The Body as Musical Archive:
Sustaining the Embodied Knowledge of the
Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana
Through Translations Between Sarod, Sitar and Cello

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This study was approved by the Bath Spa University Ethics Panel (application reference: 12072PY) on 21/01/2022. Should you have any concerns regarding ethical matters relating to this study, please contact the Research Support Office at Bath Spa University (researchsupportoffice@bathspa.ac.uk). All participants provided written informed consent prior to enrolment in the study and for any associated datasets to be utilised as presented within this thesis.

The datasets that support the findings of this study are available from the author, Peter Yelding, upon reasonable request.

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Abstract

The Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is a lineage of musicians who made important contributions to the instrumental form within the tradition of Hindustani music. The *gharānā* currently occupies a marginal position in contemporary Hindustani music. Sarod player, Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan is the last remaining hereditary musician of this lineage. This research contributes to sustaining the embodied musical knowledge of the *gharānā* and challenges dominant narratives that have contributed to its marginalisation. The knowledge of the *gharānā* is presented, as it is encountered and refined in the body, through addressing the question of what is retained and what changes as it is translated between the modes of sarod, sitar and cello playing. Instead of centring recordings, a body-centred approach to practice-led music research and archiving musical knowledge is presented. By challenging sound-centric definitions of music, a model is devised, which divides embodied musical knowledge into seven categories: sounding, kinetic, mechanical, temporal, social, spatial, and linguistic. Learning the repertoire and performance style of the *gharānā* on sitar and then translating it to the cello is the key process within the method, learning to inhabit. This process led to a new way of playing cello that draws from both sitar and sarod technique. Characteristics specific to the performance style and repertoire of the *gharānā* are revealed*,* corroborating its importance to deeper understanding of the wider tradition of Hindustani music. The findings of this research reveal the benefits of drawing on somatic perspectives in music research. Exploring the entanglement between the historic threads of the tradition and the practice and positionality of the researcher have led to deeper insight and more refined practice. This research offers an alternative framework for music studies that is less sound-centric and reflects a wayfaring, rather than a culture-bound, view of the world.

<u>A note on italics and diacritics</u>

There are a number of musical terms and concepts that use words that are not commonly recognised in English language music studies, often of Sanskrit or Persian origin. These terms are italicised, with diacritics used to assist in understanding their pronunciation, except for names and proper nouns. My use of diacritics may differ from those with more advanced understanding of South Asian languages. Some words from the tradition of Hindustani music, such as raga, are not italicised because they are more widely understood in music studies. Regardless of language of origin, musical instrument names are not italicised, even if diacritics are used. This is a conscious decision to honour musical instruments as objects that invite embodied practices. A sitar is no less a sitar to English-reading eyes than a cello is a cello to Hindi or Urdu-reading eyes.

<u>A note on honorific titles and naming artists</u>

Ustad is an honorific term for a Muslim master musician and teacher. The Hindu equivalent is Pandit. It is common in English language writing on Hindustani music to not use honorific titles such as Ustad and Pandit, for the sake of clarity and fairness. However, as a musician and student of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan, following this convention works counter to my position within the tradition. Therefore, the first time a master musician is mentioned in the thesis, they are introduced with an honorific title. Similarly, to differentiate artists from academic scholars, I use their full names, which they are known by in their performance practices, every time they are mentioned. I alternate between referring to Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan by his full name and referring to him as Ustadji. Ustadji will be used when recounting interactions with him during class. This emphasises my relationship to him and the context in which knowledge was exchanged. He will be referred to by his full name when he and his practice is situated within a wider narrative or account.

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Chapter 1. Background and introduction

The Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is a hereditary lineage of stringed-instrument musicians belonging to the tradition of North Indian Classical Music (Hindustani music hereafter). It is the oldest sarod *gharānā*, which later incorporated sitar and surbahar. Its exponents have been specialists in the instrumental style of Hindustani music for several generations. This instrumental style is known as the Tantra *baj*. It is a distinct style, which, unlike many other styles within the art form, does not aspire to emulate the singing voice in performance. Instead, specific performance techniques, repertoire and ways of developing a raga are adopted, tailored specifically to instrumental practice in its own right.

The contributions of the exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana to Hindustani music are of great historical and musical importance. However, the *gharānā* does not enjoy the same level of international and institutional recognition today as other *gharānā*s. Moreover, there is currently no hereditary musician to continue the transmission and practice of the musical knowledge emanating from the current *khalifa* (chief) of this *gharānā*, Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan. Without the continued transmission of the palimpsest of its specialised and distinct embodied knowledge, which has developed over generations, the *gharānā* will not survive outside the texts and recordings. Hindustani music, therefore, is at risk of losing a crucial, foundational element. If the history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, its repertoire and ways of playing are not re-centred it will remain in the margins and eventually fade away. Responsibility lies with the handful of dedicated students to re-centre the *gharānā* and sustain the practice and musical knowledge, which Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan has received and developed from his forebears.

The knowledge of the *gharānā* has been translated between multiple instruments, including the Afghan rabāb, sarod, sitar and surbahar. Translation has therefore been a constant feature of this *gharānā*'s practice. As one of Irfan Muhammad Khan's students I have undertaken this research to examine the process of learning the musical knowledge of the *gharānā* on the sitar and then translating it to cello. This process reveals the ways of playing, the ways of moving and the musical values that are cultivated in the body as a result of learning the musical style of this *gharānā*. The body is re-centred as the key component of a living tradition and makes the case for

learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as a process of archiving. This is an approach to the musical archive concerned with sustaining rather than merely preserving the knowledge of the *gharānā*. It is the process of learning, presenting and transmitting embodied musical knowledge that sustains a musical tradition, allowing it to continue to evolve.

This research is the culmination of the trajectory of my musical education and career as an improvising cellist, sitarist, composer and songwriter. I was trained from the age of 4 to the age of 18 in the tradition of European Classical music at a council-funded music service. This was not an elite musical educational establishment but one set up to give state school children living within the catchment of the service a high-quality musical education. I learned how to perform and participate as a soloist, with accompaniment, in orchestras, string quartets, and in rock and pop bands. I also learned to perform in European Renaissance and Baroque music ensembles thanks to a committed specialist who introduced me to baroque cello bow strokes, phrasing and switching off the vibrato. At the age of 14 this was the first time I had seriously considered that different musical traditions and styles required different ways of playing and behaving.

I also grew up in a context in which I spent my summer months living in a caravan, bender or a tent, with site crews and attendees of small, off-grid community camps and 'world music' festivals. I was exposed to and formed close friendships with a number of musicians from various European folk traditions and West African Griot traditions. From the age of 16 I started to get work as a cellist with English Rock and Pop artists. These formative experiences, prior to my undergraduate studies in composition at a UK conservatoire, established the cello, and cello playing, as a way of connecting with other musicians. Playing my cello one way, using certain left-hand techniques to express melody and certain right-hand techniques to create specific timbres, enabled me to connect and learn ways of being with one group of musicians from one tradition. Other techniques and timbres enabled me to participate in other socio-musical settings, with other groups of musicians. I had little interest in specialising in the well-trodden path of cello playing in the tradition and style of eighteenth- to -twentieth-century European classical musicians. Instead, I was drawn to treating the cello as a tool for collaboration, composition and improvisation.

I was in a supportive creative environment during my undergraduate degree in composition. I was particularly drawn to free improvisation with jazz musicians, working with drones and melodic lines, the long-form musical works of contemporary minimalist composers, and the ideas of the so-called American experimentalists. However, this creative environment, and the institution as a whole, was still very Eurocentric and Anglocentric. Thankfully, during my first year, aged 18, I got the chance to attend a six-week optional course in 'Raga Sangeet' (raga-based music). This was when I picked up a sitar for the first time. It would change the course of my musical career forever. Hindustani music was an art form that combined all the elements of music making that I found most inspiring. A highly refined, principally melodic system, which combined compositions and improvisation to make long form performances, in musical conversation with an accompanying tabla player. During the following four years, and after graduating, the fundamentals of this art form and sitar playing became increasingly central to my practice.

My professional career prior to this research has been as an improvising cellist, composer, songwriter and sitarist. I have worked in collaboration with dance artists and choreographers, theatre companies, story tellers, poets and spoken word artists, all of whom have shaped my perspectives on interdisciplinary, embodied performance practice. I have been a participant in multiple music scenes: London's free improvisation scene; the wider UK jazz and contemporary improvised music scene; the small venue circuit in North London and Bristol that supports local to international musicians of multiple musical traditions; the UK South Asian music scene. I have collaborated with Hindustani and Carnatic musicians, West African griots, jazz musicians, klezmer musicians, specialists in Mediterranean and North African traditions, rappers, and songwriters.

On sitar, after 12 years of preparatory work, research, sporadic tuition and learning to perform with tabla players at weddings and restaurants, I reached a point in understanding and performance technique where I was sure I would not be wasting a master musician's time as a student. In 2019 I was awarded an Arts Council Grant to travel to study with a master musician in Kolkata. I was introduced to Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan courtesy of UK sitarist and my former teacher, Jonathan Mayer. He

introduced me to his former *gurubhai* (guru-brother), Matyas Wolter, who had become the senior most student of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan after his and Jonathan Mayer's former teacher, Pandit Srubroto Roy Chowdhury passed away.

As soon as my training began, Irfan Muhammad Khan took me back to basics to develop my playing in the style of his musical lineage, the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. I was struck by how different many of its elements were from the popular styles of sitar playing and Hindustani music exported from India to the Indian Classical music scene of Europe and the USA. I quickly learned about the history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, its innovations, accomplishments, its unmatched body of repertoire, and its subsequent marginalisation. Because I am the last Yelding working as a performer in my family, who had been travelling performers for generations, I also felt a great affinity with Irfan Muhammad Khan as the last inheritor of his hereditary performing tradition.

I felt compelled to join my newly acquainted *gurubhai*s in the collective commitment to archiving and sustaining the knowledge and practice of this *gharānā* within the instrumental style of Hindustani music. I asked Irfan Muhammad Khan if he would be happy for me to pursue a PhD in which I explore through practice-led research the musical knowledge of his *gharānā*. I was conscious that academia and some institutional bodies in India and the West had contributed to the marginalisation of the *gharānā* through erasure or misrepresentation. This is explored in more detail in the literature review and methodology. However, with the institutional and financial support of a funded PhD, I could spend four years being entirely committed to becoming another of the small number of students helping to sustain the *gharānā* through practice and raising its profile. I explained that I wanted my research to contribute to the growing work by scholars and musicians who do recognise the importance of his family's contributions to Hindustani music. We mutually agreed that I would go ahead, so long as I check details of the repertoire and the wider knowledge and history of the *gharānā* with him, minimising the risk of further misrepresentation.

Before laying out the aims and objectives of this research, it is first necessary to give an overview of the history of the *gharānā*. It is the musicians, their genealogy (Figure 1.1), their oral histories, the palimpsest of musical knowledge, and the resulting

aesthetic values, which are referred to when the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is mentioned. These luminaries and their stories will be referred to throughout this work. A summary of some of the prominent exponents of the *gharānā*, whose style and practice relates directly to that which I have learned from Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan, follows below.

1.1 The Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana

Figure 1.1 a genealogy of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana

——— Hereditary line

– – – Line of tutelage

·········· Marriage

═ ═ ═ A separate lineage to the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana

Lucknow Gharana

Early sarod/rabāb
Madar Khan 1704–1752
Khan Sahib Gul Khan (horse trader) 1728–1779
Haqdad Khan 1765–1836

Senia training (Basat Khan & Pyar Khan)
Niamatullah Khan (sarod) 1804–1904

Asadullah 'Kaukab' Khan (sarod)
1852–1915

Karamatullah Khan (sarod)
1848–1933

Waliullah Khan (sitar)
1892–1953

Daughter ··········

Shahjahanpur Gharana

Early sarod/rabāb
Najaf Ali Khan 1705–1760
Khaler Khan 1730–1789
Hassan Ali Khan 1752–1809

Hussain Ali Khan (rabāb)
n.d.

Senia training (Kasim Ali Khan & Umrao Khan)
Enayet Ali Khan (rabāb & sarod) 1790–1889

Shafayet Khan (sarod)
1838–1915

Senia training (Amir Khan)
Fida Hussain Khan (sarod)
1855–1927

Sakhawat Khan (sarod) 1875–1955

Kalpi Gharana

Azam Khan (veena, dhrupad singer and sitar) n.d.

Abdul Ghani Khan (sitar) n.d.

Yusuf Ali Khan (sitar) c. 1887–1962

Ishtiaque Khan (sarod) 1920–1967

Noorullah Khan (sitar) 1939–2008

Gulfam Khan (rabāb) 1956

Mukhtar Khan 1942–1997

Umar Khan (sarod) 1916–1982

Ilyas Khan (sitar) 1924–1989

Idris Khan (sitar) 1954–2013

Shahid Khan (sarod) 1940

Irfan Muhammad Khan (sarod, rabāb & teaches sitar) 1954

Genealogy of the Lucknow–Shahjahanpur Gharana (continued).

The origins of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana can be traced back to two lines of Afghan Pashtūn (known as Pathān in India) martial musicians. They played the Afghan rabāb. As well as being hereditary musicians, they were mercenaries and horse traders. In the early eighteenth century they settled in two Pathān-dominated districts of east Delhi, which were renowned as 'concentrated centres' of rabāb players, Bulandshahr and Shahjahanpur (Katz, 2017 p. 50). However, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Bulandshahr line migrated to Lucknow. This move is what propelled the future exponents of the *gharānā* to the pinnacle of the instrumental Hindustani music tradition and catalysed the subsequent development of the embodied musical knowledge at the centre of my research.

1.1.1 The Lucknow line

Niamatullah Khan

In Lucknow, one of the *gharānā's* key figures, Ustad Niamatullah Khan (1804–1904), gained acclaim as a particularly good Afghan rabāb player. He was invited to become a musician in Wajid Ali Shah's prestigious court. This is where he met Ustad Basat Khan and Ustad Pyar Khan, Kalāwants descended from the son of sixteenth-century master, Tan Sen (Schofield, 2015).[1] When Shah was dethroned in 1856 by the British, Niamatullah Khan joined these Senias to accompany Wajid Ali Shah in Metiyaburj, Kolkata.[2] He spent the period in the court, and then displaced company of Wajid Ali Shah, learning and translating their musical knowledge.

Niamatullah Khan learning from Basat Khan and Pyar Khan during the nineteenth century was a key moment that solidified the position of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as the oldest sarod *gharānā* in the history of Hindustani music (Katz, 2017, Mitra, 2017). When Niamatullah Khan first approached him to be his student, Basat Khan said that it was not possible to learn Indian music on the Afghan rabāb. The construction of the Afghan rabāb, with its frets, gut strings, and limited range of octaves restricted the extent to which a raga could be expressed. Basat Khan

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[1] Tan Sen was a musician of the sixteenth century court of Akbar and considered a key historical figure in Hindustani music. His descendants, *kalāwants* who inherited his musical knowledge, are known as *Senias*. Most *gharānā*s today seek to claim some kind of connection, either hereditary or via discipleship, to these *Senia* musicians.

[2] Ustadji explained that Wajid Ali Shah was not sent to Kolkata, but went there to travel to England and make his case for appeal after losing his court. However, he fell ill and was not able to travel, so ended up staying in Kolkata.

recommended that Niamatullah Khan take up a different instrument to study with him. However, Niamatullah Khan wanted to retain the highly refined rabāb posture and technique for his study under the Senias. This is why he removed the frets from the Afghan rabāb, attached a steel plate onto the fingerboard and changed the gut strings to steel strings.

This adapted instrument is the most likely origin of the sarod as it is known today. The origins of the sarod are contested, with competing claims from different musical lineages to a respective ancestor being the first to fashion it (Miner, 1993; McNeil, 2004a). However, the Bengali musicologist Sourindra Mohan Tagore (1840–1914), testified the oral history of the *gharānā*, stating that it was indeed Niamatullah Khan who first attached a steel plate to the Afghan rabāb (Mitra, 2017, p. 147). Work started on it in Lucknow between 1855 and 1856 and it was finished between 1858 and 1869 in Metiyaburj, Kolkata.[3]

The competing claims contesting who first attached the steel plate to the instrument have been unpacked and debunked by Max Katz (2017). Irfan Muhammad Khan explained that it was not until his grandfather, Sakhawat Hussain Khan passed away that counter claims to being the originator of the steel plate innovation began to take hold (Khan, personal communication, 11th February 2025). He explained that it used to be widely accepted that it was Niamatullah Khan.[4] This is important because claims to a *gharānā* being the originator of the instrument are claims to power and influence in the tradition. Counter claims, especially from descendants and disciples that can be traced back to Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan, have played a part in other musicians having wider public and institutional recognition than descendants of Niamatullah Khan. Advocating for Niamatullah Khan as the first to attach the steel plate may go some way to redressing this imbalance.

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[3] An image sketched by James Prinsep (1831) shows a 'surod' without frets. This proves there were fretless rabābs that were called sarod prior to the Niamatullah Khan sarod. I showed this image to Ustadji. He explained that at the time there were numerous kinds of rabābs of different sizes, belonging to different traditions, which were called sarod and rabāb interchangeably. He stated that the 'surod' in Prinsep's sketch is too large to be a kabuli rabāb — the rabāb, which Niamtuallah Khan modified (Khan, personal communication, 11th June 2025).

[4] It was also stated that Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan (1888–1972), who had the closest hereditary connection to Ghulam Ali Khan of his generation, did not make any such claims to it being Ghulam Ali Khan or his son, Ustad Murad Ali Khan, who was younger than Niamatullah Khan.

Fashioning the sarod allowed Niamatullah Khan to fully inhabit the knowledge and style of his Senia *ustad*s. His sarod, with its increased range of octaves, increased melodic fluidity and created a new sounding timbre resulting from the absence of frets and added metal plate. It allowed him to use the posture and performance technique of the Afghan rabāb to preform Hindustani music for the first time. His innovation also established translation and finding creative approaches to more effectively express the knowledge of his teachers as a defining element of the *gharānā*'s history and style.

Karamatullah and Asadullah Khan

Niamatullah Khan's sons, Ustad Asadullah Khan (1852–1915), whose pen name was 'Kaukab',[5] and Ustad Karamatullah Khan (1848–1933) continued to elevate the standing of the Lucknow Gharana as they became respected virtuoso sarod players. The brothers were sent to represent India in Paris at the 1900 world fair under the patronage of Motilal Nehru. However, en route, Kaukab's sarod broke. Upon arrival in Paris, Kaukab bought a banjo, stripped off the frets and attached a steel plate, inventing the sarod-banjo. Later, when approached to be recorded, Kaukab refused because he did not want his sarod playing to be heard in shops and *pān* houses. Finally, he compromised and recorded the sarod banjo instead, for three records, presenting *thumri gats* in six ragas, one on each side: Bhairavi, Bhupali, Brindabani Sarang, Manj Khamaj, Pilu and Zila Kafi (Khan, personal communication, 11 February 2025). In fashioning the sarod banjo Kaukab was compounding that spirit of invention and translation demonstrated by his father (Katz, 2017).

The brothers continued their father's practice of scholarship. They wrote extensively on music in multiple languages. They were in contact (and sometimes conflict) with other notable music scholars and musicians of the time such as Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860–1936), who in the early twentieth century were working to establish Hindustani music as a national music of India. Katz (2017) states that the brothers went against the prevailing narratives on music at the time with their strong advocacy for the Muslim contributions to Hindustani music. Kaukab wrote two books, one published in Bengali, which was titled *Sangeet Parichay* (McNeil, 2007, p.64), the

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[5] *Kaukab* means star. He had a pen name because he was a poet.

other, unpublished in Urdu, titled, *Jauhār-i Musiqui* (1915). Karamatullah Khan published his work in Urdu *Isrār-i Karāmat Urf Naghmāt-i Niamat* (1908).

As well as their position as prominent performers and scholars, the brothers were also reputable teachers. Kaukab taught in Kolkata. Karamatullah Khan taught in Allahabad until the passing of Kaukab, when he moved to Kolkata. As well as sarod, Kaukab taught sitar, surbahar and esraj. He taught the first professional Zamindar esraj player, Kali Pali, and the first professional Zamindar sarod player, Dhiren Bose. On Kaukab's skill as a musician and teacher Katz writes:

> In addition to his father, Kaukab learned from a famed sitar and surbahar player, but it is not clear whether this person was Sajjad Mohammad-described by Miner as the "single most outstanding influential instrumentalist of later nineteenth-century Calcutta" — or Ali Mohammad Khan, the elder son of Basat Khan (Miner 1997 [1993]:150; see also Chatterjee 1996: 269; McNeil 2004a: 136 n. 30)

> Max Katz (2017, p. 159)

Regardless of the source, Kaukab was expanding his own embodied musical knowledge beyond that of his father, absorbing more streams of repertoire and performance technique into the fold of the *gharānā*. He was therefore cementing his position as one of the most important and influential figures of the Tantra *baj* in Hindustani music at the time. Like his father before him, Kaukab's training further established his lineage as a receptacle for the most refined musical knowledge of the time.

Karamatullah Khan's son, Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan (1920–1967), continued the Lucknow line of sarod playing and performing with the sarod banjo. He was a highly accomplished musician, with regular broadcasts on All India Radio Delhi and performances across India, as well as in Afghanistan and China. His eldest son Ustad Mukhtiyar Ahmed Khan (1942–1997) was a *sarodia* and banjo player, and was a staff artiste of All India Radio. Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan died when his youngest son, Ustad Gulfam Ahmed Khan (b.1956), who specialises in rabāb, was only 13. Gulfam Ahmed Khan continued the thread of the Lucknow line into the present day, receiving training

from his elder brother. He also learned repertoire from musicians of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur line, Ustad Ilyas Khan and later, Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan. He was awarded a Padmashri for music in 2021 and his son Imran Khan (b.1979) is also now an accomplished sarod and rabāb player.

Waliullah Khan

Ustad Waliullah Khan (1892–1951) was the son of Kaukab. He was the first exponent of the *gharānā* to be primarily a sitarist and was taught by his father. He moved from Kolkata to work as a court musician in Dhaka and then later returned to Kolkata, where he served the *nawāb*, Musharraf Hussain and taught his daughter, Begum Jabbar. There is a surviving record of his performing raga Pilu (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023b) and Manj Khamaj (Pokri Pokri, 2020). Katz recounts that Ustad Vilayat Khan of the Imdadkhani Gharana claimed to have obtained over 150 compositions from Waliullah Khan (2017, p. 95). The family of the now widely known Imdadkhani Gharana held Waliullah Khan and the musicians of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in high esteem.

1.1.2 The Shahjahanpur line

Enayet Ali Khan and Shafayet Khan

A key figure on the Shahjahanpur side of the *gharānā*'s genealogy was Ustad Enayet Ali Khan (1790–1889). Before he adopted sarod, he was a highly skilled rabāb player. Like Niamatullah Khan, he also received training from Senia musicians, specifically Ustad Quasim Ali and Ustad Umrao Khan. However, these Senia musicians were descended from Tan Sen's daughter and played the veena.[6] Enayet Khan was a court musician of the Bhawal estate in modern day Bangladesh. He was also the first sarod player to perform in England: he performed for Queen Victoria's 40th anniversary of reign in 1877 (Katz, 2017). His son, Ustad Shafayet Khan (1838–1915) worked as a court musician in Junagarh. He had a close relationship with the Lucknow line and he married the daughter of Niamatullah Khan, beginning the process of the lines converging.

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[6] Tan Sen's son's side of the family played the Senia rabāb and his daughter's side played the veena. *Senia* Rabāb players are often referred to as *Seni-Rabābiya*s and *Senia* veena players, *Seni-beenkar*s.

Sakhawat Hussain Khan

Shafayet's son, Ustad Sakhawat Hussain Khan, affirmed the coming together of the Lucknow and Shahjahanpur lines. He was a student of Kaukab and Karamatullah Khan and he married Kaukab's daughter. Following in the footsteps of his *ustad*s and his ancestors, Sakhawat was also internationally and institutionally acclaimed as a master sarod player. He toured Europe and East Asia, including giving a performance at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He was also 'one of the most prestigious instructors' (Katz, 2017 p. 116) at the Bhatkhande College. He was recorded on 78s, playing ragas: Gara, Mewar, Pahadi, Pilu, Tilak Kamod, Pahadi, Sorath, and Zila Kafi. He was recorded playing raga Gara for background music of a BBC film showing Indian troops training and was filmed performing Raga Pilu. His two sons, Umar Khan and Ilyas Khan, then inherited a single line of musical knowledge, combining the knowledge of the *bīnkars* and the repertoire of the Shahjahanpur side with the knowledge of the *rabābiyas* and the repertoire of the Lucknow side.

Umar Khan

Sakhawat Hussain Khan's first son, Ustad Umar Khan (1915–1982) continued the family line of sarod playing. However, he was also a skilled surbahar player and trained in vocal from Ustad Rajab Ali Khan and Ustad Alladia Khan. Umar Khan assisted Sakhawat Hussain Khan at the Lucknow Bhatkhande College and stood in for him when he was away. He then became a staff artist at All India Radio Mumbai. However, only a small number of recordings from his time there have survived. There is some suspicion that the loss of most of his archival recordings from All India Radio was not accidental, although this cannot currently be proven. Regardless of the intent or cause of this loss, it is a contributing factor to his not being as well-known as his father.

Umar Khan's marginality was compounded after he took over Waliullah Khan's position as court musician for the *nawāb* of Jalpaguri, Kolkata. The prestigious work for the *nawāb* was unfortunately timed. It resulted in less availability for public performances right at the time of the burgeoning national and international Hindustani music concert scene. More public performances would have cemented his rightful position as a well-known master of the sarod. Despite his vast knowledge and virtuosity on sarod, he remained a musicians' musician, known mostly by learned connoisseurs and other master musicians. At the end of a concert in which Umar Khan

performed after Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, the son of Ustad Allauddin Khan, who was the head of the Maihar Gharana, Allauddin Khan stated, 'you are brothers' (Katz, 2017). Umar Khan's esteem amongst musicians is also reflected by the number of celebrated maestros who attended his funeral, such as Ustads: Munawar Khan, Rahim Fahimuddin Dagar, Mushtaq Ali Khan, Latafat Khan, and Nisar Husain Khan (Katz 2017, p. 41).

Ilyas Khan

Sakhawat Hussain Khan's second son, Ustad Ilyas Khan (1924–1989) became a prominent sitarist and he also played surbahar. He performed many concerts in India, was regularly broadcast and recorded on All India Radio, and he continued his father's post at the Lucknow Bhatkhande College. Restricted by his teaching commitments and other external factors, expanded upon by Katz (2017), Ilyas Khan remained, like his brother, more of a musicians' musician. He was the same generation as the more internationally known sitarists, Vilayat Khan and Pandit Ravi Shankar. However, the breadth of his repertoire far exceeded both artists. As well as learning the vast repertoire of *gat*s from his father, he also learned from Ustad Yusuf Ali Khan and Ustad Abdul Ghani Khan in Lucknow.

Yusuf Ali Khan was a sitar maker, who made the first *kharaj pancham* sitars (Katz, 2014).[7] Yusuf Ali Khan learned sitar from Ustad Abdul Ghani Khan, descended from Senia *bīnkar* Ustad Azam Khan. Abdul Ghani and Azam Khan are exponents of the little known Kalpi Gharana. From them Yusuf Ali Khan learned a wide repertoire of sitar *gat*s and Dhrupad compositions. These compositions were then passed on to Ilyas Khan. Therefore, through Ilyas Khan a third line entered the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. He continued the role of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as a repository for refined instrumental knowledge and repertoire of the last prominent generations of Senias. Ilyas Khan's son, Ustad Idris Khan (1954–2013) was also a highly skilled sitarist.

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[7] *kharaj* is the lowest octave string tuned to *SA* and *pancham* is the *PA* above. These sitars have also become known as 'Ravi Shankar style' sitars. However, this kind of sitar was used by artist prior to Ravi Shankar's adopting of the instrument. Ilyas Khan is one such example. This is the kind of sitar that I play also.

Irfan Muhammad Khan

Umar Khan's two sons continued his mastery of sarod. His eldest son, Ustad Shahid Khan (b.1940) has now retired from playing. Umar Khan's youngest son, Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan (b.1954) is the current khalifa ('chief') of the *gharānā*. He is the last hereditary exponent of this line. He learned sarod from his father in Kolkata until it was decided that he would benefit from further study with his uncle, Ilyas Khan, in Lucknow. His study with both his father and uncle consolidated his inheritance of the three streams of musical knowledge running through the family. Although he is trained as a sarod player, his extensive study with Ilyas Khan gave him an in-depth understanding of sitar technique. This placed him to continue the family's legacy not only as great performers but also learned teachers.

Irfan Muhammad Khan taught in Assam (1995–2009). He also taught in Kabul (1984–1989 and 2010–2013), revisiting the country of origin of the early ancestors this *gharānā*. Despite the present marginal position of the *gharānā* he has travelled to perform internationally, to Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, as well as in India. As more people become aware of the vast knowledge and unique sarod style Irfan Muhammad Khan possesses, in recent years his profile has been growing. He toured the UK in 2015, 2019, and then I co-organised another UK tour in 2023. He has also toured the US, Canada, and Japan, and will tour to Australia in 2026. He has been granted awards such as the Seva Shree, the Dr Kalyan Mukherjee Memorial Award and the Sangeet Ratna. However, more needs to be done to ensure wider engagement with the knowledge he has inherited and to ensure its continued survival.

Despite the historic contribution and musical importance of Irfan Muhammad Khan and his ancestors to Hindustani music, they do not have the level of recognition that would be expected of such a lineage today (Adrian McNeil, 2004a; Katz, 2017). The elevation of other *gharānā*s and their historical narratives since the middle of the twentieth century by scholars, practitioners, commentators and institutions (in India and internationally) has led to a situation where the names, stories, perspectives, and playing styles of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana currently occupy a marginal position in Hindustani music (McNeil, 2004a; Katz, 2014; 2017). Regardless of this marginal position, as one of Irfan Muhammad Khan's students, Arnab Chakrabarty suggests, Irfan Muhammad Khan is 'possibly the last surviving hereditary sarod player

in India to have received, in detail, the method of developing a raga as practised by the Seni rabāb and veena players of the nineteenth century' (2019, n.p.). Much of this knowledge has been transmitted orally, placing Irfan Muhammad Khan in a unique position of carrying within him intangible cultural heritage of significant importance to North India's history of Classical instrumental practices.

Unfortunately, there is currently no hereditary musician to inherit and to continue the transmission and practice of the musical knowledge carried by Irfan Muhammad Khan and his ancestors. It is therefore imperative to ensure this 'heritage as cultural practice' is not lost or forgotten (Akagawa and Smith, 2009, p. 6). Responsibility for this lies with practitioners, scholars and institutions re-centring the contributions of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in the history and practice of instrumental Hindustani music. My practice-led research is intended to be a part of this crucial re-centring.

1.2 Questions, aims, objectives

It is important to acknowledge that the tradition of Hindustani music as a whole is 'very much alive today and in no imminent danger' (Schippers, 2016 p. 77). This is largely because of a sizeable, recorded archive, audiences have been cultivated through institutional education, and the continued formal approach to tuition of professional practitioners (Schippers, 2016). The style and practice of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana on the other hand is in a much more precarious position. The *gharānā* does not fare so well when the three factors above, which Huib Schippers (2016) emphasises as key to the health of the overall tradition, are taken into consideration. The recorded archive of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana has until recently been shrinking, its physical forms — records and tapes — degrading instead of growing. In comparison to other *gharānā*s, the number of students is very small. Partly because of the marginality of the two most recent generations, contemporary audiences have not been so readily primed to encounter or identify with the stylistic features of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. There is also currently an absence of a mythology in the wider public imagination relating to the luminaries of this *gharānā* that there is for other, more well-known, contemporary instrumental *gharānā*s, such as the Imdadkhani Gharana and the Maihar Gharana. As a result, the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in its current state does not have sufficient gravity to attract

enough wider public attention to guarantee its survival. It is therefore a peculiar example of an endangered practice within a thriving tradition.

Despite the overall health of Hindustani music, Schippers concedes that within the tradition there is a 'perceived lack of depth' to contemporary practice. This perception, on the surface may not give too much cause for concern (2016, p. 96). It reflects a narrative that has persisted for over a century, as earlier generations of masters have mourned the degradation of depth and quality in the art form (Schofield, 2010). Schippers suggests that this mindset has actually ensured the continued preservation of the tradition because 'the conservatism such perceptions entail possibly serves as a mechanism to ensure careful thought before changing key aspects' (2016, p. 95). However, the marginal and endangered position of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana ratifies this 'perceived lack of depth' in popular contemporary Hindustani music (*ibid*.). The *gharānā*'s vast repertoire of unique instrumental compositions are often more complex than compositions that are more widely performed. The aesthetic stylistic features of the instrumental practices within the *gharānā* are different from many of the aesthetic stylistic features of more widely known, popular contemporary sitar and sarod playing.

The historic contributions and innovations of this *gharānā*'s exponents to thought and practice within the tradition are crucial to a thorough understanding of its development. This research takes place in a contemporary political context where Muslim contributions to the art form and Indian society are being downplayed and erased (Katz 2017). The oral and documented history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana serves as a timely reminder of the importance and inextricable nature of Muslim contributions to Indian music and society. Therefore, the loss of such critical components to Hindustani music as the history, style and practice of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana would indeed lessen the depth to the tradition. This *gharānā* is foundational to instrumental forms of Hindustani music today. As with a building, foundations may not be visible, but their degradation and loss will lead to the structure above losing integrity. The continued survival of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana then should be regarded as critical to maintaining the integrity of Hindustani music.

Archiving the musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is of critical importance to ensure its survival. Irfan Muhammad Khan's students are working with him to lead this effort. Senior sitar student, Matyas Wolter is doing important work digitising and in many cases repairing the audio of surviving recordings of the past luminaries of the *gharānā*, as best he can. Many of these have been uploaded to the YouTube channel <u>Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive</u> (n.d.). Sitar student and ethnomusicologist, Max Katz (2017) has challenged dominant narratives in Hindustani music with his written work on the *gharānā*, which will be examined in more detail in the literature review. Rabāb student, Markus Schlaffke (2016) has made a documentary film of Irfan Muhammad Khan, which is now publicly available (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024a).

All of Irfan Muhammad Khan's committed students, myself included, are documenting his classes and performances. However, problems arise surrounding which elements of this knowledge survive when the principal methods of archiving centre what Diana Taylor terms 'enduring materials' (Taylor 2003, p. 19), such as recordings, texts and film. These materials are no doubt very important for the *preservation* of the knowledge of the *gharānā*. However, as Schippers writes, such materials 'do not always provide sufficient basis for the actual survival of music practices as part of an unbroken, living tradition, which many will argue is a key condition for maintaining the essence (explicit and tacit, tangible and intangible) of specific styles and genres' (2016, p. 3). An approach to archiving, which centres only preservation risks fixing embodied musical knowledge in one place and time, like a museum piece behind glass. A preserving approach to archiving fails to fully engage with the living practices, aesthetic values, and wider social ecosystem that supports this knowledge. Preserving does not permit knowledge to live, to be *sustained* and enriched by the lives of the people that carry it, so it can continue to live and evolve over time.

A sustaining, as opposed to preserving, approach to archiving practice is concerned with keeping a practice alive instead of merely documenting it. A practice can only be kept alive by ensuring it is still practised. Irfan Muhammad Khan's students are approaching the task of learning the practices and repertoire of his musical lineage, incorporating the knowledge of the *gharānā* into their practice, in different ways. Arnab Chakrabarty, for example has learned a number of compositions and stylistic

approaches to sarod playing from Irfan Muhammad Khan, which he has written about (Chakrabarty, 2019) and demonstrated in performance (Arnab Chakrabarty, 2024a). He is an established contemporary sarod player, and he has incorporated the style of the *gharānā* into his personal performance style, developed from his previous training from artists such as Dr Kalyan Mukherjee and Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta. Matyas Wolter has learned the largest amount of repertoire from Irfan Muhammad Khan, which he performs on both sitar and surbahar. As he has learned more from Irfan Muhammad Khan and from studying the recordings of the past luminaries, his performance style has gradually shifted from that of his previous guru, Pandit Subroto Roy Chowdhury to that of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Other students of Irfan Muhammad Khan who are performing publicly include Satyaki Dutta, Max Katz, Jonathan Mayer, and Adrian McNeil.

Unlike Matyas Wolter and Arnab Chakrabarty, I came to Ustadji at an earlier stage in my development as a sitarist, with no meaningful style other than what I could and could not play. Therefore, the change to my practice as a sitarist since entering the fold of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is more an example of a student's trajectory from intermediate student to performer than an established artist's shift from one style to another. My research is therefore well-placed as an exercise in archiving the knowledge of the *gharānā* through practice. The techniques and approaches to performance I have had to unlearn were not deeply ingrained. Much of what I have come to know in study and practice over the past 4 years has almost exclusively come from my tuition with Irfan Muhammad Khan and my study of the recordings of the past luminaries of the *gharānā*.

My sitar practice has matured almost entirely because of the pedagogical practices of Irfan Muhammad Khan. In contrast, my cello playing has developed and matured over most of my lifetime from the many experiences previously summarised. Interrelation between my sitar practice and cello practice seemed inevitable, as they are both extensions of my musicking body (Rahiam, 2012). I therefore had a strong sense that if I am committed to inhabiting and sustaining the knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in my practice, then I must find ways to intentionally incorporate my cello playing into that process.

This realisation led to questioning the site of knowledge archived through practice, if it is not in recordings, or documents. The provocation at the root of my research became that it is the body, the organism operating the instruments, which is the site of the musical archive. If I have successfully learned to embody the knowledge of the *gharānā* to be able to express it on one stringed instrument, then I should be able to translate it to the other, which I have played for 14 more years, without disrupting the integrity of the tradition's defining elements. Ingold states 'to be, […] is not to be in place but to be along paths' (Ingold, 2011, p. 12). First learning the body knowledge of the *gharānā* via the already established mode of sitar playing, then devising ways to accommodate it on cello, enables exploration of the paths of being a cellist, being a sitarist, and being a student of the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, as they converge.

The questions that arose from the above provocation, therefore at the core of this research are as follows:

- How and in what way does an exploration of the movement and musical gestures, as primary, but evolving sources, contribute to the transmission of the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana?

- What new understandings about this musical lineage are revealed through an exploration of its translation to performance on different instruments?

- In what ways does exploring this embodied knowledge through practice and translation assist in the de-marginalisation and continued survival of this *gharānā* within the broader Hindustani music tradition?

- What are the wider implications resulting from the methods devised and perspectives outlined in this project on wider music studies and music practice?

The objectives of this research and exploring the questions above are as follows:

- To identify the ways of moving and playing, as well as other crucial elements that make up the particular embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

- To incorporate methods and approaches from somatic performance studies and practice into music studies and practice.

- To re-conceptualise John Baily's 'learning to perform' as learning to inhabit, approaching practice-based research with a reflexive 'genealogical imagination' (Katz 2017).

- To widen the scope of music analysis and archiving beyond fixed, material texts and recordings.

- To contribute to the widening and diversifying of historical narratives and performance styles of Hindustani music in the UK and internationally.

- To demonstrate in performance the style and embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana on both sitar and cello, presenting both the *gharānā* and the cello in a new context.

This research comprised: three periods of fieldwork in Kolkata for sitar tuition with Irfan Muhammad Khan; regular online tuition and conversation throughout the duration of the project; cello and sitar practice; and creative exploration of the cello to accommodate the musical knowledge I had learned. Fieldwork was undertaken with ethical approval by the university. However, the work still required negotiating multiple power dynamics. I was a funded researcher from a university in the Global North studying a marginalised musical lineage from the Global South, which received little institutional support. My research, therefore, had potentially disproportionate power to influence the narrative about Irfan Muhammad Khan and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. I attempted to address this dynamic by writing about my findings in dialogue with Irfan Muhammad Khan and ensure he was duly compensated for his time teaching me. However, this approach also raised the question of my position as a student of Irfan Muhammad Khan and the risk of my research becoming more advocacy than account of the *gharānā*. In Chapter 3 I explain in more detail the way in which this dynamic was addressed by situating my findings in wider academic discourses and only locating my advocacy in my practice.

My knowledge and comprehension of South Asian languages that relate to the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, principally Urdu, Hindi and Bengali, is limited to very basic conversation and musical terms. For this reason, with the exception of musical terms and related concepts, my research is entirely in English. While I would prefer to be able to work multilingually, there was not the time and resources available

to do so in the timeframe of the project. Furthermore, Irfan Muhammad Khan teaches in English and is able to translate unfamiliar terms. Therefore, the net increased understanding of the tradition from learning the above languages would not have significantly impacted the findings of my research. This is similar to an English-speaking musician specialising in European Classical musical traditions and therefore understanding Italian musical terms and the socio aesthetic frameworks of the art form but not being able to speak Italian. My approach to this research was intended to compensate for the gaps in linguistic expertise with my musical abilities and my reflexive, embodied approach to inhabiting the tradition, explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.3 Ontological framework

My personal social and political positioning needs to be explicitly acknowledged to contextualise my perspective as a researcher. My personal political position is staunchly anti-racist and anti-colonial, in favour of redistributive approaches to organising knowledge and society. The impetus of my political perspective is informed by several factors. My father's side of the family, going back at least seven generations, were circus performers of Romani origin. Understanding my ancestors as people within but on the periphery of white, settled, British society formed a basis for acting in solidarity with people from marginalised, racialised and colonised groups. I grew up partly in a single-parent, low-income household with my mum, who worked as an artist and doctor's receptionist, and partly in alternative, off-grid, large communal settings to which she brought me. Experiences from these two contrasting settings instilled a sense of learning through doing, valuing craft, creativity, collective joy and collective accomplishment.

