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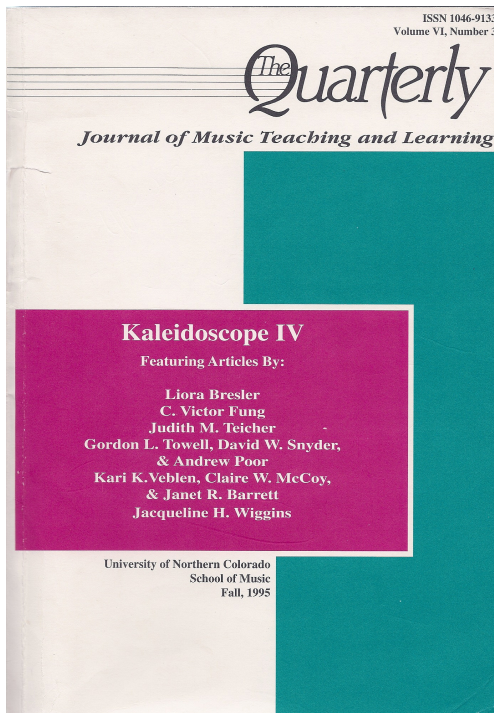
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# The Children Of The Thyagaraja Festival: A Study In Bimusicality And Cultural Identity

By Judith M. Teicher

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The Cleveland Thyagaraja Music Festival is the largest South Indian music festival outside of India (Iyengar, 1993), attracting South Indian families from many parts of the United States and Canada. Fashioned after the original *aradhana* (worship) in Tiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu, the festival pays tribute to the eighteenth century saint-composer Thyagaraja, whose musical and devotional outpourings have made him an exemplary figure in Karnatic (South Indian) music. In India the festival attracts thousands of master musicians and music enthusiasts from throughout India. The American festival functions as a gathering of immigrant families and individuals, many of whom are accomplished musicians under the umbrella of the Karnatic musical tradition. While the stated purpose of the festival is to extol the greatness of Thyagaraja as musician and devotee, many participants feel that the underlying purpose is to preserve the Karnatic music tradition for future generations.

In the United States, Thyagaraja aradhanas take place annually in many major cities. Since returning from two years of musical training in Madras, I have observed or participated in these aradhanas in Los Angeles, Oklahoma City, and Cleveland. Cleveland's festival is by far the largest and longest (last year attracting about 2,000 people and lasting

six days), and is diligently organized by a committee of Cleveland South Indians and their counterparts in Madras. Prominent musicians from India are invited to participate by performing in one of the several concerts that are scheduled, and by serving as judges in a youth competition that precedes the festival. This children's competition is a recent addition to the festival and has attracted hundreds of participants from around the U.S. and Canada. It offers children an opportunity to perform Karnatic music before famous and revered musical artists, and to receive valuable feedback from them. These children, having attained some proficiency in Karnatic music and having been educated in North America where Western music is a part of the educational curriculum, represent a unique population of potentially bimusical individuals.

Recent attention has been given to the phenomenon of bimusicality, especially as a manifestation of the cross-cultural experiences of ethnomusicologists. Titon (1994) refers to bimusicality as a means toward understanding not only the music of another culture but also its "wisdom," in that a resulting "subject shift" allows the fieldworker to understand the other culture through a reflexive experience which an outsider cannot grasp. My own experience in learning South Indian music and culture has resulted in a transformation in the way I perceive not only Indian music but also other musics outside of my primary culture. Very little has been written about the bimusical experience and even less on the bimusical experiences of immigrant and second generation children in North America.

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In Indian society, the concept of children differs from our current American view. Young people in India are considered “children” until they have graduated to the position of householder. (The ancient system divided the life into four stages, each 25 years in length. The first is child/student, then householder, then retired adult, then renunciate). Children are raised to behave in accordance with cultural norms which include obedience to parents, conformity to family mores, and respect for elders. Because of this view, the subjects of this study will be referred to as children, even though they range in age from 9-21 years.

In this manuscript, I examine the characteristics of bimusicality among the children who participated in the 1995 Cleveland Thyagaraja festival and some of the ways in which they negotiate their musical and cultural identity as Indians and as Americans. I also attempt to show that training in more than one musical system and culture holds potentially metamusical advantages. While the arena for this investigation is the festival, the scope of the inquiry reaches into the daily lives of the participants and their families and into the institutions of music education where the debate over world music and multicultural music education continues. The Thyagaraja festival, however, is an excellent backdrop for the study of cultural identity because, as an event that celebrates South Indian culture, it allows the children to openly express their Indian heritage, through performance and association with other Indians, in a way that is often inhibited in the American school culture. At the same time, the venue, a midwestern state university, and the company of other American-born youth, encourages the participants to express an equally enduring American identity.

