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.127.

<sup>17</sup> Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. "The Concept Of Cultural Hegemony: Problems And Possibilities". *The American Historical Review* 90 (3): 573. doi:10.2307/1860957.

<sup>18</sup> Ramos, Jr., Valeriano. 1982. "The Concepts Of Ideology, Hegemony, And Organic Intellectuals In Gramsci'S Marxism". *Theoretical Review* 27: p.5.

<sup>19</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.118.

by specific music forms and compositions, appropriate festivals for performance<sup>20</sup>, timing, and assembly.

According to travel logs by European missionaries Abbe Dubois and Murray Mitchel<sup>21</sup>, Carnatic music was deeply embedded in Temples and practiced strict performance and viewership guidelines. The performance ensemble specific to Temple music traditions is *periya melam*, or as the name suggests, temple ritual music<sup>22</sup>. *Periya melam* is traditionally believed to be the “sonic embodiment of God that radiates auspiciousness...and majesty”<sup>23</sup>, and is music played in a temple setting during the worship of Hindu religious deities. The music played was primary that of a double reed musical instrument called the *nagasvaram*<sup>24</sup>, and a two-sided percussion instrument called the *tavil*<sup>25</sup>. This is evidenced through the sculptures and panels depicting these instruments found in the Chidambaram Temple near Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu<sup>26</sup>. The *periya melam* ensemble performed at ‘auspicious’ times during the day in front of the idols within the temple led by the priest. On religious occasions, processions took place where groups

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<sup>20</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): 411. doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>21</sup> Terada, Y. (2008). Temple Music Traditions in Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" and Its Performance Practice. *Asian Music*, [online] 39(2), pp.108,151.

<sup>22</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.109.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid

<sup>24</sup>Ibid

<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.113.



of people would be led by *pundits* or priests who would perform the worship with sacred *mantras*, accompanied by the tune of the *nagasvaram* and the beat of the *tavil* or the *dolu*<sup>27</sup>. These processions would be conducted 6 times in a day, and compositions in different *ragas* - musical scales - would be conducted during auspicious timings<sup>28</sup>. This multidimensional temple performance structure was complemented by religious temple dancers and singers - *devadasis* and *oduvvars*<sup>29</sup>. Ethnomusicologist Krishna Iyer recounts these observations and characterized the relationship of this structure: "There is no village without a temple, and there is no temple without the *nagasvaram*".<sup>30</sup>



**Image 1: Sculpted panels of instruments used in the *periya melam* ensemble<sup>31</sup>**

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<sup>27</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.108.

<sup>28</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.109.

<sup>29</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.127.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.127.



**Image 2: Temple performers playing the tavil (left) and nagasvaram (right)**<sup>32</sup>

These sculptural evidences depicting temple music performances were found in the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu. Furthermore, archaeologists hypothesized that these sculptures were constructed by the late Chola Dynasty ruler Rajendra Chola I (1012-1044)<sup>33</sup> during the 11th century C.E.<sup>34</sup>. Image 1 is a panel inscription found on the side of the Temple, and depicts the *periya melam* ensemble. Image 2 is a stone sculpture of religious deities performing music on the *dolu* (left) and the *nagasvaram* (right). This architectural evidence proves the origins of temple music traditions and their highly traditional nature, and indicates that temple music traditions were developed by the dominant aristocratic party<sup>35</sup>. The extent to which temple music

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.118. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25501587>.

<sup>34</sup> "CHIDAMBARAM TEMPLE". 2019. *Chidambarnataraja.Org*. Accessed June 6. <http://www.chidambarnataraja.org/>.

<sup>35</sup> Ramos, Jr., Valeriano. 1982. "The Concepts Of Ideology, Hegemony, And Organic Intellectuals In Gramsci'S Marxism". *Theoretical Review* 27: p.7. <https://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-7/tr-gramsci.htm>.

traditions shared similarities with the royal court culture is significant due to both monitored by the aristocratic class.