These experiences challenged the hegemony of capitalist social relations at the time that my social imagination was forming and led to suspicion of bureaucratic and 'soft power' institutions in the UK and the Global North. Establishing meaningful relationships with musicians from the Global South from a young age dislodged the hegemony of Eurocentric musical perspectives as neutral and objective. I was involved in anti-austerity student politics during my undergraduate studies. I subsequently took part in anti-racist and anti-fascist grass roots activism in London throughout the 2010s, organising around the intersection of local, national and

international issues. This lived experience has shaped my approach to academic study.

Most of my academic study to date has been focused on de-centring the Eurocentric musical imagination that persists in the study of music. This is a musical imagination with which sounds are perceived to be detached, or disembodied, from the bodies producing them and packaged into musical works or sound objects (McClary, 1991; Goehr, 1992; Small, 1998; Toynbee, 2000). Kofi Agawu cites this ontological framing of music as 'patterned sound phenomena' (Keil in Agawu 2016, p. 37), which has developed out of the aesthetic practices and values of European Classical music and remains dominant in cultural institutions and musicology of the Global North (Born and Hesmondhalgh, 2000; Radano and Bohlman, 2000; Taylor, 2007; Agawu, 2016). Bettina Varwig critiques Eurocentric music scholars directing their attention predominantly to 'words and notes, at the expense of the performed, enacted, sounding dimension of music' (Varwig, 2023, p.4). Her critique suggests that this Eurocentric musical imagination restricts critical understanding even of her field, Early Modern European music.

Christopher Small (1998) explains that an understanding of music, focussed entirely on sounds produced, establishes a stratified listening culture. He explains the way in which audience members of Western Classical music in concert halls have come to pay as little attention as possible to the bodies of those present in the room — each other's bodies and, to a certain extent, the bodies of the players (Small, 1998, p.41). Small also explains the way sounds are perceived to be contained exclusively within the composer's musical work instead of the combined contributions of composers, performers and listeners (1998, p.87). He explains that when presenting musical knowledge as packaged within musical works, all are participating as though they are in direct communion with often-absent composers, who have the most recognition and agency to express themselves (*ibid.*). The agency for self-expression and recognition of a player on a back desk of the second violins is minimal (Small, 1998, p.70), and for an audience member is virtually non-existent (Small, 1998, p.41). Small's observation resonates with O'Toole's social analysis of singing in a choir that is regimented in a way that discourages horizontal communication (unmediated by the conductor) (O'Toole, 2021 [1993–1994]).

There is a rich body of literature that explains how a Eurocentric musical imagination, or what Phillip Ewell describes as 'music theory's white racial frame' (2021, p. 324), became dominant in the study of music and why there is a need to shift away from it. Timothy Taylor (2007) extends Susan McClary's (1991) feminist critique of the social formation of aesthetic practices in European Classical music to reveal how a culture of racism and imperialism was embedded in the tradition. He demonstrates that musical works enabled composers to represent people and cultures to audiences as 'other' and that this developed out of the social, aesthetic and political conditions in eighteenth-century Western Europe. These conditions are examined in detail in David Lloyd's forensic critique of Eurocentric aesthetics more broadly (though with a focus on literature). Lloyd describes the development of an 'aesthetic regime of representation' (2019, p. 19) where the 'modes of being human' (p. 22) of white, European men were universalised or elevated above all other modes of being human. This regime normalised ideas of a cultural, social and political supremacy that justified projects of imperialist expansion, resource extraction and domination of other lands and groups of people.

The approach to archiving musical knowledge in this project is informed by an alternative musical ontology, which I have developed, that opposes the hegemony of the Eurocentric musical aesthetic imagination. It extends beyond the constitutive elements of 'the performed, enacted, sounding dimension of music' (Varwig, 2023, p.4). It draws upon Agawu's (2016) categories of multiple intersecting elements of the musical imagination. These categories include: the rhythmic imagination, the melodic imagination, the formal imagination (2016, p. 4). His analysis also describes relationships between the musical imagination and society, musical instruments and language, as well as redefining harmony as a social phenomenon — an act of 'simultaneous doing' (2016, p. 4). This breakdown of different kinds of musical imagining builds on Small's reframing of music as social, embodied action, as opposed to a thing that is produced (1998, p. 2).

However, with a musical ontology that centres the imagination, there remains an implicit bias towards the cerebral elements of musical knowing. This overlooks the body, which contradicts Agawu's advocacy for a 'musico-choreographic' approach

to musicology (Keil, 1979 in Agawu 2016, p. 38). The musical ontology I have devised is made up of intersecting categories of musical *knowledge* as opposed to different kinds of musical imagination. These categories below will be used to define what Titon describes as 'the musical knowing that follows from musical being' (1995, p. 296). Margaret Walker states that it 'is impossible that the processes involved in musical knowing and understanding can be disembodied when music making itself is so embodied' (2000, p.40). Thomas Csordas defines 'embodiment as a paradigm or methodological orientation [which] requires that the body be understood […] as a subject that is necessary to be' and, therefore, to know (Csordas, 1993, p.135). The musical knowing of the categories below is therefore situated in the 'lived body' (Csordas, 1993, p.136) or collective bodies, where action, cognition and imagination combine.

- *Sound knowledge*: relating to ways of sounding and the aesthetics of sound within a tradition.

- *Social knowledge*: relating to ethics and social structures within a musical tradition. Also understanding the way these social structures of the tradition relate to those of the society within which the tradition is situated.

- *Linguistic knowledge*: relating to the linguistic structures within a musical tradition.

- *Spatial knowledge*: relating to the form and aesthetic of spaces in which a musical tradition takes place. This could mean the physical spaces but also the imaginary spaces.

- *Kinetic knowledge*: relating to the aesthetics of the body and the ways of moving, sitting, producing sound, not producing sound, listening, or physically participating in any other way.

- *Temporal knowledge*: relating to how time is understood, both in terms of understanding the history of the tradition as well as the way time unfolds in performance.

- *Mechanical knowledge*: relating to the mechanisms, instruments and other technology required to produce sound or to otherwise participate within the tradition.

It is important to note that these categories are not exhaustive and are not to be used as a total replacement for such definitions as *melodic knowledge* and *rhythmic knowledge*. There will be many situations where these widely understood terms are far more useful for describing a particular element of a performance or tradition. However, it ought to be acknowledged that melodic knowledge and rhythmic knowledge themselves are formed out of particular kinds of sounding, social, linguistic, spatial, kinetic, temporal and mechanical knowledge. The term, *aesthetic knowledge* is also used in this thesis when the focus is on elements of the musical tradition that are sensed — sounds, movements, atmospheres, moods. Aesthetic knowledge, therefore, is also a composite of the above elements and is broadly equivalent to the Sanskrit 'affect-based theory of performance and reception' (Schofield, 2021b, p.186), *rasa*, meaning 'emotional essences' (*ibid.*).

The above categories of musical knowledge are used throughout this thesis to indicate specific aspects of the performance style and discourses relating to the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. This knowledge and history are explored through practice, then reflected on in writing, with the support of photos, notated transcriptions and recordings. The embodied knowledge of the *gharānā* is therefore explored through principally studying the development of my practice in relation to it, as opposed to adopting a supposedly neutral voice and conveying a fixed, authoritative, and commodifiable picture of a culture. My rejection of positioning myself as an authority on the knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is to avoid de-centring Irfan Muhammad Khan. He is the authority on the knowledge of his ancestors' and his own musical practices, and ways of being in the world, which his handful of students are learning to take on.

This project is therefore very much about becoming an exponent of the *gharānā*: a carrier of its knowledge and practices, rather than an expert. That is not to say that this work is not without expertise. On the contrary, becoming an exponent of such a musical lineage requires the development of considerable expertise, refined over the course of this project and beyond. As an exponent I am in service of the knowledge of the *gharānā*, my practice is one of multiple unique iterations. In this sense, the

project offers an alternative relationship to mastery, critiqued by Julietta Singh (2017), wherein I am directed by the knowledge of the *gharānā*. I am not a master of it.

The thematic literature review in Chapter 2 explores the research which has informed my reflection, theoretical approaches, and contextualised the history and socio-aesthetic practices of Hindustani music and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. In Chapter 3 literature is reviewed that is specifically relevant to the methods adopted, such as learning to inhabit the musical style through *talīm* (intensive study), *riyaz* (intensive practice), and translation. Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings and discussion. Chapter 4 deals with the knowledge of the *gharānā* encountered through embodied experience. Chapter 5 presents the key elements of the repertoire of the *gharānā*. Chapter 6 addresses the implications and potential impact of the findings and methods on: my practice, the survival of the *gharānā,* the study of Hindustani music, and the wider field of music studies. My findings and conclusion will familiarise a reader with key elements of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as a style and lineage within the tradition of Hindustani music, and the way it is practised on sitar and translated to cello. However, the details of what has been explored in practice, and the culmination of my methods have to be encountered in performance to be fully appreciated. Therefore, this thesis is accompanied by a live performance in which I present compositions and ways of improvising from the repertoire of the *gharānā* on both sitar and cello. Appendix 3 links to recordings and gives an account of this performance.

Chapter 2. Literature review

The themes of this literature review are: Hindustani music and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana; sustaining an endangered style in a tradition that is thriving as a whole; the body and embodied musical knowledge; and translating musical knowledge. There are key texts that relate exclusively to the methodology of this research, which do not feature in this literature review but are instead reviewed and critiqued in Chapter 3. Literature on sitar and sarod is identified below, but sitar and sarod practice will be critically examined throughout the findings of this research. Cello playing and the approaches of other cellists playing Hindustani music will be explored in Chapter 4.

2.1 Hindustani music and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana

Hindustani music is a vast field, its literature spanning several centuries, languages and continents. The first known mention of 'Hindustani music' as a definitive term for 'a set of Indian song genres, key music-technical features and specialist performers' was the Persian language, *Padishahnama* (c. 1636-48) (Schofield, 2023, p. 7). Literature that falls within the canon of Hindustani music predates this further, with Persian texts by Amir Khusrau in the thirteenth century and Sanskrit texts and 'treatises on music theory that provide a chain of citations reaching back to the Nāṭyaśāstra, dating to roughly the first century of the Common Era' (Katz, 2017, p. 138).

The scope of my research is limited by my ability only to understand English language literature on Hindustani music. My practice is informed by the complex ideas, theories and narratives from early Persian and Sasnskrit texts and treatises, as the practice and theory of Hindustani music have developed symbiotically. However, I have only come to know these ideas, theories and narratives through the perspectives of other practitioners and scholars, who understand them in the language of origin. The written ideas in Urdu, Bengali and Hindi texts by exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, I have come to know via conversations with Irfan Muhammad Khan and translations by scholars such as Janaki Bakhle (2005), Max Katz (2017), Katherine Schofield (2023) and Richard Williams (2023).

There is a large amount of English language literature on Hindustani music, which again spans several continents and centuries, from the time of the East India Company's seventeenth century invasion of India and the subsequent waves of British colonialism to the present day. However, the literature written in English on Hindustani music that informs my research spans the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Some of it comes from scholars embedded or practising within the tradition, such as the work of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1930; 1972; 1974), Stephen Slawek (1987), Sandeep Bagchee (1998), Allyn Miner (1997 [1993]), Bimalakanta Roychaudhuri (2000), G.H. Ranade (1971 [1939]), Ashok Ranade (2001), Adrian McNeil (2004a), Dard Neuman (2012), Matthew Rahaim (2012), Katz (2017), Ashish Sankrityayan (2020). Some of this English language literature comes from historians and ethnomusicologists whose area of expertise includes Hindustani music, such as the work of Lewis Rowell (1990, 1992), Richard Widdess (1995, 2003), Bakhle (2005), Schofield (2010, 2021a, 2021b, 2023). There are rich histories, myriad approaches, and lively discourses within and between the works mentioned and the broader field of literature on Hindustani music, some of which will be expanded upon and critiqued below.

The presence of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in literature on Hindustani music does not correlate to the historic contribution of this musical lineage to the art form as a whole. Bagchee (1998), for example, gives a detailed summary of the aesthetic elements comprising the various forms of Hindustani music — Dhrupad, Khyāl, Thumri, Instrumental. He also gives an account of the history and present status of the instrumental *gharānā*s, which reflects the dominant narrative in literature on Hindustani music. He states there are 'three main *gharānā*s in sitar and sarod playing', the Imdad Khani sitar *gharānā*, the sarod *gharānā* of Gulam Ali Khan,[1] and the Maihar *gharānā* (Bagchee, 1998, p. 244)*.* He acknowledges other *gharānā*s, including the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, but firstly suggests incorrectly that it is only a sarod *gharānā* (*ibid*.). Secondly, Bagchee implies that because the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and other *gharānā*s are not 'encountered to the same extent', their consideration is subordinate to the so-called 'main' *gharānā*s (*ibid*.).

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[1] also known as the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana

Other examples of omission of the historical and musical contributions of the exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, while referencing the knowledge of contributions of Bagchee's (2008) so-called 'main' *gharānā*s, can be seen in the writing of Alain Daniélou (1968), Walter Kauffman (1968), Bhatkhande (1972, 1974), Daniel Neuman (1980), Slawek (1987). A widespread erroneous narrative is identified in Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury's speech in 1973 that there were only two supermen of the Sarod by the mid-twentieth century, Ustad Ahmed Ali Khan (who taught Allaudin Khan of the Maihar Gharana) and Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan of the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana (Katz 2017, p. 88). Sakhawat Hussain Khan, the *sarodiya* of the same generation whose skill and knowledge was so highly regarded that he was sent to perform internationally in the 1930s, was completely overlooked.

It is possible that B.K. Roy Chowdhury, overlooking Sakhawat Hussain Khan, reflected a political effort to downplay the status of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. This may have been because the historical perspectives and written treatises of earlier generations of the *gharānā*, which gave more weight to the Islamicate contributions to the development of Hindustani music, challenged dominant historical narratives. Moreover, acknowledging the significant importance of Sakhawat Hussain Khan as a mid-twentieth century 'superman of sarod' may also have threatened the status of the subsequent generations of students of Ustad Ahmed Ali Khan and Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan, who enjoyed institutional recognition and international success. This becomes more plausible with the added context of Irfan Muhammad Khan's explanation that it was only after Sakhawat Hussain Khan's passing that claims to figures from other *gharānā*-s being the first to attach the steel plate to the Afghan rabab began to emerge (Khan, personal communication, 11th February 2025). Roy Chowdhury's omission therefore becomes part of a wider strategic choice of a number of influential contemporary musicians to keep the musical contributions of Sakhawat Hussain Khan, his ancestors and his descendants quiet.

The omission of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, accidental or intentional, from influential texts and histories on Hindustani music makes the justification that the style is 'not encountered to the same extent' self-perpetuating (Bagchee, 1998, p. 244).

This is why a principal aim of my research is to re-centre the musical and historical contributions of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana to the art form. Lifting the history and the playing styles from the footnotes of the tradition makes potential encounters for scholars and practitioners with the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana more likely and frequent. This is crucial to sustaining the practice and historical narrative of this musical lineage.

There is a small but growing number of texts that do acknowledge the extent to which past exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana influenced instrumental Hindustani music as it is practised today. Sudipta Mitra (2017) acknowledges Niamatullah Khan's inventiveness that led to the first steel plated and steel stringed sarod. Schofield's (2023) recent publication explicitly situates the writings of Niamatullah Khan and his sons Karamatullah and Kaukab in the canon of treatises on Hindustani music. These luminaries of the *gharānā* are also presented in the genealogy of musical knowledge of the chief *kalāwant* lineages to the Mughal emperors, which traces back to Tansen (Schofield, 2023). Moreover, Irfan Muhammad Khan is mentioned in the concluding statements of the text. Schofield (2023) writes 'we can still hear the late Mughal in many corners of the Hindustani musical field [for example] in Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan's sarod playing' (Schofield, 2023, p. 247). This acknowledgment gives greater legitimacy to the valid claims of the *gharānā* to a more central position in the history of Hindustani music than much other literature currently permits.

Allyn Miner's *Sitar and sarod in the 18th and 19th centuries* (1997) gives a profoundly detailed history of sitar and sarod playing, to which the accounts of Ilyas Khan, Umar Khan, as well as those by previous generations of the *gharānā* are frequently referred. She includes a sizeable amount of repertoire in the form of *gat*s and *toda*s that she has learned from Ilyas Khan and Umar Khan, as well as repertoire by sarodiyas and sitarists from other *gharānā*s. Despite Miner's (1997) work being a broad, yet forensic, presentation of sarod and sitar playing, it is the first in-depth and to date the most extensive published English language presentation of the musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

Miner and Joep Bor (1989) criticise Stephen Slawek's *Sitar Technique in Nibaddh Forms* (1987). They explain that he normalises the sitar playing concepts and approaches to practice that he learned from Ravi Shankar, the most well-known exponent of the Maihar Gharana. Miner acknowledges Slawek's work has methodological merits, such as his 'inside-out description of improvisation in the rhythmically bound sections of sitar performance' (Miner, 1989, p. 138). Stephen Blum (2023), in his recent publication on music theory in ethnomusicology, also acknowledges the methodological merits of Slawek's in-depth description of sitar technique and the process of *talīm*. However, Miner and Bor's (1989) expertise provides a more incisive critique of Slawek's (1987) work. Miner (1989) writes that 'the most pervading shortcoming' of Slawek's (1987) work is that:

> While purporting to be a discussion of the sitar in general […] it actually appears to represent the terminology and system learned from his two teachers. Many of the terms used are not representative of the larger world of sitar.
>
> Miner and Bor (1989, p. 139)

This criticism is crucial because it highlights the subjectivity of many Western researchers and practitioners, which is often portrayed as objective truth in publications. This is one of the factors that led to the elevation of, for example, the Maihar Gharana over the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in mainstream history of and engagement with sitar and sarod playing. Miner's critique does not mention the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, but it does not need to. By situating Slawek's work in its specific context, which Slawek does not sufficiently do, Miner destabilises the normalised status of the Maihar Gharana as one of the 'main' *gharānā*s. This levels the playing field, allowing both the Maihar Gharana and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana to be understood and engaged with side by side.

Adrian McNeil's *Inventing the sarod: a cultural history* (2004a) builds on Miner's (1997) work, exploring many historical threads of specifically sarod, describing the way the instrument and the multiple playing styles developed. He refers frequently to Niamatullah Khan, Karamatuallh Khan, Kaukab, Sakhwat Hussain Khan, Ishtiaque Khan, Umar Khan, and Irfan Muhammad Khan. He also briefly mentions the marginalisation of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and its causes. However,

there is still a larger amount of space given in this work to exploring the more recently established *gharānā*s of sarod playing. Furthermore, counter claims to the origin of the sarod from other *gharānā*'s, such as the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana, are not challenged with evidence that overwhelmingly favours Niamatullah Khan's claim. *Inventing the sarod*, as it stands, goes some of the way towards lifting the oldest lineage of sarod players from the footnotes but it is not a work that explicitly re-centres the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in the history of the sarod.

Katz, a sitar student of Irfan Muhammad Khan and ethnomusicologist, has published the first text to focus entirely on the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, the Lucknow side in particular: *Lineages of Loss* (2017). This is a key work from which my research builds. It presents in detail the oral and documented history of the *gharānā*'s musicians, their contributions, and the factors that led to its marginalisation. Katz does not merely provide more detail and context to flesh out prevailing narratives within a broad and diverse range of writing on Hindustani music. He boldly and acutely critiques the narratives within many of the texts that overlook the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. His critique reveals gaps within earlier literature on Hindustani music, exposing ideological and subjective biases embedded in established methods and approaches within the wider field of ethnomusicology. Katz exposes a hypocrisy of Western ethnomusicologists studying Hindustani music, who have often approached oral histories with scepticism, while overlooking their own subjective decisions about which musicians they have studied with. Their unaccounted subjectivities have crystallised narratives, representations and misrepresentations in formative literature on Hindustani music. This is explored further in Chapter 3.

Katz highlights the way in which the politics of Hindu nationalism and communalism started to become embedded early on in the project of establishing Hindustani music as a national music. In doing so, he challenges canonical literature on Hindustani music that has not sufficiently critiqued the prevalence of anti-Muslim biases, particularly in Bhatkhande's work that has been influential to practitioners and scholars alike. He cites Bakhle's (2005) account taken from Bhatkhande's personal travel diaries, describing a meeting with Karamatullah Khan in which Bhatkhande is 'especially appalled by Karamatullah Khan's contention that Hindustani music could have origins outside India and that treatises in Arabic and Persian could serve as

authoritative documents of Indian music theory' (2017, p. 133). Katz advocates for Karamatullah Khan's position with a critical examination of the musical treatises of Karamatullah and his brother, Kaukab. He explains that both these treatises show a profound understanding of the ways that Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and Greek musical philosophies have interwoven over centuries to create the aesthetic, philosophical and social frameworks of Hindustani music. Katz historicises this complex layering and framing of the art form, positioning it in relation to key sites and moments of Islamic history such as the *Bayt al-ḥikma*, (House of Wisdom) that was established in ninth-century Baghdad 'for the translation into Arabic of texts in Greek, Persian, Chinese, and Sanskrit' (2017, p. 139).

Through Karamatullah and Kaukab's treatises, Katz presents the brothers' profound intellectual rooting in musical history and theory. This challenges myths in earlier writing on hereditary Muslim court musicians and their professional descendants that misrepresent them as illiterate or having co-opted a purely Sanskrit (and exclusively Hindu origin) musical tradition. These myths and biased misrepresentations have been weaponised to justify recent attempts to drive Muslim cultural and artistic contributions out of India's musical history (Katz, 2014; 2017). However, they have been debunked in Katherine Schofield's (2021a, 2023) work. Katz and Schofield therefore demonstrate the importance of international scholars finding ways to make visible the biases, omissions and lack of reflexivity of their predecessors. The transnational historic threads that run through Hindustani music and marginalised oral histories must be emphasised, not quashed.

Katz's (2017) approach to critiquing the ideological bias underpinning Bhatkhande's work reflects a broader methodology countering dominant narratives within literature on Hindustani music. Citing the historicising work of Andrew Shryock (1997) and Engseng Ho (2006), Katz describes this methodology as '[ennobling] the genealogical imagination as a powerful source of historical data' (2017, p. 163). He advocates for a narrative according to the genealogy and oral history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, then draws on combinations of primary sources and recent historical analysis to support that narrative.

Katz effectively invokes this 'genealogical imagination' to reposition the *gharānā* at the centre of the history of the sarod and sitar. He cites the work of Schofield (2015) to legitimise the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as the sarod and sitar *gharānā* with some of the closest connections to eighteenth-century Kalāwant musicians descended from Miyan Tansen. Thus, Irfan Muhammad Khan, the informant for much of the content of Katz's work and most of my research, carries threads of musical knowledge that can be traced back to the early foundations of contemporary Hindustani music. *Lineages of Loss* is therefore not only a determining text for my research because it presents such an extensive and coherent history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. It is also significant because it offers, through Katz's interpretation and implementation of the 'genealogical imagination' (Shryock, 1997; Ho, 2006), a method and approach which can be applied to the study of any musical tradition and musical history. This will be applied to the practice-led exploration of the repertoire and historical threads at the heart of my research.

2.2 Sustaining an endangered style

Schippers' *Sustainable futures for music cultures: an ecological perspective* (2016) has informed the framing of this research as an effort to sustain the musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. He critiques 'cultural heritage management initiatives that approach preservation statically '(Schippers, 2016, p. 5). He explains that 'preservation' and 'safeguarding […] risk ossification, strangulation and disempowerment' (Schippers, 2016, p. 7). He instead justifies an ecological approach to *sustaining* musical traditions, where 'ecological' is not bound to the environment or studies of sound in nature. His framing of ecology refers to ecosystems that sustain the practice of a tradition. He explains that ethnomusicologists since the 1960s have approached musical traditions as ecosystems, citing Daniel Neuman's (1980) work on the ecology of Hindustani music culture (Schippers, 2016, p. 6) amongst others. Schippers breaks musical ecosystems down into five domains. These five domains are: 'systems of learning music'; 'musicians and communities'; the social and cultural 'contexts and constructs'; 'regulations and infrastructure' that enable the tradition to be practised; 'media and the music industry' (Schippers, 2016, p. 12). As previously mentioned, and as Schippers acknowledges, the tradition of Hindustani music as a whole does not face a great deal of precarity across any of these five domains. It is the particular style of

the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana within the Hindustani music tradition that does not fare so well, especially in the domains of infrastructure and music industry.

It could be argued that the rise and fall of the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is no different to the rise and fall of crooning, the decline of which was due to 'natural causes', with no cause for 'indignation or concern from a sustainability perspective' (Schippers, 2016, p. 8). As McNeil (2004a) states, to many the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is considered an old style that has gone out of fashion. In seeking to re-centre, or at least to de-marginalise this style and its history, I could even be open to accusations of the ossifying safeguarding practices that Schippers (2016) criticises. However, both McNeil's (2004a) description of the status of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana style and Schippers' (2016) mention of 'natural causes' overlook that social and political contexts determine what styles within musical traditions are in and out of fashion. Timothy Taylor (2007) explains for example that equally tempered tonality becoming fashionable in European Classical music from the seventeenth century was not a natural development. He argues that the social and political context of burgeoning European imperialism led to the changes in aesthetic style from the old linear, locally varied, melodic modes to the new tonality, which achieved the same kind of spatialisation as cartography (Taylor, 2007, p. 26).

The marginalisation of the *gharānā* from the thriving mainstream Hindustani music industry and its related historical narratives should indeed be a cause for concern from a music sustainability perspective (Schippers, 2016). The aesthetic styles that dominate mainstream Hindustani music developed in a certain socio-political context. As Katz (2017) explains, in the mid twentieth century, the sarodiyas of the Maihar Gharana, Allaudin Khan[2] and his son Ali Akbar Khan,[3] deeply respected the musicians of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, as did sitarist, Vilayat Khan [4] of the Imdadkhani Gharana. However, the Hindustani music industry, and the wider music infrastructure,[5] platformed these artists and others from their *gharānā*s, with their respective styles of playing, more frequently than artists of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

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[2] Sarod player, contemporary of Sakhawat Hussain Khan
[3] Sarod player, contemporary of Umar Khan
[4] Sitar player, contemporary of Ilyas Khan
[5] support from established music institutions.

Katz (2017) also explains that exponents of another sarod Gharana, the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana, distorted evidenced celebrated moments in the history of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, such as the first fashioning of the rabāb into a sarod and notable historic concerts. They claimed these events involved musicians from their own line (Katz, 2017, p. 93). Such undermining helped to secure the status of the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana as a 'main' *gharānā* over the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

The lesser institutional support, the acts of undermining and the wider political context of bias against literate Muslim musicians, who challenged dominant narratives, all contributed to audiences becoming decreasingly familiar with the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Despite this, Umar Khan, Ilyas Khan and now Irfan Muhammad Khan continued and continue to practice, teach, and perform (when programmed) the rich musical knowledge they inherited. Therefore, the case of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana demonstrates that there are contexts in which approaches to music sustainability at the level of a tradition as a whole are too broad. In those instances, Schippers' (2016) five domains need to be adapted to be applied to styles and practices within traditions.

To sustain a style or school within a tradition, subcategories have been proposed within Schippers' (2016) five domains, which focus in on the unique and defining elements of the *gharānā.* These subcategories fall within the first three of these domains. The system of learning followed is broadly the same as the system of learning in the overall tradition. However, what defines the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana from other *gharānā*s is what knowledge is learned, the repertoire, the instrumental technique and the approach to performance. A *gharānā* is a community of musicians within a community of musicians. Therefore, rather than looking at the broader community of the tradition, the focus of this research is the musicians within the *gharānā*.

Instead of exploring the wider context and construct of the art form, this research focuses on the oral and documented histories of the *gharānā* as an integral part of the tradition. However, there is another sub-domain to consider and that is the body. This

research situates the above in the bodies of the *gharānā*'s practitioners. This relates back to the domain of musicians and communities. A *gharānā*, as a community within a community, is a collective body made of individual bodies. For a *gharānā* to survive, the knowledge and ways of playing that define it must be sustained. This can only take place if the individual bodies that make up the collective body are nourished and sustained both in terms of knowledge and physical wellbeing. This research is explicitly concerned more with the former, although elements of our *gharānā*'s ways of playing relates also to preventing tension and injury.

Wellbeing also relates to the final two of Schippers' domains and the intended impact of this research. Irfan Muhammad Khan and his students survive from performance opportunities and teaching. In adding to the small but growing body of work in the institution of English language academia, re-centring the *gharānā* is intended to increase the likelihood of institutional support and opportunities within the music industry for its current practitioners. Equally, the music industry and infrastructure of Hindustani music will be enriched by more engagement with the knowledge and practice of this *gharānā*. If Hindustani music is a body made of bodies (*gharānā*s) made of bodies (musicians), then sustaining and elevating the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana out of the footnotes is like exercising to rehabilitate a crucial limb.

2.3 The body and embodied musical knowledge

Bettina Varwig's (2023) recent work critically engages with musical knowledge as lived and attended to in the body. She explains that her exploration of early modern European musical physiology 'constitutes a kind of "carnal" musicology' (Varwig, 2023, p. xx). She proposes that her 'somatically attuned reconstruction of certain historical parameters that delineated different possible modes of experiencing and using the body' can 'aid in bridging [the] gulf between bodily praxis and discourse' (Varwig, 2023. p. 44). Her carnal musicology aims to give a sense of historicised musical bodies animated by 'wriggling spirits' (Varwig, 2023. p. 44). Varwig invites a reader who may be embedded in a sound object-oriented musical imagination to 'consider the way a singer's throat tightens when they reach for higher notes [and that] a listener may experience this tightening sensation vicariously, generating increased tension in their own bodies (Varwig, 2023, p. 45). Having established this comprehensible example of somatic attunement in musical experience, she leads the

reader to consider 'the heart, the bodily fluids, the imagination, and the rational soul' in the musical experience of an early modern performer or listener (Varwig, 2023, p. 46).

Varwig illustrates the importance of thinking beyond the confines of music happening in a linear trajectory from sound source to ear, to mind. Her more holistic approach to explaining musical experience vividly animates her subject of focus. Her research, therefore, encapsulates the importance of re-centring the body in music studies. Varwig's subject of focus is some distance from my own, both geographically and temporally. However, my project is a continuation of that expansion of the musical imagination and adoption of 'somatically attuned' methods that she so effectively demonstrates (Varwig, 2023. p. 44).

In her exploration of affect within the musical spaces of North African Sufi traditions, Deborah Kapchan (2015) suggests that musical knowledge in the form of Sufi songs is 'carried in the cellular memory of the body' (Kapchan, 2015, p. 42). This idea illustrates the concept of the body as a musical archive. The body becomes a central component in a project of sustaining musical knowledge because every element of that knowledge is, in some way, embedded in it. Kapchan's (2015) perspective on Sufi musicians illustrates the process through which embodied musical memory is shared between bodies, in spaces, via instruments or recordings, and how that can be passed on through generations. It follows that, far from the musical archive being fixed and external, comprising enduring materials (Taylor, 2003) and musical works, it is living within the practising body and the sites through which musical knowledge is circulated: other bodies, instruments and spaces.

2.3.1 The body and embodiment in Hindustani music and *music studies*
Matthew Rahaim's *Musicking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani music* (2012) is a critical text undergirding the conceptual framework for my research. He approaches analysis and practice of Hindustani vocal music from the perspective of movement, motion, gesture, embodiment and the body. He explains 'there is much to learn from gesture, posture, and the physicality of vocal production that cannot be learned from sound alone' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 37). His opening chapter historicises ways in which the body and movement have been written about in relation to

Hindustani music in formative texts and treatises of the tradition such as the *Natyasastra* (ca. 200 CE), *Sangitaratnakara* (ca. 1200 CE), Mirza Khan's *Tohfat al-Hind* (1675), and Hakim Mohammad Karam Imam's *Ma'dan al-Musiqi* (1856). The latter, Rahaim describes 'goes into some detail in the description of gestural practice at the Awadh court of Wajid Ali Shah' (2012, p. 39). As this is the court and time period that Niamatullah Khan of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana learned from Basat Khan and fashioned his sarod, it could be speculated that traces of the gestural practice described in this particular treatise may be found in the practices taught by Irfan Muhammad Khan today.

Drawing on embodiment and somatic practices in performance studies, Jerri Daboo (2010) discusses the 'bodymind', indicating a 'psychophysical' unity of body and mind, 'in [and] as a performance,' (2010, p. 40). She explains that considering both body and performance as 'process and event, rather than object' encompass identity at a personal level, as well as an 'embodiment of sociocultural values [and] surrounding geographic and cultural landscapes '(Daboo, 2010, p. 40). In other words, both bodies *in* performances, and bodies *as* performance unfold, reform and evolve, influencing each other and the spaces in which they are situated. This relates to Rahaim's description of a vocal student of Hindustani music employing two processes of learning a melodic phrase simultaneously. Firstly, the vocal student engages their body in 'note-by-note transcription, [seeing] melody as a sequence of independent units' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 54). This equates to the body in performance of a raga allowing notes and sounding melodic movements to unfold. Secondly, he describes the same melodic phrase 'embodied in [the student's] hands moving in space, [seeing] melody as motion' (*ibid*.). This is the body as performance. The movement of the body, as the melodic motion is sounded, gives the shape of the melodic motion another dimension. This simultaneous process demonstrates the body filling in the gaps between the melodic stopping points conceptualised in the mind.

Rahaim describes the ways Hindustani vocalists' physical gestures remain intrinsically connected to melodic motion. He explains that their ways of performing with their inherent physical and melodic gestures 'serve as vehicles for aesthetic and ethical values that are transmitted through generations of teachers and students' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 130). This resonates with Daboo's description of the performing body 'as

process, rather than object' (Daboo, 2010, p. 40). In performances of Hindustani music, musicians are transmitting musical knowledge of the *gharānā* they belong to, reflecting the 'sociocultural values' (Daboo, 2010, p. 40) and 'geographic and cultural landscapes' (*ibid*.) that influenced the *gharānā*, its exponents and ways of performing. Rahaim (2012) describes this trained and performing body as the 'paramparic body [bearing the] discipline and authority [of the *gharānā*]' (Rahaim, 2012. p. 130). This is a way of conceptualising 'bodymind' (Daboo, 2010), or embodied musical knowledge, in a way that is rooted firmly within Hindustani music. Rahaim explains that the term *parampara* roughly translates to chains of transmission. It is commonly encountered in the phrase *guru-shishya parampara*, or student-teacher chains of transmission. The *paramparic* body then is the body that is becoming the next link in this chain of transmission, a living archive of musical knowledge.

Rahaim approaches movement from different perspectives. He explores the relationship between gesture and melodic motion described above. He then examines the way in which a raga is not merely a 'sequence of notes' (Rahaim 2012, p. 75) or a system of melodic grammar. Citing Dard Neuman's (2012) ethnography of hereditary Hindustani musicians, he introduces a spatial conceptualisation of ragas, describing a raga as a 'melodic geography' (Rahaim 2012, p. 77). Neuman likens the *chalan* (melodic movement) and *pakad* (melodic catchphrases) particular to each raga as paths within a 'neighbourhood' or 'aesthetic territory' (Neuman in Rahaim 2012, p. 77). Neuman describes how on the one hand learned musicians can break the rules of a raga, veering off the known paths, without breaking its essence if they know it well enough. On the other hand, after watching several performances by the same musician, he concludes experienced musicians also demonstrate recurrent ways of moving through a raga, or particular melodic paths they return to with accompanying physical gestures. Rahaim then moves on to an exploration of ways musicians relate to their bodies and the knowledge they have embodied, describing for example instances when they consult their body's muscle memory to check they are teaching a raga or melodic movement correctly. Finally, he situates all the above in relation to the *gharānā*s — the different lineages of musicking bodies (and their genealogies) through which the melodic frameworks, ways of moving and known paths of expressing or revealing ragas have evolved.

Rahaim's text brings work firmly rooted in the field of writing on Hindustani music into conversation with recent works that focus on gesture in music (Baily, 2006; Gritten and King, 2006; Godøy and Leman, 2010). He explains how Robert Hatten (2004) brings new relevance to the work of an overlooked early twentieth-century musicologist Ernst Kurth (1922) on musical motion. He describes Anthony Gritten's work as developing 'Kurth's esoteric theory into methods of musical analysis that take the gesture […] as a fundamental unit of analysis' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 33). Gritten recognises that musical gestures are 'cross-modal' and 'include non-sounding physical movements as well as those that produce sound' (Gritten, 2016, p. 3). He offers a vital perspective on what constitutes musical knowledge, mentioning interaction, agency and intention as key elements, which a sound-centring musicology overlooks. However, a preoccupation solely with musical gesture when looking at Hindustani music would risk flattening the rich and longstanding structures of knowledge within the art form itself. Rahaim is clearly aware of this, which is why his descriptions of students learning the gestures of their teachers are framed as only part of inhabiting the 'paramparic body' (Rahaim, 2012 p. 130).

As well as the study of musical gesture, *Musicking Bodies* draws on phenomenological narratives and embodiment. Rahaim explains that he draws 'special inspiration from the phenomenological tradition' (Rahaim 2012, p. 33) of authors such as Edmund Husserl (1969) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002 [1945]). Narratives on embodiment, action and somatic practices come from writers such as Thomas Csordas (1990), Katherine Young (2002), Helena Wulff (2006) and Marc Thioux (2008). However, he also ensures not to approach these narratives from an entirely Eurocentric perspective, citing for example Debabrata Sinha (1985) and Davesh Soneji (2012). The interdisciplinarity of *Musicking Bodies* (Rahaim, 2012) has influenced subsequent work on Hindustani music and on embodied musical knowledge in other traditions. It has been cited in more recent publications relating to embodied knowledge in Hindustani music, such as Katz's recent work. The work has also reached beyond Hindustani music, influencing articles on, for example, body movement in Okinawan Classical Music (Matt Gillan, 2013) and Balinese Gender Wayang (Ako Mashino, 2020). Rahaim has assembled relevant material from a broad range of disciplines to devise a coherent methodology to analyse Hindustani vocalists. His analysis has a concise framework to theorise the musicking body in Hindustani

music from multiple angles. Despite Rahaim's focus on the voice, his research therefore provides a solid framework with which to explore the embodied knowledge of the instrumental musical lineage of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

Nikki Moran's (2013) work observing the movements and gestures of performers of Hindustani music (Moran in Martin Clayton, Byron Dueck and Leante, 2013) builds on that of Rahaim. Her work focuses on social knowledge in performance. Rather than centring the 'content', she centres 'the mechanisms of musical communication that give music its dynamic social effect' (Moran in Clayton et. al, 2013, p. 41). Performers were observed and filmed to document and trace their movements, to examine the relationship between musical gesture and attentional 'looking' behaviour (Moran in Clayton et. al, 2013, p. 5). Moran identifies a key aspect of social musical knowledge as '[musicians'] concerns about the way that they attend to others during performance' (Moran in Clayton et. al, 2013, p. 44).

Moran plays sitar and Rahaim is a vocalist. However, Moran's (in Clayton et. al, 2013) and Rahaim's (2012) methods for examining and documenting combinations of social and kinetic musical knowledge involve observing other musicians, as opposed to interrogating their own practice. This does not negate the contribution of Rahaim's and Moran's research. Their work cultivates deeper understanding about the complex mesh of embodied musical knowledge underpinning Hindustani music beyond connoisseurs of the art form itself. Both authors take the general understanding of what constitutes musical knowing well beyond the realm of sounding. However, even though the perspectives of observed musicians are invited, Rahaim and Moran do not centre experience and meaning in Hindustani music from the autoethnographic perspective of a practitioner. While their observational modes of analysis can help to address the experience of gradually coming to know in the body, the process of archiving a living tradition through practice requires theoretical and methodological input from other areas of research.

2.3.2 Music cognition

The subject of musical knowing in the body is developing within the field of music cognition. Observations have been made about the deeply entwined relationship between the body's vestibular system, which takes care of spatial orientation,

coordinating movement and balance, and the auditory system, which processes what we sense through hearing. The ways in which the systems influence each other play a critical role in rhythm perception (Todd and Lee, 2015). This relationship is why 'movement evoked by a rhythmic auditory stimulus, such as moving the head, feet or hands, is intended to assist in the understanding of a complex sound' (Lezama-Espinosa and Hernandez-Montiel, 2020, p. 1). There is therefore a well-established understanding in music cognition studies that participating in musical activity involves the whole body.

Despite this understanding, there is a recurring problem in much of the literature on music cognition and psychology. The ontological framing of music tends not to be anywhere near as up to date as the scientific methods and conclusions. The Eurocentric notion of music as comprising only its sounding elements, or that music is just an auditory stimulus, persists (Peretz, 2006; Stewart and McDonald, 2008; Todd and Lee, 2015; Lezama-Espinosa and Hernandez-Montiel, 2020). There is an acknowledgement that 'some cultures have no separate term for music, including dance and music in the same category' (Peretz, 2006, p. 2–3). However, even here there is no reflection on the possibility that the author's culturally biased, normalised term 'music' may be the issue.