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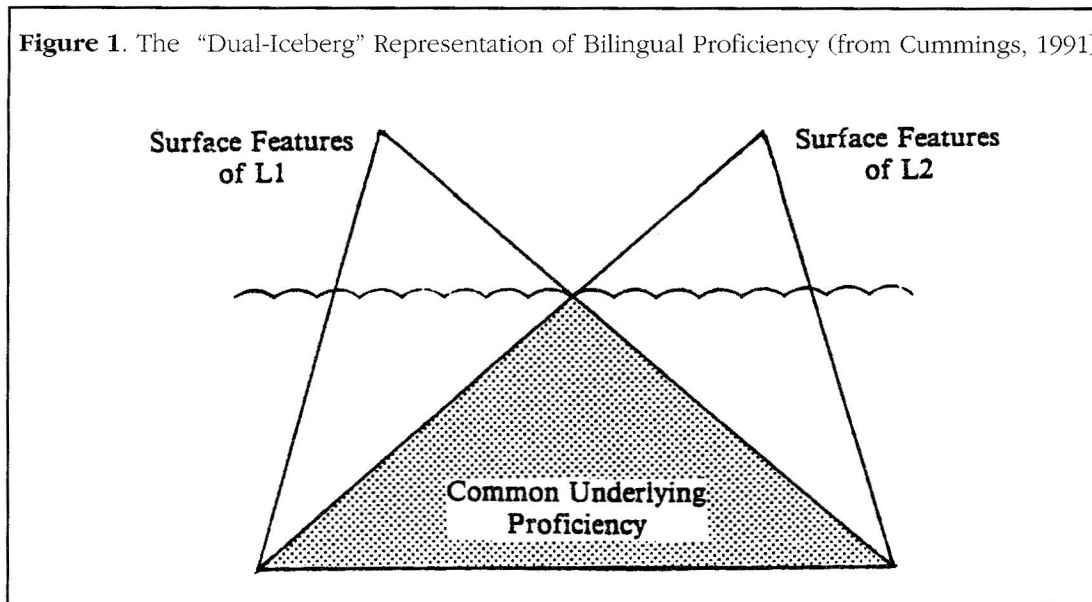
Hood (1960) first discussed the phenomenon of “bimusicality” as a result of becoming fluent in two musical languages. He described the musicians of the Imperial Household in Japan who were required to be proficient in Gagaku, the ancient Japanese court music, as well as Western classical music. He also described an “alternative musicality” of

those who have sacrificed their indigenous music in an effort to become proficient in Western music. Hood ultimately pointed out that bimusicality is really a matter of “musicality” which, defined in its simplest terms as a natural aptitude for music, facilitates musical learning, understanding, memory, and creativity.

Gordon (1993) attributes musical aptitude and musical achievement to the ability to audiate. Audiation, as defined by Gordon, is the ability to hear and comprehend music when the sound is not physically present. Gordon's analogy that audiation is to music as thought is to speech parallels the concept of common underlying proficiency as postulated in the theoretical framework of second language acquisition. This theoretical framework suggests that there is a common underlying proficiency in language by which the development of proficiency in the second language correlates positively to develop-

ment of proficiency in the first language (Cummins, 1991). In other words, when a new word or syntactical feature is learned, it is attached to a previously held concept by which its meaning is formulated. The image of a “dual-iceberg” (see Figure 1) is used to represent the surface features of the two languages, beneath which lies a common foundation of concepts. Studies of bilingual chil-



**Figure 1.** The “Dual-Iceberg” Representation of Bilingual Proficiency (from Cummings, 1991)

dren (Cummins, 1979) report greater cognitive flexibility and greater ability to analyze linguistic meaning than among monolingual children. Music learning, as it relates to this theory, may also have a common underlying proficiency in the function of audiation. How we hear and give meaning to unfamiliar musical patterns may be directly related to the repertoire of musical concepts already contained within the underlying proficiency of our prior musical experience.

Based on the above correlation to language learning, the condition of being bimusical, like that of being bilingual or bicultural, should result in an expanded foundation of meaning-making on which new patterns may be processed and made meaningful. Bimusicality, therefore, may be thought of as enhanced musicality and thus, an enhanced ability to audiate. Taggart & Gouzouasis (1995) argues that young people who are exposed to more than one tonality are better able to understand the syntax of a given tonality. To expand on this idea, immersion into a new musical culture may result in the ability to transcend the cultural and musical limitations of both cultures, so that new musical/cultural learning is facilitated by a wider range of underlying musical and cultural concepts.