A royal figure who is credited to developing temple music changes and court culture<sup>36</sup> was Krishnadeva Raya of Vijayanagar Empire who ruled the surrounding area of Thanjavur from 1509 to 1529. As part of the ruling class,<sup>37</sup> he had appointed eight scholars. Allasai Peddana was awarded the title *Andhra Kavita Pitamaha*<sup>38</sup> - which translates to *Father of Telugu Poetry*. The relationship between the court and the composer relied on the system of music patronage. Aristocratic patronage system gave a monetary purpose to musicians who fared from poor backgrounds. Composers and musicians would be invited to perform for the king or any of the royal members for religious observances or festivals. Poets and composers were solicited and generously compensated. Krishnadeva Raya himself composed pieces to encourage participation such as *Amkutha Malyada* in Telugu, which is known to be 'one of the five literary gems of Telugu literature'.<sup>39</sup> Another prominent ruler who developed the Carnatic music

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<sup>36</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Temple Music Traditions In Hindu South India: "Periya Mēlam" And Its Performance Practice". *Asian Music* 39 (2): p.117.

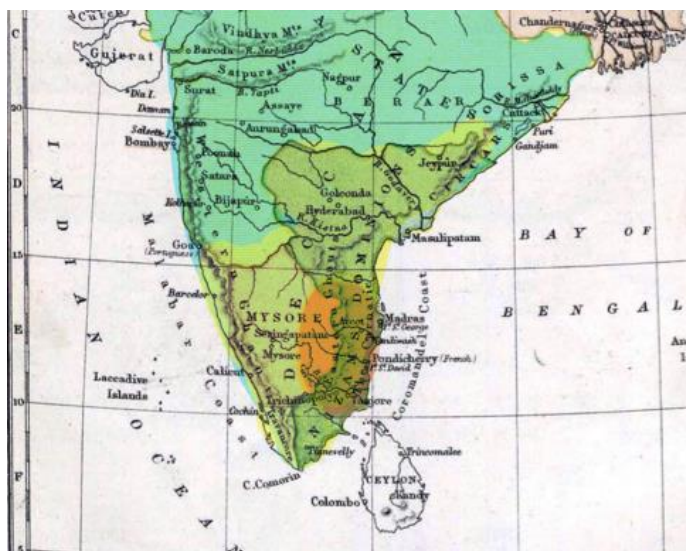
<sup>37</sup> Lears, T. J. Jackson. 1985. "The Concept Of Cultural Hegemony: Problems And Possibilities". *The American Historical Review* 90 (3): 567. doi:10.2307/1860957.

<sup>38</sup> Mitra, Moumita. 2018. "THE CONTRIBUTION OF VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE TOWARDS DASIATTAM". *INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF INDIA* 3 (5): p.4.

<sup>39</sup> Reddy, Srinivas G. 2011. "The Āmuktamālyada Of Kṛṣṇadevarāya Language, Power & Devotion In Sixteenth Century South India". *South And Southeast Asian Studies In The Graduate Division Of The University Of California, Berkeley*.

patronage system in Thanjavur was the Maratha King Serfoji II who ruled from 1798 to 1832: he catalyzed Carnatic music from merely a courtly ritual to a performance art<sup>40</sup>.

The following map displays the three dynasties and their expanse of territory in the South Indian region.



**Graph 1: Map of Chola Dynasty, Vijaynagar Empire, and Maratha Empire in South India<sup>41</sup>; Chola in Blue, Vijaynagar in Yellow; Maratha in Red**

Therefore, it can be concluded that the performance and development of Carnatic music was restricted to an aristocratic space dominated by priests and hereditary aristocracy. As a consequence of the nature of composition, performance and the physical space for

<sup>40</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.127.

<sup>41</sup> Colbeck, Charles. 1905. "Territory Under Maratha Control In 1759 (Yellow)". Map. New York; London; Bombay. The Public Schools Historical Atlas. University of Texas.

performance were entirely defined by a *dominant* class that exercised cultural hegemony. However, this system underwent a transformation which resulted in changes to the nature of performance.

## Chapter 2: Bhakti Movement redefining music in plebeian culture and the origins of Sabha Ganam (Concert Hall Music)

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the factors that catalyzed the transformation of the patronage system of Carnatic music such as technological advancements made to the acoustics of Concert Halls, and the role of mass media from the mid 18th century. There was a loss of power of the hereditary aristocracy of the Marathas<sup>42</sup> following the capture of Thanjavur in 1799 by the British East India company<sup>43</sup>; this directly resulted in the dismantling of cultural hegemony that was previously established. Therefore, Carnatic music was introduced to plebeian society<sup>44</sup>. The overall structure of performance in the late 18th century experienced a fundamental break as acoustic changes were made

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<sup>42</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.127.