In the field of music studies, the differences between definitions of musicking in different traditions and communities have been embraced by progressive scholars as an opportunity to address universally what a hegemonic Eurocentric and sound-centric ontology of music overlooks (Small, 1998; Agawu, 2016; Blum, 2023). However, in music cognition studies these differences are often dismissed as cultural. There is insufficient reflection on the possibility that a sound-centric definition of music and a brain-centric perspective of cognition is universally limited and limiting. There is not enough of an acknowledgement that pitch perception is only one of many equally crucial elements of musical participation. Neither is there sufficient recognition that, globally speaking, the hegemonic definition of music as exclusively sound production and perception is a minority perspective (Small, 1998, Agawu, 2016). It does not appear to have occurred to many music cognition authors that perhaps the dismissed musico-choreographic African traditions convey a closer representation of what musical activity actually entails (Agawu, 2016). As a result, there is a lack of

clarity and lack of specificity of terms, for example 'musicality' and 'pitch perception' often become interchangeable. This can be seen even in the definition of the neurological condition in which people have difficulties to perceive pitch, as 'amusia' (McDonald and Stewart, 2008). A more accurate term for such a condition could be 'amelodia', although that too may have its problems. Until these studies on music cognition incorporate other aspects of musical activity, they ought to be redefined as studies on sounding cognition.

There is a turn in recent music cognition literature towards a remedy to the ontological drawback of earlier work. This turn relates much more closely to the musical ontology of my research and the somatic approaches, which are expanded upon below. Lezama-Espinosa and Hernandez-Montiel (2020) acknowledge that cognition takes place within dynamic systems. 'Cognition emerges from the coupling between the body, the Central Nervous System (CNS) and the environment, modifying one's perception of the environment' (Lezama-Espinosa and Hernandez-Montiel, 2020, p. 2). This relates to the adoption of what has become known as 'four E cognition' in music cognition studies (van der Schyff, Schiavio, Walton, Velardo, Chemero, 2018). This model states that music cognition is embedded, embodied, extended and enactive. The definitions of these terms follow below:

I. Embodied: cognition cannot be fully described in terms of abstract mental processes (i.e., in terms of representations). Rather, it must involve the entire body of the living system (brain and body).

II. Embedded: cognition is not an isolated event separated from the agent's ecological niche. Instead, it displays layers of co-determination with physical, social, and cultural aspects of the world.

III. Extended: cognition is often offloaded into biological beings and non-biological devices to serve a variety of functions that would be impossible (or too difficult) to be achieved by only relying on the agent's own mental processes.

IV Enactive: cognition is conceived of as the set of meaningful relationships determined by an adaptive two-way exchange between the biological and

phenomenological complexity of living creatures and the environments they inhabit and actively shape.

Schiavio and van der Schiff (2018, p. 2)

This framing of cognition aligns with an ontology of musical knowledge broken into sounding, kinetic, social, linguistic, temporal, spatial and mechanical elements, which inform and interlink with one another. This 'four E' model also reaffirms the importance of body-centred approaches to musical learning. Schiavio and van der Schyff discuss the 'brain-body-world' system (2018, p. 4), which resonates closely with Daboo's (2010) adoption of the term 'bodymind'. A brain-body-world system makes it much easier to perceive transference and development of musical knowledge across more than just the sounding domain.

'Four E' cognition makes for a very effective justification for this research, in which the body and bodies are identified as the key to archiving a musical tradition, with a view to sustainability over preservation. However, this work on music cognition really is a starting a point. It is the 'given that', which inspires the premise of my research. 'Separating brain and body, perception and action, experience and [behaviour], may in fact be a largely artificial move that offers only limited accounts of what mental life really entails' (van der Schyff et al, 2018, p. 5). That being the case, it would make sense to research embodied knowledge of a musical tradition using a more body-centred approach. For the same reason, as explained above in relation to Moran's work (in Clayton et. al 2013), there is no use adopting in my research a methodology where experience and transference of musical knowledge is externally measured as it would be in a cognition study. The aim of this research is to examine embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana through practice. Rather than measuring biological processes, this research aims to explore the experience in the body. The language and perspectives of experience in the body are most developed in somatic practices, dance studies and related studies of embodiment.

2.3.3 Somatic perspectives
Awareness of and attending to the body is not new in music studies. There is plenty of literature that recognises the extent to which musical traditions can be understood through embodied practice (Kippen, 1988; Baily, 2006; Gritten and King, 2006; Godøy

and Leman, 2010; Walker, 2014a). However, it is surprising how little work in the field of music studies adopts language and perspectives that have developed in somatic and choreographic studies oriented around dance. This project has built on analytical work that draws more from dance studies for observations of the ways musicians' bodies move (Rahaim, 2012; Broughton and Davidson, 2014; Clayton, et al. 2019; Varwig, 2023). It also explores intention of movement and ways the body senses, in motion (Formenti et. al, 2014; Hunter, 2021; Stepputat and Diettrich, 2021).

Unlike much of the music cognition and ethnomusicological work above, Vicky Hunter (2021) offers a way of researching embodied practice 'through first-person experience as opposed to encountering or imagining a site from afar — through description or abstracted visual representation, or the remote lens of a webcam or computer screen' (Hunter, 2021, p. 7). She explores 'environment-anatomy synergies and material entanglements as a means of investigating body-site relationships' (Hunter, 2021, p. 6). This approach illustrates the way bodily knowing and coming to know is embedded in wider systems, extended beyond the body itself and enactive in the sense that these wider systems and the body affect each other mutually.

Hunter's (2021) research extends beyond exploring material entanglements to generate 'body-based' data. She explains that her work 'engages researchers with the intellect, felt sensibility, and a nuanced orientation to space, place and its material entities' (Hunter, 2021, p. 10). This encapsulates what my research seeks to explore in the study of the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Of course, studying the way in which the body performs repertoire and the performance style is of critical importance, as are the ways of sensing surroundings, movement, and intention.

Hunter's choreographic enquiry (Hunter, 2021) relates to Csordas's (1993) definition of 'somatic modes of attention', which are 'culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others' (Csordas, 1993, p.138). However, the 'others' in Csordas' definition are implied to be other people, while Hunter's 'others' extend to space, place and its material entities (Hunter, 2021, p.10). What terms such as choreographic enquiry, somatic modes of attention, somatic attunement (Varwig 2023), and somatic perspectives (Whatley,

Brown, Alexander, 2015) share, is approaching research in ways that centre attention to bodily movement and sensation in practice. Such approaches and the findings resulting from their application can be broadly defined as somatics.

Somatics is a mature and rich interdisciplinary field, the history and perspectives of which are summarised by Martha Eddy (2009) and Christina Kapadocha (2021). Eddy (2009) explains that in the twentieth century the 'gradual shift towards theoretical support for experiential learning and sensory research occurred in parts of the academic and scholarly culture' (Eddy, 2009, p. 6). Kapadocha states that this shift enabled researchers to 'identify various interrelations: between one's body and mind, one's bodymind and their environments, including other ever-changing moving bodies, social conditions and material objects' (Kapadocha, 2021, p. 3).

Eddy breaks the 'somatic world' into three domains, 'somatic psychology, somatic bodywork, and somatic movement' (2009, p. 7). The development of the latter, somatic movement, Eddy suggests has been largely the domain of dance professionals. It 'involves listening to the body and responding to [its] sensations by consciously altering movement habits and movement choices' (*ibid*.). The relevance of somatics to this practice-led music research can be found in Sondra Fraleigh's (2021) definition. She explains that somatics is both about improvement of skills and performance but also 'a first-person relational phenomenon', which 'engages perceptual activities that encourage participants to receive and interpret sensory information as they interact with others and the environing world' (Fraleigh in Kapadocha 2021, p. 37). The key here is that somatics is connected to practice and therefore allows a first-person account of practising to fill the gaps left by observational approaches to knowing and coming to know a musical style or tradition.

Phillip Zarrilli's (2011) work brings a South Asian perspective to somatics. He explains that 'in South Asian traditions there is a general cultural assumption that long-term practice of psychophysical disciplines leads to discoveries' (Zarrilli, 2011, p. 254). He breaks down the idea of 'possessing complete knowledge of the body' in South Asian systems into three related 'bodies of practice'. These are: '1. the fluid body of humours and saps; 2. the body composed of bones and muscles (and for the martial arts practitioner the vulnerable vital junctures or spots of the body); 3. the subtle,

interior body' (Zarrilli, 2011, p. 250). The latter of the three relates especially to practice as opposed to bodily disposition and physicality. He relates the subtle interior body to the Sanskrit terms *cittam* and *mana*, which, when applied to embodied practice, are considered to mean consciousness, comprising 'awareness, perception, or the attunement/direction of one's attention-in-action' (Zarrilli, 2011, p. 254). He explains that 'unlike the term *buddhi* (rational mind), the use of *mana* or *cittam* assumes that the 'mental 'element engaged in doing a psychophysical practice is not rational thought 'in the head', but an operation of the mind/awareness/consciousness' in the body (*ibid*.). Zarrilli's work illustrates therefore that somatic understandings of practice and of being in the world are not recent outside Eurocentric academia.

Although not explicitly stated like Varwig (2023), Margaret E. Walker (2014a; 2014b) employs somatic methods for exploring contested historical threads of a South Asian performance tradition. She presents a compelling historicisation of Kathak dance and the often overlooked, hereditary performing women whose knowledge and practices shaped the art form. Elements of this performance tradition entangle intimately with the practice and wider history of Hindustani music. Walker's research therefore offers both thematic and methodological insight to this project.

Walker explains the ways in which her training in the tradition offered 'kinaesthetic knowledge [which] informed [her] bibliographic and ethnographic research' (Walker, 2014b, p.6). Her 'embodied understanding' influenced approaches to interviews with other dancers. Her 'physical insight' during observations of performers trained by past masters 'opened up a physical archive of past practice preserved in contemporary presentation' (Walker, 2014b, p.6–7). Her body, trained to be able to sense, attend to and enact the kinetic knowledge of the tradition, allowed her to engage with the bodies of other practitioners as crucial archival sources. Her writing is therefore also an act of translation, communicating her own embodied understanding in a new mode — a process relevant to Mary Wardle's (2022) research, explored further below. There are resonances here with my own methodology (presented in Chapter 3). However, Walker uses her body 'as apparatus' (Hunter, 2021, p.50) to understand, translate and present a new, thorough historicisation of practice, whereas my body is used as apparatus to explore practice in the present, assisting in keeping the living archive alive.

In Sreenath Nair's (2015) definition of embodied practice in Indian performance studies, the body is described as 'an instrument in the hand of the performer' (Nair, 2015, p.2). Nair explains that knowledge is transmitted through 'mastery of the practice of the body', which requires the performer to consciously disengage from the body's micro movements, trusting that the body will remember. At the same time, the performer must remain acutely engaged with the overall process of performance and the body's 'motion trajectories and mental manoeuvres' (Nair, 2015, p.2). Nair's definition resonates with the processes of musical knowing in the body explored in this thesis and expanded upon in Chapter 3. Methodology, Chapter 4. Embodied experience, and Chapter 5. Repertoire.

Nair's (2015) use of the word 'mastery' in his definition of embodied practice requires further interrogation. Julietta Singh (2017) critiques mastery, stating that 'there is an intimate link between the mastery enacted through colonization and other forms of mastery' (Singh, 2017, p.9). She explains that to be a master of an art form or tradition is 'widely understood to be laudable. Yet as a pursuit, mastery invariably and relentlessly reaches toward the indiscriminate control over [an 'other'] — whether human or inhuman, animate or inanimate' (Singh, 2017, p.10). Perhaps her critique of mastery is why Deschênes' (2018) aim of 'mastering a music of which one is not native' is so troubling. This framing of coming to know musical knowledge turns a process of potential dialogic entanglement and mutual enrichment into a process of domination. This is a trend within Ethnomusicology, which is critiqued further in Chapter 3.

Returning to Nair's (2015) use of 'mastery', which is not so simple, as it is the performer's own body he suggests is being mastered. Mastery over one's own body undeniably suggests a dynamic of dominion and therefore falls within the scope of Singh's (2017) critique. However, for one's own body to be considered an 'other' that is dominated, reinforces the cartesian duality between body and mind, which much of the literature informing this project seeks to challenge (Csordas, 1993; Daboo 2010; Ingold, 2011; Rahaim, 2012; Formant et al., 2014; Walker, 2014a; Hunter 2021; Varwig 2023).

Mastery in the context of Nair's (2015) embodied practice is less a term for dominion and more a term meaning skilled, well-practised, and highly refined. It suggests a process of choosing to train one's body in the service of a particular purpose — in his case, and mine, a performance tradition. The tension between mastery as an inherently dominating force and as a term for being highly skilled is explored by Singh (2017, p.92). However, her assertion that 'skill can never be detached from the relations of power that make it possible' (*ibid*.), and by implication deserving of suspicion or rejection, is potentially not a liberatory conclusion to draw from this tension. As musicians, as with all performers, there are not only collective identities, families and communities built out of the shared pursuit of refined performance skill, but profound joy from training one's own body in service of musical knowledge.

In an attempt to give language to that joy in forming and refining of singular and collective musical bodies, without conjuring a dynamic of dominion, I have adopted the term, 'becoming an exponent'. My research is committed to forming redistributive futures. However, in abandoning mastery in relation to practice — especially in the context of musical skill and performing in the service of musical knowledge — there is a risk of removing potential sources of joy, community, and enchantment from those futures. There is a key differentiation between the mastery Singh (2017) rightly critiques and a highly refined practice that has accumulated knowledge over generations. The mastery relating to the latter is much closer, paradoxically, to devotional yielding.[6] Nair's (2015) practice of the body, as with the practices of exponents of the *gharānā*, is an act of devotion to a set of social, kinetic and aesthetic principles and directions.[7] The body in this context — training and playing — is in a state of constantly becoming. The objective is never to have mastered, but to know more intimately. As the saying goes, the day you have mastered the art form is the day you stop playing.

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[6] This sense of yielding is what is absent from Deschênes' (2018) narrative, preoccupied with mastery over a musical tradition.

[7] The devotional aspect of the tradition, and therefore my practice, is why I feel no contradiction between my politics and embracing terms relating to mastery, referring to musical masters and luminaries, and using honorific terms such as ustad. Implicit in these terms is a recognition of the trajectory of the knowledge these musicians carry. Luminary is particularly evocative of this — past musicians who were illuminated by the knowledge they carried. My acknowledgment of their status reflects my own yielding to something bigger than myself and at healthy distance from the lure of individualism.

<u>2.4 Translating musical knowledge</u>

My research is not only about learning the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana on one instrument, but also about translating it to another. In this way, my approach resonates with Timothy Rice's (1994) six-part framework for presenting and coming to know the musical knowledge of Bulgarian folk music traditions, through a focus on the practices of one particular family. The first stage is encountering the tradition, followed by acquiring the tradition, then living the tradition, observing the ways in which the tradition changes, continuing the tradition, and finally interpreting the tradition (Rice, 1994, p. vii–ix). The processes of learning the embodied knowledge of the *gharānā* on sitar, explored in Chapter 3, resonate with the first five parts of Rice's framework. Translating the knowledge to cello aligns with the sixth part: interpreting the tradition.

Rice appeals to approaching music 'as experience' and is critical of the dominant tendency in Eurocentric music studies to reduce musical knowledge and experience to an aesthetic object (Rice, 1994, p.307). Furthermore, Rice emphasises the importance of reflexive research practices in ethnomusicology, while still centring the voices and perspectives of his research participants and interlocuters. He does not shy away from describing his own senses and sensation as key variables in his analysis, which supports his powerful appeal to allowing musical knowledge to fill the soul. However, Rice also does not depart significantly from dominant tendencies in Eurocentric music research at the time this work was written, presenting the researcher mostly as a passive experiencer.

Rice's conclusion finishes with a reflection on the ability of the musical tradition he has studied to enrich his own experience in the world (Rice (1994, p.309). However, possibly as a result of a preoccupation with 'cultural insiders' and 'outsiders' (Rice, p.88, 1994), Rice stops short of viewing himself, the researcher, as a vector for the tradition, entangled in the tapestry of musical knowledge he is studying. Interpretation does not reach as far as the ways in which the tradition is carried forwards in the practices of the researcher. This is where Rice's research differs from mine. Through practice-led research, I am positioning myself as an active agent in the continuation of the knowledge and practices of the *gharānā*. Translating from sitar to cello is part

of that process. It is therefore necessary to interrogate existing perspectives on and approaches to translation in music studies.

Some helpful perspectives on music and translation are offered in *Music, Text and Translation,* edited by Helen Julia Minors (2014). She highlights that a performer realising the instructions of a score in a musical performance is an act of translation that 'exists beyond semantic language' (Minors, 2014, p. xx). Minors (2014) provokes 'if music can translate in its own terms, what are these terms and how does its sense (and means) transfer and cross from one sensory domain to another?' (*ibid*.). Such considerations are key to exploring what ways of moving and ways of sounding are retained as the musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is translated from sarod to sitar to cello.

Minors' (2014) work, however, does little to address wider problems with translation as a process, which Timothy Ingold (1993) critiques. Ingold (1993) explains that translation is bound to a view of 'a world of humanity already parcelled up into discrete cultures, each having a distinctive essence' (Ingold, 1993, p. 229). He describes this as a world 'divided' by a 'western' gaze (Ingold, 1993, p. 230). Minors actually reinforces this western gaze when she repeats problematic premises such as 'music as a universal language' (Minors, 2014, p. xx), and dichotomies constructed between 'Western and non-Western musics' (Minors, 2014, p. xxii). This reinforces Eurocentric aesthetic framings of musical knowledge — perceiving all musical knowledge of all musical traditions as equivalent to text, implying it only constitutes differing ways of sounding. This framing supports the basis of Ingold's (1993) critique of anthropological narratives, which claim to situate all 'other' cultures in the world together, while elevating a single 'western' culture as the arbiter of true objectivity. Ingold (1993) illustrates this with an image of the 'western' observer on a mountain looking down at (or on) everybody else. He explains 'whereas non-western cultures are always somewhere, the West is apparently nowhere, or everywhere' (1993, p. 214).

The paradoxical presence and absence of the 'west' can be found throughout *Music, Text and Translation* (Minors, 2014), in which much of the subject matter belongs to various categories of 'western' musical traditions. It is only challenged when

ethnomusicologist, Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg (2014), reminds the reader that 'knowledge or definitions of music are by no means universally true, a fact which still is not often addressed or recognized in much Eurocentric scholarship' (in Minors, 2014, p. 38). Despite this reminder, such Eurocentricity persists in Minors' (2014) work on music and translation, as demonstrated in her recent chapter, 'Translations Between Music and Dance' (Minors in Monica Boria et al., 2020). While there is at least some recognition of the role of gesture as a key musical element, music is once more established mainly as a sounding text. The analysis of the translation of music into dance is predominantly an analysis of the way the poetics and aesthetics of the sound of a Debussy ballet score relates to dance movements — the movements of performing musicians are not mentioned. This is a sound object-focused framing of music within translation studies. It has little useful application to my research concerned with translating embodied musical knowledge of a style within the Hindustani music tradition.

Like the field of music cognition, the Eurocentric ontological framing of music appears to be widespread. Recent publications such as *Music and Translation* (Lucile Desblache, 2019) features a somewhat broader range of subject matter than *Music, Text and Translation* (Minors, 2014) and there is deeper reflection on what Daboo describes as 'sociocultural values [and] surrounding geographic and cultural landscapes' (2010, p. 40) throughout the chapters. However, there is still a continuing tendency to examine music solely as an 'object' (Yelding, 2016), rather than 'a process and event' (Daboo, 2010, p. 40.). This shows there are still problems with the conceptual and ontological framing of music within translation studies that need to be overcome. As a result, to develop an understanding of translation relevant to an examination of the transmission of embodied musical knowledge through generations and between instruments of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, it is necessary to draw from areas of translation studies where the focus is not music.

Klaus Kaindl's (2020) work on multimodal translation offers a helpful conceptual framework for translating between instruments. He explains that 'mode, medium, and genre are three building blocks that form the basis for a translation-theoretical approach that serves to overcome the language-centredness of translation studies' (Kaindl, 2020, p. 57). In relation to my research and practice, the genre is Hindustani

music, the medium is the instrumental style of the *gharānā*, the mode is Ustadji's sarod, or my sitar or cello. This helps to examine what is retained and what changes in the process of translation. The meaning and semiotics of genre and medium should stay the same — I am bringing the cello into the medium of the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, of the genre of Hindustani music. The transfer is therefore only between modes. However, it is not quite as simple as that. Kaindl (2020) explains:

> In translation, a multimodal whole is also transferred into another temporal, social, and cultural context. Assuming that the meaning of modes always depends on the specific context of use, such a transfer also means change, since the recipients and with them the social and cultural parameters change.
>
> Kaindl (2020, p. 59)

In that sense, it is cello playing that is also being translated, as it is modified to align with the broader parameters of Hindustani music. This has to be done in order to 'ensure there are enough similarities between modes for them to be comparable' (Kaindl, 20202, p. 55).

The subject of embodiment and translation has been presented in recent work by Mary Wardle (2022). She explores 'meaning […] grounded in mental representations of perception, emotion and, crucially, movement', through the way dancers work with dance notation (Wardle, 2022, p. 32). She draws a parallel between Katherine Batchelor's (2018) interrogation of how much an interpreter should draw on non-verbal meaning and the way ballet dancers in a company traditionally handed down choreographies 'from one cohort of dancers to the next' (Wardle, 2022, p. 36). Wardle describes the way 'idiosyncratic interpretation of some répétiteurs' has been seen as a 'drawback' to the 'text' of the choreography (Wardle, 2022, p. 36). She explains that dance notation has been advocated for as a way of removing the residue of these bodies' 'highly subjective interpretations' and distinctive ways of moving (Wardle, 2022, p. 36). In this context the need to be true to the 'text', or perhaps, dance object, of the choreographer appears to have greater importance than choreographies evolving through the idiosyncrasies of the bodies that have carried and performed them.

Wardle's work explores the process of translating embodied knowledge from one medium to another, movement to score or score to movement. However, the content of this work does not entirely align with my research. The aim of my research is to retain the bodily idiosyncrasies in the process of learning musical knowledge from Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan. This is because it is precisely the 'residue' of performers bodies (Wardle, 2022) that defines the different 'paramparic' bodies of different *gharānā*s and their related styles (Rahaim, 2012). Rahaim (2012) explains how performers learn the gestures of their gurus and then, with time, build on or abandon certain elements to create their own style, which then passes on to their students. That's how a *gharānā* evolves, like a palimpsest. Therefore, learning the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and translating it between modes can be understood as taking on and responding to the residual idiosyncrasies and 'bodily intelligence' (Wardle, 2022, p. 39) of the *gharānā*'s exponents, as opposed to bypassing them.

Ingold's concepts and approaches to anthropology offer a helpful framework for exploring this process of translation. His work has already been recognised as transformative in the field of translation studies by Sue-Ann Harding. In the abstract of a recent paper, Harding describes how Ingold has 'developed powerful ideas about ethical ways of being in the world [that are] centred on "becoming knowledgeable" through the continuous practice of "wayfaring", or "lineal movement along paths of travel"' (2021, p. 351). She states that Ingold's reconfiguring of the '*act* of translation [to the] *art* of translation [offers] "the possibility of new beginnings"' (Harding, 2021, p. 354, emphasis added). This reconfiguring of the *act* of translation to the *art* of translation aligns with the process of learning to embody and sustain the knowledge of a *gharānā*. The *act* of translation connotes a direct reproduction of knowledge and meaning, where residual idiosyncrasies and subjective interpretations may be viewed as a potential 'drawback' (Wardle, 2022). The *art* of translation could be seen more as the process described by Rahaim (2012). Students develop their 'paramparic body' through not merely replicating the knowledge of their gurus but integrating that knowledge with their own experiences and sensibilities, adapting it and transmitting it (Rahaim, 2012, p. 130). For my practice and research that includes learning to express the knowledge of the *gharānā* on both sitar and cello.

The application of Ingold's perspective to the translation of the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana between the modes of sitar and cello playing connects my research to the new materialism to which Ingold's work has been an influence. Hunter (2021) explains that 'new materialist thinking extends discussions of body-world relations beyond phenomenological realms' (Hunter, 2021, p. 17). She explains that phenomenological perspectives can reduce objects, beings, or happenings to 'singular definable entities' (*ibid.*). New materialism is more concerned with 'ontological and epistemological [enquiry] through notions of intra-action and performativity' (*ibid.)*. This understanding of entanglement can be seen in Ingold's (2011) concept of 'lines' and 'meshwork'. Depicting an organism as a wavy line with an arrow on one end, he explains:

> There is no inside or outside, and no boundary separating the two domains. Rather there is a trail of movement or growth. Every such trail discloses a relation. [It is] a trail along which life is lived. Neither beginning here and ending there, nor vice versa, the trail winds through or amidst like the root of a plant or a stream between its banks. Each such trail is but one strand in a tissue of trails that together comprise the texture of the lifeworld. This texture is what I mean when I speak of organisms being constituted within a relational field. It is a field not of interconnected points but of interwoven lines; not a network but a meshwork
>
> Ingold (2011, p. 69)

The lives of organisms are not separated from each other, or static, but are constantly evolving. They are not constrained by isolated cultural networks that form through meetings but instead form a 'meshwork' through becoming entangled with the trajectories and growth of other organisms. He reflects on this and adds that actually a single line oversimplifies the 'lives of organisms [which] generally extend along not one but multiple trails, issuing from a source' (Ingold, 2011, p. 70).

Harding suggests that this idea above, of enmeshed trails, relates to translation (2021). Perhaps then translation is the art of making new points of rebirth, between and along particular threads. Imagine an *ustad* or guru as a source — likened by Ingold to a 'knot' (*ibid*.), from which a *gharānā* emanates as threads of musical knowledge. These threads comprise, for example, ways of playing, socio-aesthetic

values, ways of moving, and the residual idiosyncrasies of prior sources from which the threads have come. A student learning and translating such a thread of knowledge is connecting that thread with their own thread of musical knowledge. The trajectory of the student's thread will become a trajectory of the *gharānā*, which weaves into an evolving tapestry of musical knowledge, connecting histories and futures across continents. Approaching the body as a musical archive is identifying and tracing the threads of knowledge that run through that body and their points of entanglement in the meshwork.

Ingold's (2011) imagining of lines in a meshwork encapsulates the way threads of knowledge run through the musicking body. His conceptualising of tool use can be applied to multimodal translation. For example, his explanation of the relationship between the body, a tool and the world both the body and the tool inhabit:

> To describe a thing as a tool is to place it in relation to other things within a field of activity in which it can exert a certain effect, [positioning it] within the context of a story […] Every use of a tool, in short, is a remembering of how to use it, which at once picks up the strands of past practice and carries them forward in current contexts. The skilled practitioner is like an accomplished storyteller whose tales are told in the practice of his craft rather than in words.
>
> Ingold (2011. p. 56–57)

This accurately summarises the relationship between the instrumental mode and a musician. The mode is the tool use through which the story is told — sarod playing, sitar playing or cello playing. The medium is the story, the practice. Strands of past practice are equivalent to threads of musical knowledge 'carried forwards' in a meshwork of the musician's musical life. The instrument has the function of awakening or channelling such threads. Ingold (2011) describes this relationship as asymmetrical. He illustrates this with a description of the way 'the hand can bring itself into use, and in its practised movements can tell the story of its own life' (Ingold, 2011, p. 56). However, the instrument 'relies on the hand for its story to be told [or, more generally] extrasomatic tools have biographies, the body is both biographer and auto biographer' (Ingold, 2011, p. 57). This encapsulates the idea of the body as the musical archive. The body is the biographer and auto biographer of a medium of

musical practice, formed by threads of musical knowledge. These threads are expressed and carried forwards through an instrument, a mode of playing. At the core of my research is the idea that once the body has learned to tell these biographies and autobiographies through one mode — sitar playing, it should be able to through another related mode — cello playing. The key is to first create a context and conditions in which the body knows, and the modes relate.

2.5 Conclusion

This research spans and draws from multiple fields. It draws from music cognition, somatic and choreographic practices to approach the body, as opposed to recordings and notation, as the key site of archiving musical knowledge. Examining in practice the process of translation between sarod, sitar and cello draws from translation studies and phenomenological perspectives — Ingold's (2011) dwelling perspective in particular,. The process of exploring a musical tradition not only through practice on one instrument but translating to another expands on existing literature in the fields of ethnomusicology and music studies more broadly. The musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana documented in practice and throughout this thesis builds on existing documented literature on the *gharānā* and the wider field of Hindustani music.

This work does not sit purely in the field of ethnomusicology, because it is as much about bringing recent reflexive approaches and reconfigured ontological narratives from ethnomusicology (and other fields) to music practice. The way practice and theory overlap, especially in relation to translation as part of coming to know a musical tradition, offers new ways of working in ethnomusicology. However, really differentiating between what is music practice and what is ethnomusicology in my research is beside the point. The boundaries between these fields should be so porous that they are barely noticeable, if they have to exist all. It is preferable to situate this work in a broad field of music studies, '[extending] beyond creating a "melting pot" or "multicultural" approach [to including] diverse methodologies [and] topics' (Morrison, 2019, p. 728). Interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary studies of music more effectively attend to the layers of knowledge, experience, identities and histories that make up any musical space, culture or tradition. Such interdisciplinary approaches enable the study of music to function as a lens through which to examine

what Laura Formenti, Linden West and Marianne Horsdal call 'embodied narratives', which 'make and expand connections, and a consciousness of how everything interconnects, beyond an overly individualised, disembodied cognition' (2014, p. 21).

Chapter 3. Methodology — learning to inhabit as a method of archiving

This chapter presents the methods with which I have studied the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and explored its embodied knowledge through practice. It begins with a critique of learning to perform and current ethnographic methods in ethnomusicology, offering a reframing of John Baily's (2001) learning to perform as learning to inhabit a musical style or tradition. The ways in which my approach to learning to inhabit incorporates reflexive and body centred approaches to studying a musical tradition are then explored. An interrogation of positionality, informed by a genealogical perspective (Katz, 2017), follows. The final section of the methodology presents the cyclical process through which I have learned to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in practice.

3.1 Rationale and explanation of learning to inhabit

The central approach to this practice-led research is rooted in John Baily's work on 'learning to perform' (Baily, 2001). Baily's approach involves undergoing tuition on an instrument from one or more competent practitioners of a musical tradition, following the tradition's mode of pedagogy. The acquired knowledge of performance technique and aesthetic knowledge of the tradition is then analysed and presented in papers, presentations and performances. Baily explains that it is only through learning musical action that an 'operational 'understanding of music 'from the inside' can be acquired (Baily, 2001, p. 94).

Learning to understand music from the inside has multiple interpretations, each relevant to this process. It can be interpreted socially, as coming to know a tradition from the perspective of an insider. It can be interpreted aesthetically, as coming to know the inner workings of the sounding elements of a tradition, how to appreciate them and how to recreate them. It can also be interpreted as learning an internal sense of intention, gesture, aesthetic preferences and musical imagination. Baily describes what is learned from the inside as 'what you have to know' (Baily, 2001, p. 94). Jeff Todd Titon (1995) describes this as 'experientially based musical knowledge' (1995, p. 287), which could equally be termed embodied musical knowledge.

Learning to perform as a research method that is 'part of the process of data collection and analysis' (Baily, 2001, p. 93) raises questions about ethics and extractive power

dynamics within ethnomusicology. Firstly, by focusing on the moment of performance there is an implicit elevation of the presentational aspect over other aspects of engaging with the musical knowledge of the tradition. Secondly, there is a risk of reinforcing extractive dynamics of ethnomusicological fieldwork.

Kofi Agawu (2016) explains the process whereby a scholar from the metropolis acquires musical knowledge from a tradition they have selected, often in a location or with a group of people that have experienced colonisation or marginalisation. The scholar then 'packs bags, travels to the field, spends a year or two in the field (depending on the grant)' (Agawu 2016, p. 41). The ethnomusicologist brings the knowledge they have acquired, or an account of that knowledge, back to the metropolis and, after presenting their academic analysis, receives accolade as an expert on the tradition in question.

The position of the ethnomusicologist 'expert' in the music discourse of the metropolis tends to eclipse the teachers and practitioners from the tradition in question, who are relegated to the position of informant. Moreover, the embodied and orally transmitted knowledge of the tradition in question only tends to acquire value 'if it can be framed as sponsored, as intentionally acquired within a circumscribed period, paid for by a recognised body' (Agawu, 2016, p. 42). Barnor Hesse explains such a process as 'the codified organization of knowledges […] based on the adjudication and valorization of Europeanness and the debasement and appropriation of non-Europeanness' (Hesse, 2007 p. 656). This forms part of his wider critique of ethnography conducted by scholars from metropolises of the Global North whereby '"Europeanness" is the basis of ethnography and "non-Europeanness" is […] the condition for being "ethnographed"' (*Ibid.*). Learning to perform by Baily's definition falls within this critique and could be considered acquiring knowledge of a musical tradition to re-present it in the academy of the metropolis.

The extractive dynamic of ethnomusicological fieldwork outlined above does not only raise questions on ethical and moral grounds, which could be dismissed by those opposed to redistributive academic methods as ideologically biased. There are many instances relating to Hindustani music where the methods, subjective choices, omissions, oversights, representations and misrepresentations by Western scholars

have caused further confusion, as opposed to sustaining knowledge or enabling further understanding. Such instances have been critiqued by other scholars such as Allyn Miner (1989) and Katherine Schofield (2021a). Western scholars have also been criticised by master musicians such as Irfan Muhammad Khan. He explained that a number of Western scholars in the twentieth century studied or learned from the most easily accessible musicians, who were not necessarily the most knowledgeable, and then published or presented their findings as authoritative sources on the art form (Khan, personal communication, 27 January 2023). These scholars were not sufficiently critical of the music institutions and prevailing social politics in India that granted easier access to the musicians at the centre of their studies. As Max Katz (2017) explains, this was one of the contributing factors to the marginalisation of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. The biases and oversights of Western scholars' ethnographies deprived audiences and student practitioners of the authoritative knowledge and repertoire of learned musicians, such as those of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

Baily acknowledges his own position in the Afghan musical traditions in which he became a participant. He recognises that his practice as a musician and music researcher extends far beyond just presenting papers and performances. Baily states:

> The person who uses learning to perform as a research technique is unlikely to stop once fieldwork is over. On the contrary, you tend to take on the music as your own. After twenty years of playing Afghan music, with many private and public performances in Europe and the USA, Veronica Doubleday and I have become 'Afghan musicians', accepted as such by the various Afghan communities with whom we have been in contact.
>
> Baily, 2001, p. 96

This describes the impact on Baily of learning a sense of musical being from Afghan musicians. The researcher becomes a vector for the musical knowledge of the tradition. The trajectories of both the tradition and the researcher are forever changed as a result of this process. This extends beyond merely acquiring musical technique and being able to give performances. Baily acknowledges this, stating that other key outcomes of learning to perform include a deeper understanding of musicality, musical cognition and pedagogy, as well as having a role, status and identity within a

community (Baily, 2001, p. 94–95). This is not just a process of learning to *perform*, but developing a sense of being (Ingold, 2002 p. 114) within a tradition and being in the world as an exponent of that tradition. This is a process of learning to *inhabit* a musical tradition. Therefore, learning to perform should be reframed as learning to inhabit. This framing would avoid the potential pitfalls of learning to perform that risk privileging only the musical knowledge of a tradition that can be replicated in, often Eurocentric, presentational modes.

Reframing learning to perform as learning to inhabit was initially a way of acknowledging the overall process by which Baily came to know and dwell within the Afghan music traditions to which he dedicated much of his research. However, learning to inhabit also addresses Bruno Nettl's interrogation of insiders and outsiders when learning 'music of other cultures' (2015, p. 157). The issue with Nettl's perspective and much work in ethnomusicology is the 'culture-bound' view of the world, for which Tim Ingold criticises the fields of translation and anthropology (Ingold, 1993, p. 213). Ingold writes, '[Anthropology has] divided the world, through an operation of inversion [and] we are now left with pieces that have to be connected together again through translation' (Ingold, 1993, p. 230).

Similarly, a culture-bound ethnomusicology perpetuates the process of inversion — 'carrying across' the translated knowledge of one defined culture to another (Ingold, 1993, p. 217). Ingold's critique is the basis for only referring to 'traditions', as opposed to 'culture', throughout this research. A tradition is more porous, it is action-oriented, a way of doing and participating, governed by particular rituals and principles. With culture comes the preoccupation of being on the inside or the outside of contested determining boundaries. With tradition, the preoccupation becomes the extent, and perhaps the effectiveness, of participation through action. Learning to inhabit is not a process of learning to be in or of another culture. It is a self-aware process of attending to other practitioners, systems of knowledge, governing values, and 'acts of ceremony' of a tradition (Ingold, 2002 p. 114).

Learning to inhabit could be defined as learning 'a special kind of consciousness arising from what, using terms from phenomenology, would be called musical-being-in-the-world' (Titon, 1995, p. 295). This relates to Ingold's (2002) writing on his

'dwelling perspective'. He writes, 'it is in dwelling upon the land — in the senses both of inhabiting it and of sustained focal attention towards its ancestral essence in acts of ceremony — that people forge their sense of being' (Ingold, 2002 p. 114). A sense of understanding, purpose, belonging, identity and community comes from first inhabiting a space and then sustaining acts of ceremony within it. This resonates with Steven Feld's account of a moment of 'inhabiting [an] aesthetic reality' through the act of ceremony of playing with Kaluli musicians (Feld, 2012 [1989], p. 237). However, it goes beyond Feld's experience of an important moment that makes up part of a musician's 'musical field' (Toynbee, 2000).

Continuing with Jason Toynbee's (2000) application of Bourdieu's (1984, 1992) habitus and field to a musical context, learning to inhabit is about reshaping the habitus of a musician. That is, the musician's disposition and way of musical knowing, which interacts with musical fields and the wider world. This disposition aligns with Philip Zarrilli's interpretation of *bhava* and *rasa* combining in South Indian Kathakali dance traditions (2000, p. 88). However, his translation of *bhava* as a 'state of being' and *rasa* meaning taste and sensation does not wholly align with more orthodox translations, where *bhava* means emotion (especially an artist's inner emotion) and *rasa* means emotional essence that is performed and received (Schofield 2021b). That said, a generous interpretation of Zarrilli's translation of *bhava*, could be '*emotional* state of being'. A crucial part of learning to inhabit a musical tradition and practice is about learning the emotional and social state of being, which then determines taste and sensation, allowing more effective communication and reception of the emotional essence of a tradition's musical knowledge. Learning to inhabit is therefore an approach that allows artists and researchers to describe the process of situating their lived practice as it evolves within a tradition, whereas learning to perform connotes producing research outputs about other or othered traditions.

In practice, learning to inhabit is not limited to learning musical structure and performance, but learning how to operate in the wider social world of a particular musical tradition (Titon, 1995, p. 295). It is a reflexive process, which aims to establish what Donna Haraway describes as, 'partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology' (1988, p. 584). This is a process of developing an

'intersubjective and dialogic understanding' of a musical tradition (Titon, 1995, p. 290) through forming long-term, meaningful relationships with competent practitioners. It is a process of becoming an exponent, which acknowledges the researcher musician and the informing musician as 'being constituted within a relational field' (Ingold, 2011, p. 69). The entanglement of both parties reconstitutes the meshwork of their respective practices and the tradition in question.

Ethnography is used in learning to inhabit to examine, explore and respond to the knowledge and practice of existing practitioners. Learning to inhabit also requires auto-ethnography to examine situated experience. New ways of knowing are identified and generated through creative exploration, as the researcher's existing practice entwines with the musical tradition and its practitioners. Attention is directed towards the situated action and multi-textured embodied experience of learning within a musical tradition. Attention is then directed towards the ways in which this experience reshapes the musician's existing practice. This in turn feeds back to and affects the dynamic of the space (or spaces) of the tradition within which the musician is learning.

Learning to inhabit gives name to an approach where a researcher is actively aware of the way the body, intention and sensibility changes during and as a result of transmission. It requires attending to the experience in and of the body and bodies while studying the experience of musical transmission (Blum, 2023, p. 58). Stephen Blum states:

> Results of a process of *transmission* depend on participants 'techniques of the body: how they move, control specific muscles, produce and interpret sounds or written symbols, remember, use, and perhaps modify earlier experience of relevant interactions.
>
> Blum, 2023, p. 59

The musicking body (Rahaim, 2012) is determined not only by acquiring the necessary kinetic knowledge to produce and interpret sound in a particular way. The musicking body is also determined by the way this acquired kinetic knowledge interacts with all previous bodily experience and interactions. As Brian Dietrich and Kendra Stepputat (2021) explain, 'we are continuously formed and shaped by everything we learn and

do, and that the embodied point of departure shapes our perception and subsequently the physical interpretation of a movement tradition significantly' (Stepputat and Diettrich, 2021, p. 42). In practice this looks like modifying or relating to previous experiences, developing and maintaining a critical self-awareness (Kara, 2015, p. 38).

Hunter (2021) demonstrates such critical self-awareness in practice which she explains as 'engaging with the material world through a form of present, real-time awareness of phenomena [that] emerge from synergies between body-architecture forms, structures and composition' (Hunter, 2021, p.51). This engagement results from employing somatic techniques such as 'slowing down, pausing and taking time to notice' surroundings and 'tun[ing] in' to environment (Hunter, 2021, p.51). Hunter cites her own *Arriving Score* (2007) to offer more detailed direction for tuning in. She invites participants to 'feel the space through the front, side, back of the body, [to] feel '3D' in the space [and to send] awareness out into space [then acknowledge] attention outside and inside the body' (Hunter, 2021, p.52).