The children who are the focus of this study are undoubtedly bicultural in that they have learned the cultural cues of both the

dominant culture and the culture of their parents. Not all the children, however, were bilingual, although the parents of many were not only bilingual but also highly successful in their assimilation into American life without sacrificing their cultural identity as Indians. Most of the children's performances were musically outstanding, according to the master musicians judging them. They exhibited understanding and technical skill in Karnatic music that is rarely paralleled in Western performers of the same age. Many of the children, having also studied Western music (piano, violin, flute, school band, choir) and have undoubtedly been immersed in the mainstream popular music culture that prevails in the media. These children present a rare opportunity to glimpse into the realm of bimusicality and how two musical languages and cultures play a role in their cultural identity.

#### **The Festival Competition**

The participants in the festival competition ranged in age from four and one-half years to twenty-five years. This study, however, focuses on those between nine and twenty-one years, (twenty-four of the twenty-seven participants). Those older than twenty-one were excluded from the study because of their adult status in American society, and the children younger than nine had very little training and were novice performers.

The subjects' training in Karnatic music varied, ranging from two years to ten years,

although many of the children have been informally trained in the home since they were very young. Karnatic music training takes place primarily by means of aural transmission. Many societies in the world use such modeling and imitation as a means of teaching music (Campbell, 1991), and this process of learning develops musical memory and attention.

Some of the children's parents are trained musicians and a few are active teachers of Karnatic music, although none are considered professional musicians. Thirteen of the children have also received training in Western music, ranging from one to twelve years. Training consisted of either private lessons, school band, choir, or orchestra, or a combination of these. Unfortunately, there is great variance in the depth of training among school choirs, bands and orchestras, and it is difficult to say how proficient the children may have become without a standardized or performance-based measurement. The intensity of musical training was determined through interviews with the children and their parents or teachers. The children came from highly educated families, many of the parents being professionals or having completed graduate studies. Most of the children were second generation Americans or Canadians, although some were born in India, Sri Lanka, Africa or Australia. Families of the youth were predominantly Tamil speaking, while a few spoke Telugu or Malayalam.

The competition took place in the same university auditorium as the festival which followed the next day. This has been the festival venue for the past seventeen out of the eighteen years the Cleveland festival has existed, although the competition is a recent addition. The competition began in the morning with a brief introduction of the judges who included some of the best known performers of Karnatic music. The organizers then called attention to the present research project in their announcements, urging parents to cooperate in an endeavor that should contribute to a better understanding of the value of preserving this music tradition. They also lauded the young people for having persevered in learning a music tradition that is foreign to American culture.

Each young participant was called to per-

form a selection of his or her choice, usually a *kriti* by Thyagaraja, although compositions by any of the renowned composers were acceptable. The *kriti* is an art song which follows a compositional formula that begins with *pallavi*, the main theme, followed by *anupallavi*, a secondary theme, and *charanam*, a third section which sometimes includes the melody of the *anupallavi*. The *kriti* is often preceded by *alapana*, an improvisatory, rhythmically-free exposition on the *raga* of the *kriti*. *Alapana*, though improvisational, are often pre-learned by students in music training. Only one of the children performed *alapana*. Most recited the tonic-dominant-tonic (Sa-Pa-Sa) before beginning the piece, and some sang the *arohana* (ascending notes) and *avarohana* (descending notes) of the *raga* of the piece.

Fifteen of the children performed vocally, three on *veena* (lute), three on *mrdangam* (drum), one on Indian flute, and four on violin. Two of the children performed both vocally and on an instrument. The most prevalent characteristic among the children as they approached the stage was their apparent humility. While stage fright and inhibitions may have been equally present, a humble attitude on the part of a student is an important ingredient in the successful *guru-shishya* (pupil-teacher) relationship. Wearing traditional clothing, each student sat down and performed his or her piece without gestures or displays of showmanship or virtuosity. Instead, all seemed concerned with technical correctness of form, *raga*, and *tala*. Several children were asked the title and *raga* of the piece they performed; however, not all the participants were able to give the correct *raga*. As they left the stage they continued their humble profile, many offering *pranams*, a gesture of respect by folding the hands prayerfully.