<sup>43</sup> Gough, Kathleen. 1977. "Colonial Economics In Southeast India". *Economic And Political Weekly* 12 (13): p.542.

<sup>44</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.102.

through the adaptation of certain instruments<sup>45</sup>. This supra structure was promoted by the public announcements through mass media<sup>46</sup> and evidenced through the banners and public concert announcements. As a new stratum of bourgeois people arose within the governmental system<sup>47</sup>, they occupied a core position in the public space of performance arts.

The bourgeois consisted of both the performers and the scholars who critiqued and lay judgement on art<sup>48</sup>. Tanjore was home to the *Trinity of Carnatic music*, who were pioneers of the *Bhakti movement*: Thyagaraja (1767-1847), Muthuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835), and Syama Sastry (1762-1827). The prolific *Trinity* composed music in the late 18th century with the main intent of performing private worship for Hindu divine entities<sup>49</sup>, and catalyzed a religious movement of Carnatic music in plebeian society. They reformed cultural identity and introduced a paradigm shift to Carnatic music - an individualistic nature that contrasted heavily with the purpose of the patronage system. According to American Scholar Raymond E. Ries, Thyagaraja had 'struggled to accept the secularizing

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<sup>45</sup> Choudhury, Sisirkana Dhar. 2010. *The Origin And Evolution Of Violin - As A Musical Instrument: And Its Contribution To The Progressive Flow Of Indian Carnatic Music*. Kolkatta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math.

<sup>46</sup> Chopyak, James D. 1987. "The Role Of Music In Mass Media, Public Education And The Formation Of A Malaysian National Culture". *Ethnomusicology* 31 (3): p.441.

<sup>47</sup> Habermas, Jürgen. 1991. *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Space*. Cambridge: MIT Press Paperback Edition.

<sup>48</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.103.

<sup>49</sup> Doraiswamy, P.K. 2017. "Lyric Is Only The Peg To Hang The Music On". *The Hindu*, 2017. <https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/music/carnatic-music-was-essentially-an-art-form-which-could-also-be-practised-without-bhakti/article17433696.ece>.

trend of Carnatic music'<sup>50</sup>, and instead opted to 'remain faithful to tradition by composing individually towards God to express authority of inspiration'<sup>51</sup>. "Music was intended and inspired as a means of devotion and salvation"<sup>52</sup>, and represented a movement of music structure that was created as a direct emergence of authority in the plebian class. Ries further elaborates on the public space that had impacted Carnatic music by using it to 'other ends than divine'<sup>53</sup>, more particularly towards the entertainment sphere: 'musicians were pitted against each other to test knowledge of ragas and remembering a set of compositions'<sup>54</sup>. Music had evolved from a traditional art form that was meant solely to be performed in an exclusivist space, to a medium of individualistic expression of humanistic emotions: a specific example of this includes the expression of romanticism, which was initially seen a form of escapism<sup>55</sup> but later accepted as a form of creative expression. This new colonial experience paved way for the relocation and transformation of the traditional art form<sup>56</sup>; consequently, the public sphere had expanded its horizons through the emergence of concert halls.

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<sup>50</sup> Ries, Raymond E. 1969. "The Cultural Setting Of South Indian Music". *Asian Music* 1 (2): p.25. doi:10.2307/833909.

<sup>51</sup> Jackson, William J. 1994. *Tyāgarāja And The Renewal Of Tradition*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

<sup>52</sup> Ries, Raymond E. 1969. "The Cultural Setting Of South Indian Music". *Asian Music* 1 (2): p.25. doi:10.2307/833909.

<sup>53</sup> Ries, Raymond E. 1969. "The Cultural Setting Of South Indian Music". *Asian Music* 1 (2): p.29. doi:10.2307/833909.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.107.

<sup>56</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.129.