Hunter's *Arriving Score* (in Hunter, 2021, p.52) encapsulates in a very concise, straightforward fashion what 'somatic attunement' (Varwig, 2023) looks like in practice. It offers practitioners, who are not necessarily dancers, understandable direction to becoming aware of their 'body-as-apparatus' (Hunter, 2021, p.51) — therefore, becoming knowledgeable in the body. The accessibility and clarity of the score and the techniques within it not only offer a great deal of scope to inform learning to inhabit as a method for acquiring knowledge of a musical tradition in the body. The score also complements my methodology conceptually. In order to inhabit, first it is necessary to *arrive*. What is crucial here is that the kind of arriving demonstrated in Hunter's score is antithetical to conquering, or colonising space. Her arriving is not concerned with imposing upon, dominating, or becoming an authority. It is instead concerned with bringing attention to a space and the bodies within it, noticing 'internal/external exchange' and points of entanglement between the practitioner's body and the space. Hunter's *Arriving Score,* therefore offers a framework for dialogically inhabiting a space, or in my case, a tradition.

The practical application in this project of such somatic techniques demonstrated by Hunter involved 'tuning in' (Hunter, 2021, p.51) and reflecting on the experience and positioning of the whole body in the spaces in which learning, practising, and performing took place.[1] Sensation, imagination and movement during and in response to this experience were given focussed attention. Of particular importance was noticing synergies between sounding and moving when playing. When my playing sounded right (informed by an aesthetic sensibility, in turn informed by research of the *gharānā*'s style), attention would be directed to the body and the space to get a sense of how it was moving and positioned. Similarly, if it did not sound right, attention would be directed to the body to work out what needed to physically change in order to rectify the way of sounding. This process was documented through auto-ethnography, offering insights into the sounding, social, kinetic, spatial, temporal and mechanical knowledge of the musical tradition.

Much of the knowledge I have acquired has been a result of interactions with Irfan Muhammad Khan or reflecting on my interactions with him. Through reflexive auto-ethnography, I have been able to describe these interactions, how they relate to my body and my practice, and the way in which this reflects the knowledge of Irfan Muhammad Khan and the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Working reflexively has not been an obstacle to be overcome, or even 'a quicksand that we drown in' (Titon, 1995, p. 290). Contrary to Titon's concern that too much reflexivity will eventually make it impossible to do fieldwork (1995, p. 290), working reflexively has enhanced my approach and my findings. I have ensured my positionality as researcher, sitar student, and artist, is taken into consideration as a key variable. Although I occupy the position of funded researcher, the point of interrogation is my experience as a student of Irfan Muhammad Khan. This student-*ustad* dynamic respects and maintains in the research the position of Irfan Muhammad Khan as the authority on the musical knowledge in question.

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[1] The 'tuning in' referred to here follows a different intellectual thread to the 'tuning in' often cited in ethnomusicology, which traces back to the anthropologist Alfred Schütz (1951) writing on social relationships in music practices. Hunter's (2013) 'tuning in' relates to the embodied research practice of another anthropologist, Natasha Myers (2017; 2020) and the somatic research of Csordas (1993), which also cites Schütz's later writing on phenomenology (1970).

All interactions with Irfan Muhammad Khan where musical knowledge was transmitted have been treated as 'class' or *talīm*. Being paid as a teacher according to agreed rates, which depend on where the teaching is happening, mitigates against an exploitative situation in which he has to perform unpaid labour to ensure the knowledge of his musical lineage is represented and performed accurately. Accurate representation of Irfan Muhammad Khan's knowledge is also important when documenting and exploring it in a thesis. The drawback of written and recorded documentation from the position of a student of an art form is that a student's mistakes become set in the document or recording and risk becoming a permanent representation, or misrepresentation of the tradition. Therefore, it was decided that I should take the same approach to my writing about the *gharānā* that I have during *talīm* and *riyaz* (explained below). My findings and transcriptions that were included in the final document were sent over to Irfan Muhammad Khan for him to check over and advise upon. He was also paid for this time and labour as though this was class. Acknowledging the agency of my *ustad* was a key ethical consideration. Referring back to Ustadji minimised the risk of preserving inaccuracies in an enduring document, established trust and cemented a healthy student-teacher relationship. Mutual respect and trust allowed me to learn more about the knowledge of the *gharānā* and to become an exponent of the *gharānā*, as opposed to a casual student, or an outside observer.

My reflexive approach and intention to maintain the student-*ustad* dynamic of the relationship throughout this research goes some of the way to acknowledging my positionality as a researcher and addressing issues of agency. The formative experiences mentioned in the introduction that led me to becoming a sitarist and a student of Irfan Muhammad Khan give context to my practice. However, there are elements of my positionality as an artist and a researcher conducting this project that still need to be interrogated. I have applied Katz's (2017) ennobling of the genealogical imagination to explore the dynamics of my relationship to Irfan Muhammad Khan and the *gharānā* in the context of historical narratives. Historicising in this way brings more clearly into focus the multiple intersecting dynamics and lines of entanglement (Ingold, 2011) resulting from my research and practice.

Colonial legacies must first be acknowledged before they can then be repurposed in narrative and practice to serve remedial or reparative ends. As a white and British musician and researcher there is no avoiding the fact that the presence of my body in any Hindustani music space carries with it legacies of British colonialism, even at a purely semiotic level. The negative impact of the East India Company and the British Empire on India, including the modern equivalent sum of 45 trillion pounds sterling in terms of wealth extracted from the Indian subcontinent, is common knowledge and has been widely documented (Dalrymple, 2020). However, specifically in relation to the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, the Britishers were responsible for the rupture that disbanded Wajid Ali Shah's court and musicians. When they dethroned Shah, the musical trajectory of Niamatullah Khan and his descendants was significantly altered.

It is no coincidence that many instrumental *gharānā*s that have better survived the transition from the system of royal patronage to the concert tradition of Hindustani music today came from courts that had more favourable relations with the British (Khan, personal communication, 27 January 2023; Katz, 2017). Loyalty to the old system of patronage, which began to crumble, meant that Ilyas Khan and Umar Khan were not promoted as the ambassadors for the art form that they deserved to be. Moreover, knowledge of and taking pride in the Islamicate elements of Hindustani music sometimes put exponents of the *gharānā* at odds with the more Hindu-centric perspective of the architects of modern Hindustani music as the national music of India (Katz, 2017; Bakhle, 2005). As a result, other musicians who were more favourable to the newly established institutions started to get the performance opportunities that put them on the world stage in the mid twentieth century. The actions of the British, from 1856 were by no means the only cause of this marginalisation of the *gharānā.* A great deal of responsibility for this lies with music institutions in India. However, British imperialism certainly was one of these factors that had a lasting detrimental impact on the future position of the *gharānā*.

Despite the destructive impact and legacy of British colonialism and imperialism on the Indian subcontinent, and specifically on Hindustani music, there have been numerous dialogic interactions between British musicians, or music enthusiasts, and the Hindustani music tradition. Schofield (2023) gives a detailed account of relationships and encounters between Indian court musicians and British musicians

in late Mughal India. Since Enayet Ali Khan of the Shahjahanpur line gave the first instrumental Hindustani music performance in England, the presence and keen audience of the art from in the UK has only grown. After the impact of the sitar explosion in the 1960s (Lavezzoli, 2006), British musicians such as Clem Alford and Mick Taylor were early committed British participants of the Hindustani music tradition and became respected sitarists. There is now a thriving Hindustani music scene in the UK, populated by diasporic British South Asian musicians, visiting South Asian musicians, and musicians from outside of the South Asian diaspora, who have become a part of the tradition.

There are still tensions and problems that have arisen and persist in some of the ways that Hindustani music, musicians and music culture in the UK interact. For example, there is the dominant narrative that Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan gave the first notable Hindustani music concerts in the West (Lavezzoli, 2006). There were three generations of musicians from the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana who performed in the West prior to the famous Yehudi Menuhin collaboration with Ali Akbar Khan and the sitar explosion that accompanied George Harrison and Ravi Shankar working together. However, the earlier performances in Europe are not regarded as a part of a significant moment in Western popular culture, so these concerts do not get the same widespread public recognition or celebration.

There is also the issue that the UK is geographically peripheral to the Indian musical centres such as Kolkata, where Hindustani music is at its most diverse. This peripheral involvement means that only the often simplified and monolithic mainstream of Hindustani music exported from India reaches the UK's cultural institutions. The disproportionate relative power and influence of the UK's cultural institutions, therefore, normalise a sometimes simplistic and essentialised version of Hindustani music. This is then exported back to India and the rest of the world, which entrenches the hegemony of the mainstream further still. Musicians from marginalised *gharānā*s, or with styles that differ from this simplified version of Hindustani music, do not get the same performance and touring opportunities, or institutional support. There are fewer opportunities for audiences to encounter counter-narratives and differences in styles that give a fuller sense of the tradition as a whole.

There is a remedial dynamic to being a British musician learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana on the sitar and cello, in practice, and writing about the experience in this thesis. Irfan Muhammad Khan's handful of dedicated students are simultaneously committed to keeping a lineage of practice alive, whose present instability is, to some degree, due to the previous extractive actions of those who enriched the country I grew up in. This research will hopefully lead to more performance opportunities for Irfan Muhammad Khan and his other students. More concerts make more readily available the musical knowledge and historical narratives of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in the UK and internationally. Consequently, my research and practice will hopefully diversify the current UK Hindustani music scene as it is currently. UK-based practitioners and enthusiasts will gain a fuller picture of the history and practice of the Tantra *baj* and there is more likelihood of wider engagement with the knowledge, history and practitioners of the *gharānā*.

A brief genealogical perspective on the history of the cello and its entanglement with the genealogy of the sarod is presented in the findings of this research. However, the ways my own genealogy resonates, parallels and ultimately entangles with that of the *gharānā* are explored in Figure 3.1 below:

Thomas Yelding (Musician, puppeteer, showman and scrap merchant)
c. 1795–1879

|

John Yelding (Circus musician & ringmaster) 1833–1892

|

John Yelding (Circus performer & equestrian) 1875–1927

|

John 'Speedy' Yelding (Clown, equestrian, tightrope, lion tamer, and animal keeper)1898–1980

|

Derek Yelding (Ventriloquist, Punch & Judy and pantomime Dame) 1931–2017

|

Steven Yelding (Musician) 1958–2012

|

Pete Yelding (Musician) 1989

Figure 3.1 Genealogy of Yeldings.

The patrilineal ancestral line of Yeldings (Figure 3.1) working as performers spans seven generations at least.[2] That entire side of the family have been performers for several generations.[3] They worked as travelling performers, in circus, in puppetry, and later in music hall. The Yeldings were originally Anglo-Romani, but my 4 x great grandparents, Thomas Yelding and Ann Chapman, became Showmen, joining the circus. Subsequent generations intermarried with other circus families such as the Fossetts. These Showmen families were large, and they densely populated the travelling circuses in the UK, Europe and the USA for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although there are still working circus performers descended from Yeldings, there is no one with the surname, Yelding, still performing in circus. I am the last named Yelding of my family still working as a performer of any kind.

The above personal genealogy is relevant to this research because it reveals several resonances with the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana:

• I can empathise with Irfan Muhammad Khan on the feeling of being the last of a line of performers, who were internationally recognised as being at the top of their field in the nineteenth and twentieth century. We differ in the sense that Irfan Muhammad Khan is *still* at the top of his field but has not yet been sufficiently recognised by influential institutions and platforms nationally and internationally.

• The Yeldings were particularly well known for their work performing with animals, especially horses. There is another resonance with the *gharānā* here, that both my family and the early figures of the *gharānā* would have been working in the trading of horses at the same point in time.

• There is a historical intersection between the two genealogies. It has already been stated that Enayet Ali Khan had Queen Victoria as an audience. As did a lion tamer who fits within my wider genealogy — Ellen Chapman (1833–1899), whose brother married into my family and who was herself thought to be a distant relative of my

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[2] Only the male line is shown to illustrate the patrilineal continuation of the surname, to echo the male line shown in the genealogy of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, and to scale down the visual presentation of my genealogy to avoid taking up too much space.

[3] There is oral history in the family that claims the Fossetts, who intermarried with the Yeldings came from France several centuries ago performing for royalty.

fourth great-grandmother, Ann Chapman. Despite being from separate continents, both Ellen Chapman's and Enayet Ali Khan's performance practices had been witnessed by the same set of eyes and ears.

- There is also the parallel of family structure. Historically, marriages in the Yelding family were close to keep the performing within the family. This connects to the historic family structures of Romani families, which are very similar to South Asian family structures. It is now common knowledge that the starting point of migration of the various groups of Romani people was North India. Although this was over a millennium ago, this connection with South Asia invites the question of reading my own genealogy through the lens of hereditary performers in North India. My family, in a South Asian context would have been considered acrobats and low status musicians and entertainers, occupying a similar position to *mirasī*s (hereditary musicians of a low social status). It would be less likely at an earlier point in history for a descendent of acrobats, or any other social standing equivalent to *mirasī*s to learn with an *ustad* of Hindustani music affiliated with the Senia *rabābiyas* and *bīnkars* (McNeil, 2007b). In light of this, I occasionally joked with Irfan Muhammad Khan that by learning from him I was "coming up in the world".

The above genealogy has played a key role in my process of learning to inhabit the practice of the *gharānā*. Through the above resonances I have formed a more intimate relationship and emotional attachment to the *gharānā*'s history and practice. These connections have a prominent presence in my imagination as I practice. Moreover, sharing my family's history and these connections during class has contextualised my presence in the *gharānā*, influencing the way in which I relate to its exponents and practitioners, past and present. The genealogical imagination has therefore been crucial to situating and developing my practice, and the way I have conducted this research.

A cornerstone theorist undergirding my political perspective is Frantz Fanon (1986 [1967]; 2021 [1967]). Influential aspects of Fanon's (1986 [1967]) writing include: the reimagining necessary to rebuild minds and bodies of both colonised people and people who are beneficiaries of colonialism; his narrative of the particular leading to the universal as the basis for anti-colonial solidarity (2021 [1967]). The ways Fanon's

(1986 [1967]; 2021 [1967]) writing influences this research can be seen in the alternative musical ontology I proposed in the introduction and my recurring critique of Eurocentric perspectives continuing to dominate music studies. In relation to the *gharānā*, there are clear similarities between the impact of capitalist and Hindu nationalist forces on contemporary Hindustani music, which have exacerbated the *gharānā*'s marginalisation (Katz, 2017), and the impact of British imperial forces before that. My commitment to re-centring the practice and narratives of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is therefore also driven by an activist mindset inspired by Fanon (1986 [1967]; 2021 [1967]) working in opposition to an unjust erasure of a crucial component of Hindustani music.

My commitment to my *ustad* is driven by the will to develop and hone my practice, the sense of responsibility to honour the *ustad*-student relationship, and the activist mindset described above. A potential tension therefore arises between account and advocacy in my work. However, it could be argued that the tension between account and advocacy can be seen in all Anglocentric writing on Hindustani music, as certain subjective perspectives and oral accounts have been normalised and reinforced. As Katz (2017) states, there is merit to adopting a position of advocacy in this research, to tilt the balance away from the dominant histories and normalised practices that downplay or erase the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. My approach to auto-ethnography outlined in this methodology locates my body, my interaction with Irfan Muhammad Khan, and the knowledge of the *gharānā* as the key sites of analysis. My role as an advocate for the *gharānā* is therefore within the process of becoming an inhabitant of the *gharānā* outlined in the auto-ethnographic elements of this research. The tension between account and advocacy in this research is therefore mitigated by analysis of my auto-ethnography being informed by, and accountable to, wider flows of academic discourses outlined in Chapter 2.

I have attempted to ensure the literature that informs my analysis, and the writers cited rebalance the male-centric focus of the subject and my own position as a man in a patriarchal society. As a researcher committed to accounting for the perspectives of all genders in academia, I have sought to ensure gender parity between academics cited. When studying a practice within a tradition that has been for the most part patrilineal, a focus on male figures is unavoidable. However, the overarching body-

centred narrative to this research is partly informed by New Materialism, which Victoria Hunter states 'is informed by feminist perspectives that acknowledge and champion the fleshy materiality of the body as interlocutor with the material world and its material conditions' (Hunter, 2021, p. 9).

It would be naive to suggest situating research in a conceptual frame informed by feminist principles and citing women is enough to end the hegemony of patriarchy in music, academia and society. However, approaching the lineage of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana as a meshwork of embodied knowledge offers an alternative to approaching *gharānā*s and hereditary musical lineages through the patriarchal lens of biologism. As with finding alternatives to Eurocentric frames of reference, approaching this research with a lens shaped by feminist perspectives adds to the cumulative efforts of divesting from oppressive and inequitable ways of knowing and being in the world.

My diagnosed neurodivergence is the final aspect of my positionality, which influences how my research is carried out, to be taken into consideration. I have a medical diagnosis of a complex profile of ADHD, dyspraxia and trauma. This manifests in ways such as difficulties with auditory processing, difficulties with short term memory, challenges with executive function and certain kinds of coordination. Many of the strategies used to mitigate these challenges, such as making recordings and using visual cues to assist memory, have been adopted and adapted to assist in my processes of *talīm* and *riyaz* explained below. Moreover, overcoming the inherent challenges of my condition relating to co-ordination and executive function have required giving explicit attention to the way my body moves in space and my interactions with others. This focused and direct attention to sensation and movement forms the basis of the somatic approaches that I have adopted in this research. Despite the increased depth of understanding about my musical practice, which this directed bodily attention facilitates, it also takes a great deal more time to develop my practice. Therefore, although I am an experienced and able musician, the speed of my refinement in technique and memorising of repertoire is not fast. This slower learning does have an upside — in the long run what I come to know off by heart is known and felt deeply. The musical knowledge is lived more intimately.

3.2 The process of learning to inhabit

Below (Figure 3.2) is a diagram illustrating the dynamic process of the methodology of this research. It demonstrates the key stages of coming to know through practice and becoming an exponent of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. It is, therefore, an alternative to Robin Nelson's (2013) model for practice as research. Nelson's model identifies crucial ways of knowing — experiential, performative, tacit, embodied (Nelson, 2013, p. 37). On the one hand, he connects these ways of knowing from distant spectatorship and broader conceptual frameworks, and on the other hand, differentiates aesthetic knowledge such as understanding of what 'works', methods, principles of composition and impact. Nelson's model is a clear illustration of different modes of knowing. To some degree he illustrates the way arts praxis — 'theory imbricated within practice' — relates to these modes of knowing (Nelson, 2013, p. 37). However, he does not clearly depict the iterative way inhabiting arts praxis takes place as a result of different ways of knowing influencing each other through stages of practice.

My model for learning to inhabit illustrates the stages of practice that lead to ways of knowing. Each of the boxes describe a step in the process. The arrows and boxes are colour coded to indicate where the outcomes of each step lead. Each step leads to the next step. However, each step also continues to unfold independently of the steps that follow. For example, *riyaz* on sitar takes place, which leads to translations and *riyaz* on cello, but more *riyaz* on sitar still continues to take place.
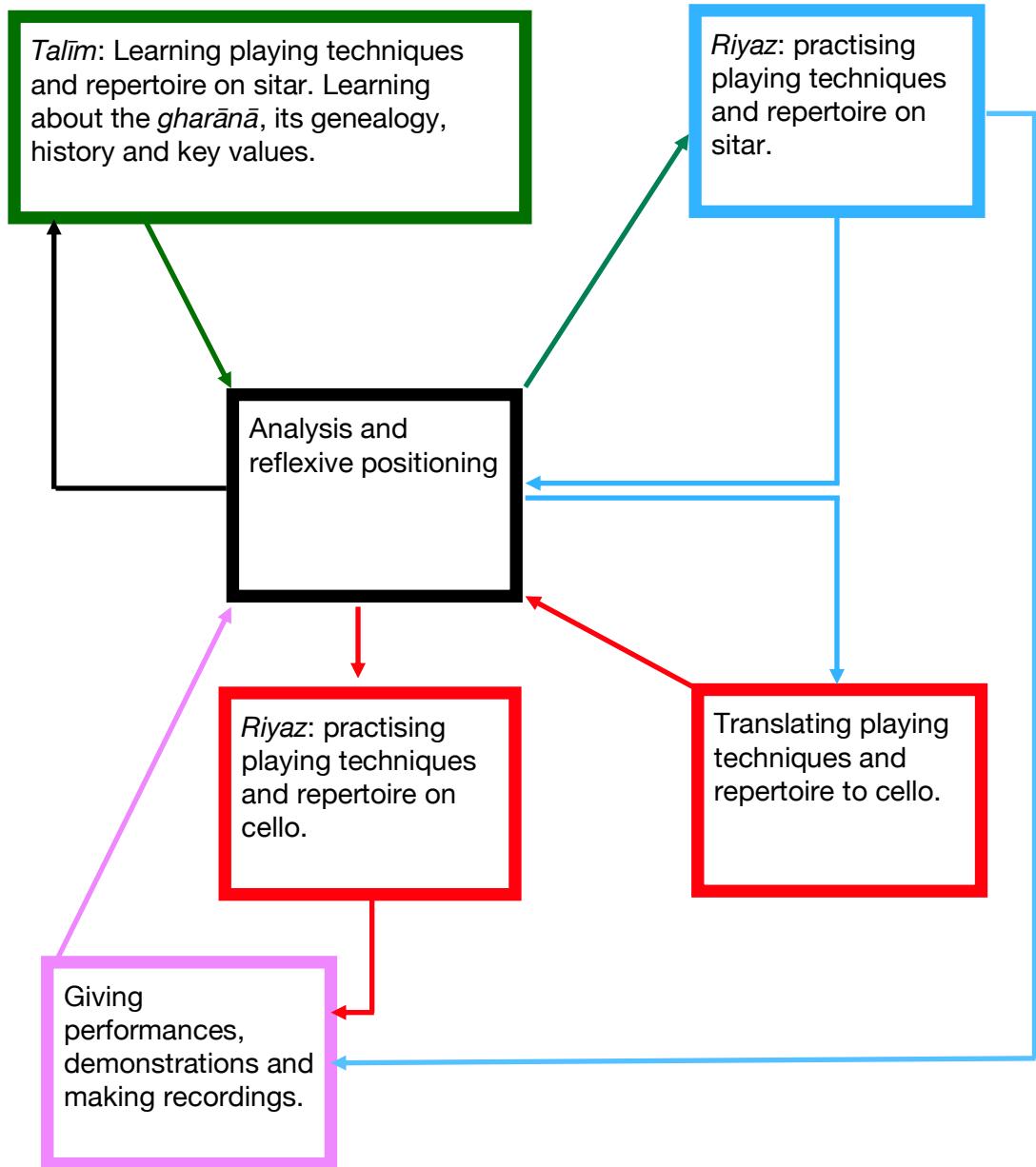
Figure 3.2 diagram illustrating the process of learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

3.2.1 Talīm

Tālīm is described in the *Dictionary of Hindustani Classical Music* simply as 'an Urdu word for lessons' (Roychaudhuri, 2000. p. 139). However, there is a difference between merely having a lesson and *tālīm.* Katz explains, 'learning to move your body and shape musical phrases as your teacher does is central to the transmission process known as *tālīm*, or formal training. Participating in *tālīm* requires an extraordinary degree of commitment from both parties' (2017, p. 26). It is a process that goes beyond just learning repertoire in class: ragas, *gat*s, *bols*[4] and *paltas*.[5] My interpretation of *tālīm* is that it is a process of 'attending to' (Csordas, 1993. p. 138–9) the knowledge of the *gharānā*. The *ustad* presents this knowledge in a way that it can be transmitted. On the student's part, *tālīm* requires a high degree of attentiveness during conversation with the *ustad*, during the *ustad*'s performances, as well as during class. As a result, the student will learn the performance style of the *gharānā*, expression, sitting posture, and gain a deeper aesthetic understanding of ragas and how their *shruti*s work. The student also learns the oral histories and historical perspectives of the *ustad*, gradually becoming a repository for the memory and genealogy of the *gharānā*.

Traditionally *talīm* would involve staying with an *ustad* or *guru* for extended periods of time, over many years, in order to be fully immersed in the specific knowledge and practices of the tradition. This way of learning was also known as *guru-shishya parampara*. However, time constraints, budget and the many logistical and administrative complications of modern life prevent such an approach. So instead, *talīm* took two forms. First and foremost, after having had consent from Irfan Muhammad Khan and passed the university's ethical approval, I made an annual trip of 4–5 weeks to Kolkata every year for 3 years. I stayed near to Ustadji's house and attended class once or twice a day, 6 days a week. These lessons were usually filmed. On the rare occasion a camera was unavailable, they were at least recorded. These lessons were when I would learn much of the crucial embodied knowledge of the *gharānā*.

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[4] right hand stroke patterns
[5] repeated patterns for practice that improve strength, speed and accuracy of both the left and right hands

For the second form of *talīm*, when I was back in the UK, I would learn repertoire via video call. These classes were also recorded. The two-dimensional nature of these classes made learning anything beyond repertoire more challenging. There were many occasions when a technique or a way of playing came up that Ustadji would say to me, "we will go over that when you are here". This was an acknowledgement that *talīm* is better conducted in person. The intricacies of a process that combined learning online and in person are explored in more detail in chapter 4.

3.2.2 Riyaz

Riyaz is the term used for intensive practice. This is the process through which a student starts to internalise the knowledge they have received during *talīm*. According to Irfan Muhammad Khan, the ideal amount of time spent per day on riyaz is 4 hours. The first hour should be spent playing *paltas*. The second hour, learning new, or less familiar repertoire. The third hour, revising more familiar repertoire. The fourth hour, playing the fast *thumri gat*s. If I were able to practice in the presence of Ustadji throughout the year, he would have been able to correct mistakes in real time. Distance and time zone made this an impossibility, so I revisited recordings of class and transcribed the *alāp* and *gat*s of each of the ragas I was taught to assist learning and memorising the vast amount of repertoire. I also notated several *toda*s (structured improvisations) — especially early in the process, before I was familiar with the ways of improvising. However, once I had learned frameworks and patterns of enough *toda*s notating all *toda*s for every raga would have been an inefficient use of time.

My approach to notation is explained in Appendix 1. My Transcriptions and notations are only representative of my understanding of the embodied knowledge of the *gharānā.* My handwritten transcriptions are and will continue to be attached to and dependent on my embodied practice. I did not want to use notation software and standardised graphics, with aesthetic implications of neutrality and authority. Approaching notations and transcriptions as handwritten documents that are evolving in conjunction with, and as extensions of, my practice, challenges their authority as fixed archival materials.

While it was incredibly useful as a resource to assist riyaz (and as a way of conveying the knowledge of the *gharānā*), the documentation of *talīm* is not sufficient to fully

access what was actually transmitted. My recordings and transcriptions trigger memory of the embodied moment of learning in person. The term embodied moment here means the moment of transmission when the knowledge was sensed and encountered in the body for the first time. This includes: the ways of playing and therefore of moving and sensing musically; what those ways of playing and techniques felt like; the emotional characteristic of the raga being learned; associations with the techniques and the raga resulting from conversations; my disposition that day in my body; the disposition and my relationship to other people and objects present in the room; what was happening in the street surrounding the house. All of these factors influenced my relationship to the repertoire as I began the process of incorporating it in practice.

Although *riyaz* and *talīm* have been defined here as two separate processes, they run alongside each other. I would learn new repertoire and techniques in *talīm*, I would then practise them in *riyaz*, then Ustadji would listen to the success of my *riyaz* at some point during *talīm*. That may or may not be the next immediate class. Sometimes a significant amount of time passed between learning something in *talīm* and then presenting it back to Ustadji after having practised it. However, in general, especially when learning online and early on my study, Ustadji would prefer that we did not move on to learning something new until I could show that I had understood what I had already been taught. This meticulous attention to *talīm* was in part because of Ustadji's generous pedagogical approach. It also made it more likely that his knowledge and the knowledge of his ancestors would be transmitted and represented accurately in the future.

3.2.3 Analysis and reflexive positioning

I studied the experience (Fraleigh, 1999, p. 215) of my *talīm* and *riyaz* from an embodied perspective (Hunter, 2021, p. 10). During my in-person lessons my attention was directed towards the sound of Ustadji's playing, the ways his body moved and interacted with the sarod, the space in which I was learning, and my own sensory and corporeal experience — both when listening and when playing. During *riyaz*, I considered the sounding outcome of my playing as feedback for what my body was doing. My attention was directed towards my own posture, positioning of parts of the body, moving, or not moving, and the way that felt. If the sounding outcome of

my playing did not create the same or similar aesthetic sense as that felt during *talīm* or of that established when listening to recordings of past luminaries, then I needed to alter my posture, positioning of parts of the body, or the ways I was moving or not moving.

The multiple directions of my attention in *talīm* and *riyaz* could be described as 'an intricate manifold of sensation, action and environment', which Hunter cites as definitive for 'choreographic dwelling', or 'inhabiting movement repertoires' (Rubridge and Schiller in Hunter, 2021, p. 11). Hunter positions the body 'as a corporeal, porous and fleshy entity that houses and encompasses the self that, through its intra-actions and immersions within the world, forges a sense of relational identity' (Hunter, 2021, p. 9). Her perspective and somatic approach to practice encapsulates what is meant by learning to inhabit. It requires being not only alert, but responsive in practice to the ways of moving and sensing that create ways of sounding in a space. Moreover, these ways of moving and sensing become a part of the music researcher's being in the world, shaping far more than action in the moment of performance.

The moment of performance is still the most concentrated iteration of ways of moving and sensing, which inform ways of sounding and lead to ways of being. For this reason, a crucial component of this research is giving a performance in which some of the embodied knowledge of the *gharānā* will be presented for examination. However, it has been necessary to find multiple ways of representing this embodied knowledge within the narrative of this thesis, the written element of my research. I have used a combination of photos and videos to convey moments within my practice and demonstrable elements of the style and repertoire of the *gharānā*. When presenting an experience of movement in the body, especially when the focus is not visual, auto-ethnographic somatic analysis has been drawn upon.

Broughton and Davidson (2014) demonstrate the utility of Laban's (1974; 1988) approach to writing about effort, action, and intention in movement, applied to a musical setting. In particular, Broughton and Davidson adopt Laban's effort shape analysis. To summarise, effort is comprised of four motion factors: weight, time, space, flow. Each of these motion factors consist of an effort element. Weight of an effort can be strong or light. Timing of an effort can be sudden or sustained. An effort

through space can be direct or indirect. The flow of an effort can be bound or free. Moreover, effort can either be *gestural*, relating to only a specific body part, or *postural*, relating to the whole body (Broughton and Davidson, 2014, p. 6). The shape of effort occurs over three axes: the horizontal axis — left and right, the vertical axis — up and down, and the sagittal axis — inwards and outwards (*ibid*.). This approach to analysing movement has been applied to my ethnographic description of Irfan Muhammad Khan's sarod playing in class and my auto ethnographic description of sitar playing and cello playing. Effort shape analysis (Laban 1974; 1988) has therefore been crucial for identifying and describing how movement has been translated between the modes of sarod playing, sitar playing and cello playing.

My approach to multi-modal translation (Kaindl 2020) has been to first reach a level of proficiency at the *gharānā*'s style of sitar playing, a mode that is already an established part of the tradition. It has been the practice to which I have given the most time and attention during this research. The justification for focussing so much on sitar is that sitar playing has been the process by which I have come to know the body knowledge of the *gharānā*. If I had brought cello to class, time would have been spent partly working out new ways of performing existing techniques and negotiating differing ways of sounding and moving. I would not have gained the experience of sitting and feeling in my body techniques and ways of playing that already exist in the *gharānā*. The resulting outcome of my translations would have been only approximations and interpretations of Ustadji's sarod playing. Attending the class on cello, I would not have achieved anywhere near the same level of nuanced embodied understanding of the style of the *gharānā* as I have through the process of learning and honing this knowledge, first, on sitar.

Another benefit to learning the body knowledge of the *gharānā* on sitar, rather than straight on to cello, is that I have learned from Ustadji's descriptions the ways that sitar playing and sarod playing as modes, and their respective techniques, differ, and what they have in common. Most of the differences in movement and technique have been because of the differing mechanics of the instrument. To achieve a particular sound requires moving a particular way, with particular effort, on one instrument, which is not possible on the other, so a different way of moving has been necessary to achieve that same sounding outcome. The ways of moving and the techniques that

sarod and sitar playing have in common have often reflected core values of the *gharānā*, not just in terms of ways of sounding, but ways of moving and ways of being. I have taken this distinction as an indicator for what to consider when translating from sitar to cello.

3.2.4 Translation

To begin the process of translation onto the cello I first devised a way of playing that would fit broadly into the tradition. I considered ways of sitting, tuning the cello strings, ways of using the bow and rules that determine the placement of my left-hand fingers on the string. The mode of cello playing I devised was informed by: current practices of the small number of cellists who play Hindustani music; what I had come to know about the general approaches to performance within the *gharānā*; and my own experiments in practice. The finer techniques, the ways of moving and the inherent effort, shape and sensation in the body, which I had learned on sitar were then interrogated. These finer details were compared with and incorporated into the mode of cello playing that I had devised. Modifications continued to be made to my cello playing as the effort, shape and sensation of my sitar playing developed and continued to be refined.

When attempting to realise a particular sounding element of the *gharānā*'s style that was standard practice on sitar, but, owing to its different mechanics, was unachievable on cello, I would refer back to Ustadji's sarod playing. I would listen to and observe the ways Ustadji's left hand moved along the fretless sarod neck and the way his right hand struck the strings and find ways to recreate these movements on the fretless cello neck and with my bow. I would also ask him about these techniques, and he would explain more. However, for the most-part my approach to translation involved seeking to recreate on cello the embodied and sounding sensations experienced while playing sitar.

3.2.5 Performance

Performance is a vital component of this musical tradition, but it should not be considered the outcome of a linear process that *learning to perform* implies. This project culminates in an examined live performance in which I demonstrate the ways that all the details explored and presented in this thesis come together in the moment.

The performance will be in two halves. The first half will present the body knowledge of the *gharānā* as I have learned it, on sitar. The second half will present some of the musical knowledge I have translated to cello. The process of performance (Daboo, 2010) offers the opportunity to examine to what extent has the knowledge of the *gharānā* been embodied and how confidently I transmit to an audience the details presented in the findings of this thesis.

The pressure and focus of the process of performance offers the opportunity to analyse and reflect on how effectively I have come to know the repertoire and the *gharānā*'s ways of playing during and after the event. Documentation of performances Ustadji is unable to attend allow us to go over what aspects worked and what need more work. The conclusions drawn from reflection will inform what is necessary to learn during *talīm* and practice during *riyaz*, so I can more effectively embody and represent the mindset, repertoire and style of the *gharānā* in performances. The cycle of learning to inhabit continues.

3.3 Summary of learning to inhabit

The findings presented in the rest of the thesis illustrate the details of the repertoire that I have come to know from the inside (Baily, 2001) via the process of learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. First embodying the knowledge of the *gharānā* as a sitarist and then translating it to cello is a process of making new entanglements, or points of rebirth, between and along lines of transmission (Ingold, 2011). Irfan Muhammad Khan is the living source of the knowledge, the 'knot' from which the *gharānā*'s threads of musical knowledge emanate. As a student, my practice and therefore my body becomes entangled with these threads. The trajectory of my practice and research will therefore unavoidably become one of the trajectories of the *gharānā.* This trajectory weaves into an evolving tapestry of musical knowledge, connecting histories and futures across continents. It is this process that Baily's framing of learning to perform overlooks and that *learning to inhabit* seeks to acknowledge.

Chapter 4. Embodied experience

This chapter explores different aspects of the embodied experience of learning to take on and translate the knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. It focuses on the elements of the embodied musical knowledge of the *gharānā* that fall outside the typical definition of repertoire. A description of the process of *talīm* [1] and the differences between *talīm* in person and online is followed by a description of the structure and content of the process of *riyaz*. [2] An account of my experience of taking on the sitar posture of the *gharānā* then leads to a comparison between sitar postures of Ilyas Khan and of sitarists from other *gharānā*s of his generation. This is followed by an explanation of the physical disposition — the way of holding the body and maintaining composure when playing. The next section presents the mode of cello playing that brings the cello into the *gharānā*'s style. The final section explores the common and contrasting details of left- and right-hand techniques of sitar, sarod and cello.

4.1 The experience of *talīm*

During the project I received *talīm* in two different ways, face-to-face and online. The first and most important way was through extended periods of face-to-face study in Ustadji's home in Kolkata. These took place in January and February 2022, 2023, and 2024. Bound by visa restrictions in 2022 and 2023, in the aftermath of the height of the COVID 19 pandemic, I could only stay in India for 30 days. However, for the 2024 visit, as more flexible e-visas had been re-introduced, my funding allowed me to spend 5 weeks in Kolkata. January and February are the best months to study in Kolkata: the cool, mostly dry, winter to early spring climate prevents the hours of class and practice from taking as much of a toll on the body, compared with the heat of late spring to summer and the humidity of monsoon season. There are also numerous Hindustani music festivals and concert programmes in the city at this time of year. This meant that whilst I was in the city for class, there were also opportunities to witness Ustadji performing, as well as to attend performances of students and masters of different *gharānā*s.

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[1] Dedicated tuition
[2] Intensive practice

Some concerts Ustadji would attend, and I would sit with him on the front row, or nearby if there was no space. At these concerts I learned more about my participation as an audience member. As Chloë Alaghband-Zadeh (2017) explains, it is common in Hindustani music concerts for audience members to vocalise appreciation of a moment in a performance with statements such as '*wah*' (bravo), or '*kya baat hai*' (how beautiful), or kissing the teeth. However, when sat with Ustadji and other experienced musicians, I noticed they were more sparing with such expressions. I found that as my understanding of the nuances of ragas deepened, I too vocalised my appreciation less. It was not that I was enjoying concerts less. Although moments of being moved to vocalise my appreciation of performances became more sporadic, when I felt compelled to do so it was because I felt both affected emotionally and particularly impressed by the delivery of a specific melodic movement. One of the perspectives presented in Alaghband-Zadeh's analysis of audience participation at concerts was that too many '*wah*s' showed less knowledge of the art form than occasional expressions of appreciation. My experience of developing as an artist and what I observed in the participation of other, more accomplished, artists would support this perspective.

I also learned more about my role as a student at concerts, which are important not only for the exchange of musical knowledge, but also to be visible in the audience as a participant in the Hindustani music scene. Senior musicians sit in the front rows with their students to encourage and critique the performance, as well as to be acknowledged by the performers and the audience. I learned how to behave as a student in public in these settings and when meeting Ustadji's contemporaries. I was deferential to Ustadji and, when asked, I would explain to other musicians how long I have been learning with him or take part in musical conversations. I would assist him in any logistical responsibilities or fetch tea and snacks in the interval. This was not explicitly demanded by Ustadji and nor would I have been reprimanded for not behaving in this way. However, my behaviour at concerts publicly communicated to others and to Ustadji that I was a committed student.

After the concert Ustadji would ask questions and give his assessments of the performance. He would ask what I thought of the performance. He would then give his analysis. He would commend performances that not only conveyed the correct

melodic movements of the raga but also that showed the artist's emotional connection to what they were playing or singing. He could tell if a performer was just, as he would say, 'going through the motions', or if they were communicating something a little deeper, 'with soul'.

Ustadji would explain which elements of a performance did not align with the aesthetic values of the *gharānā*. If it was a modern raga (devised since the mid twentieth century) or an adaption from the Carnatic tradition it would not align with our *gharānā*.[3] There is enough repertoire for the earlier ragas of the tradition to spend a lifetime refining, so there is no need to come up with new ragas or play the more recently devised ragas inspired by the Carnatic tradition, as some musicians do. Ustadji would critique the quality, origin and delivery of the *gat*s in a performance. He would also explain if the performer detracted from the raga with the wrong melodic movements or demonstrated a way of playing that was more about showing the performer's command over the instrument than presenting the melodic and expressive qualities of the raga. Examples of this include: striking the *baj* and deadening it straight after to leave just the resonating of the *tarabs*; improvisations that span several *tāl* cycles and often distort the raga; and playing chords. Ustadji would explain what I should learn from or avoid doing in relation to a performer's posture and gestures if I wanted to perform in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. He would advise that I do not take on such habits as superfluous bodily movements and would commend performers who maintained a sense of stillness, an element of performance practice explored in 4.4 Physical Disposition.

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[3] With the exception of Ragas Abhogi and Narayani, as these two Carnatic-origin ragas made up part of the course Ilyas Khan taught and so were passed on to Irfan Muhammad Khan (Khan, personal communication, 20 February 2025).

Figure 4.1.1 photo courtesy of the Raga Fellowship Foundation.

Photo (left to right): me, Irfan Muhammad Khan, Pandit Budhaditya Mukherjee (sitarist), Pandit Sugato Nag (sitarist), at a concert in which the vocalist, Ustad Waseem Ahmed Khan and sarod player, Arnab Chakrabarty performed.