The master of ceremonies, a former Cleveland now residing in Madras, reflected on the level of competition which exists in Madras, the hub of Karnatic culture, where one must be exceptional in order to succeed. He pointed out, however, that even in Madras one will never see a galaxy of musicians as judges equal to those who were present for the festival. The com-

petition's purpose, which is to generate a continuing interest in Karnatic music, was affirmed by the presence of such renowned artists. The children were visibly inspired by the judges, many of whom they have heard perform on recordings. During the children's performances the judges would sometimes keep the *tala* with hand motions and sometimes confer with one another. On several occasions a judge would advise the performer on adjusting the *sruti* box (tonic-dominant drone which is often an electronic device instead of the traditional bellows type.) On two occasions the *veenas* would not hold their tuning and required expert help. In one instance the teacher came on stage and assisted, and in another one of the judges, a renowned veena artist, helped adjust the instrument. In the interviews that followed, the children expressed that one of the highlights of the festival was the help they received from a judge.

The performances were judged primarily on correctness of form, *sruti* (adherence to pitch), *raga* and *tala*, although the expression of *bhava* (feeling) was observed in a few of the participants. One girl sang with her eyes closed and in an apparent state of absorption, while another sang with obvious understanding of the meaning of the text. Most of the young people were more concerned with technical correctness. When asked later about the meaning of the song that was sung, many of the participants were not able to give even a general explanation. Some, however, were able to say that the song was devotional, which is generally true about all South Indian music. Only a few were able to give more detail about the meaning of the text. Most Karnatic music is in either the Telugu language or Sanskrit. Although many Tamil-speaking people are somewhat familiar with Telugu, which is deeply rooted in Sanskrit, many of the children have not had enough exposure to either language to extract the meaning from the songs they know.

The children were interviewed regarding their experience in the competition. Some enjoyed the chance to compete, to listen to others, and to compare levels of achievement. Others disliked the competitive nature of those "out to win." Most all the partici-

pants stated that what they liked best about the competition was the chance to perform for the judges who are top-name musicians and who were so patient and encouraging to them. Some of the children mentioned that the best part of the competition was the feeling of accomplishment they felt after their performance.

### Outline of the Festival

The main event of the festival, which takes place each year on the Saturday morning of Easter weekend, is a group performance of Thyagaraja's *Pancharatna Kritis*, the five compositions which are said to be the composer's finest. All who know the compositions are invited to participate. The auditorium stage is filled with local and visiting musicians, including the visiting artists from India. Several *mrdangam* (drum) players take turns while the five *kritis* are sung in remarkable uniformity. This uniformity attests to the consistency of the tradition of Karnatic music, as well as to the many weeks of group practice on the part of the Cleveland participants. Choral singing is uncommon in Indian classical music, although it occurs in devotional *bhajan* singing, indicating the devotional import of the performance.

The remainder of the weekend is devoted to concerts given by the visiting artists and to the open stage for individuals to offer one of Thyagaraja's 800 extant (Ramanujachari & Raghavan, 1981) compositions for those assembled. Many young people, some of whom participated in the previous day's competition, perform during this time. Many perform with their teacher sitting beside them. The teachers themselves usually participate in the *Pancharatna Kritis*. Children and adults line the room and hall backstage anxiously awaiting their turn to perform. Although the order of performers is carefully organized and posted backstage, it is frequently challenged by those requesting earlier or later performance times. Occasionally the visiting artists from India would come backstage and make a positive comment to one of the children about his or her performance. The children mentioned that those were some of the most memorable moments of the festival.

One child, who had participated in the competition the day before, received a stand-

ing ovation following his song. His performance was so extraordinary in its level of musicianship for such a young (nine-year old) boy that there seemed to be a sense of communal acknowledgement that, as one enthusiastic audience member put it, "Here is a torch-bearer, who represents the spirit of the festival and the hope for preserving the Karnatic music tradition in America."

Several of the visiting artists and local musicians performed during the open stage segment, sometimes forming newly arranged groups. One humorous diversion was the switching of roles, with a renowned *mrdangam* player singing and the renowned singer playing the *mrdangam*. The audience was delighted at the comic bravado of the musicians who were really quite good at their new performance medium, and at an invitation to see a side of those artists which usually remains hidden behind a formal performance appearance.

The competition awards were given following the Sunday morning concert. Two awards were given in vocal and each of the instrument categories, one each for a boy and girl. As the children were called to accept their award, many did *padnamaskaram*, the tradition of touching the feet of elders and revered persons. The boy who received the standing ovation prostrated himself as a show of humble respect. Again, the audience seemed to identify with the significance of this representation of a powerful cultural gesture passed on to a transplanted generation. One child, however, drew a laugh from the audience when she nearly grabbed the trophy out of the judge's hands. Remarks about how "American" the gesture was could be heard from several in the audience.