Two major halls that were constructed in 1853 and 1855 respectively were the Raja Annamalai Chettiar Hall and the T.T. Krishnamachari Hall in Thanjavur<sup>57</sup>. Engineers and architects designed a hall in such a way that a single sound would echo throughout the expanse. To further enhance the auditory sense, a percussion instrument was chosen to accompany the vocalist in order to amplify the beat or *talam*. The *veena*, a traditionally arched harp, was discontinued as a form of accompaniment in concert halls due to its poor resonance and sound production; it was replaced by the violin that was adapted from western music to Carnatic by Balaswami Dikshitar<sup>58</sup>. Similarly, wind instruments like flute that produced mild sounds were also unable to adapt to the growing demand for the number of music concerts. Professor. Lakshmi Subramanian stated that “the social milieu of music and performance had undergone a major transformation”<sup>59</sup>. Her research ‘Court to Academy’ is a significant source used in this investigation; the value of this source in the context of this research is evident as it provides scholarly and deeper insight into the transformation that took place in Carnatic music. The critical analysis of music from court to academy is important as it is specifically based on Carnatic music. However, a limitation of this source is seen as Subramanian does not use the conceptual underpinning of the bourgeois public sphere to evaluate this case study.

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<sup>57</sup> "THE ACOUSTICS OF CONCERT HALLS THROUGH A SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION". 2005. *Journal Of Architectural And Planning Research* 22 (1): p.21.

<sup>58</sup> Choudhury, Sisirkana Dhar. 2010. *The Origin And Evolution Of Violin - As A Musical Instrument: And Its Contribution To The Progressive Flow Of Indian Carnatic Music*. Kolkatta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math.

<sup>59</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.130.



The interaction between the audience and the performers led to an overall direct appeal as the community became vocal in the aspects of exchanging feedback and offering constructive criticism. The frequency of concerts increased due to a direct correlation between the increasing number of members in the public space of Carnatic music: sponsors, composers, performers, critics, and the audience. Banners were placed outside of concert halls in order to promote the events and increase viewership.<sup>60</sup>



**Image 3: The Main Building of the T.T. Krishnamachari Auditorium (Chennai, 1998)<sup>61</sup>**

Image 3 is a picture of the main concert hall T.T. Krishnamachari Auditorium. The following table is the result of the study conducted by scholars Satya Pancharatnam and A. Ramachandraiah in order to discern the concert hall preference of the standard audience, and how the acoustics aided in the rising viewership of Carnatic music concerts.

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<sup>60</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Tamil Isai As A Challenge To Brahmanical Music Culture In South India". *Senri Ethnological Studies* 71 (1): p.203.

<sup>61</sup> Terada, Yoshitaka. 2008. "Tamil Isai As A Challenge To Brahmanical Music Culture In South India". *Senri Ethnological Studies* 71 (1): p.204.

Favorite seating area in a hall	Center and right	34.05%
	Center and left	31.74%
Sound quality preference for classical music	Clear	79.58%
	Lively	51.23%
Importance of view of the performer	Very important	73.18%
	Not that important	23.65%
Hall type	Specially for Carnatic music performances	72.41%
	Multipurpose	19.87%
Hall size	Medium size	60.55%
	Small size	21.87%
Dependence of the success of a concert	Partially on the acoustics of the hall and partially on the performer	64.86%
	Totally on the performer	27.73%

**Table 2: 'Respondent Preferences (mode)'<sup>62</sup>**

According to the survey's results, specific halls constructed for Carnatic music performance were important in retaining consistent viewers, and acoustics played a major role (as 64.86% of the survey takers voted)<sup>63</sup> in measuring the success of the concert. Hence, an inference can be drawn that a rising viewership directly correlated to the increasing number of concert halls. It can therefore be concluded that concert acoustics played a major role in advancing the transformation of the public space of the performing arts in Madras by making concert halls accessible to the bourgeoisie or South Indian middle class.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized by musicologist Pandey Rajanujam that the best of an artist's musical capabilities within their physical and mental barriers is to be represented in a three hour maximum full length concert, beyond which the artist was unable to render

<sup>62</sup> Pancharatnam, Satya, and A. Ramachandraiah. 2005. "THE ACOUSTICS OF CONCERT HALLS THROUGH A SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION". *Journal Of Architectural And Planning Research* 22 (1): p.21.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

any musical compositions without suffering vocal damage or a limitation of the human body<sup>64</sup>. This is unlike previous musical discourse where musicians were expected to perform for as long as six hours at a set interval. In a concert hall, the contribution to the artist's salary was made by the paying audience as well as the donor's funds. Additionally, the vocalist was the primary focus of a Carnatic music concert, who was accompanied by the percussionist and the violinist.<sup>65</sup> A cultural shift of concert music occurred due to the eminent need to integrate Carnatic music with the cultural identity of Southern India<sup>66</sup>. The extent to which mass media proved to be a catalyst in promoting the performing arts is highly significant and this is evidenced through the banners and posters placed outside of concert halls.