I would come for class once or twice a day, morning and evening, Monday to Saturday. Learning was predominantly one-to-one. I would enter Ustadji's house and go through to his music room. This is a large space, steeped in the history and knowledge of the *gharānā* and Hindustani music. The back wall was painted a bold, dark shade of fuchsia. On it was hung a combination of black-and-white, colourised and colour photographs, in black frames. They were mostly portraits of exponents of the *gharānā*, spanning generations. There were also some large, group photographs of Ustadji's ancestors standing amidst other past luminaries of Hindustani music. In front of the wall stands a still fully functional gramophone, with 78s of early Hindustani music recordings stacked beneath. Next to the gramophone, lying on top of a carpet, were two sarod cases containing Ustadji's sarods and a very small antique sitar, protected from dust by a fabric cover.

Against the opposite wall, next to the doorway, was a large cabinet, with a sliding glass door. Behind the glass stood the sitars that belonged to his uncle, Ilyas Khan, two tanpuras and the sarod that belonged to his father, Umar Khan. Each instrument was secured with a gold-coloured cord, threaded through two hook-eyes, which are screwed into the plum-coloured, velvet-lined back of the cabinet. Around the perimeter of the room were other cabinets containing Ustadji's personal archive of the *gharānā*. There were unpublished manuscripts of his ancestors, notebooks from his uncle's teaching, published books on Hindustani music, tapes, CDs, records and so much more. In the centre of the room, bridging the instrument cabinet at the front of the room and the red Afghan carpet against the back wall, was another large Afghan carpet on which Ustadji sat — with his back to the cabinet. The experience of being surrounded by the objects and images so potently charged with the history of the *gharānā* gave the sense that it is possible to learn by osmosis, just by being in this space.

Figure 4.1.2 photo of the back wall of Irfan Muhammad Khan's music room.
© Yelding

I would sit on the floor, opposite Ustadji and set up my phone or tablet to film the class.[4] We would exchange greetings and light conversation before I took one of his uncle's sitars from the cabinet. I would then return to sit opposite him, and I would tune the sitar. I would ask permission to start recording. He would nod, pick up his sarod and class would then begin. In that moment, I would always get a sense of the seriousness of the task at hand. I was holding one of Ilyas Khan's sitars, on which he had performed and taught. I could feel the eyes of generations of *ustad*s looking at me from behind. I could see their reflections in the glass of the cabinet behind Ustadji, like ghosts, shimmering amidst the necks of the instruments upon which they were superimposed. I felt a great sense of responsibility to do the best I could to honour this musical knowledge that these past masters and the master sat in front of me had cultivated. Often this would manifest in tension in my arms and shoulders, which prevented me from concentrating fully. Learning to relax in order to fully focus in such a setting, was therefore my first lesson — before I even played a note.

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[4] Students recording class is standard practice and widely accepted in the 21st century, although previous generations of teachers of Hindustani music were less welcoming of it.

Figure 4.1.3 photo of Ilyas Khan's sitar on the carpet, before the start of class. © Yelding

Regardless of what repertoire or technique I was learning, class would usually follow the traditional format, where the *ustad* plays a phrase and the student repeats it (Daniel Neuman, 1978; Dard Neuman, 2012; Slawek, 1987; Kippen, 1988; Miner 1993). Most of the time Ustadji would demonstrate on sarod and I would repeat it on sitar. However, if I was struggling to pick up what he was showing me from his sarod playing, he would take the sitar and show me on that. We would not move on to the next phrase until I had got the first phrase correct, or close enough that with practice it would become correct. When learning *gat*s, often Ustadji would repeat the *gat* over and over and I would join in, gradually tuning into what he was playing. If I was not able to pick it up, we would then break the composition down phrase by phrase. During class I was also taught about and corrected on my posture, hand position, right hand *bol* strokes, left hand articulation and correct ways to maintain the instrument. Most of the time these corrections were verbal, but once or twice, when

my wrist or arm needed slight adjustment Ustadji would move it. Some classes were spent learning *paltas* and other practice techniques.

A particular raga would be chosen either by Ustadji, because it was one that he thought I should learn, or by myself, because it was one that I wanted to learn.[5] I would learn a raga over a number of lessons, usually three — sometimes fewer and sometimes more, depending on how challenging I found the raga. The first lesson of learning a new raga would tend to be focussed on a *vilambit gat* (slow composition). If I picked this up quickly, we would also go over a *drut gat* (fast composition). Otherwise, in the second lesson I would tend to learn the *drut gat*. If I picked up this *drut gat* quickly, or if I had learned it in the previous lesson, we would go over *madhya lay gat*s (medium tempo compositions) or alternative *drut gat*s. The reason Ustadji gave for learning the *gat*s first, was that they offer a clear insight into the notes and movements of a raga. The third lesson would tend to be learning the phrases of the *alāp.* Once we got to the end of the *alāp*, Ustadji would then demonstrate the key melodic movements ('*chalan*') of the raga and that set it apart from similar ragas. We would discuss which movements to avoid, which could risk either breaking the mood of a raga or veering into the melodic terrain of other ragas. The feel, tempo and other nuances of the raga in question would also be discussed, often with demonstrations.

Early on in my *Talīm*, I would often learn set *toda*s (improvised phrases played between iterations of the *gat*) at the same time as learning the *gat*s. [6] These set *toda*s would often follow the same pattern in multiple ragas. When I was first learning these set *toda*s, it was important to learn how they worked in each raga. Learning these set *toda*s multiple times in different ragas gave me an understanding of how their shape and expression changed in accordance with the *chalan* of each raga. As my *talīm* progressed I would then show Ustadji how I expected some of these set *toda*s to

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[5] Contrary to Neuman's claim (2012) that typically hereditary *ustad*s would not give the name of the raga they were teaching, I would always know the raga I was learning from Ustadji. Furthermore, from discussions with Ustadji about his own learning, neither his father nor his uncle withheld the names of the ragas they were teaching. This is one of many instances within literature on Hindustani music where the pedagogical style of one lineage (or a select few lineages that academics and institutions have had access to) has been accepted as representative of pedagogical style more broadly. This is not the case.

[6] There is often confusion with the mention of *toda*s, as today most people call them *tān*s. However, according to Ustadji, in the instrumental *gat-toda* tradition of Hindustani music, *tān* just means single melodic movement. Therefore, a melodic movement in the *alāp* could be considered a *tān.* Moreover, a *toda* could comprise many *tān*s.

work in the raga I was learning, based on the *gat* I had just been taught. He would then approve or correct my interpretation.

Much of what I would learn about *toda*s would be after I had learned the *alāp.* I came to learn from Ustadji that all the student needs to know about the *chalan* of the raga lies within the melodic movements of the *alāp*, giving the student all necessary ingredients to make their own *toda*s. Once I had learned the *gat*s and *alāp* Ustadji would often give a full demonstration of the raga and how he improvised. Sometimes I would just listen to these demonstrations. However, most of the time Ustadji would begin to play a *gat* and I would be expected to join in and accompany. I would then repeat the *gat* over and over, keeping its cycle in the absence of tabla, while Ustadji improvised *toda*s. I watched and heard, as I played, how the set *toda*s could be varied and how to come up with new *toda*s spontaneously.

Accompanying Ustadji's improvisations gave a visceral sense, in real time, of the temporal knowledge inherent in the style of the *gharānā*. By hearing and feeling how Ustadji's *toda*s fitted with the *bols* of the *gat* I was playing, I came to know where Ustadji started and finished *toda*s in the *tāl* cycle, as well as the speed, rhythm and articulation with which he played them. I would feel this in a number of ways. Firstly, through excitement in the gut, which would result in having to regulate the tempo of my accompaniment, ensuring Ustadji's playing did not speed up my own — through regulating my breath, visualising a constant pulse like a piston in my mind and maintaining abdominal core strength. Secondly, I felt tension between my regulated tempo and the rhythmic feel and placement of Ustadji's playing as tingling sensations up the back of the neck, through the scalp, and slight tension in the eyes, ears and forehead. This tension was not prohibitive to my playing. It was therefore an indicator that I was developing a sense of rhythmic style.

Being alert to sensation when I was playing during *talīm* was important, because in both *riyaz* and performance I would try and recall the feeling of playing the technique or repertoire learned in class. For example, attempts to recreate the sense of rhythmic style described above would involve recalling memory of sensation — referring back to the sense of tension, as well as the sounding outcome of my rhythmic placement in relation to a tabla machine. The remembered sensation would inform the way of

sounding. The sounding outcome was then feedback as to whether I had recalled the sensation correctly. If the sound was noticeably different from the sound remembered, or from the recording referred to, I would adjust my body and playing technique until it was closer. I would know I had learned something when the memory of the sensation in class aligned with the desired sound I was aiming to produce. This process applied to all aspects of my *talīm*.

Sometimes the most significant lessons learned were not from the repertoire or techniques, but from conversations when playing had finished. This was often when we would drink a cup of tea, and I would ask questions prompted by what I was learning to play. This would lead to conversations about numerous relevant details including: Ustadji's own learning; his ancestors; other distinguished exponents of various Hindustani music *gharānā*s; the theories and philosophies underpinning Hindustani music; and the wider history of the instruments and the art forms. These discussions and oral histories often led to a fuller understanding of a particular technique, or why a *gat* was composed the way it was, as well as establishing a closer relationship with Ustadji.

Our discussions also ingrained a deeper sense of the social and aesthetic conditions in which this musical tradition has developed and continues to evolve. This sense resulted in a stronger emotional, social, aesthetic and technical understanding of the *gharānā*, its repertoire, the ragas I had been learning and the art form as whole. This resonates with Katz's explanation of historical and theoretical perspectives gained through *talīm,* as continuing a 'chain of memory through which the voices of the ancestors are carried into the present' (2017, p. 12). Working from my ontology of music as a composite of multiple forms of knowledge, this 'chain of memory' is as important to learning the knowledge of the *gharānā* as learning the notes and how to play them. These conversations were therefore a crucial element of my *talīm*, and as essential as learning to perform.

Over the ten or eleven months of each year I spent back in the UK, I received *talīm* online via video call. Learning online followed a similar, though somewhat condensed format as learning face-to-face. A raga would be decided upon. I would learn the *gat*s and *alāp* phrase by phrase. I would learn *toda*s through demonstrations from Ustadji.

However, the content of class was limited by such technical restrictions as insufficient bandwidth to see and hear everything clearly in real time and by the latency inherent to playing via video call. Other aspects that were missing from online class were: the convivial social environment in which conversation revealed wider knowledge of the *gharānā*; and being able to pick up the subtle embodied details in Ustadji's playing because I was only seeing a two-dimensional image of Ustadji, often at an angle that did not show his whole body. Similarly, Ustadji could not see what my hands and body were doing on his tablet screen in the same way he could in class, which meant he could not assess my posture and hand position. Therefore, online *talīm* was much more oriented towards learning sound knowledge, repertoire, only.

It was essential to consider my approach to the act of listening during *talīm* and the way in which it factored into my wider methodology. During online *talīm* I would mostly rely on the sound coming through Ustadji's tablet microphone and then through my speakers, with some limited visual stimuli from the image Ustadji's camera captured. I preferred not to wear headphones because they prevented me from hearing my sitar playing in the room as clearly. From the perspective of an ontology of music and listening, which centres the concept of sound objects, learning online would be sufficient. The sound of Ustadji's playing would enter my ear and my brain would understand it, so I should then be able to learn to recreate it. However, what was learned during face-to-face *talīm* was always more thorough than during online *talīm*. I always came away from class in person with a deeper understanding of the ways of playing of the *gharānā*, beyond just the repertoire.

My approach to listening in class extended beyond thinking of the ear as the only part of the body that listens. It was informed by the similarity Kapchan (2009) identifies between the Sufi concept of *sama*[7] and what scholars such as Becker (2004) call 'deep listening'. Kapchan (2009, p. 67) explains that both listening approaches demonstrate 'an active and attentive listening that involves not just the ear, but the entire affective and sensate being'. This describes exactly how I would listen in face-to-face *talīm* with Ustadji. When Ustadji demonstrated a phrase for me to repeat, my listening body — including, but not only, my ear — would sense the sound from every

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[7] the translation Kapchan uses in this instance is 'spiritual audition'

part of the sarod. I would be alert to the way the sarod sounded in the room and the way it related to other sounds inside and outside the room.

My eyes were not just watching; they too were another active part of my listening body, assisting in my understanding of how sound was produced. My listening body would sense the movement of Ustadji's hands as he produced each note and the subtle ways his whole body moved as those notes became a phrase. I would sense the stillness and composure of Ustadji's posture as he played. I would comprehend the juxtaposition between the parts of the body that moved with speed and strength, while others remained still. My approach to listening during face-to-face *talīm* was tuning into knowledge circulating in 'feedback between body and machine, body and body, body and environment' (Kapchan, 2015, p. 38). Rather than the body becoming 'all eyes' (Zarrilli, 1998, p. 201), in the context of embodied listening during *talīm* it could be argued that the body, including the eyes, becomes all ears.

4.2 The experience of *riyaz*

A large amount of recorded material of Umar Khan and Ilyas Khan has been lost. However, there is a significant amount of recorded material of performances, radio recordings and demonstrations of Ilyas Khan in his later years. As a dedicated student of Irfan Muhammad Khan, I have been able to access these, though I have decided not to share any of the recordings that are not already publicly available from the recorded archive in this project. Irfan Muhammad Khan's most senior sitar student, Matyas Wolter, has been remastering, digitising, and making available online some of these recordings, as well as those of Kaukab, Sakhawat Hussain Khan, Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan, Walliullah Khan, Umar Khan, Ustad Idris Khan, Ustad Shahid Khan, and Irfan Muhammad Khan himself.

These archival recordings are a rich resource for technique, *gat*s, and *toda*s. They also show individual stylistic differences between the various exponents of the *gharānā*. However, they should not be taken as absolute authoritative representations of the way the musicians of the *gharānā* develop a full performance. Tensions between accurately representing performances of a music tradition and the technological and social constraints of the recording process have been written about in the context of several traditions (Bayley, 2010). The ways in which recordings represent or

misrepresent specifically Hindustani music artists has been explored by Adrian McNeil (2004b). There are numerous social and technological factors that impact how reliably the recorded archive of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana represents the practices of its exponents. From the recorded archive of Kaukab, it could be suggested he only played Thumri, because the available recordings of him only feature Thumri *gat*s. The reason he played Thumri *gat*s for these recordings was because the technology of the time could only record a few minutes of audio and Thumri *gat*s are better suited to short performances. There is a similar issue with Ilyas Khan's radio recordings. He was recording to a fixed time for broadcast, which meant that these recordings were not necessarily representative of the way he would develop a raga in a full-length, live performance.

Learning repertoire only from recordings, without knowing the wider context, could lead to misrepresenting the repertoire of the *gharānā*. This is something I have had to consider when referring to recordings during *riyaz* to assist my own playing. I have therefore made a conscious effort to check with Ustadji some of the details I hear from recordings of earlier exponents of the *gharānā*. Again, this highlights the importance of paying attention to the wider embodied knowledge that is passed on in person during the learning process. As well as being the main source of instruction for performing, learning in person becomes a standard against which enduring archival materials can be assessed for the extent to which they represent the knowledge and style of a performer. For this reason, during *riyaz*, I have referred more to the recorded lessons, which serve as a reminder of what I was taught in class, to directly inform my practice.

I listened to archival recordings of Ilyas Khan predominantly with the intention of familiarising myself with the repertoire, learning expressive nuance in sound production, and inspiration for devising my own *toda*s. However, the more I became familiar with the repertoire of the *gharānā*, the more listening to Ilyas Khan playing sitar felt like riyaz. I would hear him play certain phrases in these recordings that I could imagine playing myself, recalling the feeling of the same or similar phrases that I had been taught. I felt as though I was projecting his performance through my arms and fingers to an imaginary sitar that was almost tangible. This feeling was enhanced by the memory of playing on Ilyas Khan's actual sitars (see Figure 4.1.3) during *talīm*

in Kolkata, on which I got to feel the shape and texture of the instrument and the resistance of the strings as they were struck, pressed and pulled.

The experience of feeling as though I was physically practising whilst listening to recordings of Ilyas Khan affirmatively answers Margaret Walker's (2000, p. 36) question, '[could] the act of informed listening [be] the covert representation, a physical memory, of the actions involved in musical production?'. My informed listening was a kind of 'mental practice', which Walker describes as when 'one imagines playing, internally seeing the instrument, hearing the sounds and feeling the movements involved in playing, [which] actually reinforces the covert connection between the sound and the sound-producing movement' (2000, p. 36). However, emphasis must be given to this being *informed* listening. My enhanced memory and understanding were a result of having already developed intimate familiarity with the embodied musical knowledge of the *gharānā* from several hours of *talīm* and *riyaz*. It is likely there would be some experience of this kind if a sitar student who was unfamiliar with the *gharānā* listened to the archival recordings of Ilyas Khan, but to a significantly lesser degree.

As mentioned in the Methodology, I was advised to break *riyaz* into four parts: *paltas*, less familiar raga, familiar raga, Thumri raga. Ustadji advised that I should begin riyaz early in the morning. He recalled that, when he was learning, he would get up early enough to start practice at 5am. He would have some tea and something light to eat, do 3 hours, then have breakfast. Then in the afternoon he would do another session of practice. He explained that if I wanted my playing to sound sweet and melodious I would be better off practising early in the morning. Practising later would make my playing fast and powerful, but it would lack the sweetness. There is logic to this. Playing early in the morning, before the stresses of the day or any other distractions have had chance to impact the mood, gives a musician the chance to form a more intimate connection with the musical knowledge they are learning to express.

Early practice is common for many masters of Hindustani music. It has physiological and spiritual justifications, which are explained in Aysha Imtiaz's article (n.d., darbar.org). Ustadji's advice then, was not only about optimising my *riyaz* to improve my playing, but also learning a way of being and doing, in terms of structuring the way

I live each day, and therefore a way of inhabiting the tradition as a whole. My ability to follow this structure to the day varied throughout the project. There were periods — especially during write-up of the thesis — that this routine was not possible. However, I tried to ensure that I practised *paltas* and repertoire every day and followed this daily practice routine as closely as possible.

Aside from structuring the process of *riyaz*, another way in which time of day was an important variable during riyaz related to which ragas I practised. Every raga evokes a specific, unique, mood or atmosphere, but also has an appropriate time of day or season to be performed or practised. Playing the ragas at the appropriate time of day will bring out its inherent affective qualities. Ustadji recounts that when he was staying with his uncle, Ilyas Khan, to study, Ilyas Khan would sometimes wake Ustadji up in the middle of the night, or at 4am, to tell him to practise a midnight or early morning raga (Khan, 22 November 2024, personal communication). If he was not used to performing these ragas at the right time, his body would not be primed to deliver the best performance. This logic also comes from the old system of patronage. If a patron summoned a musician for the middle of the night, or at the crack of dawn, the musician needed to be ready to perform at the drop of a hat.

The importance of time of day highlights a crucial element of temporal knowledge in Hindustani music in general. However, the sense of readiness to serve both the patron and the raga by acknowledging time of day or season, as a crucial variable in *riyaz*, also speaks to the specific experience of musicians whose ancestors were once patronised by the courts. With this in mind, I also attempted to practise ragas at the right time of day or season. If there was a thunderstorm, I would pick up my sitar and practise one of the Malhar ragas. In spring I would practise Basant. Obviously in my day-to-day riyaz, which tended to be in the morning, I would not only play morning ragas, but I would try and at least ensure I had played something that matched a specific time of day or season regularly.

Paltas are technical exercises (see Video 4.2). They are of crucial importance for honing and refining the speed, strength and control of the left and right hands, as well as specialised techniques such as *gamak*s (Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). Practising *paltas* not only improves technique but also improves stamina and patience. Spending at

least an hour each day going over the same small number of repetitive exercises prepares the body and mind to resist the urge to reveal too many ideas in improvisation too soon or to speed up too quickly in a performance.

When Irfan Muhammad Khan was a student, he was sent by his father and *ustad*, Umar Khan, in Kolkata to stay for a period of intensive tuition with his uncle, Ilyas Khan in Lucknow. Irfan Muhammad Khan explained that for the first 6 months Ilyas Khan instructed him only to practise *jhalla* strokes. After that 6 months Ilyas Khan still was not entirely happy with Irfan Muhammad Khan's refinement of the strokes, but they were passable enough to begin teaching other repertoire. Irfan Muhammad Khan explained that although those 6 months were gruelling, the benefits to his technique, stamina and frame of mind from that period have lasted to this day. With the time constraint of this project and the amount of repertoire I wanted to learn, such an extended period to work on one single technique was not possible. However, it is a frame of reference that helps me to keep focus and move through fatigue, when repeating a *palta* becomes tiring.

I would practise a selection in the first hour of *riyaz*, six of which are presented below and in Video 4.2. The first three improve dexterity and precision of the left hand. Using the *swāra*s of Yaman they are as follows:

1. Over Ektaal (12 beats)—*SṆ RS GR MG PM DP ND ṠN ṘṠ G̓Ṙ ṘṠ ṠN ND DP PM MG GR RS*

This *palta* is exclusively for sitar. The upper note of each descending pair of *swāra*s is stopped by the middle finger and the lower of each pair is stopped by the index finger. Ascending and descending along the neck of the sitar with the whole hand, while playing descending pairs alternating between the two fingers, decouples the motion of the hand from the motion of the fingers. Instead of the movement of the hand being synonymous with the movement of melody, the positioning of the hand determines where on the sitar neck (and therefore the *saptak*), the fingers dwell. This prepares the bodymind (Daboo, 2010) for improvising intricate melodic movements in which the motion of the fingers can more easily move counter to the motion of the hand.

As with all fretted instruments, on sitar the finger pushing the string down actually causes the *parda* in front of it to stop the string.[8] As the finger slides to the next *parda*, the pitch of the *swāra* does not change until the next *parda* is stopping the string. This is what makes this *palta* playable. Without frets, the index finger sliding up the string to its new position, before the middle finger stops the next note, would be audible. This would spoil the sound of the melodic motion, which means this *palta* cannot be played in the same way on the fretless sarod or cello. Instead, the descending pairs would be played with one finger sliding from the upper to the lower note. Therefore, the motion of the hand in the modes of sarod and cello playing differ from that of sitar playing. When playing with two fingers on cello, the motion of the hand will always follow the motion of the melodic movement.

2. Over Tīntāl (16 beats)—*SRGM PDNŚ DNŚṘ ĠṘŚN DPMG RSGR SṆḌP MPḌN*

3. Over Tīntāl (16 beats)—*GRS MGR PMG DPM NDP ŚND ṘŚN ĠṘŚ DNŚ PDN MPD GMP RGM SRG ṆSR ḌṆS*

The above three paltas would all be played over a tempo of 100bpm. However, every five minutes I would increase the speed at which I play them over that fixed tempo. In a thorough session, first I would play them single speed — at a ratio of 1:1, then one and a half speed (2:3), then double speed (1:2), then triple speed (1:3), then four times (1:4), then potentially six times (1:6) and eight times (1:8). If I was pushed for time I would go from 1:2 to 1:4 or 1:6. This improves the ability to improvise around the *lay* and to play *laykarī* effectively.

4. Repeating the strokes *DaRa DaRa Da Ra Da Ra chik chik*[9] at speed improves right hand strength and control when playing *jhalla*. Over a 100bpm Tīntāl cycle, the actual speed of the *jhalla* strokes would be 400 bpm. Therefore, increasing

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[8] Despite this technicality, it is easiest when describing playing the instrument to say the finger is doing the stopping.
[9] Right hand strokes are described in 4.6 Right Hand Performance.

the *tāl* tempo by 1bpm would increase the *jhalla* strokes by 4 bpm. I did not translate this stroke to cello, as it does not have chikārī strings.

The two *gamak*[10] *paltas* are as follows (Figures 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). The experience and
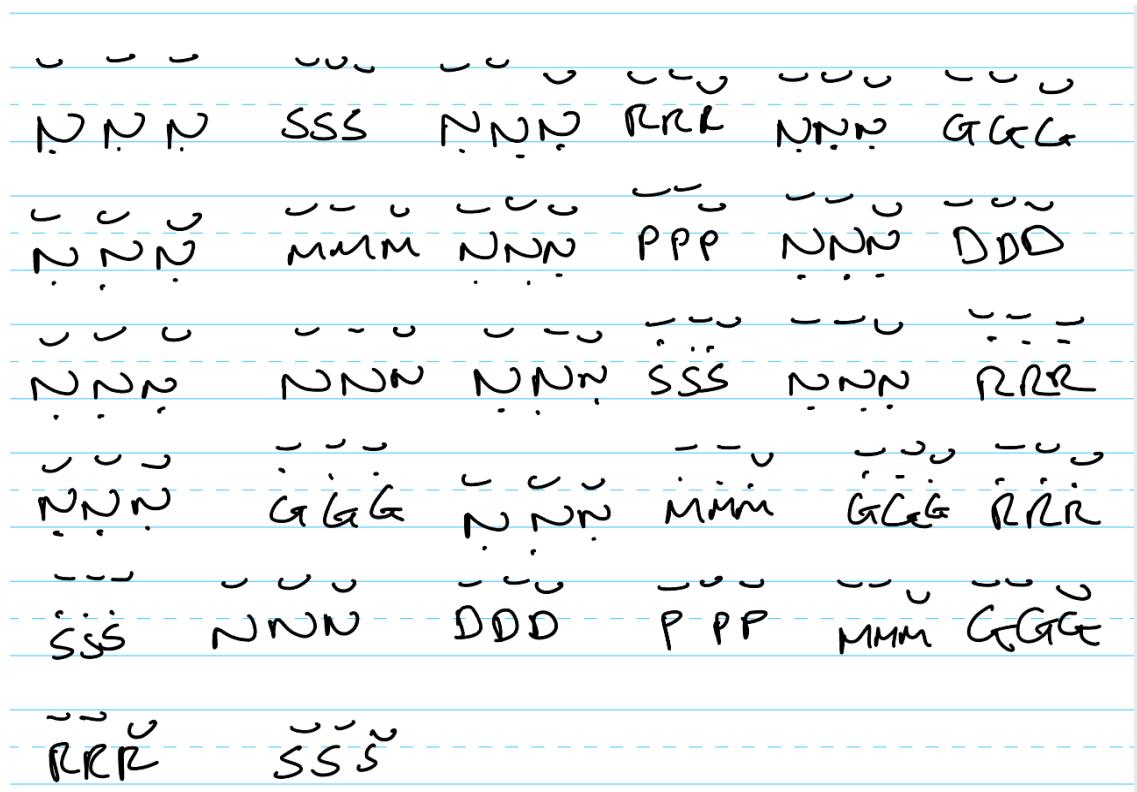
sensation of playing *gamak* is described in more detail in 5.2 *Alāp-jod-jhalla*:

Figure 4.2.1 first *gamak palta.*
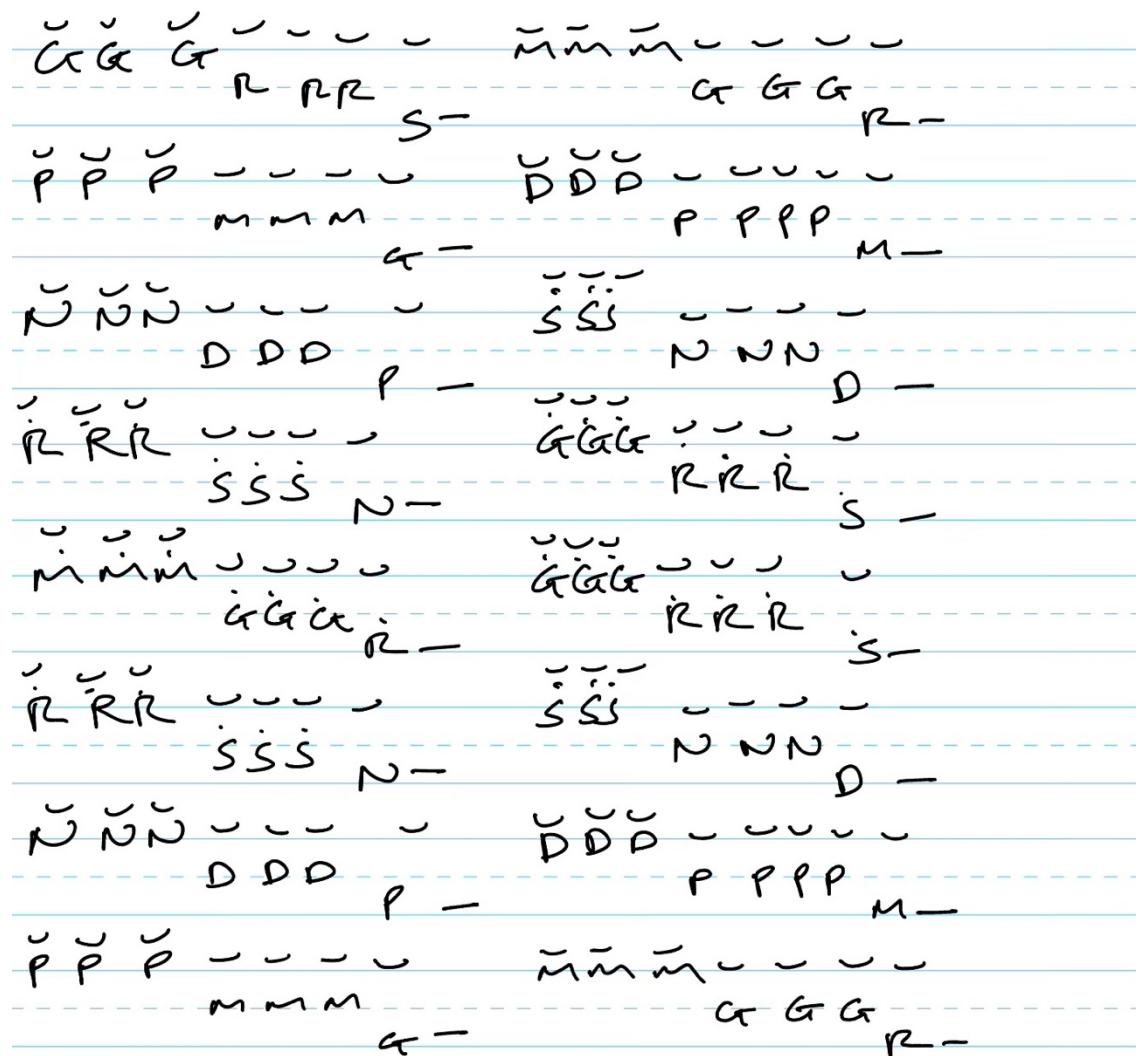
Figure 4.2.2 second *gamak palta*.

In February 2024, at the end of my final period of in person *talīm* during this project, I had learned a repertoire of over 60 ragas. However, very few of them I could recall without first revisiting my notes, transcriptions and recordings. I asked Ustadji how I should conduct my *riyaz* over the next 16 months to ensure that by the time of my final recital I would be able to demonstrate confidently in performance that I had embodied as much of this musical knowledge as possible. We decided that 60 ragas were more than enough, so I would not be learning any new repertoire. Ustadji then recommended that I focus on revising a selection of these ragas and we would reconnect regularly to rectify any mistakes or questions. I would also keep practising the Thumri ragas: Bhairavi, Gara, Kafi, Khamaj, Pilu and Zila Kafi.

The processes of *talīm* and *riyaz* are processes of 'becoming' (Ingold, 2011, p. 9), in which the student not only receives the body knowledge (Neuman, 2012, p. 440) of the ustad and the *gharānā*. The student dedicates considerable time and attention to honing the body's capacity to sense, receive and move in ways that effectively sustain this knowledge. The student's 'paramparic body' (Rahaim, 2012. p. 130) interweaves with the *gharānā* to become part of its 'continually evolving tapestry' (Ingold, 2011. p. 9). *Talīm* and *riyaz* are therefore crucial to the method of learning to inhabit the style and tradition of the *gharānā*, archiving it through practice (Deo and Subramanian, 2020).

<u>4.3 Sitar posture</u>

A considerable amount of time and attention during *talīm* and *riyaz* were directed towards my sitting position to achieve as close a posture to that of Ilyas Khan as possible. A particular focus was given to the position of my right arm and right hand. Ustadji would alter and correct my right arm and hand in class, based on his intimate knowledge of the playing technique of his uncle. I would try to imprint the feeling of the corrected position so I could replicate it during *riyaz*. Ustadji also instructed me to study pictures of Ilyas Khan, as well as his son Idris Khan to remind me of this position. Once I had learned the correct way of sitting and positioning my right arm, I documented how exactly that should feel in the body (Appendix 2). This feeling of the correct way of sitting is the result of a process of *talīm*, consulting archival photographs and comparing to documentation of other sitarists' postures, from outside the *gharānā*. The detail of this process and key features of this sitting position are presented below.

Learning a way of sitting that best facilitates a position of the right hand to produce sound from the sitar in the style of the *gharānā* most effectively was a gradual process. It involved reflecting on the entire body. Adjustments were made in response to tension, or resistance in the body and sounding strained when playing — especially at speed. There were many occasions that Ustadji corrected something about my hand, or my posture and I would then take a close-up photo of the part of my body that had been adjusted, for future reference. These photos ended up, for the most part, not being very helpful. Looking only at a concentrated area was not taking into consideration the small adjustments made to the rest of the body. To resolve this, whenever I picked up the sitar, I would direct my attention to the way numerous parts of the body connected to other parts of the body, when I felt I was sat in a way that created the least tension and resistance. As well as referring to photos of Ilyas Khan and other sitarists in the *gharānā,* I also would refer to the photos, which I had taken for reference, of my whole body to assist in my repositioning.

The spine is a key area of consideration when attending to sitar posture in practice. For some of the UK tour I co-organised for Ustadji in 2023, we stayed at the residence of Kathak dancer, Alpana Sengupta. As well as a deep knowledge of movement practices, Alpana Sengupta had a deep understanding of sitar technique, having been

married to and collaborated long-term with the late sitarist Mick Taylor. When she saw me practising, she observed my spine was not straight and there was tension in my hands. She instructed me to stand up, with my legs poised in a strong A-frame, the width of my shoulders, and a straight, strong spine. My arms from the shoulder to the elbow hung parallel to my torso. Then she demonstrated a movement involving raised forearms, rotating my wrists, and opening and closing my fingers like a fan. She explained that my spine and my core should feel strong and my forearms to my fingers should feel nimble. The nimble and relaxed forearms to fingers was a direct result of the engaged core and strong spine. She recommended that I apply this principle to my practice.

This awareness directed to my spine and core changed the way I related to my sitar playing body as a whole. Instead of thinking about each isolated part of the body, I began to consider the ways in which they connected. Later that day I mentioned this interaction to Ustadji. He agreed, explaining that it would help me to improve my sitar posture and if I looked at the video of Sakhawat Hussain Khan (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020d), I would see his spine was straight and his hands relaxed. The mutual understanding between Ustadji and Alpana Sengupta of attuning to anatomic alignment and attending to posture illustrates the undergirding principle of *cittam* and *mana* mentioned by Philip Zarilli (2011) across South Asian embodied practices.

The angle of Ilyas Khan's right arm in relation to the shoulder is approximately 45 degrees. Ustadji explained that this arm position (he did not say a specific angle) enables a more relaxed posture, lessening the likelihood of tension in the shoulders and strain on the spine. He advised that allowing the elbow to sit too wide on the gourd will cause strain in the spine, shoulder and elbow. Moreover, despite making playing superficially easier in the short term, a wide elbow will prevent the correct opening and closing right-hand stroke technique, causing eventual finger strain from overplaying with too much use of the arm.

The photos of Ilyas Khan (Figure 4.3.1) and Idris Khan (Figure 4.3.2) both show the angle at which the right forearm rests is very similar, and the thumb is placed after the *Ga parda* in both pictures. This hand placement, with the instrument tilted slightly forwards, enables the optimal opening and closing hand stroke technique. This way of stroking ensures the hand, rather than the wrist and the arm does most of the work to strike the string. Too much use of the arm and wrist was a sign my hand and fingers were stiff. This stiffness would cause muscle strain and would lead to injury. It would also affect the quality of sound on the instrument when playing at speed. There is not necessarily an obvious audible difference between a relaxed and straining hand with one single stroke. It becomes more obvious when playing multiple strokes quickly, at a constant tempo. If the rhythmic flow is broken or if there is too much variation in articulation so the consistency is lost, that is a sign of a straining right hand. That said, a straining hand may also be audibly noticeable at a slower tempo or with a single stroke, if the attack on the string is too strong that the decay of the string's vibration and the resonance of the instrument is lost.

Figure 4.3.1 Ilyas Khan's thumb position. Image courtesy of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan
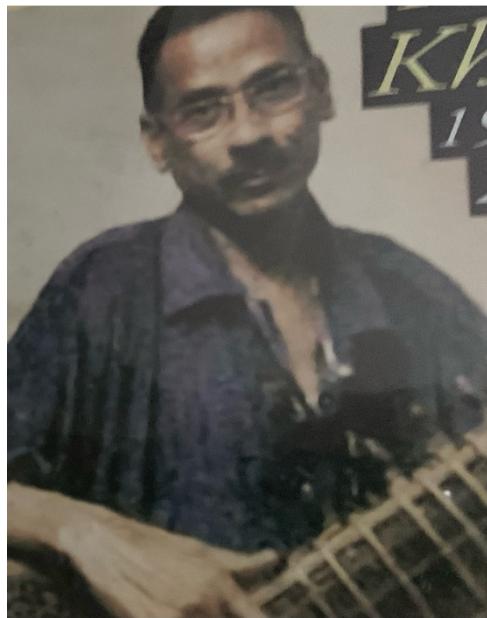
Figure 4.3.2 Idris Khan's thumb position. Photo taken of a picture on Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan's wall (edited to compensate for camera angle).

Ustadji explained that if my right arm and hand position were correct, I should be able to 'make a ring' (Khan, personal communication, 20 January 2024), with the inside of my index finger and thumb (see Figure 4.3.3). The ring shape forming at the end of a *Da* stroke and before a *Ra* stroke indicated that much of the effort of the sitar strokes was from the opening and closing of the hand, instead of unnecessary movement of the arm and wrist. This gives greater control over the strokes, especially *jhalla* strokes, and improves stamina in performance, helping to keep a stable amount of power: not too strong but strong enough to get the instrument to resonate. This reduces chances of tension and therefore injury.

Figure 4.3.3 index finger and *mizrab* forming a ring with the thumb at the end of a *Da* stroke. © Yelding

The insight from Ustadji into Ilyas Khan's posture and right-hand technique will have come from Ustadji's experience of years of observing his uncle practising, teaching and performing. This is therefore a pertinent example of embodied musical knowledge transmitted across multiple generations of teacher and student:

- Kinetic knowledge: the physical positioning of the body and the physiological reasoning behind it.
- Mechanical knowledge: a level of understanding the design of the instrument to know the most effective way to incorporate it into the sitting body.
- Sounding knowledge: knowing that this position will create the optimal sounding result.
- Linguistic knowledge: that Ustadji was able to encapsulate forming the incredibly specific shape and position of the right hand and fingers with the simple phrase, 'make a ring', in a second language.

The sounding knowledge and the kinetic knowledge work hand in hand, informed by the mechanical knowledge. In practice and performance, I would often become aware of tension after perceiving a quality of sound that I was unsatisfied with. I would then ask myself as I was playing: how does my hand feel? how is it moving? I would then

make an adjustment. Once the adjustment was made, I would listen to find out if there was a positive difference in sound. I would have developed only a fraction of this sound-informed bodily awareness from studying the photos alone. The photos unlocked, enhanced and reaffirmed what had first been learned from that embodied transmission in class. The refining of my right hand was (and is) an ongoing process. The photos, combined with an alertness to sound quality and sensing tension in my fingers, hand and wrist, serve as a reminder, assisting in this process of refinement.

There was another detail relating to my sitar right hand position, which did not come from explanation from Ustadji or from photos. That detail is the slight resting curvature of the wrist. I was finding it challenging to 'make a ring' with my hand in the correct position and make a consistently clear sound without tension. There was something I was missing; my wrist was too straight. The missing element, the slight curvature of the wrist only became apparent after Ustadji asked me to tune his sarod in class. I barely knew how to play the sarod, having held it only a handful of times. I had, however, observed Ustadji's posture and playing in front of me, under two metres away, for several cumulative hours, over four years. I picked the sarod up and held it in the way I had seen him hold it. I immediately felt the natural curvature of the wrist, which happens when positioning the arm the way that can be seen in the photos of Umar Khan (Figure 4.3.4) and Irfan Muhammad Khan (Figure 4.3.5).[11] When I returned to the sitar, having tuned Ustadji's sarod, I retained that curvature that I had felt whilst holding and tuning the sarod. This allowed my wrist to relax much more while playing and helped to increase my right-hand speed and control over my strokes.

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[11] This differs from the Maihar way of holding the sarod, where the elbow is much wider.