### **A Wedding, But Without the Bride and Groom**

While the festival is being enjoyed at the auditorium, another large and dedicated contingency is preparing the meal that is distributed freely to all in the university cafeteria. Feeding is considered an important part of the festival and is as much a meritorious tradition in Cleveland as it is in Tiruvaiyaru or Tirupati. The preparations begin the week before the festival at the home of one of the organizers. Reflecting on the amount of

preparation and activity, one participant remarked that, "It's like a wedding, but without the bride and groom." Food is prepared for the expected 2000 people and an enormous amount of resources is required to pull it off successfully. At lunch time people begin to make their way to the cafeteria building, forming queues that extend several buildings long and require almost an hour of waiting. The abundant friendliness that prevails at this time is matched only by the hard-working and conscientious servers and the delicious meal that is served. Weddings in India are a time of ritual, rejoicing and feeding large numbers of people. The same atmosphere prevails at the Thyagaraja Festival, where families and friends are rejoined, everyone is welcomed and fed, and the prevailing attitude is one of celebration.

Like the Indian wedding, the festival continues for several days. Visitors from out of town, many from Canada and southern states, and some from as far as Texas and California, are accommodated by as many Cleveland and Akron residents as possible. Many people share close quarters for several days, something that is quite common in India, especially during weddings, but is strikingly absent in many opulent American homes. Throughout the festival an atmosphere of closeness seems to bind old friends and strangers alike in a feeling of belonging that encourages open friendliness and establishes many new friendships.

The concerts, which took place on the weekend afternoons, evenings, and Sunday morning as well as evenings into the week, are traditionally three to four hours in length. For those who understand the music it is a timeless event that cannot be long enough. For the uninitiated, it is an opportunity to intermittently retreat to the lobby to socialize with friends. The informed audience is an involved and integral part of the performance, often keeping *tala* with hand motions and reacting visibly and audibly during ingenious and moving moments of the performance. This is the only time the organizers sit down and reap the fruit of their labors. They are often the most animated and appreciative members of the audience.

Several of the older youth participate much

as the adults do. One youngster, who had been a competition participant, participated in the *Pancharatna Kriti* group performance playing the flute. Most of the competition participants listened intently to the concerts and individual offerings, although a few showed signs of restlessness and ventured off to be with friends. Often children sat with their parents or teacher and conferred on identifying the *raga*, sitting for long periods at a time, sometimes dozing off or becoming distracted, but intent on taking in as much music as they could.

### **Elevator Tag and Fire Drills**

Identity is a complex phenomenon which includes self-concept and self-esteem, and represents a combination of roles an individual must play (Bagley, Verma & Mallick, 1982). Language, clothing, the music one listens to, and social interactions all contribute to one's attempt to define and negotiate social position (Turino, 1993). The musical aspect of the festival plays an important role in such processes of self and group definition, but it by no means paints the whole picture. One of the ways many of the children of the Thyagaraja Festival negotiate their identity and social position in the overwhelmingly Indian environment of the festival is through their games. Elevator tag, sliding down bannisters, and exploring the halls of the university provide the children with a means of declaring their unique identity as Americans as well as Indians, and most of all, as children. For many of the children the weekend is a long adventure with their friends, often out of the presence of their parents who are engaged in the musical and social aspects of the festival. Many of the children look forward to this time to be on their own.

Children raised in America are bombarded with media images of how they are supposed to act. Children are often depicted as brazen, savvy, and disdainful of parents in popular television programs. These behaviors are the antithesis of the norm in most Indian homes. Negotiating the Indian and American images is a difficult task. The children at the festival often make distinct cultural statements through their gestures and mannerisms, both when they perform and when they are relaxed and interacting with

friends and family. Many of the children become overtly "American" in their mannerisms while offstage, using gestures and stances that they would avoid in a totally Indian environment, while their mannerisms "on stage" are subdued and appropriate for the traditional constraints of the festival. This ability to adjust their "stance" alludes to the children's bicultural expertise and awareness of the differences in cultural expectations. While their position as Indians is strengthened by their musical participation, their position as Americans must be negotiated by attention to opportunities for individuation and self-assertion.