In conclusion, the evidence shows that the *Bhakti movement* was a catalyst which eroded cultural hegemony of the aristocratic class and expanded the viewership of Carnatic music amongst the South Indian class. Carnatic music concerts were open to plebeian society, and hence resulted in a larger creative scope for music of different genres that followed unique compositional structure. Additionally, the genres of Carnatic music expanded from seemingly religious compositions and praises towards royal figures to humanistic perspectives expressing romantic or other natural human emotions.

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<sup>64</sup> "THE ACOUSTICS OF CONCERT HALLS THROUGH A SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION". 2005. *Journal Of Architectural And Planning Research* 22 (1): p.17.

<sup>65</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.423 doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>66</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatic Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.131.

## Chapter 3: Impact of Public Space on Carnatic Music through the Madras Music Academy and the All India Radio (AIR)

This chapter discusses the primary impact of the Madras Music Academy and the All India Radio (AIR) on the public space of Carnatic music in the late 19th and early 20th century. The Madras Music Academy, established in 1938, restructured music under a curriculum, and therefore created a supporting structure for formal music education amongst the bourgeoisie. Mass media was a medium of diffusion that encouraged diverse viewership of concerts sponsored by the academy, most particularly, the South Indian elite class. Lastly, the AIR complemented the Academy as it had provided a platform for the graduating artists and broke down geographical barriers that the institute had imposed. The public space had impacted Carnatic music performance in its structure of performance, and composition type.

One of the first classification systems that theoretically documented musical theory was 'Oriental Music in European Nation' by Chinnaswami Mudaliar in 1893<sup>67</sup>, who argued that musical notation in Carnatic music must be documented for Western critics to comprehend the traditional art. A new framework was institutionalized to support the newly transformed public space of Carnatic music. The structural cohesion took place with the establishment of the Madras Music Academy, as scholars sought to use

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<sup>67</sup> CHINNASVĀMI MUDALIYĀR, A. M. 1893. *[Oriental Music In European Notation. A Monthly Periodical ... With Words [Chiefly Telugu] In English, Telugu And Tamil Characters. No. 1-6.]* 1st ed. Madras.

Mudaliar's framework to classify Carnatic music notations, and the theoretical and historical aspects into manuscripts that were later taught to the future cohorts in the university. It was compartmentalized into an educational curriculum. Furthermore, although the classification of Carnatic music was established as a broad repertoire for didactic purposes, it still retained its traditional roots due to the impact of the *Bhakti movement* that took place from the 18th to 19th century. Additionally, the establishment of the Madras Music Academy led to changes in the publicity of music, and concert funding.

The style of music and nature of concert performance had undergone a transformation and secularization in Madras post the introduction of the Madras Music Festival sponsored by the Music Academy; this was catalyzed by the promotions by mass media. Concerts were previously organized by private concert sponsors in lieu of Hindu religious events such as Krishna Jayanti (August-September) and Rama Navami (March-April).<sup>68</sup> According to a case study conducted in the concert structure and timings, the new music festival was "first held in March in 1929...thereafter shifted to the end of December and beginning of January."<sup>69</sup> These timings were arranged for convenience, and "the non-religious concert timings is a significant evidence of transformation of the music culture in Madras"<sup>70</sup>. "This change from the religious to the secular timing of music festivals is a

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<sup>68</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.422. doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>69</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.422. doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

noteworthy instance of secularization of the musical culture of Madras.<sup>71</sup> The music culture was supported by the bourgeois public sphere, which had two classifications: 'the public that attended music concerts and public events, and the public that discussed artwork and performances.'<sup>72</sup> It is important to make this distinction as each subset of the public space was involved in a different activity in the Carnatic music system.<sup>73</sup> The audience and viewership consisted of predominantly the South Indian middle class elite<sup>74</sup>, whereas the organizers and composers were educated scholars from the Madras Music Academy. The public outreach and secularization affected the traditional art form and fundamentally altered its structure. The growth in the viewership is evidenced by the table below. It has been taken from the Madras Music Academy Archives, and details a list of the number of performances conducted in its yearly music festivals in the past 80 years.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.418. doi:10.2307/850653.

<sup>72</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.103.