Figure 4.3.4

Figure 4.3.5

Umar Khan's hand position.
Image courtesy of Ustad Irfan
Muhammad Khan.
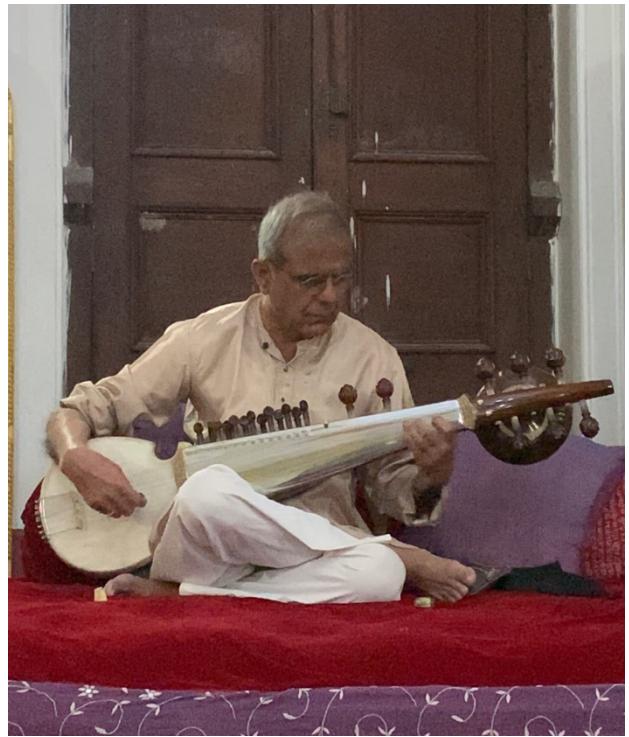
Irfan Muhammad Khan's hand position.
Photo taken February 2023 during a recital
at the Mahishadal Rajbari. © Yelding

I wrote down where I concentrated my attention in the body for both the penultimate and final iterations of my posture during the period of my research (Appendix 2). The most obvious conscious difference between these postures was that I had moved my lower right leg forward to rest my shin on my kneecap, so that the entire side of my right foot would rest on the ground instead of only part of it. I decided to make this change because I had noticed in the photo of Ilyas Khan (Figure 4.3.1) that his right foot was rested entirely on the ground and the angle of his right leg in relation to the ground was more obtuse than mine. Placing the whole side of the foot on the ground, whilst my right leg crossed my left leg further up my left thigh caused my right leg to go numb and my knees to strain. Bringing my right leg further forwards prevented this. The difference between these postures is illustrated in Figures 4.3.6 and 4.3.7.

Figure 4.3.6 posture before right foot adjustment. © Yelding

Figure 4.3.7 posture after right foot adjustment. © Yelding

In this new position (Figure 4.3.7) I felt a notable sense of stability that I had not felt in 16 years of playing sitar. It was as though I had been given a whole new foundation from which I could play with considerably more ease. I was no longer concerned about over stretching my knees as a result of mild hyper-mobility. My right foot felt like the third support of a tripod with my left buttock and the top of my left foot, which was rested on the ground at the base of the right side of my body. When I explained this to Ustadji, he agreed that this was a needed change to my posture. He likened it to

earthing a plug. The third point is necessary 'to prevent a short circuit' he joked (Khan, personal communication, 22 November 2024). Underneath that joke is a great deal of sense. With the new positioning of the foot, I felt less likely to slouch and more in control of keeping my spine straight and my head still because of the increased stability. There was less resistance from my right hand when playing fast *dir* and *jhalla* strokes.

Resting the whole side of my right foot on the ground enabled a more relaxed body and mind when playing, as it reduced the build-up of tension — or 'short circuiting'. The two photos (Figures 4.3.6 and 4.3.7) were taken three days apart, before and after making this change to my posture. The latter shows a slightly more open chest, which also enabled deeper breathing. The difference appears only slight in the picture, but the difference in terms of a sense of stability was striking. That this crucial change to my posture came from a photo of Ilyas Khan shows the importance of enduring materials as part of a musical archive. However, the placement of the right foot in the photo only took on greater significance as a result of responding to that photo through practice, with an embodied understanding of the practice that the photo was documenting.

Another cause of stiffness in the right hand is tension in the left foot supporting the body of the instrument. I found that when playing, as tension increased, I had a tendency to flex my left foot. My toes would go from being in line with my left elbow (as seen in figure 4.3.7) to pointing more to my front. This altered the position of the body of the sitar, which impacted the positioning of my right hand. A flexed outwards left foot also destabilised my balance because the altered position of the sitar also caused my body to lean slightly to the right.[12] Also, a tense rather than a relaxed foot under my right thigh and sitar meant my seated foundation felt destabilised. I would not notice these above changes in the body until I noticed my right hand going tense and finding right-hand strokes at speed more challenging to play. Once becoming aware of this, I would troubleshoot. I would check: is my right-hand position making a ring? If it was, then is my right foot stable and on the ground? If so, I would then

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[12] In these moments I decided not to set up a camera and photograph this disruption to my posture. Photos would give more than an autoethnographic account as evidence. However, I felt strongly that giving more attention to flexed out toes, or overbalancing, which cause tension and n*egativ*ely impact my practice would further ingrain the habit of making these mistakes in my muscle memory.

shift my attention to my left foot. On numerous occasions it was my flexed left toes that were the culprit of the tension. I would then breathe and relax my foot, so the toes were once more pointing in the same direction as my elbow, which would usually alleviate tension and relaxed my right hand, and subsequently improved the quality of the sound I was producing.

Posture and how to sit while playing sitar is well documented in the literature on sitar practice and performance (Avtar Vir, 1980; Bandyopadhyaya, 1988; Hamilton, 1989; Slawek, 1987; Alford, 1989; 2008). However, owing to the way sitar players such as Ilyas Khan and Walliullah Khan have been overlooked, there is very little documentation or acknowledgment of sitar posture according to the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in academic literature. To address this, a brief comparison will follow between the sitting positions of three prominent sitarists of the same mid-twentieth-century generation: Ilyas Khan (1924–1989), Vilayat Khan (1928–2004) of the Imdadkhani Gharana, and Ravi Shankar (1920–2012) of the Maihar Gharana. I traced from the photo with Umar Khan (Figure 4.3.8) the outline of Ilyas Khan's posture (Figure 4.3.9). I also traced the outline of my own posture (Figure 4.3.10) and the postures of Vilayat Khan (Figure 4.3.11) from a screenshot of a recording of one of his performances (navrasrecords, 2015) and of Ravi Shankar (Figure 4.3.12) from a photo of one of his performances (Britannica, n.d.). This posture analysis is therefore only based on single moments of these artists' respective lifetime practices. However, the differences between their postures are significant enough for these moments to be considered representative of their respective practices.
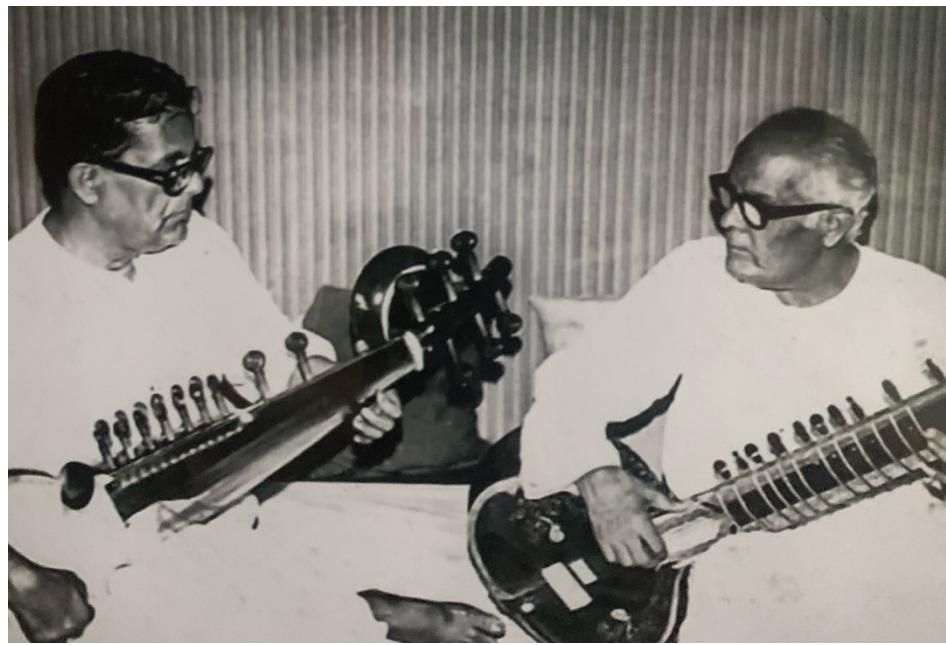
Figure 4.3.8 Umar Khan (left) and Ilyas Khan (right) Image courtesy of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan.
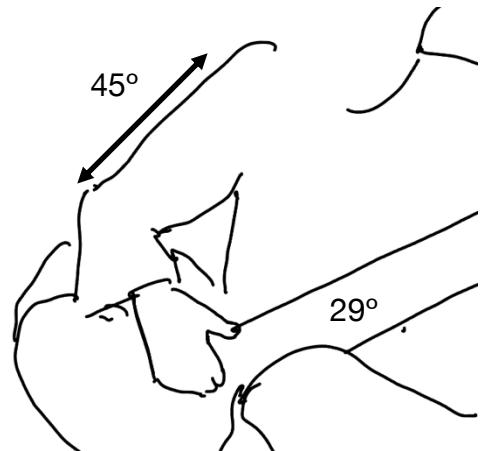
Figure 4.3.9 traced outline of Ilyas Khan's sitting position.
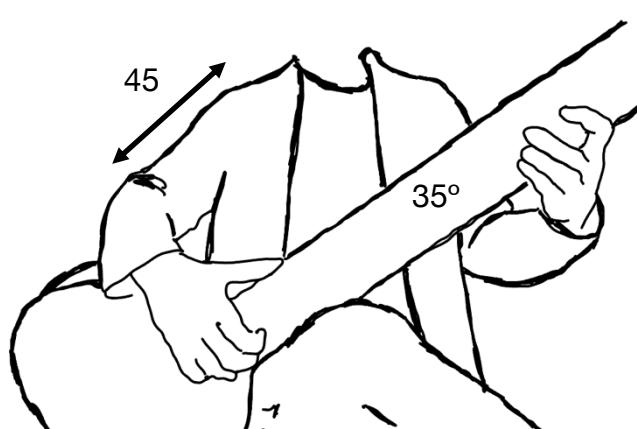
Figure 4.3.10 traced outline of my sitting position.
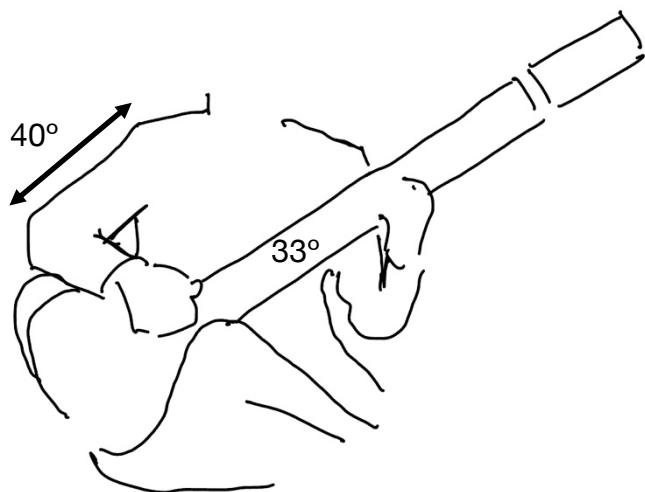
Figure 4.3.11 traced outline of Vilayat Khan's sitting position.
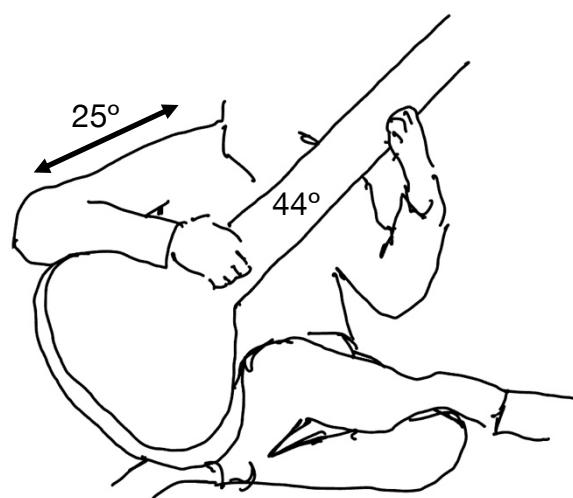
Figure 4.3.12 traced outline of Ravi Shankar's sitting position.

The angle of the neck of Ilyas Khan's sitar, in relation to the floor is slightly more acute than that of Vilayat Khan and considerably more acute than that of Ravi Shankar. From my practice I have found that the acute angle reduces the potential for tension and strain in the left shoulder blade and left triceps. It allows the left elbow to hang lower down in relation to the torso, as the upper arm is relaxed and closer to the body. The elbow can then act as a pivot for the forearm to move freely left and right, along a much flatter axis, along the neck of the instrument, thus making it easier to move the fingers across the strings at high speed. The positioning of the upper left arm closer to the body also more easily allows the forearm and the palm to align and for the palm to be held more parallel with the neck of the sitar. This improves dexterity of the fingers and allows more strength and accuracy when pulling meend. It is beyond the scope

of this project to explore the anatomy of the arm to explain exactly why this is. Improved dexterity can be confirmed by my observation after hours of practice in both this posture and other positions. This posture gave a feeling of greater control and accuracy with my left hand and arm, as well as a better resulting tone and tuning.

The angle of Ilyas Khan's sitting position in the above photos is not significantly different from Vilayat Khan's. The outline of Vilayat Khan shows his right arm is only six degrees more acute in relation to his shoulder and the angle that Vilayat Khan holds the sitar (in relation to the ground) is only five degrees more obtuse than that of Ilyas Khan. Despite stark differences in aesthetic style and the execution of their performance technique, the minimal variance of posture between the two masters of the sitar shows similar approaches to and understanding of most effective sitar posture in both their respective *gharānā*s. However, in the photo of Ravi Shankar, his right arm drops only 23 degrees from the point of the shoulder, meaning his right elbow sits much wider on the gourd of the sitar. The angle of his sitar neck from the ground is also much more obtuse at 43 degrees. Unlike both Ilyas Khan and Vilayat Khan, Ravi Shankar is therefore much less able to support his instrument with his right leg, where the gourd joins the neck of the instrument. This is much closer to a surbahar sitting position. Surbahar is played and supported differently owing to its size, shape and construction. Playing sitar with this posture is far more likely to create tension in the body and is not the most conducive posture to playing with the most relaxed control over the instrument.

Vilayat Khan and Ilyas Khan were trained on the instrument from an early age by their parents and other master musicians associated with their respective musical lineages. Both musicians will have received ongoing explanations and guidance, with minor adjustments, to optimise their ability to play with maximum control, dexterity and accuracy, and as little tension as possible. Ravi Shankar, who was first trained as a dancer, picked up the sitar at 18 years old, much later than both Ilyas Khan and Vilayat Khan. He received an in-depth and thorough training in the practice of Hindustani music from Allaudin Khan of the more recently established Maihar Gharana. However, he was not exposed to the same body knowledge over time, from a young age, in the same way as Ilyas Khan and Vilayat Khan. It is therefore plausible that Shankar's sitting position reflects a gap in his knowledge of sitar practice, which then became a

part of his performance style. The less secure sitar neck, resulting from it not being supported by the right thigh, would move around more when playing. This can be seen in footage of his 1971 recording of Raga Bihag (ALEXPOLYBASS, 2018 4:32). The sitar moves up and down when he pulls *meend* and he rocks backwards and forwards as he plays. This has a degree of theatricality to it, but, as explained in the performance technique sections, a still sitar neck is preferable for most effective command of the instrument.

To acknowledge the drawbacks of Ravi Shankar's sitting position compounds Miner's (1989) criticism of Slawek's (1989) work. Miner states that Slawek presents Ravi Shankar's performance style as an example of sitar practice in general, as opposed to a presentation of that of only his teacher (Miner and Bor, 1989). Ravi Shankar's global platform and revered position as a cultural figure has normalised a sitting position that creates tension in the body over time and makes it harder for players to reach their utmost potential in performance. This posture has now been adopted by generations of sitar students. Moreover, the theatricality that came with the less stable sitar neck positioning has come to be synonymous with sitar playing in the wider public imagination, both in India and internationally. While this has entertainment value, it does not necessarily benefit a way of performing that prioritises the exposition of ragas. Because Slawek (1989) did not clarify that the posture he adopted from Ravi Shankar is not universal, his work has contributed to the normalisation of this way of playing the sitar.

Slawek (1989) was not wrong to emphasise the importance of retaining through practice such a crucial element of a *gharānā*'s performance style as posture. However, the posture he advocated for does not demonstrate the way of sitting that enables most control of the instrument. It is unfortunate that this posture is found in the most widely accessible documentation of sitar performance. As a consequence, there is a risk that the quality of sitar performance will drop over time. The normalisation of Shankar's sitar posture also brings to light biases in musicology, especially of Western ethnomusicologists, based on which musicians that researchers had easiest access and exposure, as opposed to which musicians had the most in-depth knowledge of the art form. Archiving optimal sitar posture such as that of Ilyas Khan through practice is therefore not only crucial for sustaining the performance style

of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, but also to ensure the continued diversity and quality of sitar practice in general.

<u>4.4 Physical disposition</u>

Much of the focus on embodied musical knowledge in this research deals with movement. However, in the same way the crucial inverse of sounding is silence, attention must also be paid to stillness (not moving). The 1935 video footage of Sakhawat Hussain Khan performing Raga Pilu (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, <u>2020</u>d) shows how incredibly still he keeps the upper half of his body as he performs. This reflects the importance of stillness in the performance style of the *gharānā* and became apparent in my first lesson with Ustadji, a year before commencing this project. In my study of sitar prior to meeting Ustadji I had picked up a habit of shaking the sitar neck. I thought moving in this way enabled a greater sense of melodic expression and helped to sustain the sound. However, I had developed the habit of moving the sitar neck because of my posture, which was yet to be addressed, as well as from watching videos of Ravi Shankar and seeing other artists perform in that way. This habit was therefore a result of limited exposure to the knowledge of sitar performance: watching footage only of artists that were well known in the UK and attending concerts by the handful of sitarists that perform in the UK.

Within minutes of playing in my first class, Ustadji instructed me to 'give it [referring to the neck shaking] up'. He explained that moving the neck will make my playing go out of tune and will lead me to play out of *lay* (Khan, personal communication, 5 January 2020).[13] He subsequently said the same when I was moving my head too much.[14] Moving my head along with the contour of melodic motion was wasted energy. I should have been directing this energy to my hands, which were responsible for controlling the melodic motion I was learning. I was moving my body to become familiar with the sounding shape of the melody, but I needed to feel the motion of the movement on the inside, with a sense of focussed intention, before expressing it on the outside. Moving my head was allowing the kinetic energy of the melodic movement to leave my body before I had chance to internalise it, like piercing a hole in a water pipe, allowing the pressure to drop and the water to travel in more than one direction.

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[13] *Lay* roughly translates to metre and rhythmic timing. So, playing out of *lay* means playing out of time.
[14] Whereas Ilyas Khan moved his head momentarily in moments of heightened expression, I was moving my head to the contour of the whole melody I was learning.

Konstantin Stanislavsky (2013 [1937]) famously draws a distinction between an actor exuberantly performing actions intended to convey suffering in the scenario of the loss of a precious brooch on set, then the same actor focusing on the task of finding the brooch because it needed to be found. In the first instance the actor performed superfluous movements to appear expressive. In the second instance, attention and action were directed entirely by the intention of finding the brooch in the part of the room where the brooch was supposed to be. Stanislavsky explained that the latter instance was far more emotionally compelling as well as communicating the narrative of the scenario more clearly. By the same logic, performing with the intention only of communicating the raga will give a more compelling presentation of the atmosphere and emotion of the raga than performing superfluous actions for the sake of appearing expressive. What may appear like a complementary gesture may actually clutter and obstruct what was intended to be expressed. As well as being an important lesson in control of the instrument and internalising melodic movement, learning to embody stillness also reflects the physical disposition of the *gharānā*'s performance style. The rest of this section examines in more detail the disposition required for playing sarod, sitar or cello in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

The superfluous head movements I was making when learning a new *gat* in a raga with which I was unfamiliar contrast significantly with concentrating the kinetic energy of melodic motion only to the part of the body controlling melody. There is a distinction between moving in *response* to melody and moving with the intention of *expressing* melody. A sense of stillness while directing a significant amount of kinetic energy to the hands is illustrated in a notable moment during the *jhalla* at the end of Irfan Muhammad Khan's *alāp* in his 2023 performance of Raga Barwa (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023c, 19:10). While playing fast right-hand strokes, he performs at this moment with the same upper body stillness as seen in Sakhawat Hussain Khan's performance. Despite the melancholic and emotive mood of Raga Barwa, and the speed and rhythmic complexity of the right-hand strokes at this climatic point, Irfan Muhammad Khan remains mostly still.

Ustadji revealed to me after this performance that he had not played this raga for many years. He was therefore less familiar with the melodic motion of Barwa than that of a raga he performs more regularly, thus making his stillness even more notable. He

was more than likely going through the process of 'consulting the intelligence of [his] musicking body' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 108) to recall this raga as he revealed it to the audience. Yet, the kinetic energy and effort of the melodic motion was directed mostly towards his left hand. The expression with which Raga Barwa was conveyed was directed mostly through his right hand and the way the strings were struck.[15] This is an example of muscle memory operating as a form of archiving musical knowledge. Irfan Muhammad Khan was calling on the ways of moving he had learned from his uncle and his father, which he had retained in his bodymind (Daboo, 2010).

The concentration of melodic motion mostly towards the left hand and the sense of stillness in performance appears, on the surface, to contrast with a 'whole-bodily practice of singing; the hands tracing shapes in the air' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 108). The key difference between instrumental performance and vocal performance is that in instrumental performance the hands are creating the sound. Whereas, in vocal performance the hands are assisting the vocalist in mapping the sound. Like vocal performance, instrumental performance is a whole-bodily practice in which instrumentalists adopt 'practiced stances of the body […] from which melodic action is possible' (Rahaim, 2012, p. 108). Instrumentalists are using their whole bodies to '[navigate] temporal and melodic structures' (*ibid*.) as they are performing, to the same extent as vocalists. However, more physical effort is concentrated towards the hands employing particular rhythmic, melodic and textural techniques on the instrument.

The 1988 footage of Ilyas Khan shows upper body and head gestures at moments of melodic and rhythmic tension and excitement (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2022, 5:02 and 5:33). However, there is minimal movement of the sitar itself, even at those moments where Ilyas Khan moves his head and upper torso with his melodic expression. The nature of Ilyas Khan's upper body and head gestures appear: to communicate with the tabla player, to be an extension of his breathing, or to be kinetic overspill, where the kinetic energy of the melodic movement is so great that it

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[15] I was present in the audience at this performance. The audience was visibly moved by the tender and melancholic affect of the melodic movements of this raga and the way they were expressed by Irfan Muhammad Khan. However, the audience was also drawn in by the contrast of the aesthetic tension and expressiveness of his playing, versus his stillness and composure. This is evidenced in the recording by the rapturous applause and vocalisations of appreciation between the *alāp-jod-jhalla* and the start of the *vilambit gat* (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023c, 20:19–20:50).

cannot be contained to just the left hand. Similar examples of such kinetic overspill can be seen at times in Irfan Muhammad Khan's playing, one generation later, for example during the fast *toda*s within the drut section of his 2021 performance of Raga Nat Bihag (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2021c, 38:24). In these moments the effort and anticipation of the fast *toda* leading to the *sam* is visible in the facial expression of Irfan Muhammad Khan, as well as in the upward gesture of his head, followed by the nod to the tabla player acknowledging his arrival on the *sam*.

The gestures of Ilyas Khan and Irfan Muhammad Khan in the above moments emphasise the melodic contour and rhythmic details of what they are playing or about to play, and do not disrupt the *lay* of the performance. These moments are an artful display of intention, effort and anticipation, which also have a degree of performance and entertainment value. Ilyas Khan and Irfan Muhammad Khan's physical movements also communicate and connect with the tabla player. Gestures that communicate with the tabla player are an example of necessary social musical knowledge in Hindustani music, which Nicky Moran (2019) has examined in detail.

Movement and gesture beyond that which sounds the instrument are by no means prohibited in the performance style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. However, importantly, stillness is the starting point from which movement emerges as a result of some form of excitement: aesthetic tension, emotional expression, or social interaction. Stillness is more likely to return once the excitement is released, or the moment of communication has passed. Stillness is therefore not a fixed state, from which departure could be seen as a departure from the style. Stillness is more a process, or a guiding principle, wherein a musician should aspire to return to stillness, where possible, during performance.

Movement at points of excitement and intensity would not stand out if they occurred continually throughout the performance. Constant moving can be seen in the performance style of the internationally-platformed contemporary sitar player, Niladri Kumar of the Maihar Gharana (Darbarfestival, 2014, 3:27). His physical movements (shaking the sitar neck and his head) and the sounding movements (such as dwelling on *meend* to emphasise the act of pulling *meend* instead of using *meend* to express the movements of the raga) differ considerably from the physical and sounding

gestures in the recordings of Irfan Muhammad Khan and Ilyas Khan. The difference between the ways the artists of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana move, and the way Niladri Kumar moves, reflects the aesthetic values and social knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, which aspire to stillness.

Aspiring to stillness of body and mind in sitar practice has been very challenging, especially with ADHD, which brings with it challenges relating to performance anxiety and impulse control (such as involuntary movement when performing). I managed to give up the sitar-neck-shaking quickly because changing my posture and having new points of reference through exposure to recordings of exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana made it easier to consciously unlearn that behaviour. However, behaviours and actions more removed from the hands, where so much of my attention is directed while playing — head movements, right foot movements, shoulders going up, leaning too far forward, and forgetting to look up to connect with the tabla player and audience because of hyper focus — have all been much more challenging to control. These movements are evidence of tension in the body.

I was able to get more control over tension and excessive movement after I altered my sitar posture. The more stable sitting base, with a more open chest made it easier to breathe and to practise breathing while playing. Tension was also reduced and a more stable sitting position adopted in cello playing when I decided to sit in an elevated position on the yoga block rather than completely on the floor (see 4.5 Translating to cello). In both instances the lower level of tension in the body made it easier to direct my attention to the parts of the body where it was most needed. However, aspiring to stillness remains a challenge and takes a great deal of effort and intention to maintain in performance on both sitar and cello, which can actually be a source of more tension. Therefore, in practice, my adoption of (especially inner) stillness as a guiding principle requires, contradictorily, allowing myself to make a certain degree of involuntary, relaxed exterior movement.

Prior to adopting my improved posture, I asked Ustadji about ways of addressing the above challenges with stillness both in *riyaz* and in performance. He advised me to focus on breath and breathing as these are key to developing a sense of space and pacing when improvising. It was recommended that, when practising *paltas* for

example, I should retain focus on the breath, especially when changing the speeds at which I played the *paltas* over the *tāl* (set to a fixed tempo)*.* As well as enabling a more relaxed body and clearer mind, there was a temporal element to working on the breath. Improved awareness and control over my breathing would ensure a firmer sense of *lay* and melodic placement, preventing me from rushing in performance.

Irfan Muhammad Khan's guidance resonates with Phillip Zarrilli's (2011) writing on breath, or *prana* (which also translates as 'wind'), as a 'conceptual and practical link between the gross, outer, physical body and inner experience' in South Asian embodied practices (Zarilli, 2011, p. 248). Zarrilli cites an anonymous martial artist who states that *prana* is 'the basis of all other powers, and only by increasing one's wind-power will that person's mental power and physical power increase' (*ibid*.). This is effectively what Ustadji's advice was to me. More control over my breathing would increase strength and mental power, decreasing physical tension and performance anxiety, ultimately improving stillness. Ways of breathing are a vital part of the *gharānā*'s kinetic and temporal musical knowledge. I later asked him about the connection between his advice to me about breathing and the concepts around *prana*, he said 'of course, it's [referring to musical and yogic practices] all connected' (Khan, personal communication, 19 November 2024). Irfan Muhammad Khan's pedagogical ability to communicate integral concepts to wider South Asian embodied practices simply, in another language, illustrates the extent and depth of his embodied knowledge.

Before explaining my approach to translation, the mode of cello playing must first be outlined. The mode of cello playing has been illustrated in a global context in the curatorial practice of Jon Silpayamanant, which he calls 'the global cello' (2024). It broadly consists of playing a bowed string instrument, upright, usually (but not always) seated, and the hand predominantly responsible for producing sound is positioned below the hand mainly responsible for affecting pitch. This broad concept of cello playing therefore includes existing South Asian bowed instruments such as the sarangi and the esraj. The global framing of this mode complements and could be seen as a subcategory within the broad concept of fiddling, evidenced in the work of Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje (2008). This is supported by the fact that several instruments such as the Persian kemancheh, the Indonesian rebab, and the cello itself fit the category of spike fiddles. However, there are also many instruments which fit Silpayamanat's (2024) global mode of cello playing, but which are not spike fiddles.

DjeDje argues that the fiddle 'has multiple identities that shift due to differences in geography and ideology' (2008, p. 7–8). She explains that 'the role of the fiddle in societies is not fixed; variations in location, history, cultural systems, and individual preferences affect meaning' (DjeDje, 2008, p. 8). She proposes the idea of fiddling as a mode, a way of doing, that morphs and evolves to suit local contexts, which similarly applies to Silpayamanat's (2024) global mode of cello playing. Fiddling could be differentiated from cello playing by the positioning of the hands — on a fiddle the hand predominantly responsible for producing sound is closer to the body and the hand predominantly responsible for affecting pitch is further away from the body. Playing with hands poised this way allows for smaller, therefore higher-pitched instruments and the ability to move around more easily while playing. There are different social and aesthetic contexts to playing with the hands poised for the mode of cello playing, which is inherently more sedentary and allows for larger, lower-pitched, instruments. Therefore, the identities, geographies and ideologies underpinning 'cellos' and 'cello playing' in a global context differ to those of 'fiddles' and 'fiddle playing'.

Silpayamanat's (2024) curatorial work aims to re-locate the Eurocentric practice of cello playing as a thread within a global tapestry of upright, bowed string-instrument playing. However, it must be acknowledged that outside of the specific context of his

practice, there is a risk of cultural imperialism when extending the concept and practice of cello playing to bowed instrument modes globally, and to multiple musical traditions. Cello as a concept — like violin as a concept — conjures a much more specific organological association than the fiddle, which as a frame of reference is far more malleable. This is why DjeDje (2008) does not talk about violin playing but fiddling. Instruments such as the kemancheh and esraj can be described as aligning with cello playing as a mode. However, they should not be considered different manifestations of the cello as an object, or kinds of cello playing commonly recognised in a Eurocentric sense. They are instruments whose context-specific design and use accommodates particular ways of sitting, ways of playing and ways of participating, which should not be overlooked or obscured by broader categories.

Any attempt to place instrumental modes within broader categories of ways of playing must be made with the intention of establishing clearly defined, horizontal, dialogic connections. Extending cello playing beyond its commonly known context to become a broad category of upright bowed instrument playing leaves too much room for confusion to establish such connections. To avoid this confusion and in preference for a more neutral English language term, not so heavily associated with one specific way of playing, the term 'upright fiddle' playing (Adams, 2020; Garzoli, 2020; Noh, 2012;) may be more appropriate as a broad subcategory of the mode of fiddle playing. Cello playing would therefore be an iteration of upright fiddle playing, wherein performers must negotiate the specific design and acoustic properties of the cello, in the form it is widely recognised.

There is some use to naming broader categories of instrumental modes, within which instrument specific modes from multiple traditions can be categorised. It not only brings to light resonances between traditions. It also brings to light the interwoven histories of many of these instruments. For example, the cello comes from the violin family. One of the predecessors to the violin was the rebec. As Henry George Farmer acknowledged as far back as 1930, it is widely accepted that the rebec was adapted from the Arabic instrument, the bowed rabab,[16] which would have arrived in Al-

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[16] Rabab without a diacritic mark here refers to the broad category of rababs, which span languages and continents. Rabāb with the diacritic mark refers specifically to rabābs in a South Asian music context.

Andalus (eighth century–fifteenth century CE). Therefore, there is a historic and musical thread in the cello and other European fiddles that traces back to the Umayyad Caliphate. The historic thread of the bowed rabab follows the expanse of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, into Central Asia,[17] connecting with other rababs, such as the Afghan rabāb. Modes of upright fiddle playing and modes of fiddle playing in general could therefore be considered subcategories within a very broad mode of rabab playing. Fiddles, cellos, sarods and sarangis could therefore all be considered distant cousins within the genealogy of the rabab.

Ingold states that 'functions of things are not attributes but narratives [or] the stories we tell about them' (2011, p. 56). Placing the mode of cello playing within the mode of rabab playing embeds the cello in a narrative shared with the sarod. Identifying shared space, where cello playing and the knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana meet assists the process of translation. Kaindl (2020) writes on multi-modal translation that 'a transfer is only possible if there are enough similarities between modes for them to be comparable and, thus, transferable, and if there is a sufficient difference that makes the transfer necessary' (Kaindl, 2020, p. 55). A reimagining of cello playing as an iteration of rabab playing makes it much easier to conceive similarities between the cello and the sarod as instruments. This makes the transfer of Irfan Muhammad Khan's musical knowledge to cello seem possible without, in the process, losing too much of what makes the instrumental style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana unique.

My experience of adapting my body to alter my mode of cello playing may differ from some of the other cellists who have learned to participate in the tradition of Hindustani music. I was not coming to this art form as a concert-level European classical cellist, rooted in one tradition, entrenched in one way of moving and relating to the instrument. I came into this project as an average level performing cellist with a varied palette of techniques, aesthetic sensibilities, learned musical behaviours, and a wide radius of musical creativity based on my diverse formative music education (Toynbee, 2000). My 13 years of training on sitar meant that both my body and my musical imagination were already conditioned for playing Hindustani music on cello. In fact,

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[17] As DjeDje (2008) makes clear, this history also connects to fiddles across Africa, such as the Fulani riti/Bambara soku/Hausa goje and the Amharic Masenqo.

the sound I produced on cello had already changed because of the grooves on my left index and middle fingers and I had already developed a tendency to slide through notes with my left hand.

My specific approach to learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana on cello differs from the practices of other notable cellists, who have previously translated knowledge from the tradition of Hindustani music to cello. However, many of their approaches and techniques I was influenced by in the early research stages of this project, either because I have chosen to adopt or modify something they have done, or because I have sought to find an alternative to what they have done. The first and most influential cellist upon my practice is Nancy Lesh (also Kulkarni) from the United States. Before commencing her Hindustani music training, she worked as a cellist in professional European orchestras, performing within the tradition of European Classical music. In 1982 she took a three-month holiday to India with her cello. She had never seriously encountered Hindustani music before. Nevertheless, she developed a deep appreciation for Hindustani music during this trip. She began to learn Dhrupad in Varanasi with Dr. Ritwik Sanyal and never returned to her position in the Italian orchestra she was working for at the time. After two years she studied with Sanyal's Ustad, the veena player, Ustad Zia Mohiuddin Dagar. After her Ustad passed away in 1990, she studied with his brother, the Dhrupad vocalist, Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar.

Nancy Lesh has successfully translated Dhrupad from the mode of veena performance to cello performance. Her expanded mechanical knowledge, resulting from encountering the veena, influenced some modifications to her cello to achieve closer aesthetic and kinaesthetic similarities to veena playing. Modifications include attaching two *chikārī* strings to the neck of the cello. She strikes these with the fourth finger of her left-hand, while the other fingers are stopping a note on the string. She has changed the wooden nut, over which the melody strings sit, for an elk horn nut, to produce a "ringing tone" (Lesh [Kulkarni], 2008). She performs cross-legged, sat on the floor. As a result, the cello is positioned at a more acute angle, with the end-pin only out a fraction to elevate the instrument slightly. She tunes the strings Sa-Pa-Sa-ma. In terms of Western note names, with Sa tuned to the pitch of *C*, that means the strings are *C-G-C-F*, as opposed to the standardised *C-G-D-A*. She demonstrates

a reconfigured, non-Eurocentric relationship to the cello. This can be seen in the way she talks about her strings. She refers to the main strings (as opposed to the *chikārī* strings) on her modified cello as the "melody strings" (Lesh [Kulkarni], 2008). This is a similar way of thinking about the different functions of strings (chikārī, melody, or sympathetic) of a sitarist or veena player.

There have clearly been no approximations where the aesthetics of Dhrupad are concerned. She plays ragas with precision, using no vibrato or any other identifiable forms of left-hand ornamentation from the Western cello traditions she was previously trained in. She uses mostly her first three fingers of the left-hand, especially her first finger, to stop notes on the string. This helps her to express *meend* with appropriate stylistic momentum, pitch and shape. Most of the range of her playing concentrates on the low to upper-mid registers of the cello, with only occasional use of the upper registers. Her right-hand articulation is smooth and emulates the vocal articulation of her *ustad*s. It should be noted, however, that, unlike other bowed instruments already commonly used in Hindustani music, she has retained an overhand bow-hold. This makes sense for the modern Western bow that she performs with. Modern Western cello bows were designed for optimum control with an overhand bow-hold. Bowing these underhand to appear like other Indian bowed instruments would give less control of the bow and not improve the ability to play according to the sounding principles of Dhrupad.

In the *jhalla* section of her Bhairav performance (Taal Matrix Foundation, 2016, from [40:20](#)), Lesh uses different patterns of bow articulation. She uses her open middle *Sa* string as a constant, against which she plays short phrases, held notes and *gamak*s on the *Pa* string. Right-hand articulation of these phrases, held notes, and *gamak*s include: *SaPaPaPa SaPaPaPa, SaPaPa SaPaPa SaPa, PaPaPaPa PaPaPaPa SaSaSaSa SaSaSaSa* (note names indicate the string on which the bow is playing). She also sustains a long bow, moving it slowly, on the Pa string to play fast *gamak*s with the left hand, then tucks in a single articulation of the open Sa string at the end of the long bow. This emulates the right-hand jhalla strokes of veena players and shows that she has observed and internalised the right-hand veena technique of her *ustad*.

Nancy Lesh has learned the repertoire and embodied knowledge of her *ustad*s through years of face-to-face *talīm*. Her relationship to Dhrupad goes far beyond being able to give passable stylistic performances. She has learned to inhabit the social and aesthetic space, values and practices of the tradition by forming long-lasting relationships with the custodians of a particular style within the tradition, internalising in her body what she has learned from these interactions. Then, through creative exploration, based on her knowledge of her instrument (and with the guidance of her *ustad*s), she has found a way to translate what she has internalised to the mode of cello playing. As such, she has made a space for herself in the tradition where she can participate and contribute authentically. When she performs, she appears not to be merely presenting an idea or a representation of Dhrupad, but to communicate the knowledge of Dhrupad that she lives with and that lives within her.

Saskia Rao-de Haas, from the Netherlands, is another cellist who had a successful career in the European musical work tradition, as well as European folk traditions, and then retrained in Hindustani music. Her approach noticeably differs from that of Nancy Lesh. Saskia Rao-de Haas has made significant modifications to the instrument she plays. She has commissioned a number of increasingly adapted instruments, to accommodate the way of playing she has developed. These adaptations include adding a fifth melody string to the cello, adding sympathetic strings and changing the shape of the body to make sitting cross-legged on the floor easier. The first iteration of these adaptations was built by Dutch luthier, Eduard van Tongeren. It was based on the European baroque instrument, the viola d'amore (Rao-de Haas, 2021). Saskia Rao-de Haas also differs from Nancy Lesh because she trained under a number of musicians who play sarod, sitar and bansuri. She also learned from Damodar Keshav Datar, who translated the Khyāl vocal style he had learned to violin.

Saskia Rao-de Haas has studied and internalised the aesthetics of Hindustani music and has learned how to express herself through ragas with a high level of knowledge. It is also clear that she is a very technically accomplished cellist. However, a closer examination of her playing reveals that remnants of intonation and articulation from the European traditions have remained in her left-hand technique. For example, in her 2010 performance of Miyan Ki Malhar (East Marries West, 2010, 06:38 and 08:21) Saskia Rao de-Haas uses her fourth finger for ease of accurate intonation. The speed

and pressure with which the fourth finger is pressed onto the string and the way that the hand becomes static, no longer moving with the motion of the melody, disrupts the melodic motion of the raga. The way her left fingers stop the strings with a static hand during the rhythmic patterns of the *jod* material similarly sounds more like a way of stopping the string in a European folk tradition (East Marries West, 2010, 08:57). This may be a result of an elevated focus on playing the right notes without considering the physical motion of moving through those notes. She seems to be relying on her well-honed left-hand technique from European traditions to be able to play specific notes with clarity and precision, but overlooking the melodic (and therefore physical) movement required to maintain the overall shape of the phrases of the raga.

The footage of Nancy Lesh performing Dhrupad on the other hand shows refined left-hand cello technique that is no longer influenced by Western traditions in which she had previously trained. The higher level of refinement of the left hand than that of Saskia Rao-De Haas is possibly because Nancy Lesh learned the aesthetic sound knowledge of one tradition, Dhrupad, and the body knowledge of the specific style of her *ustad*. She appears to have learned a set of consistent techniques and ways of actioning the body that she observed in her *ustad*'s veena playing and then devised a set of consistent cello techniques in response. In contrast, the video description of Saskia Rao-de Haas's Miyan Ki Malhar Performance (East Marries West, 2010) states that she explores both the Tantra-*baj* (instrumental style) and Gayaki-*ang* (vocal-influenced style) in her playing. These are two distinct style, with different approaches to articulation, playing compositions and ways of exposing a raga. It would not be right to say that combining these styles cannot be done, but doing so and delivering a consistent performance requires mastery of both styles. The choice of which elements from which style to combine would then be deliberate, rooted in artistic intention.