One of the traditions at the Cleveland Thyagaraja Music Festival was established, anonymously, by some of the children. For the past several years, at a most inopportune time, a fire alarm is pulled and the entire assembly of people perform a ritual fire drill. The humor in this event is that it has come to be an expected feature of the festival, even though it has caused untold grief for the organizers and the artists who are performing when it occurs. Each year, the 1000 or so people evacuate the building and congregate outside in a congenial manner while the building is inspected.

This event is perhaps the most indicative of the children's efforts to assert their American identity. What could be more American than a fire drill? Fire drills are a regular feature in schools, and rebellious behavior (such as pulling a fire alarm) is often condoned and even glorified in the media. Although it is doubtful that any of the serious music students were involved (they were attending the concert), rebellion is often a widespread desire enacted by a few. Whereas the serious music students at the festival may have channeled their identity issues in musical or other productive ways, the young people who were involved in pulling the fire alarm were, perhaps, without alternatives to negotiating their cultural identity. The importance of music in the lives of immigrant and second generation children, and of being recognized and appreciated members of the musical subculture, cannot be underestimated.

Immigrants and their children "require powerful ego strengths" in the task of recreating an identity in a new environment



(Verma & Bagley, 1982). Self-esteem can be severely threatened by the experience of immigration or of not being a member of the dominant culture. Self-esteem is, in fact, a crucial part of identity formation, attitude and behavior. Research on cultural identity and self-esteem (Bagley, Verma & Mallick, 1982) reveals that sources and levels of self-esteem and identity structuring are different for different groups of people. What constitutes an indicator of self-esteem in one culture may be very different for another. In the process of enculturation, the immigrant must negotiate these differences without becoming marginalized.

In order to assess the self-esteem of the children who participated in the music competition, they were given the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory (Battle, 1981), a 30-item self-report scale intended to measure an individual's perception of self. All the children who had participated in the music competition had scores which ranged from intermediate to very high. A small sampling of young people who did not participate in the competition scored in the intermediate to high range.

Enculturation is the process of learning a culture by slow, formal and informal training, usually while growing up (Kubik, 1994). Kubik (1991) found that enculturation is an ongoing process that does not stop at any particular age but can change throughout one's life. The presence of musical training as young people grow may be one of the more significant enculturating influences on their identity. Paralleling language acquisition, the stronger the development of the primary culture (that of one's parents), the better-equipped young people are to acquire the new culture. Several of the children pointed out that they had been listening to Karnatic music all their lives and were trained informally by a family member from the time they were very young. Their participation in a family-valued activity, as well as the recognition they receive from the Indian community, has contributed to their social position within those arenas. For those children who recently immigrated to America and Canada, this may be their only forum for recognition and identity clarification while they learn to formulate a growing identity in

new social situations.

Successful immersion in American culture may be facilitated by a strong initial self-concept as Indians which comes, in part, from the Karnatic tradition. While Arnold (1985) found that in Chicago the classical Indian traditions played a minor role in Indian musical life, the same is not true in Cleveland. Two factors may account for this. First, the South Indian families in which Karnatic music has played a role in the past tend to pass this tradition on to the young people. Perhaps the classical tradition was not a strong factor in the lives of the Chicago Indian families even while they lived in India, and therefore they placed little importance in it after immigrating. For many South Indians (especially but not exclusively Brahmins) Karnatic music is an important part of identity (Nettl, 1985). South Indian music teachers, even in the U.S., place importance on the *guru-shishya sampradaya* (student-teacher line) by meticulously adhering to the style and giving credit to the teachers of that line, even though they accept tuition which is a Western tradition. The second factor may be that occasions such as the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival and Youth Competition are added incentives for young people to maintain the Karnatic tradition.

American-born children may tend to prefer American popular music, especially while they are with their peers who are not involved in Karnatic music. One style, however, does not necessarily preclude another. In interviews, several of the children mentioned how Western and Karnatic music both have a place in their lives, and that one doesn't influence the other. They are in separate compartments, so to speak, because the two musics are so different and are expressions of two very different cultural foundations. One of the children, who had many years of Western classical training, revealed that, when she is alone, she prefers to listen to Western classical music. Many others stated that they listen to Karnatic music daily. In addition to regular practice of Karnatic music, the bimusical children reported that an equal amount of time is spent practicing Western music. When asked to evaluate their musical ability compared to others their



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age, all children reported that they considered themselves above average and thought they were equally successful in both musical systems. When asked if they ever think of Western music in terms of Karnatic music, or vice versa, all insisted that they do not. Upon further reflection, however, all those who had studied both Western and Karnatic music realized that they could think of parallels but rarely do it. This points to the hypothesis that the two musical languages surface separately because they are different, yet below the surface the underlying concepts are stored for subconscious reference.