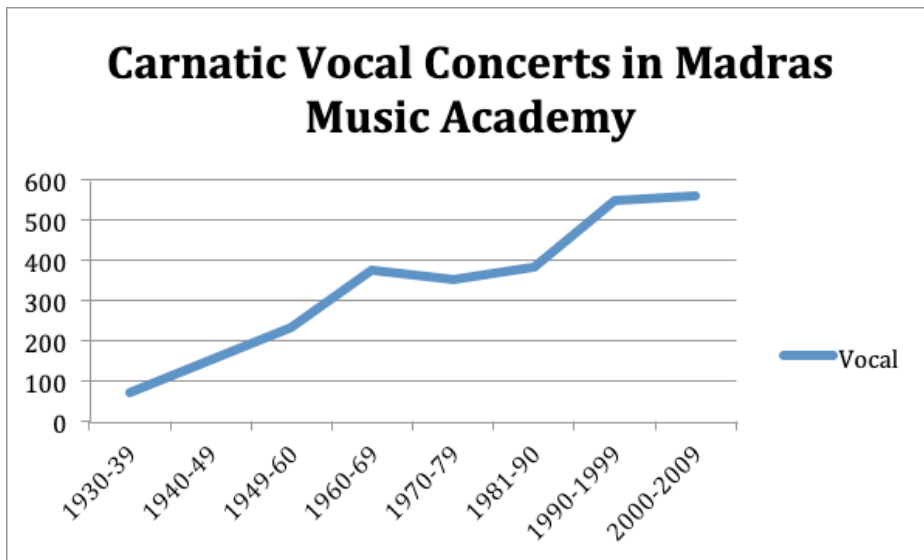
<sup>73</sup> Habermas, Jürgen. 1991. *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Space*. Cambridge: MIT Press: 28. Paperback Edition.

<sup>74</sup> Subramanian, Lakshmi. 2006. "Court To Academy: Karnatik Music". *India International Centre Quarterly* 33 (2): p.132. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23005877>.

<sup>75</sup> "Annual Conferences And Concerts – Music Academy". 2019. *Musicmadrasacademy.In*. Accessed September 21. <https://musicacademymadras.in/annual-conferences-and-concerts/>.

Concert Type	1930-39	1940-49	1949-60	1960-69	1970-79	1981-90	1990-1999	2000-2009
Vocal	71	154	234	377	354	384	552	562
Violin	54	162	269	381	352	407	602	649
Mridangam	58	174	291	415	386	442	644	679
Flute	7	12	26	23	38	39	47	46
Veena	5	12	24	27	31	37	50	51
Ghatam	0	3	82	92	52	41	154	305

Table 1: List of Carnatic Music Performances in Madras Music Academy by decade<sup>76</sup>



Graph 2: Carnatic Vocal Concerts in Madras Music Academy

<sup>76</sup> "Annual Conferences And Concerts – Music Academy". 2019. *Musicmadrasacademy.In*. Accessed September 21. <https://musicacademymadras.in/annual-conferences-and-concerts/>.

Based on Table 1, the graph above is representation of the number of vocal concerts conducted in the 'List of Concerts in the Madras Music Academy'. The graph is almost linear from 1930-1969, and follows a general increase. As the viewership had altered, the Carnatic music structure had evolved. What was initially meant as a temple tradition, or an occupation in the royal court had emancipated itself from the exclusivist space and was transformed by the public space.

A major limitation of concert halls was the geographical barrier: viewers were expected to attend the concerts physically. Potential viewers who were unable to do so were excluded from the public space. However, the advent of the AIR in 1938 in Madras<sup>77</sup> had helped in breaking down the geographical barrier by making Carnatic music and other forms of performing arts available to listeners across the country via the radio. This technological advancement had not only expanded the geographical horizons, it had also provided a system for potential occupation in the performing arts. The *veena*, and wind based instruments were being popularized again due to the respected musicians of that century such as Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar, and Muthiah Iyengar<sup>78</sup>. The AIR branch established in Madras led to an influx of Carnatic musicians, the most notable being Dr. Balamuralikrishna, and D.K. Pattammal in the 1940s<sup>79</sup>. Artists and musicians who

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<sup>77</sup> "Archives - Prasar Bharati | All India Radio | Doordarshan". 2019. *Prasarbharati.Gov.In*. Accessed October 11. <http://prasarbharati.gov.in/pbarchives.php>.