That sense of deliberate intention and mastery of both styles is not always evident in the case of Saskia Rao-de Haas's Miyan Ki Malhar performance (West, 2010). If she had committed to playing the Tantra-*baj* style she may have studied more closely the left-hand and finger movements of sitar and sarod players, she was learning from and found a way to adopt respective ways of moving on the cello. However, there are also

moments where Rao-de Hass demonstrates Hindustani violin technique (East Marries West, 2010, 08:00–08:05) in the performance. These are some of the most successful moments in the performance because she is using a way of expressing melodic motion on an instrument of the violin family that is already embedded in the tradition. If she had committed to translating Gayaki style violin left-hand technique, the performance may also have been a more successful example of Hindustani music performed in the mode of cello playing.

Similarly, Saskia Rao-de-Haas's right-hand bowing technique is exercised with virtuosic control and expression but is stylistically inconsistent. She successfully adapts the lyrical bowing style from her training in Western cello traditions to make the instrument sing (East Marries West, 2010, 07:21–08:05). This is entirely appropriate for playing the Gayaki style, emulating the voice on the instrument. However, she then starts to play *jhalla* strokes (East Marries West, 2010, 08.43), which are closer to the Tantra-*baj* style. The accentuation and attack of the bow on the string and the posture of the hand demonstrate very technically proficient *spiccato* bowing. Despite the speed and control, this is not a successful adaptation of a Western bowing technique. It is more of an *adoption* of a Western bowing technique to give the sense of *jhalla* strokes. She does not turn her virtuosic control of the bow into a right-hand technique that becomes a *jhalla* stroke. It appears to be an approximation of *jhalla*, rather than a *jhalla* technique in and of itself. When compared with Nancy Lesh's *jhalla* strokes (Taal Matrix Foundation, 2016, 40:20) Saskia Rao-de Haas does not appear to have given enough consideration to the effort and motion of the right hand playing *jhalla*. Her right hand would have been more consistent if she had committed to the Gayaki-*ang* bowing and phrasing throughout the performance.

Saskia Rao-de Haas's translation of Hindustani music to cello comes across at times more as a performed representation of the broad aesthetics of raga-based music, than a consistent expression of a raga in an identifiable style of Hindustani music. This makes her playing ideal for collaborations across multiple traditions, both in India and internationally. It may also be why much of her practice is framed in an 'East meets West' narrative. However, Nancy Lesh demonstrates a more coherent translation of Hindustani music to the mode of cello playing, situating the instrument more successfully within the tradition. The crucial missing element in Saskia Rao-de Haas's

playing could well be a close relationship with a single, principal teacher of a particular style of string playing. [18] It is possible to conclude that Rao-de Haas's work on modifying the cello is a result of not having developed sufficient body knowledge to be able to use the cello in its original form to express the nuance of raga exposition in Hindustani music performance — even though she plays the correct pitches of a raga in the right places. This difference between the processes of Nancy Lesh and Saskia Rao-de Haas exemplifies the contrast between learning to perform and learning to inhabit. Whereas Rao-de Haas has successfully learned to perform Hindustani music on the cello, Lesh has learned to inhabit the tradition with her cello.

Jake Charkey, from the United States, is a more recent example of a cellist learning to inhabit a Hindustani music tradition. He began studying Hindustani music on cello in 2005. These studies began under sarangi player, Aruna Narayan, then continued under violinist and vocalist, Jagan Ramamoorthy. He later spent several years studying Hindustani violin technique, which is an adaptation of the Gayaki *Ang* (vocal style), under violinist, Dr N. Rajam and translating this style to cello. He explained that adopting the Gayaki style from N. Rajam was less challenging than what Nancy Lesh and Saskia Rao-de Haas had to do. What was possible on violin was inherently closer to what was possible on cello than the veena playing Lesh followed, or the multiple modes of playing Rao-de Haas followed (Charkey, personal communication, 7 June 2024). Unlike Lesh and Rao-de Haas, Charkey does not sit directly on the floor. He sits elevated slightly on a small block, approximately 10 inches from the ground to have better command of the instruments (Charkey, personal communication, 7 June 2024). He also loops a length of fabric around the lower right quarter of the cello, hooks that loop over his left thigh and uses his right foot to pull the cello towards his body. He tunes his cello *Sa Pa Sa Pa*. Aside from this, there are no modifications to his instrument. Instead, most of the focus of his translation of Hindustani music to cello appears to have been towards adapting his body.

Like Nancy Lesh, it is evident in the way Jake Charkey performs that his process of translation is a result of learning to embody the aesthetics and performance

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[18] It could be argued that Rao-de Haas's multiple sources of musical knowledge has allowed for creativity and the forming of a unique voice. However, there is a difference between developing a unique way of doing something from a place of embodied understanding of a tradition and having used knowledge from outside a tradition to fill a gap in embodied understanding.

techniques of a particular style and a close relationship with a principal teacher. His right-hand bowing technique has been successfully adapted so that it sounds consistently within the Gayaki-*ang* style of Hindustani violinists such as N. Rajam, emulating the expressive qualities of the singing voice. Moreover, Jake Charkey has taken on the advanced violin bowing techniques of his teacher (Jake Charkey, 2022, 03:04). These techniques have in part come from the first tradition Dr. N. Rajam trained in, Carnatic music and were since adopted in Hindustani violin playing. In addition, Jake Charkey's left hand moves with the motion of the melody (Jake Charkey, 2022, 03:19). The finger he uses to stop the string depends on the distance travelled between notes. However, momentum is maintained in his entire hand, which creates the sound of fluid melodic motion instead of melody as steps — notes sounding as precise, but isolated, individual entities, which is a feature of cello technique in numerous Western traditions. The sound of fluid melodic motion is maintained when he uses his fourth finger (Jake Charkey, 2022, 08:48–09:00). This fluid motion of the left hand sustains the melodic motion of the raga and demonstrates a thorough embodiment of the musical knowledge of his teacher.

It is surprising in a recent interview (Brooklyn Living Room Sessions, 2023, 27:26) that Jake Charkey states that instrument technique is not taught in Hindustani music and that people just learn the music and then work it out on their instruments. What this implies is that the focus is on the sound knowledge of the tradition and instrumental technique is up to each individual performer to work out. If that were the case, there should not be as stark a difference between Jake Charkey's cello technique and that of Saskia Rao-de Haas. What should be understood from what Jake Charkey states and probably what he meant is that it is up to the student to discern the body knowledge of the teacher. The teacher will not always tell the student exactly how to sit, where to position their body and how to move with their instrument when playing. Learning this comes from paying enough attention to the body, playing and resulting sound production of the teacher. This is why, despite evidently not being given the kind of explicit guidance of how to play, which musicians training in a Western conservatoire may expect, Jake Charkey has nevertheless been able to adopt the violin technique of N. Rajam very successfully. Jake Charkey's stylistic similarity to the violin playing of his principal guru is an example of a student developing a 'paramparic body' (Rahaim, 2012 p. 130).

All three cellists above use a modern Western bow with an overhand bow-hold, which is particularly good for creating a powerful lyrical sound that emulate the human voice. This is why Jake Charkey's bowing is so successful in the Gayaki-*ang* style and Lesh's bowing is so successful in the Dhrupad style. However, despite Saskia Rao-de Haas's evident mastery of Western bowing techniques, her adoption of *spiccato* style bowing (East Marries West, 2010, 08.43) in place of more appropriate *jhalla* techniques shows that bowing overhand with a modern Western bow (whilst sat on the floor) to play in the Tantra-*baj* style presents challenges. This is confirmed in Nancy Lesh's playing. Although her *jhalla* strokes are executed with precision and at an appropriate tempo for Dhrupad (Taal Matrix Foundation, 2016, 40:20), they are not at the high speed of Tantra-*baj* style playing. Furthermore, Lesh's bowing follows the structure and phrasing of the Dhrupad composition, ensuring emphasis of the *sam* (first beat) with a downbow (Taal Matrix Foundation, 2016, 28:08). However, this is at a steady Dhrupad tempo, rather than the high speed of a *drut gat* in the Tantra-*baj* style. To be able to recreate the sometimes very fast right-hand *bols* of the *gat*s of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana with my bow, an alternative to Nancy Lesh's and Jake Charkey's bowing needed to be devised.

I decided to bow underhand, with a Baroque style bow. Considering my criticism of Rao-de Haas, adopting a Western bowing technique to solve the problem of *jhalla* bowing, I would surely be open to the same criticism of turning to European bowing technique to inform my translation of right-hand sitar techniques to cello. Part of the reason for that decision is that sarangi players and esraj players bow underhand. This allows the right shoulder and upper forearm to remain relaxed when playing sat on the floor, as is customary in Hindustani music performance. However, due to its design and weight distribution there is little advantage to using an underhand bow-hold on a modern style Western cello bow. I therefore tried to use a sarangi bow, bowed underhand, to play the cello, sat cross-legged on the floor. The thickness of the horsehair of the sarangi bow (closer to the thickness of that of a double bass bow) made the cello sound dense. Moreover, the weight distribution of the bow prevented me from short and fast notes, which are essential for the Tantra-*baj* style. I then turned my attention to existing underhand cello technique, which is a feature of some Baroque cello bowing and da gamba bowing. Having previously played continuo cello

in baroque music ensembles, I knew that short, light bow strokes was a feature of Baroque cello playing, assisted by the weight distribution of baroque bows. I was then advised by da gamba player, Dr Markus Kuikka, that a da gamba bow hold would maintain a clear attack of the note, while keeping my shoulder and upper arm relaxed. It would also allow me to play with ease at speed. This is why I chose to adopt a da gamba bow hold, using a Baroque bow, to play Hindustani music on the cello.

During this project I explored four ways of sitting that I needed to choose between to be able to successfully accommodate the cello in a Hindustani music setting. All of these would be on the floor, to be at the same level as the tabla player. I adjusted the length of the end pin to find the most comfortable elevation for each of these positions. The first option was to sit cross-legged in the same way as Nancy Lesh and Saskia Rao-de Haas, with the end pin extended roughly the length of my fourth finger. This was an acceptable way to sit, but the acute angle of the cello led to me feeling like I was being pushed backwards and putting undue stress on my lower spine. The acute angle of the neck also meant that my left arm would often get tired from having to raise it further to reach notes at the top of the neck. However, it also made playing in the middle to upper regions of the cello neck much easier, as my left-hand sat naturally further down the instrument. This way of sitting did not feel like the best solution and the challenges I faced from sitting like this show why Saskia Rao-de Haas sought to play a smaller instrument.

The next option was to adopt the same seated position as when I play sitar. That meant sitting cross-legged, but with my right leg resting over my left knee. This seated position is known as Ardha Gomukhasana in yoga and is adopted by most sitarists and sarod players (McNeil, 2004a, p. 127). This felt appropriate for keeping as much body knowledge as possible the same between cello and sitar, as well as sitting the same way Ustadji and his ancestors sat. The weight of the right foot over the left knee also brought my weight forward, counterbalancing the weight of the cello, meaning I was no longer being pushed back. This allowed for a slightly more acute angle of the cello, reducing tension in my left arm. My right arm was fine to work in this position, but I was aware that I had to reach quite far forward with it, meaning I had less gravity and arm weight to bow with. I also had to be constantly aware of the angle of the bow, because my lack of elevation made it harder to see whether it was moving straight. If

it was not straight, there was a danger of making the cello squeak. Nevertheless, this position worked for playing sat directly on the floor.

In my research into the Gharana, I came across Max Katz's video of Ustadji's cousin, Ustad Gulfam Ahmed Khan, descended directly from Karamatullah Khan (mkatz76, 2009). He was playing the Seni rabāb in the way it would have been performed by the Senias who taught Niamatullah Khan. He was kneeling with the instrument resting in his lap. I was struck by the way this larger instrument, with its wider intonation and deeper tone, despite being exclusively plucked, had much in common with the cello. For this reason, I experimented with playing the cello kneeling on the floor, sat on my heels. The cello was not in my lap but instead positioned in front of my knees. The benefit to sitting like this was that it allowed the cello to be positioned with a less acute angle than when sat directly on the floor. This meant my right arm did not have to reach as far and the slightly elevated position gave my right arm more of a downward force, allowing my right shoulder to stay more easily relaxed and the correct angle to avoid squeaks could be maintained. The elevation also meant that my left arm sat in a more relaxed position when playing further towards the top of the neck. It also felt in keeping with aspects of the *gharānā*'s past, so I wanted to opt for this as my preferred seated position. However, unfortunately I was unable to sit for long periods without experiencing a lot of pain in my ankles. Whereas I had gotten used to sitting cross-legged for hours at a time, with enough flexibility in my hips and knees not to experience any pain, I had virtually no experience or stamina for kneeling for long periods. Learning to sit like this would take years of conditioning my body, which did not feel like a feasible option.

The fourth option was a way of achieving that elevated position from kneeling without hurting my ankles (see figure Figure 4.5.1). This followed Jake Charkey's way of sitting, raised off the ground, with the endpin extended by the distance of the span from the thumb tip to my index fingertip of my right hand, when making a reversed L shape (approximately 16 centimetres). I used a cork yoga block to sit on, which gave firm support to my bottom and spine, so I could sit with legs crossed on the floor in front of me. The cello did not need a strap, as Jake Charkey uses, because I rested it more to the left, against my left knee. This was the most comfortable and the most effective way of playing. However, there were two minor drawbacks. The first was

logistical: it was yet another piece of equipment that needed to be transported for concerts when also needing to carry a cello, a sitar and sound equipment. The second was that this did not fit with the ways of sitting of previous exponents of the *gharānā*. The solution recreated the elevation of kneeling, which can be traced to the posture of Seni rabāb players, but it was not actually kneeling. However, the elevated position of my arms and the increased relaxation in my shoulders, resulted in greater clarity of tone and dexterity. There was a tendency with the other seated positions to feel pushed backwards by the cello. My elevated pelvis in this position helped to keep my spine straight and allowed me to lean into the cello. In the final year of my research, I decided this would be the most effective sitting option.

Figure 4.5.1 Final cello sitting position. © Yelding

Of the three cellists mentioned in my review of current practices of Hindustani music played on cello, Lesh's left-hand technique has the most restricted use of fingers. This is in part because she uses her fourth finger to strike the *chikārī* strings, meaning she principally uses her first three fingers to play melody. My approach to left-hand technique differs from all three cellists. I decided to use only my first two fingers. Having been playing sitar for 16 years my first two fingertips have permanent grooved calluses from the sitar *baj* string (main playing string). These grooves produce a different sound on the cello to fingertips with flat calluses. They also make it easier to slide up and down the string, which is helpful for playing *meend*.

Using mostly my first two fingers seemed the most logical solution to keeping finger configurations and hand movements learned on sitar as similar as possible when playing cello. Furthermore, sarod and sitar players of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana use only their first two fingers (Katz, 2017, p. 24). Since this project is about sustaining the practices and knowledge of this musical lineage, using the same number of fingers to play both sitar and cello was a good place to start. However, there is one exceptional circumstance in which I decided to employ my fourth finger. This is when it is necessary to play *ma* on the fourth string. This pitch is further along the neck of the instrument. Because of the time it takes to reach across from the higher strings and move up the neck of the instrument, there is a risk of disrupting the rhythmic flow especially in the *gat* section of the performance if using the first or second finger. Rushing this movement makes it more likely I will play out of tune. A fourth finger on the low *ma* solves this problem.

I tend to tune my concert sitar to C or C sharp. I tune the cello between B and C sharp. A luthier recommended tuning the cello to B, to open the sound up. B is now my preferred pitch for concerts. However, to clearly demonstrate the process of translation the cello is tuned to the same pitch as the sitar in the videos recorded for this thesis. The tuning of the cello strings that I decided to settle on was influenced by two factors. The first was the tuning of the sitar, where the top string, tuned to *ma*, known as the *bāj*, is the main playing string. Below that is a lower *Sa* string, also known as the *jora*. Below that is the lowest *Pa*, known as the *Pancham* string. Then finally there is the lowest *Sa*, known as the *Kharaj* string. Emulating this on the cello

would mean tuning it *ṢA ṚA SA ma*. This is the same tuning in Nancy Lesh's performance (Taal Matrix Foundation, 2016), which was the second factor influencing my choice of tuning. The *ṢA ṚA SA ma* tuning enabled my first two left fingers to play ragas on the cello with relative ease and fluency. The open *Sa* strings mean that *Sa* is always accessible as a reference, both in terms of a sounding pitch and as spatial reference.

Over time I became familiar with the approximate placement of all potential *swāras* along the string from *Sa,* which helped me to map out the melodic motion of a raga on the string. The *Pa* string enabled me to access open *Pa* and reach *Dha* and *Ni* without having to go all the way up the cello string, as I would have to on the lower *Sa* string.[19] A second, upper *Pa* string however, would make *Ma* harder to reach when playing with two fingers. The distance from *Sa* to *Ma* on the Sa string is quite far when playing with two fingers. Tuning the upper string to *ma* means I can move across to open *ma* or stopped *MA* after only a small movement to play *Re* and *Ga*. This is useful when playing faster *gat*s and *tān*s. The open *ma* string also makes movements in the upper tetrachord much easier, with more fluidity. Playing Pa with a first finger means there is no change in timbre between Pa and the higher *swāras*.

ṢA ṚA SA ma was the first tuning I decided to work with and the tuning I settled on, after spending a year of the project experimenting with tunings that allowed me to recreate the experience of playing predominantly on the top string of the instrument, as I do on sitar. The cello strings I used were Larsen strings, which are known for a mellower quality. I changed to the harder and brighter-sounding Evah Pirazzi strings for a period, because I wanted to see if their brighter sound would give the playing more of an aesthetic sheen. However, I eventually returned to the softer Larsen strings because my gentler Baroque style bow was not powerful enough to make the Evah Pirazzi strings sing out.

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[19] 'Up the cello string' here actually means moving up in pitch. This is common for cellists to say, even though when 'moving up the string' the hand is actually moving in a downwards direction.

I experimented with two other tunings. The first was ↓*PA ṢA ṢA SA*, [20] in which *Sa* was tuned to *F*. The problem with this tuning was that descending through the lower octave but only being able to reach as far as *Pa,* felt unresolved and unsatisfying. For the second tuning, strings of the cello were tuned ↓*SA* (lowest string detuned to low G) *ṢA* (the G that the third string is usually tuned to) *ṢA SA* (the top string detuned to G). The main octave in which sitar is played begins from 1/3 of the way along the *bāj* string, on the seventh *parda* (fret). The octave below crosses onto the *jora*. On the cello, with the top string tuned to *ma*, to start the main octave from the same place — one third of the way up the top string–the thumb quickly becomes obstructed by the body of the instrument. Making the top cello string *Sa* resolved this limitation and enabled melodious and expressive adaptions of the Gharana's repertoire. However, it was very challenging to play *drut gat*s and *toda*s accurately at speed, in this tuning. It worked well for *alāp* and *vilambit gat*s. Therefore, this could be a tuning worth adopting for cellists interested in playing Dhrupad, or even those playing the Gayaki style.

The time spent working in the ↓*SA ṢA ṢA Sa* tuning was not wasted. After I had decided to revert to the tuning, *ṢA ṢA SA ma* in B/C/C sharp, I discovered a considerably improved dexterity and articulation, when playing on the second string, *Sa*. The ways of moving I had developed with *Sa* as the first string were easily transferred to *Sa* as the second string, with the added benefit of being able to move across to the first string for fast phrases with big gaps between *swāra*s. One drawback to returning to the *Sa Pa Sa ma* in B/C/C sharp tuning was that the slightly more brilliant timbre of the top string, with the *Sa Sa Pa Sa, or Pa Sa Pa Sa,* tunings, which gave my playing more of a singing quality, was lost. These alternate tunings may well be returned to in future projects.

To summarise, I have devised a particular mode of cello playing to ensure there are enough similarities to be able to successfully transfer knowledge between the sarod, sitar and cello (Kandl 2020). This mode provides a useful starting point with which to translate and adopt the nuanced *gharānā*-specific ways of playing. These will be

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[20] The arrow here indicates the next octave below. With handwritten notation this would be represented with double dots.

explained in the following sections in which different elements of the musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana are presented in detail.

4.6 Right-hand performance technique

The movement of the left hand is always either determining or dependent on the movement of the right-hand *mizrab* strokes on the sitar, *jawa* strokes on sarod, or bow strokes on the cello. The *mizrab* is a wire pick which is attached to the right index finger. The immediate movement of the index finger, supported by the movement of the other fingers, causes the *mizrab* to strike the string. The sarod and cello differ from sitar in that both the *jawa* and bow respectively are held in the hand. This means on sarod and cello attention is given to the way in which the *jawa* or the bow is held by the hand. This requires a way of thinking with and about the right fingers that prioritises stillness — the grip should remain constant. The whole hand is moved. Whereas on sitar, attention is given to the way in which the *mizrab* is placed on the finger and the way in which the fingers move.

Ustadji recommended that the *mizrab* ought not be too large and well clear of the upper joint (closest to the fingernail). Too large a *mizrab* would be too close to that joint. The bind of the *mizrab* would restrict movement of the finger and restrict blood supply. The result of too large a *mizrab* was felt in my playing halfway through this project, in 2023, as the speed at which I was able to play increased. I was starting to experience strain and pain in my index finger after sessions of *talīm* and *riyaz* in which I played fast repeated strokes. It was at this point that Ustadji inspected the size of mizrab and where it was on my finger. It was too large and too close to my upper finger joint. After switching to a smaller *mizrab*,[21] which sat closer to the fingernail, this pain subsided. Ustadji's correction reflects another example of his anatomic, kinetic and mechanical understanding of sitar practice, despite not being a sitar player himself.

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[21] I also had to endure the pain of new calluses forming where the binding of the *mizrab* rubs against the finger in a new location.
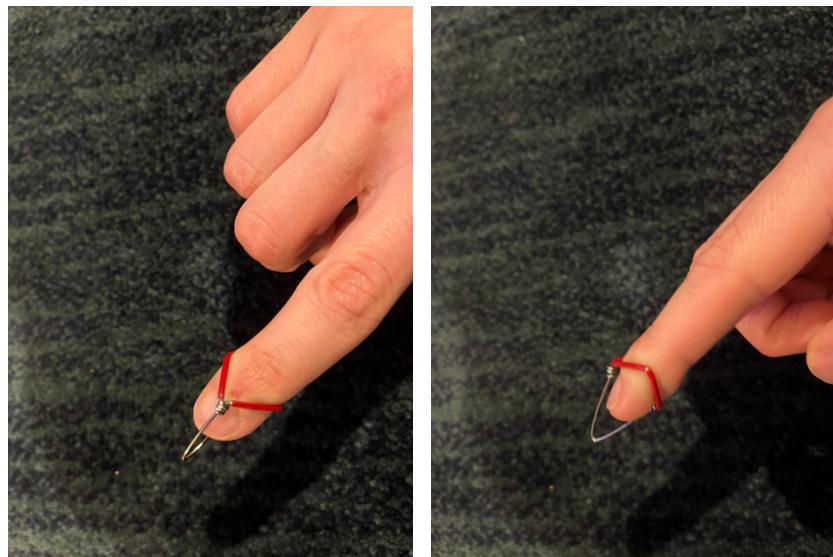
Figure 4.6.1 (left) and Figure 4.6.2 (right). The size and placement of the *mizrab* on the left index finger. © Yelding

Sitar right-hand strokes are demonstrated in Video 4.6.1. There is plenty of literature that describes right-hand strokes and their corresponding *bols* (ways of speaking, or naming of these strokes) (Slawek, 1987; Alford 1989; Miner 1997; Bagchee 1998; Sharma, 1999; Farrell, 2002). The *Da* stroke is the strongest stroke, which on sitar is an upward stroke, using the greater potential strength of the right hand's sagittal closing motion. *Ra* on sitar is a downward stroke, which is weaker because of the lesser potential strength of the hand's opening sagittal motion. These strokes apply in principle to the *baj, jora, pancham* and *kharaj* strings, though it is highly unlikely for a musician to use anything other than a *Da* stroke on the latter two strings. The effort of these strokes is sudden and bound by the constant placement of the entire hand, which is anchored by the thumb to the neck of the sitar. The thumb should maintain contact with the sitar neck as much as possible.

There are compound strokes made up of combinations of these two right hand movements along the vertical axis. For example, *Dir* is a *Da* stroke followed by a *Ra* stroke. It is a strong then weak articulation. *RaDa* is a combination of a *Ra* stroke then a *Da* stroke, so it is a weak then a strong articulation. *Dra* is a fast combination of a *Da, Ra and Da* stroke and it creates a ricocheting sounding effect at the attack of the note. On sitar and sarod, *Da* strokes can be punctuated with strikes of the *chikārī* strings. On sitar these can either be with a downward, outward strike with the *mizrab*

or with a grown, elongated nail of the fourth finger. These strokes are referred to as '*chik*' — short for *chikārī*.

From the only surviving video footage of Ilyas Khan, it can be seen that his right-fourth-finger regularly goes out of view, behind his other fingers (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2022, 2:40). He is using his fourth finger to strike the *chikārī* strings. This is a right-hand technique that comes from veena and is adopted more commonly on surbahar. The string is struck with the long nail of the fourth finger. It gives a slightly softer timbre to the strike of the *chikārī* strings, compared to the index finger strike with the metal *mizrab*. Striking the *chikārī*s with the fourth finger is an ideal technique for playing *alāp* and *jod*. The softer attack when the strings are struck gives an overall gentler punctuation between the melodic movements struck with the *Da* stroke of the *mizrab*, allowing more headroom to build towards stronger *chikārī* strokes as the performance develops.

Using the fourth finger to strike the *chikārī* strings on sitar, more common to veena and surbahar, is not unique to Ilyas Khan. However, it indicates a continuing thread that harks back to the *bīnkars* who first taught the early luminaries of the Shahjahanpur side of the *gharānā*. Furthermore, Yusuf Ali Khan, from whom Ilyas Khan inherited the Kalpi Gharana compositions, learned from sitar player Abdul Ghani Khan — son of veena player Azeem Khan and grandson of veena player Hussain Khan (Mahābhāratī, 2011). Ilyas Khan would have retained the knowledge of these *bīnkars* in his sitar and surbahar playing. His brother and Irfan Muhammad Khan's father, Umar Khan would have also retained this knowledge in his surbahar playing. There are recordings of Ilyas Khan playing surbahar in the *gharānā*'s private archive. There is also a publicly available recording of Umar Khan performing Raga Multani on surbahar (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024b). Irfan Muhammad Khan is teaching the Dhrupad compositions of the *gharānā* and the knowledge of surbahar performance from his father and uncle to senior sitar and surbahar student, Matyas Wolter. Wolter is now successfully incorporating the fourth finger to strike *chikārī* strings into both his surbahar and sitar practice. Therefore, the thread of knowledge from the veena players who instructed and influenced the *gharānā* continues. I have also recently started to incorporate this use of the fourth finger to strike the *chikārī*s into my practice.

4.7 Left-hand performance technique

Stephen Slawek's (1987) work succinctly describes common left-hand sitar techniques. Rather than adding any new definitions, this section presents the bodily experience of left-hand sitar techniques and the translation of these commonly practised sitar techniques *from* sarod and *to* cello. A selection of melodic movements from different ragas, as practised by the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, are then presented.

On the sarod most melodic motion occurs over the horizontal axis, as the first and second finger move along the string, either stopping *swāra*s individually or gliding through them as *meend*. The melodic motion occurs over the vertical axis when the fingers cross to another string. On sitar, melodic motion occurs along the horizontal axis when stopping individual *swāra*s on their corresponding *parda*s, as the first and second fingers move along the string. Melodic motion occurs along the vertical axis when crossing strings and when bending the *baj* string to pull a *meend*. On cello, the distribution of effort to affect melodic motion is more straight-forward: it is along the vertical axis when changing the pitch of one string and along the horizontal axis when moving across strings.

As described in the methodology, for the most part I have learned the *gharānā*'s approaches to melodic motion from listening, observing and absorbing Irfan Muhammad Khan's sarod playing. There is an added complexity when translating melodic motion from sarod to sitar. Melodic motion in sarod playing sounds much more fluid than melodic motion on sitar, owing to the sarod being fretless. I had to get used to Irfan Muhammad Khan's sarod playing to differentiate between which movements were stepwise motion, which would translate to stopped *parda*s along the horizontal axis on sitar, and which movements were *meends*, which would translate to vertical bends of the string on sitar. Moreover, on sarod it is theoretically possible to maintain the fluid motion of a *meend* all the way along a string. On sitar, the number of *swāra*s covered in a *meend* is restricted by how far it is possible to bend the string. Usually this is a maximum of 4 *swāra*s, though this can vary. If learning a *meend* that covered more than 4 *swāra*s on sitar from the sarod, it was then

necessary to break up the movement into a combination of stopped notes along the horizontal axis and pulled notes along the vertical axis.

There were a significant few days during my final period of fieldwork in Kolkata, when I learned a great deal more about pulling *meend* on sitar. My own sitar, on which I would practice, needed some minor repairs. While these were undertaken, I borrowed from Ustadji, one of his uncle's (Ilyas Khan's) sitars for *riyaz*. This was a rare opportunity to play this instrument that belonged to a past master for extended periods of time, exploring how it felt. What I noticed was how much easier it was to pull a *meend* from *Pa* to *Śa*. It felt as though becoming familiar with the feel of the shape the neck in my left hand, and the resistance in the left arm and hand from bending the string on this sitar over the specific curvature of its frets, imparted further mechanical and kinetic understanding of the way Ilyas Khan played.

I was not able to do a direct comparison, so I do not know if this ease was a difference in design, or if it was heightened by my confidence resulting from playing such a special instrument, with the sound of Ilyas Khan's *meends* in my mind's ear. However, my practising over those few days felt as though it was guided by the ghost of Ilyas Khan. I could sense: his years of practice on this instrument — striking, pulling, carrying, knocking, restringing, bleeding on, and attending to it in many other ways; his preferences for the way his instrument was set up — the height of the bridge and string action, the spacing of the strings; and their relation to the way he sounded in recordings. What was retained from this period of practising on Ilyas Khan's sitar was pulling *meend* with a greater sense of relaxation. I was not experiencing as much tension in my left arm and hand. The sounding outcome was smoother and more precisely in tune.

There is an advantage to learning melodic motion on sitar before doing so on cello, rather than just taking the cello to class and learning directly from Ustadji. The cello and sitar strings both need to be stopped with the fingertips, whereas on sarod it is with the fingernails. The cello string sits within the callus groove on the index and middle fingertips caused by the sitar string (Figure 4.7.1). The point of contact with the string is therefore the same. This means that on cello the physical sensation of feedback from the string to the fingertips, as it moves along and stops the string, is

more like the sitar than the sarod. Learning melodic motion on sitar first, means I have the advantage of feeling this feedback on an instrument that already has an established way of moving in the style of the *gharānā*.

Figure 4.7.1. the callus grooves on the index and middle fingers of my left hand. © Yelding

On both sitar and cello, sagittal motion of pressing and de-pressing the string should have a degree of consistency. Sagittal effort plays an important role in distribution of effort through the horizontal or vertical motion of moving along the string. The lighter the string is pressed, the easier it is to move the left hand along the neck of the instrument. Pressing the string too heavily will waste energy, slow down movement along the neck of the instrument and increase risk of tension. There is, however, a crucial timbral element to sagittal effort on both sitar and cello. Depressing a string to the point that the finger is only touching the string deadens its vibration, silencing the *swāra*. This is important for phrasing. On sitar, if I were to pull a *meend* and keep holding the string stopped at the end of the movement, the final *swāra* of the movement would continue to ring out. Lifting the finger stops this, changing the articulation of the melodic movement. Allowing the string to ring out and deadening it are adopted, depending on the nature of the phrase. When listening to the phrasing of Ilyas Khan's sitar playing, I am listening for these details, which I can replicate because of my familiarity with the ways of sounding the instrument. I have applied this subtle way of working with sagittal effort to my cello playing to recreate from sitar different ways of articulating *meend*.

Left-hand melodic motion on cello is like a hybrid of sitar and sarod technique. When translating melodic motion to cello from sitar, it is necessary to change movements across both axes back to motion across a single, vertical axis (except when crossing strings). This is where learning from a sarod player has its advantage, because I can recall the memory of experiencing and absorbing from Ustadji the melodic movements as motion along a single axis. Therefore, I have the feeling of melodic motion in my body and in my fingertips from learning on sitar. However, I also have a reference of how sound and movement of melodic motion across the single axis should be, from listening to and observing Ustadji in class.

Although melodic motion along the string occurs on the sarod and the cello over a single axis, the axis of motion on sarod is horizontal and on cello it is vertical. There is an advantage to being able to sense in the left arm the vertical motion of pulling a *meend* on sitar before translating to the entirely vertical motion of playing along the cello string. It means there is a reference of the effort with which I should move my hand along the same axis. However, there is a difference in terms of the positioning of the hand and forearm over that same axis. The left forearm is palm up when playing sitar, whereas when playing cello, the palm is turned 90º, facing inwards. Therefore, when translating *meend* from sitar to cello, although both movements are along the vertical axis, on sitar the movement along the vertical axis feels like pulling downwards to bend the *baj* upwards. Then relaxing upwards to bend the *baj* downwards. On cello it feels like *pushing downwards* to bend a stopped *swāra* upwards and *pulling upwards* to bend downwards. Pushing and pulling to bend the *swāra* in either direction is more akin to bending *swāra*s on the sarod. *Meend* on cello could therefore be described as a hybrid of sitar and sarod playing. It requires the vertical motion and stopping with the fingertips of sitar playing, with the pushing and pulling along a single axis of sarod playing.

Until this point, *meend* has been used as a general term for all glides or bends through *swāra*s, as this is generally how musicians use the term. However, there are different types of *meend.* These types of *meend* have already had an in-depth description by Slawek (1987), so below is a brief summary:

- *Meend* — when applied specifically, as opposed to as a general term, describes a glide through *swāra*s in which each *swāra* that is sounded is equally spaced apart in time.

- *Kan* — briefly sounding a *swāra* or *swāra*s, before gliding to land on another for a longer duration

- *Khatka* — gliding into a *swāra* but the glide starts instantly, so there is no impression of a starting *swāra* sounding before the main *swāra* is landed upon.

- *Murki* — a 'turn' around a principal tone (Slawek, 1987, p. 40)

There is a difference in the way *meend* is approached in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and that of instrumental *gharānā*s that follow the Gayaki style, which emulate the singing voice more directly. The sitar playing of Shahid Parvez of the Imdadkhani Gharana is exemplary of the Gayaki style approach to *meend* (Bazm-e-Khas, 2020a, 2:37). The motion with which the left fingers bend the string is much more embellished than the more direct sounding way of bending the string heard in Ilyas Khan's playing (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024c, 4:29). There is a stylistic preference in the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana tradition for a more direct, less embellished way of moving through *swāra*s via *meend*. This is also stylistic in terms of responding to the set-up of the instrument. Ilyas Khan's sitar is set up with a more open sounding *jawari*, which causes the string to resonate with a buzzing timbre, as it vibrates against the curvature of the *jawari* (for a more detailed description of *jawari*, see Video 4.7.1). This means the sustain of the *meend* is heard in the resonance of the string buzzing, then through the body of the instrument and the sympathetic strings resonating. The more closed *jawari* of Shahid Parvez causes the string to ring with a clearer timbre. The resonance of the *meend* is more audible through the instrument and the sympathetic strings, as opposed to any additional buzzing of the string. This stylistic disparity demonstrates different ways in which the melodic and kinetic knowledge interacts with mechanical knowledge in different *gharānā*s

This following description of the opening phrase of the Chhayanat *alāp* (Figure 4.7.2) encapsulates the way in which I have attended to and reflected upon the effort and motion of pulling *meend*. The opening *swāra* of Chhayanat, which in this instance is

PA, is like an inhalation before the ascending *meend*. After striking that first *swāra*, with my index finger stopping the string on the *PA* parda of the *baj*, I take an inward breath to ensure the note is given the time it needs to bring the listener in, but also in preparation for the physical exertion of the *meend*. It is always essential to ensure *meends* are pulled with the appropriate momentum and in tune. However, this is especially so for the first *meend* and the second note of a performance, as it sets the tone for the rest of the performance. Taking a breath allows focus and the direction of attention to the muscles in the left hand, arm, spine and to my ear.
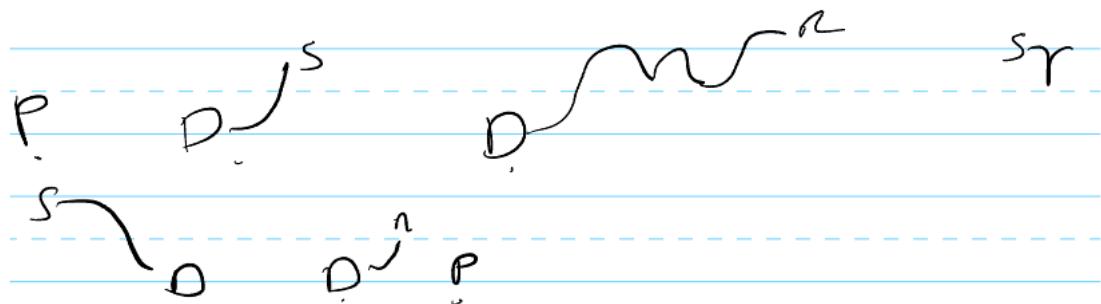

Figure 4.7.2 *meend*s in the opening of the Chhayanat *alāp*, demonstrated in Video 4.7.2.

My middle finger then reaches for the *ḌHA parda*, my thumb and index follow just behind as I stop the note. To give the shape and momentum of the ascending *meend*, the effort with which I am pressing into the *baj* string with my middle finger increases very slightly to give 'dha a very subtle swell of physical energy. Then I pull the *baj* downwards with all my fingers, but especially my middle finger, which is in contact with the string, along the arc of the *parda.* As I pull*,* the flat of my palm, just below my knuckles, gains more contact with the neck of the instrument. This acts as leverage, directing pressure into the instrument instead of down my arm. This stabilises the sound as my fingers and the instrument are doing most of the work. The rest of my left arm stays mostly relaxed.

The pull accelerates and then slows as the pitch of the string approaches the landing point, *SA.* This gives the ascending bend in pitch an arc shape. Ustadji once explained, when I was learning another raga, that too slow and constant a *meend* 'shatters the shape of the raga', awakening too many *shruti*s (Khan, personal communication, 28 January 2023)*.* In reference to the gesture above, if the speed of

the pull was constant, I would awaken all the *shruti*s between PA and SA. The shape of the gesture would sound like a straight line instead of a curve and the melodic motion of the raga lost, as demonstrated in Video 4.7.2. I know when to stop pulling via feedback I receive in my ears in the form of pitch and sound quality, as well as the physical sensation of pressure on my fingertip and the muscles controlling the finger, from the string tightening under the increased tension. My finger lingers on SA until the note rings out. My fingers relax, still holding the string to prevent it vibrating, but no longer pressing. I allow the string to silently return to DHA, on the DHA parda, for the next movement.

To perform these first movements on cello I bow the open PA string with a pulling stroke. I then inhale and press the tip of my index finger down to the string at the point where the pitch of DHA will sound. The bow is then pushed, to give slight accentuation at the start of the *meend.* I try to match the inward (sagittal) and downward (vertical) energy of the *meend* pulled on the sitar on the cello, as well as the lightness of the thumb. So, I push my index finger slightly into the fingerboard and then slide it in a downwards direction, with that same arc of acceleration to give the bending of the note that necessary curve, awakening the correct *shruti*s.[22] Only, instead of that slide coming from pulling with the fingers, I am pivoting my forearm at my left elbow and keeping my hand fairly still. This means that I am translating the effort directed across the vertical axis from the knuckles on sitar to the elbow on cello.

There are variants of the next movement in numerous ragas. It is like a segment of staple vocabulary, which can be applied to multiple melodic contexts (see its adaption in Figure 4.7.3 to Miyan ki Malhar and in Figure 4.7.4 to Gaud Sarang). On sitar this movement follows the same chain of movements as the previous. However, once I arrive at SA, instead of keeping my hand still while letting the note ring, I quickly relax the tension of the pull enough to very lightly touch NI, before returning to SA. I repeat this but on the second return I pull just a little bit further, to RE. I then stroke the string once more with my right hand, relaxing the pull to sound SA, but again repeat that same quick relaxing and re-pulling of the string between SA and NI. These oscillating

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[22] The difference here is that on cello I am going from no fingers for the first note, to my index finger for the *meend*. If the PA string was tuned a note lower to *ma*, like how the *baj* is tuned, then the fingering would be the same — index, then middle finger.

movements following the big sweep from *DHA* to *SA* need to be fast and light, without too much inward effort, like a little dip in the pitch, rather than heavy lurch.
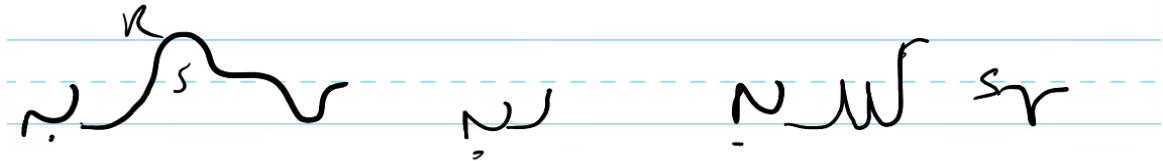

Figure 4.7.3 opening *alāp* movement of Miyan Ki Malhar, demonstrated in <u>Video 4.7.3</u>.

Figure 4.7.4 opening *alāp* movement of Gaud Sarang, demonstrated in <u>Video 4.7.4</u>

On cello my hand quickly returns, lifted off the finger board but still touching the string, silently to *DHA* between bow strokes. As with the sitar, this next movement follows the same vertical and sagittal direction, with the same distribution of energy and momentum. However, with the note being bowed instead of plucked, I am not waiting for the right amount of time for the note to ring out before striking again, but for the right amount of time to pass before changing bow direction. I lift the bow off the string, shortly after touching *RE*. Then I change bow direction to articulate the single oscillation between *SA* and *NI*.