#### **Audiation Scores**

Twenty children participated in audiation testing using the Advanced Measures of Music Audiation (AMMA, Gordon, 1989). The purpose of testing was to compare audiation scores according to age, instrument, years of Karnatic music study, and years of Western music study, and to see if a correlation exists with bimusicality. Another purpose was to see if there is a significant difference in scores between monomusical and bimusical participants and to compare these scores with the standardized norms.

AMMA is used to measure music aptitude apart from musical achievement. Thus, it is the most suitable test available for those who may not have had formal instruction in Western music. Subjects are asked to listen to 30 pairs of prerecorded, monophonic musical statements and answers that have been played on an electronic synthesizer. They must determine whether the musical answers are the same or different from the statement, and, if different, whether the difference is tonal or rhythmic. Three scores—tonal, rhythm, and total—are derived from the test. Although not entirely culture-free, the examples are not commonly heard patterns from any one musical system but were com-

posed specifically for the test. The test was originally designed for high school, college and university music majors and non-music majors, the groups with which standardization was conducted.

Gordon (1989) states that audiation is the basis for music aptitude. Memorization and imitation are outer evidences of audiation, but audiation is based on understanding and not mimicking. Gordon states that musical aptitude stabilizes at about age nine. Therefore, greater musical exposure prior to age nine can increase an individual's musical potential. Although the AMMA is not intended for pre-high school children, festival participants under 15 were given the test and those scores were analyzed separately.

The scores were first compared to the standardized scores of high school students. The eight children over age 15 who participated in testing all scored a total score above the 50th percentile, ranging from the 50th to the 93rd percentile with a mean at the 77th percentile. In the rhythm subtest, scores ranged from the 45th to the 96th percentile with a mean at the 74th percentile. The tonal subtest scores ranged from the 44th to the 94th percentile, with a mean at the 74th percentile. AMMA recommendations state that those scoring at the 50th percentile and higher would benefit from music instruction in higher education.

The highest AMMA scores were achieved by a bimusical participant who also had the greatest number of years of training. Correlations were found ( $r=.555$ ) between higher AMMA scores and years of study in Karnatic music. While the highest scores were achieved mostly by bimusical participants 15 years and older, two of the highest scores were achieved by two of the youngest participants, with only 2-3 years of training in only Karnatic music. (See Table 1)

**Table 1**  
**Participants ages, instrument, years of Karnatic music study, years of Western music study, and audiation scores**

Participant		Age	Medium	Years of Study	Years of Western Music	A.M.M.A Audiation Scores		
#						T / PR	R / PR	Tot / PR
1		9	vocal	2	0	29/79	31/74	60/80
2		9.5	vocal	3.5	0	31/88	28/56	59/72
3		10	vocal	4	4	24/50	25/40	49/44
4		12	violin	4	6	21/34	24/35	45/32
5		12	violin	3	7	24/50	25/40	49/44
6		12	vocal	6	2	24/50	32/80	56/68
7		13	vocal	10	1	29/79	33/85	62/84
8		13	mrdangam	1.5	3	26/63	25/40	51/50
9		13	vocal	4.5	8	27/69	31/74	58/74
10		14	vocal/veena	3/3	0	23/44	28/56	51/50
11		14	flute	3	4	25/57	31/74	56/68
12		15	mrdangam	5	0	23/44	30/68	53/58
13		15	vocal/violin	10/1	8	33/94	36/96	69/93
14		15	vocal	10	3	31/88	34/89	65/89
15		16	vocal	10	0	25/57	26/45	51/50
16		16	veena	8	4	27/69	29/62	56/68
17		16	vocal	8	0	29/79	33/45	62/84
18		17	vocal	6	5	24/50	29/62	53/58
19		18	veena	3	2	26/63	28/56	54/62
20		21	violin	7	12	31/83	33/80	64/82

T=tonal score R=Rhythm score Tot=Total score PR=Percentile for age group

## Conclusions

Several factors must come into play in the development of musicality. Blacking (1988) poses the question whether music and dance are mere “extras” that help young people to learn social and technical skills, moral values, and to acquire a sense of group identity, or if they are essential forms of knowledge that contribute to a balanced personality and the development of cognitive capacities. If musicality is indeed linked with cognitive development, then music education — in any culture — plays a most important role in an individual’s growth.