<sup>78</sup> "Mani Iyer Speaks". 2019. *Maduraimani.Tripod.Com*. Accessed November 28. <http://maduraimani.tripod.com/id7.html>.

<sup>79</sup> 2019. *Prasarbharati.Gov.In*. Accessed August 31. <http://prasarbharati.gov.in/AIR/natartists.php>.



graduated from the academy were provided with the opportunity to pursue music professionally. Viewers tuned in to listen to these artist's own representation of their original compositions as well as older songs. For instance, although Dr. Balamuralikrishna performed his musical compositions, he also performed his rendition of the Thyagaraja's *Kritis*, and *Keerthanas*<sup>80</sup>. This pertained to a niche group of listeners, but the diversity of artists within the cohort had appealed to a dimensionally vast audience. However, radio broadcasting was limited to a minimum of 15 minutes and a maximum of 75 minutes<sup>81</sup> - these rigidly fixed timings had initially sparked distaste amongst the public according to a newspaper article published in 'The Hindu' on 11th June, 1939<sup>82</sup>. These changes were gradually accepted by listeners and musicians by 'tactful negotiation'<sup>83</sup>. The AIR propagated Carnatic music to a diversified audience around the country; it created a platform for professional performance.

The progressive development of the Carnatic music system is shown through the increasing number of genres, change in the structure of concerts, geographical expansion, and is supported by a diverse growing viewership. According to Naomi Miyamoto, a communal voice was expressed through the public space<sup>84</sup> that transformed

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<sup>80</sup> Balamuralikrishna, Dr. M., and S. Gopalakrishnan. 2016. M. Balamuralikrishna S. Gopalakrishnan Interview. In person.

<sup>81</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.411.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> L'Armand, Kathleen, and Adrian L'Armand. 1983. "One Hundred Years Of Music In Madras: A Case Study In Secondary Urbanization". *Ethnomusicology* 27 (3): p.411.

<sup>84</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.109.

the structural system of Carnatic music. The musical reception<sup>85</sup> of the art form that was limited by concert system fee structure was expanded due to the AIR, and the 'rising middle class began to express their ambition by challenging the manner of the aristocrats' listening'<sup>86</sup>. Another significant observation made by Miyamoto was the acceptance and performance of old music, or music performed by artists who rendered their own versions of the compositions of older-composers such as the prolific *Trinity*: this was explicitly seen in the renditions of the AIR and concert hall artists in the 19th and 20th century.

## Conclusion

This study indicates that Carnatic music was restricted to Royal Court and temples from the 13th century to the 18th century; it operated in a particular manner due to the exclusivity of the high court culture. However, the *Bhakti movement* in the 18th century was a highly significant milestone that introduced Carnatic music into plebeian society due to its individualistic nature in the promotion of creative knowledge. It had emancipated Carnatic music from the Royal Court and integrated it into plebeian culture; this was the first attempt to break down the restrictive traditional performance art. The other significant factor that had transformed the music system was the emergence of public space in the

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<sup>85</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.110.

<sup>86</sup> Miyamoto, Naomi. 2013. "Concerts And The Public Sphere In Civil Society Through Rethinking Habermas's Concept Of Representative Publicness". *International Review Of The Aesthetics And Sociology Of Music* 44 (1): p.111.

19th century with the advent of mass media and secular state. Scholars, composers, and critics collaborated to establish the Madras Music Academy that was sponsored by the new state in the 20th century. This had established Carnatic music as a curriculum in the pedagogic system. The Madras Music academy played a significant role in developing the structure of Carnatic music through the delineation of all the melodies or ragas to accommodate a repertoire of Carnatic music: it was developed as a formal secularized curriculum. Additionally, the AIR had expanded the geographical reach of Carnatic music. Consequently, the nature of compositions, performance, and viewership changed. The evidence presented in the essay shows the change in the structure of Carnatic music from a highly traditional court culture to part of plebeian culture was caused due to the advent of mass media that established authority in the public space. Thus it can be concluded that the emergence of the public space significantly impacted the structure of music, and had effectively resulted in the transformation of the fundamental operation, and purpose of this art form. A more profound argument can be drawn in the context of the case study: the new medium of diffusion broke down the traditional boundaries and transformed the social root of Carnatic music which originated as an aristocratic exclusive form of performing art.

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