The responses of the bimusical children interviewed show us that cognitive and affective development appear to be inseparably interrelated, and that one nurtures the other. Through learning and participating in musical activities the children developed a primary cultural identity. Their musical and cultural experience laid a foundation for learning a second musical system and cultural identity. Neither primary musical system nor primary cultural identity were compromised. Similar to second language acquisition, bimusicity appears to be an advantage to the children’s psychological well-being as well as development.

The children of the Cleveland Thyagaraja Festival Competition all displayed average and above average musical ability, both in performance and audiation scores. While the conclusions drawn from this study are by no means definitive, they shed some light on possible correlations between bimusical training, years of study, and above-average audiation. There is also evidence that audiation of monomusical individuals may be transcultural and that the system of musical training in the Karnatic tradition is particularly advantageous in developing audiation due to its heavy reliance on aural learning and multiplicity of tonal and rhythmic structures. While many of the monomusical youth scored well above the standardized norms in audiation and gave superior performances, the bimusical participants attained higher mean scores. Further, while the highest scoring participant was bimusical and placed first in two performance areas. Two overall winners of the competition were both bimusical, two monomusical participants

with few years of training achieved both very high audiation scores and superior performance ratings, winning first and second place in their age category.

Further investigations in bimusicity should look more deeply at the family influences of young musicians, including age of beginning musical studies and the amount of early music exposure, both of which appear to be significant factors in musical aptitude. A music teacher of several festival participants observed that those children who gave superior performances came from families where the mother, father, or another family member was a musician, thus influencing their early exposure to music. Interviews with parents and teachers proved this to be the case. Further investigations should look more closely at intensity of both musical trainings and other musical exposure. The depth and scope of instruction in choir, band and orchestra should be observed. Since Karnatic music instruction is primarily a one-on-one teacher-pupil relationship, comparisons with other private instruction would be revealing.

In a previous study of children from different ethnic backgrounds, Gouzouasis (1993) found that the tonal audiation scores of Indian-Canadian kindergartners were statistically lower than those of the other groups in the study, which he attributed to the differences in the Indian tonal system, a lack of Western music exposure, and the Western bias of the test. Although he concluded that those children were not able to generalize the tonal syntax of Indian music to that of Western music, it is equally possible that the amount and intensity of music exposure of these kindergartners had not been sufficient to enhance audiation. It is also possible that exposure to classical Indian music, which utilizes a great variety of sophisticated melodic and rhythmic structures, was minimal for these children who came from Sikh (north) Indian families. The young people in the festival competition all had varying degrees of exposure and training to classical forms and their audiation scores were generally above average. This points strongly to formal training and exposure in either Western or Indian classical music as fundamental influences in audiation ability.

Inclusion of non-Western traditions in American music education is strongly suggested. There appear to be a great many advantages to learning more than one musical system. Several bilingual advocates (Cummins, Krashen, Legarreta-Marcaida, 1991) have pointed to the benefits of cultural identity formation and self-esteem as well as the cognitive flexibility that come from bilingual education. Similarly, American children, whose backgrounds are varied, can benefit from experience in multiple musical cultures without compromise to the music culture of choice. In addition, the musical advantages of experience with diverse tonalities, rhythms, and contexts, may result in expanded musicality.

The fact that Karnatic music thrives in Cleveland attests to the importance it has in the lives of the families who value it. Community support, through festivals and ongoing music teaching, is balanced by community benefit. Children and adults are drawn to activities that are rewarding to their sense of self and group identity. Behague (1994) stated that music is perhaps one of the most structured expressions of human culture, especially in defining a group's values and world views. This is clearly reflected in the role Karnatic music has played in the identity formation and cultural balancing of Indian-American young people. Musicality, whether nurtured by one musical culture or many, cannot be developed in isolation of the cultural roots from which the music springs. The processes of learning music and culture appear to be as closely interwoven as are the processes of learning language and culture; a distinction is difficult to make. Therefore, in our efforts to teach music from a multicultural perspective, it is vital that cultural contexts be explored with as much concern as musical concepts.

The cross-cultural assimilation experienced by immigrants to the United States and Canada inevitably results in some amount of traditional culture being lost. Language, textual meaning in songs, and parts and pieces of a culture that are considered not vital to the tradition are often, by necessity, neglected. Yet, the essence of the Karnatic music tradition survives in places like Cleve-

land and many other cities where festivals of this kind are held. It survives in the young people's ownership of an Indian identity and music making that is highly valued by the community, as evidenced by continued interest and participation. The children's American identity may, in fact, lend greater validity to retaining their Indian identity and its ancient, and often foreign, musical culture, by virtue of their own bimusical expertise.

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