On cello and sitar, the next *meend*, from *SA* down to *DHA* is the inverse of the of the movement of the first *meend*. The speed accelerates in the middle of the movement to give the sound of an arced shape. Then, for the final movement, the second finger on sitar, or index finger on cello, must hold the base *swāra* of *DHA* and gradually increase the inward sagittal effort without altering the pitch, then the finger must relax outwards very slightly just before lifting the note. That outward sagittal relaxing must continue through the fleeting sounding of the note until the finger is no longer pressing the string but just touching it, stopping it from vibrating. This gives the *meend* a

different sense of momentum. The extra weight from the slightly increased sagittal effort does not change the sound, but it makes the movement slower before returning to a lighter touch. A short breath is taken, then the final 'PA is sounded either as an open string on the cello, or with the index finger on the PA parda of the sitar.

The following examples demonstrate other kinds of meends, or meends that are part of the wider movement vocabulary of the gharānā. In these examples it is not necessary to go into as much somatic detail because the general concept of the motion in the left hand is now established.

The movement m P–D P m–P in the Jaunpuri alāp (Figure 4.7.5) is another in which the overall shape occurs through different swāras, in multiple melodic contexts and multiple ragas (see Figure 4.7.6 for its use in Kafi). The iteration of this movement in Jaunpuri is played on sitar with the index finger on the ma parda then the middle finger lands on the PA parda and pulls up to dha. Then the middle finger is lifted off and the meend from ma is played with the index finger. On the cello this whole movement is also played with the index finger on the SA string. It could be played starting on the open ma string, but the subsequent movement, the khatka down to ga is more fluid if performed on the same string as the movement which precedes it. The khatka here is important, because dwelling too much on the shrutis between ma and ga would give the impression of Raga Darbari instead of Jaunpuri.
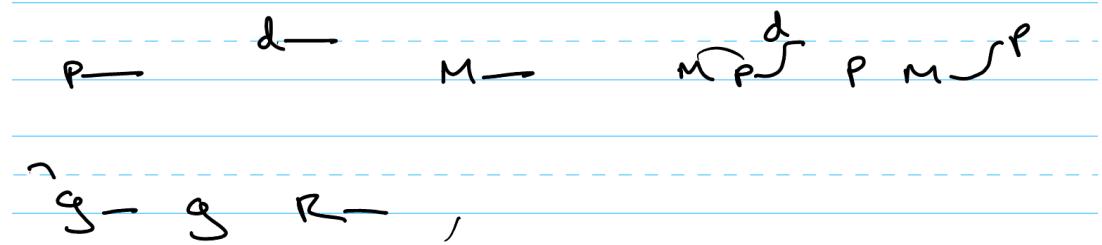
Figure 4.7.5 *meends* from Raga Jaunpuri *alāp* example 1, demonstrated in <u>Video</u>

<u>4.7.5</u>.

Figure 4.7.6 *meend* from *alāp* of Raga Kafi, demonstrated in <u>Video 4.7.6</u>.

The movement in Jaunpuri (Figure 4.7.7) from *PA*, through *dha* and *ni* to *SA* and the following movements in sequence can be played as a *meend* on sarod because of the absence of *pardas* and the ability to *meend* over larger distances on the string in one fluid movement and a single stroke. However, on sitar they require a technique known as *gitkiri*. This is a left-hand technique where, in a single stroke the index finger moves over multiple pardas, before landing on the destination *swāra*. However, on sitar this single stroke needs to be broken up between stopped *swāra*s on *pardas* and *swāra*s sounding through pulling *meend*. In this instance the destination *swāra* is then pulled as a compound *kan* movement*,* before finally resting on the landing top *swāra.* On cello this whole phrase begins on the open *ma* string. Then, in the same way as on sitar, the index finger stops *PA*, then the middle finger stops *dha* before playing a *meend* through *ni* to *SA.* The subsequent iterations of this movement on cello differ from sitar in that every time the middle finger stops *dha*, it then ascends through all the subsequent *swāra*s as a compound *kan* movement*.* Whereas, on sitar the *kan* begins one *swāra* later as the sequence ascends.
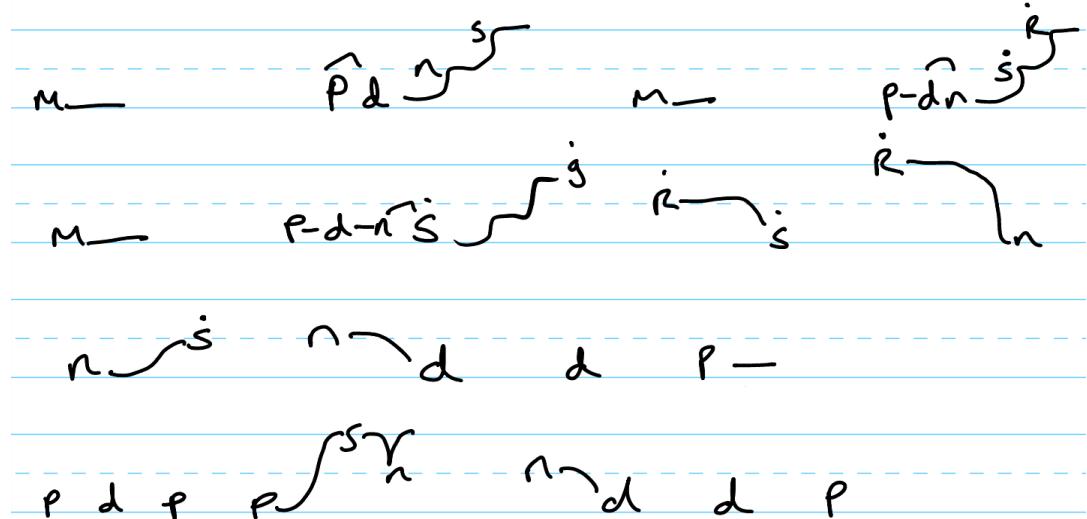
Figure 4.7.7 *meend*s from Raga Jaunpuri *alāp* example 2, demonstrated in Video 4.7.7.

Andolan and *kampan* (Figure 4.7.8) are quite similar techniques. Slawek writes that both *andolan* and *kampan* are kinds of oscillations. He explains that the frequency of oscillation of *kampan* is faster than that of *andolan.* Moreover, that '*andolan* normally has a greater amplitude of vibration, even extending to a [neighbouring] pitch, while *kampan* produces a very slight alteration of pitch' (Slawek, 1987, p .41). Translating *andolan* and *kampan* from sitar to cello follows the same principle as translating all the different kinds of *meend*. On both instruments the motion of the technique occurs predominantly over the vertical axis. To perform *andolan*, the finger oscillates gently as the pulled *baj* is gradually relaxed and the finger arrives on the destination *swāra*. Oscillating whilst bending back to the destination *swāra* awakens more *shruti*s than a straight *meend*. The sound of this movement feels grand and austere. When playing *kampan* the oscillations are faster and lighter. Fewer *shruti*s are awakened because a *kampan* is set to a single *swāra*.
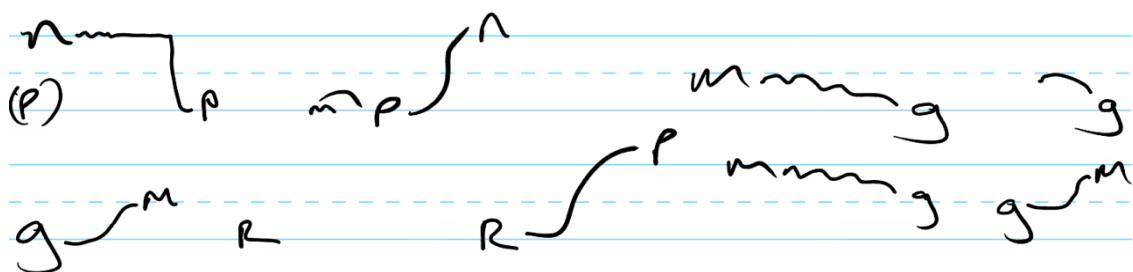

Figure 4.7.8 Miyan Ki Malhar *alāp* phrase with *kampan* and *andolan*, demonstrated in Video 4.7.8.

Kampan can be heard on the first *swāra,* the *ni*, of the phrase in the *alāp* of Miyan Ki Malhar (Figure 4.7.8). *Andolan* can be heard immediately after in the descending movement from *ma* to *ga*. There is no uncertainty in the *kampan* about where the *swāra* is placed, because of the smaller oscillations. However, as the finger gradually pulses down towards *ga* from *ma,* the width of the oscillation between the *swāra*s gives the feeling of lingering somewhere between the two *swāra*s. This brings out the serious and contemplative expression of this raga.[23]

There is one final left-hand technique covered in this section, which is the *krintan* (Figure 4.7.9)*.* This is a technique in which, when a *swāra* stopped by the left-middle finger is struck, the left-middle finger then plucks the string, to sound the *swāra* below, which is stopped by the index finger. This can be seen in the *alāp* phrase from Bilaskhani Todi. There is also the inverse of this technique present in this phrase, in which a *swāra* stopped by the index finger is struck and then the middle finger hammers on to the string, to sound the *swāra* above. Slawek called this technique '*sparṣ'* but that is not a term used to describe this technique in the sitar practice of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Both techniques follow the same principle on sitar and cello, as both involve using the fingertips to either pull off the string in the case of *krintan* or to hammer onto the string.
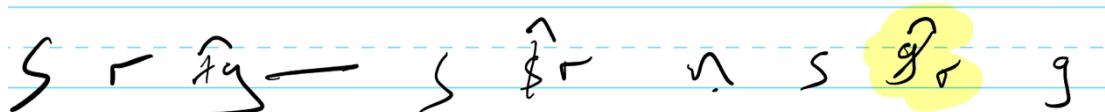
Figure 4.7.9 phrase from Bilaskhani Todi *alāp* showing *krintan*, demonstrated in Video 4.7.9.

There is another, even slighter oscillation, which I have picked up from Irfan Muhammad Khan's playing. This is not a named technique, and it is smaller and subtler than *kampan*. It is employed to bring out the expressive colour and resonance of particular *swāra*s, especially at moments of heightened emotion and when it is aesthetically appropriate to dwell on particular *swāra*s. This can be heard in the *alāp* of Irfan Muhammad Khan's performance of Bilaskhani Todi (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur

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[23] Darbari is another raga with a similar andolan over *komal ga.* Both ragas are Kannada ragas, which are characterised by the movements m R P and g m R S.

Gharana Archive, 2020a, <u>6:05</u>–6:50). I had not noticed that I had picked up this technique until I found myself doing it on sitar and cello (explicitly demonstrated in <u>Video 4.7.10</u> but also evident in <u>Video 5.3.1</u>).

On sarod it is achieved by gently oscillating the fingernail along the horizontal axis when playing a particular *swāra.* On sitar it is most easily played on a *swāra* that is approached via *meend*. The finger pulling the *baj* very swiftly but gently relaxes and strengthens. The vertical effort of the fingers pulling the *swāra* and the counter force of the string wanting to return to being completely straight can be felt in the fingertips and the knuckles. That tension between the downward effort of the hand and the upward tug of the string is what creates that soft vibrato-like shake of the note. On cello it is the memory of feeling those opposing forces when playing the sitar, paired with the memory of observing Ustadji that helped to prevent the Eurocentric cello vibrato technique taking over. This melodic technique on cello converts the horizontal shaking motion of the fingernail on the sarod string to vertical. However, it is that sense of focused pulling and relaxing felt in the hand when playing the technique on sitar, which ensured the rapidity of this technique, and which enables me to reproduce it on cello. This technique on cello is another hybridisation of the same technique on sitar and on sarod.

Exploring posture and physical disposition has provided a wider bodily context for determining how effectively I am able to use my left and right hands and fingers, and the ways they move with the instrument. Through the process of translation from the mode of sitar playing to the mode of cello playing I have come to understand that at the gestural level, in the hands and fingers, there are elements of Irfan Muhammad Khan's sarod playing, which I have not been able to adopt in the mode of sitar playing, but which I have been able to adopt in my cello playing. The entire process of adopting the right posture, developing an appropriate physical disposition, honing the correct left- and right-hand techniques and translating these between instrumental modes, has been a result of developing a close relationship with Irfan Muhammad Khan during *talīm* and following his recommended routine of *riyaz*. The sounding content of the performance and the repertoire that I have learned during this process is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 5. Repertoire

This chapter addresses the more explicitly sounding elements of the knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and follows the chronological structure of an unfolding performance. It begins with an exploration of the fundamental principles of melodic motion. The following section presents the way this melodic knowledge is expressed and developed in the first part of a performance: the unaccompanied *alāp*, *jod* and *jhalla*. The subsequent *gat* section explores the three originating streams of the compositions that make up the repertoire of the *gharānā* and the ways that they are played on both sitar and cello. The final section examines improvisation between iterations of the *gat* and concluding a performance in the style of the *gharānā*. Accompanying recordings demonstrate how all the examples are performed on both sitar and cello. The repertoire and techniques are presented in this chapter in detail to give as clear a representation as possible of the social, kinetic, aesthetic and temporal intentions that inform the ways of sounding when performing in the specific style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. The detail also reveals the depth of the theoretical underpinning of the repertoire and performance style of the *gharānā*. However, even with the accompanying recorded examples, the culmination of the embodied experience discussed in the previous chapter and the repertoire presented in this chapter can only be fully understood in the context of a live performance.

5.1 Melodic movement

The *alāp* is the introductory section of a performance in Hindustani music. This is the section where an instrumentalist or singer presents the melodic motion and full character of a raga. It begins with an opening statement and then gradually reveals the *swāra*s and movements of the raga, first in the lower *saptak* (octave). Depending on the instrument and the raga, the instrumentalist may then do the same in the lowest *kharaj saptak*. The *swāra*s and movements of the raga are then revealed in gradual ascent through the main *saptak* and the upper *saptak*, before returning to *Sa* of the main *saptak*. A more detailed description of the *alāp* structure is given in 5.2 *Alāp – Jod – Jhalla*.

The movements of the *alāp* section of the performance in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana are much more fixed than many other contemporary instrumental *gharānā*s. Like other aspects of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana's

style, this shows a closer affinity to the Dhrupad style of the Senias who taught the early luminaries of the *gharānā*. When Irfan Muhammad Khan's ancestors were playing to their knowledgeable patrons, they would be expected to present the melodic structure of the raga, at the appropriate time of day or season, in full, in the *alāp*. Fixed movements in the *alāp*, which were of course free to be embellished or varied so long as their fundamental shape remained intact, ensured that no melodic element of the raga was missed. As well as providing inspiration for *toda*s later in the performance, presenting the full melodic structure with these movements in *alāp* ensures that the *shruti*s of the raga are awakened correctly. The following section will present a brief explanation of *shruti*s, an exploration into the way every raga has a different way of awakening *shruti*s, and the way in which this is handled in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

5.1.1 Awakening shrutis

There is extensive English language literature from the mid to late twentieth century that discusses in depth the history, concept, mathematics and aesthetics of *swāra*s and *shruti*s (Ranade, 1971 [1939]; Daniélou, 1980; Levy, 1982; Bhatkhande, 1984; Roswell, 1992; Bagchee, 1998). In summary a *shruti* is a perceptible division in pitch of the *saptak* (octave). It is generally accepted that there are 22 *shruti*s. However, these 22 *shruti*s are not equal divisions of the *saptak*, but 'prominent intervals' (Daniélou, 1980, 5. 37). Irfan Muhammad Khan writes, in one of his numerous unpublished notebooks, about the distribution of the 7 *swāra*s across these 22 *shruti*s. He explains that *Sa, Ma* and *Pa* each span 4 *shruti*s, *Re* and *Dha* span 3 and *Ga* and *Ni* span 2. *Swāra*s are either *prakrit* (unchanged) or *vikrit* (changed). There are two kinds of *prakrit swāra*s: *achal* (immovable) — *SA and PA*, and *shudh* (natural) — *RE, GA, ma* and *PA.* There are also two kinds of *vikrit swar: komal* (flattened) — *ga*, *dha* and *ni*, and *tivra* (sharpened) — *MA*. Irfan Muhammad Khan also acknowledges the variance in the precise delineation of *shruti*s within *swāra*s, which runs through the history and discourse of Hindustani music. Table 5.1.1 presents the way that ancient musicologists fixed the *shudh* position of the seven *swāra*s. Table 5.1.2 presents an example of the way modern scholars have fixed the *shudh* positions of the seven *swāra*s:

			Sa			Re		Ga				Ma				Pa			Dha		Ni
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Table 5.1.1 the *shrutis* over which *shudh swāras* are placed, according to ancient scholars.

Sa				Re			Ga		Ma				Pa				Dha			Ni	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22

Table 5.1.2 the *shrutis* over which *shudh swāras* are placed according to modern scholars noted in Irfan Muhammad Khan's book.[1]

[1] He does not say which modern scholars, because it is a notebook as opposed to an academic text. However, it should be noted that, as Levy (1984) lays out, there are multiple contemporary proposed delineations of *shrutis*, and it is a topic of debate in modern literature.

Reading and discussing Irfan Muhammad Khan's perspective and understanding on *shruti*s and *swāra*s is enlightening because it comes in part from his inherited knowledge and training from his father and uncle. However, it also comes from his own reading of past and contemporary musicological literature on Hindustani music — including from his ancestors. Engaging with and contributing to the sounding and aesthetic theories underpinning Hindustani music, alongside their respective performance practices, has been integral to the standing and reputation of the most respectable Ustads historically (Katz, 2017; Schofield, 2021; 2023). Irfan Muhammad Khan's ancestors have a record of contributing to and engaging in the musicological discourses of their day, relating to theories of sound and sounding in raga-based music. This is evidenced by Schofield's (2023) inclusion of the writing of Niamatullah Khan and Karamatullah Khan in the canon of late Mughal period treatises and written contributions to theory of Hindustani music. In this sense, as Katz (2017) also explains, learning, discussing and responding to the sound theories underpinning raga-based music retains another vital component of the practice of the *gharānā*.

My gradual understanding of the sounding theories of *swāra* and *shruti* underpinning ragas in Hindustani music came partly through discussion with Ustadji in class and wider reading (both academic literature and Ustadji's notes). However, most of my understanding came through practice and learning the palimpsest of accumulated knowledge that is Ustadji's way of playing ragas, during *talīm*. What was particularly striking about learning in this way was, as Rahaim (2012) observes, the extent to which motion and movement were integral to conceptualising the way the distribution of the *swāra*s of a raga over *shruti*s works. This will be explained in more detail below.

The exact delineation of *shruti*s *across* the *saptak* was a particular concern of Alain Daniélou (1980). He delved into the theoretical (as opposed to perceptible) division of the *saptak* into 66 *shruti*s. He intended to present all the potential theoretical fixed points over which a *swāra* could fall and gave each of these positions his own, subjective meaning (Levy, 1982). However, this preoccupation with the ultra-specific frequencies of *shruti*s, as fixed and isolated units, does not really capture the essence of how the division of the *saptak* into *shruti*s, and over which *shruti*s the *swāra*s fall, works in practice. Boundaries between *swāra*s should be considered porous, a position supported by Ranade (1971) and Bhatkhande (1984), who, as Levy (1982)

summarises, are of the view that the exact *shruti*s over which *swāra*s fall are dependent on the wider melodic context.

*Shruti*s, like *swāra*s, are not completely fixed entities. The perception of which *shruti* a *swāra* ignites changes depending on the role and placement of the *swāra* within a larger melodic movement and that movement is characterised by the larger melodic structure of the raga. Or, as Irfan Muhammad Khan explained 'when you move the *swāra*s in a different way, the *shruti*s always change' (Khan, personal communication, 19 November 2024). Moreover, a *meend* may awaken more than one *shruti* within a *swāra*. The exact placement of the *swāra*s of a raga over which *shruti*s is therefore highly subjective, contingent on the *chalan* of the raga, as well as such nuances as the performance style and individual sensibility of the performer. This makes it almost impossible to illustrate in a definitive musical example without considering the wider context of the raga and the performer. However, the examples of melodic motion in Purbi *thāt* ragas below demonstrate the way moving through the same *swāra*s in different ways ignites different *shruti*s. This is experienced by a listener as one melodic movement through the same set of *swāra*s having a very subtly different character or feel to another.

Coming to understand the concept of *shruti*s in practice was a result of the way Ustadji taught the key aesthetic features and melodic structures of ragas, as well as the common pitfalls that break the mood and aesthetic of a specific raga. Movement and motion were embedded in his vocabulary. He would speak about 'learning the movements' of a raga, explaining the way the shape of the melody would 'touch'[1] specific *shruti*s of the raga. He also explained the temporal element of these movements: each raga has its own sense of tempo, because the speed at which you move through a melodic movement awakens *shruti*s differently. A pertinent example of this was when he demonstrated a downward *meend* that covered several *swāra*s, which I repeated back too slowly. He advised that playing this movement too slowly 'touched *all* the *shrutis'* between the *swāra*s in question, which spoiled the aesthetic of the raga. Playing the *meend* with the correct momentum touched only the *shruti*s that were supposed to be sounded (Khan, personal communication, 28 January

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[1] I decided to interpret Ustadji's use of the word 'touch' as ignite or awaken.

2023). Melodic motion of a raga then is not only about the points of landing, or the shape, but also the sense of speed and momentum with which the movement is expressed.

My approach to playing ragas changed as a result of considering them as articulations of particular melodic movements that awaken particular *shruti*s. Rather than practising to recreate a way of sounding, I was practising a way of moving that, if successful, would allow the mood of the raga to emerge. The way I stopped, or bent, the strings with my left hand and struck them with the right became an act of melodic conjuring, enabling the raga, with its unique affective qualities, to hang in the space between the performers and the listeners. The sounding outcome would create a whole-body sensation, which would then inform the way further movements were employed. What I was learning from Ustadji was the ways he and his ancestors moved to conjure the mood of the raga in space. It was therefore a very different experience to the kind of conjuring of the Eurocentric musical work tradition, which is more preoccupied with playing specific sounds to bring forth the internal world of an individual composer, absent from the stage.

5.1.2 Differentiating between ragas that use the same swāras

Understanding in practice the relation between melodic shape and momentum is illustrated by the way I was taught to differentiate between different ragas with the same *swāra*s. Ragas such as Basant, Paraj, Purbi and Puriya Dhanashri are grouped within the Purbi *thāt*.[2] All of these ragas have the *swāra*s, *S r G M P d N S*, although Purbi, Paraj and Basant also feature varying use of *shudh ma*. Despite the *swāra*s of these ragas having the same pitches, moving over these *swāra*s in a different order, with different emphasis and sense of momentum, awakens the *shruti*s within each *swāra* in a different way. This is what makes the melodic character and mood of each of the above ragas unique and identifiable, despite their shared fundamental tuning.

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[2] Bhatkhande's *thāt* system of organising ragas has in recent years been critiqued for its inconsistencies. However, so long as it is not taken as the only way of grouping ragas, there is merit and utility to loosely grouping ragas based on the position of their *swāra*s. In fact, prior to the establishment of the *thāt* system, the manuscript of Karamatullah Khan shows *thāt* used as a term to differentiate between ragas with different placements of the *pardas*.

It is worth noting that despite stark aesthetic differences, the following ragas grouped within the Purbi *thāt* share many affective qualities as a result of their shared *swāra*s. When playing all of the following ragas I feel a sense of ascension. Anxious feelings are brought to serenity, but I do not feel pacified or dulled, rather given a sense of momentum and joyous purpose. These sensations are felt up the back of my neck, along my scalp and my earlobes, in my chest and in my abdomen. However, the different affective qualities I experience when playing each of the ragas should also be acknowledged:

- Purbi is an early evening raga, which has an air of brooding devotion to it.
- Basant is a springtime raga, which is light, with a slight edge of dramatic excitement to it.
- Puriya Dhanashri is an early evening raga, which is simultaneously calming and dramatic, encouraging feelings of deep breath and sharpened attention. This raga has a particular shine to it, often reminding me of evening sun rays reflecting off a metal surface.
- Paraj is an early hours of the morning raga. It is an intriguing combination of playful and melancholic, perhaps in the way a dream can veer from one of these states to another.

When asking Ustadji about my particular enjoyment of these ragas, he explained that musicians' preferences for different ragas are reflective of their personal nature. He explained that his uncle, Ilyas Khan, tended to prefer more romantic ragas, such as those grouped in the Kafi and Khamaj *thāt*s. Whereas, his father, Umar Khan, preferred the more austere and devotional ragas such as Purbi *thāt* ragas and Raga Darbari. I have found through my training with Ustadji that my preference is somewhere in between, as I am equally drawn to Kafi *thāt* ragas as I am Purbi *thāt* ragas.

The opening *alāp* phrase of any raga is crucial for establishing its correct melodic motion and mood. The Figures discussed in this section represent the opening phrases of ragas Purbi, Basant, Paraj and Puriya Dhanashri, which ascend to *SA* and descend to *ṢA*. There is a stark difference between the opening movements of these

ragas in terms of the time taken to move through the *swāra*s and, therefore, the momentum with which the *shruti*s are awakened. A comparison between the opening phrases of these ragas in terms of their shape and momentum, and therefore the energy and emphasis directed towards the *shruti*s within the *swāra*s of these ragas, follows below:

Purbi:

• In the opening phrase of Purbi, (figures 5.1.1 and 5.1.2) *SA* is arrived at from *MA* by the second stroke. *MA* is allowed to breathe before the second movement, which goes swiftly from *MA* all the way up to *SA* via a *meend.* The momentum of these first two strokes is distributed in a way that gives the sense that *MA* is the inhalation before the swift exertion up to *SA.* However, in practice, the opening statement of *MA* does not feel like an inward breath. When I play it, my attention goes to the centre of my forehead, from where I imagine the sound of the *swāra* protruding as a straight line. This helps to give the *swāra* space to breathe, with a sense of momentum and purpose. I then take a breath and direct my attention to the abdominal core, heart, left arm and left hand for the faster, upward *meend* to *SA*.

• The *swāra*s *dha* and *NI* are not explicitly stated in this ascending movement but their *shruti*s are briefly touched in the *meend* from *MA* to *SA.* This establishes *SA*, as opposed to the other *swāra*s above *MA*, as the point of upwards resolution from the tension of that initial statement of *MA.*

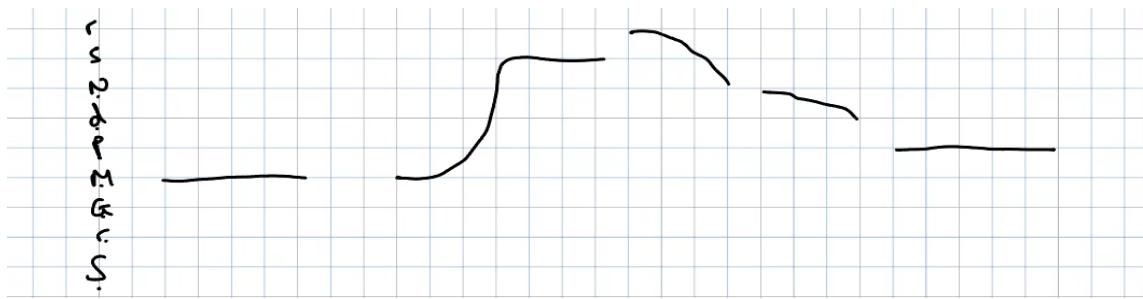Figure 5.1.1 first phrase of Purbi on sitar, demonstrated in Video 5.1.1

Figure 5.1.2 melodic contour of first phrase of Purbi.

- To play the *meend* of that second stroke in Purbi on sarod and cello, it is possible to go straight from *ṂA* to *SA* in one fluid movement. However, on sitar, to get there via pulling *meend* from the *MA parda* is just a little too far. The way round this is to strike the *baj* when the left index finger is pressed down on the *ṂA parda*. Then to move the left hand quickly along the neck a short distance so the second finger can press the *baj* at the *dha parda* (without another stroke) and then quickly pull the *baj* up to *SA.* This way, the listener hears a fluid movement ascending to *SA* from *ṂA*.

- The speed of this second movement compared to the brooding initial statement of *ṂA* is enough to need to keep the melodic momentum ascending towards *re,* after the resolution on *SA.* This makes *SA* not only a point of resolution but also a pivot over which the melody falls from its own weight and accrued melodic tension, having continued past its strong point of resolution to the weak *re* just beyond. This accrued momentum then spills in a lilting descending *meend* from *re* to *ṆI*, giving *ṆI* emphasis. Then, again from *ṆI* to *ḍha*, before landing finally on the resting place of *ṖA*.

- If *ḍha* and *ṆI* were explicitly stated in ascent, as opposed to merely touched via *meend*, before the two downward *meends* from *re* to *ṆI* and then *ṆI* to *ḍha*, then the opening phrase would sound like Puriya Dhanashri. Though *SA* plays a critical role here in the differentiation between Purbi and Puriya Dhanashri. In Puriya Dhanashri *SA* would be omitted in ascent, allowing more momentum to build towards a strong *re,* from *ṆI*. Furthermore, if the upward melodic momentum following the second Purbi stroke were to stay just at *SA* before descending back down via *ṆI* and *ḍha,* then the opening phrase would sound more like Basant.

Basant:

- Despite *SA* in Basant being arrived at from *MA* later, by the fourth stroke, the faster tempo of the strokes in Basant means that the timing of the arrival on *SA* in both Basant and Purbi is quite close. The distribution of energy given to each of the *swāra*s in ascent is also much more equally dispersed than in the opening ascending gesture in Purbi. This difference in dispersal of energy illustrates one way in which Basant has a lighter aesthetic feel to the weightier, more brooding, Purbi. The psychophysical effort in preparation and exertion of the opening *meend* in Purbi, felt especially in the abdomen, arm and hand, is much greater than the opening Basant movements. The first three *swāra*s in Basant are stopped, so attention is principally directed to the left index and middle fingertips and then the ears and breath, to gauge sustain time. Then the *meend,* although technically being pulled from *ḍha* to SA, as in Purbi, feels as though it requires far less effort. This is because the right-hand stroke coincides with expression of *ḍha*, rather than *MA* as in Purbi. So, although the *meend* uses the same physical strength in both ragas, the distance covered in pitch and on the instrument feels considerably shorter in the Basant *meend*.

- In Basant the opening movement (Figures 5.1.3 and 5.1.4) explicitly states *MA, ḍha* and *SA*. *ṆI* is not explicitly stated but is very briefly touched as one of the awakened *shruti*s in the *meend* from *ḍha* to *SA*. However, there are contexts in Basant where *NI* can be stated in ascent. For example, later in the *alāp* comes the phrase *M-d-N-Ṡ -dṙ ṠNṠ*.
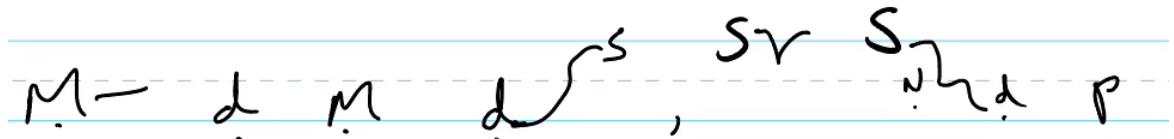

Figure 5.1.3 first phrase of Basant on sitar, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.1.2</u>.
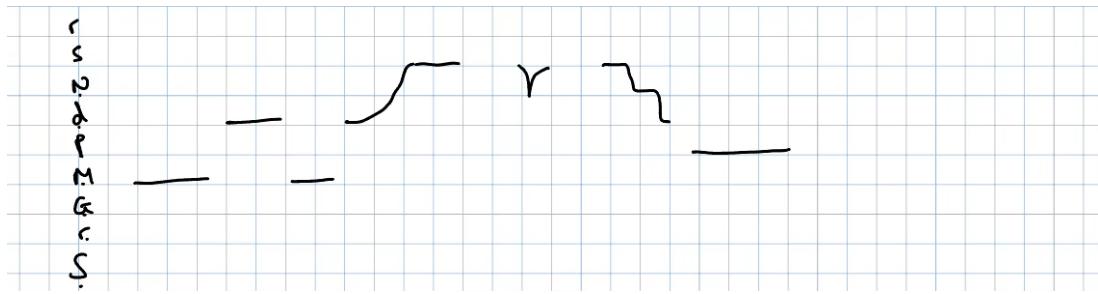
Figure 5.1.4 melodic contour of first phrase of Basant.

- The ascent in the opening phrase towards *SA* is not direct. By returning to *ṂA* from *ḍha* on the third stroke, that upward momentum, which is seen in the second stroke of the Purbi *alāp* opening, is diffused. This means that there is less upward momentum available for the ascending *meend* from *ḍha* to *SA.* Therefore, there is not that same impetus to move beyond *SA* as there is in Purbi. *SA* is the point of arrival, from which the melody descends to *ṢA* via *ṆI* and *ḍha*.

- In the opening of Purbi, the statement of *ṆI* and *ḍha* is made in two lilting movements from *re*. Whereas, in Basant *ṆI* and *ḍha* are stated in one single movement in which the two *swāra*s are momentary dwelling points, as part of a *meend* from *SA*. The *swāra*s must be stated and not glided over. It would also be permitted to play *ṆI* and *ḍha* in separate strokes, but they should have equal emphasis. Therefore, they must not be played with the same lilting *meend*s, which give *ṆI* more emphasis, as heard in the Purbi phrase.

Paraj:

- In the Paraj opening (figures 5.1.5 and 5.1.6), unlike in Purbi and Basant, all the *swāra*s between *ṂA* and *SA* are expressed. However, the main landing point is *ṆI*, which is stated multiple times and given space to breathe, before a quick and subtle resolution to *SA* at the end of a *meend*. *SA* is an afterthought to *ṆI*, which is the main event. The opening four strokes (*Ṃ P ḍ Ṇ*) are very close to the movement in Puriya Dhanashri, *Ṃ ḍ Ṇ*. The use of *ṢA* in the Paraj movement, adding that vital extra resonating *shruti*, creates a different colour to this ascending combination of *swāra*s to that of Puriya Dhanashri.
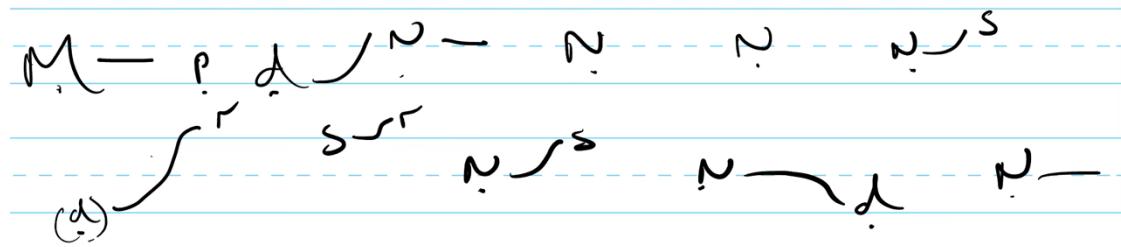
Figure 5.1.5 first phrase of Paraj on sitar, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.1.3</u>.
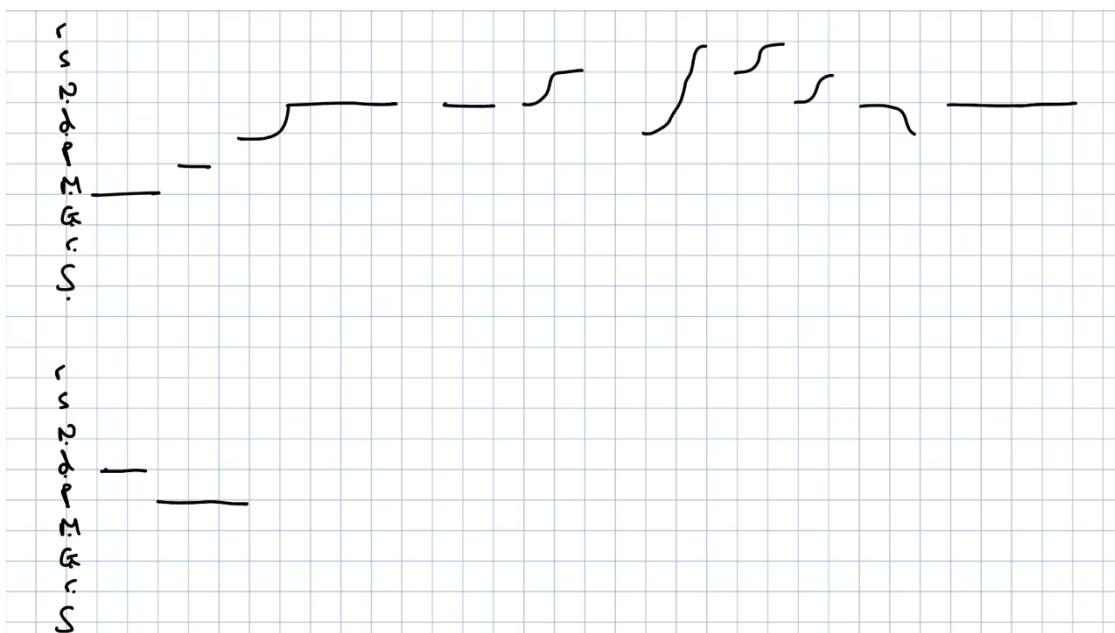

Figure 5.1.6 melodic contour of first phrase of Paraj.

- The descending movements of this Paraj phrase, which go from *re* to *PA*, differ in shape and colour to the movement in the Purbi *alāp* opening, from *re* to *PA*. Whereas in Purbi the two *meends r–N, N–d* lilt downwards, the descending movement in Paraj features three *meends* that pull upwards. The general overall descending movement of the phrase is contrasted with the upward motion of the *meends ḍ–r, S–r, N–S*. It is as though the two *meends S–r, N–S* are restating the *shruti*s that were touched in the initial *ḍ–r* movement. The weight and exertion in the left arm and hand of the pull of the first *meend, ḍ–r*, which is quite a stretch over four *swāra*s, is diffused by the following, much lighter *meends* over a single *swāra*. The feeling of pulling the string up, while descending down the neck establishes in the physical motion, as well as

the sounding motion that raga Paraj is an *uttarang* (residing in the upper tetrachord) raga.

- The following downward *meend N–ḍ* then resolves upwards back to *NI*. This sets Paraj apart from Basant, which would resolve after stating *S N ḍ* down to *PA*. In Paraj, to make clear that this is not Basant, only once that final emphasis of *NI* has been restated does the melody move down in a stepwise afterthought from *ḍha* to *PA*.

Puriya Dhanashri

- The opening *alāp* phrase of Puriya Dhanashri (figures 5.1.7 and 5.1.8) moves from *MA* to a *meend* beginning on *ḍha*, ascending to *re*, falling to touch *NI and* resolving upwards to *SA* — all in one stroke. The initial ascent to *re* from *ḍha* establishes *re* as a strong (but not dominant) *swāra*.
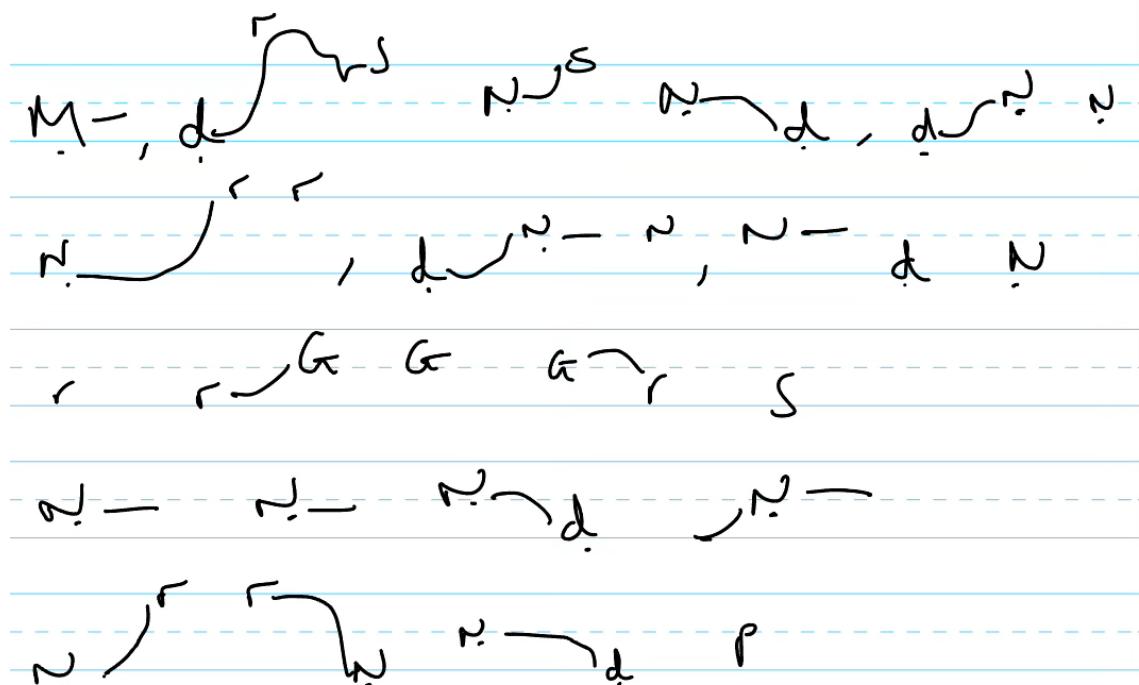

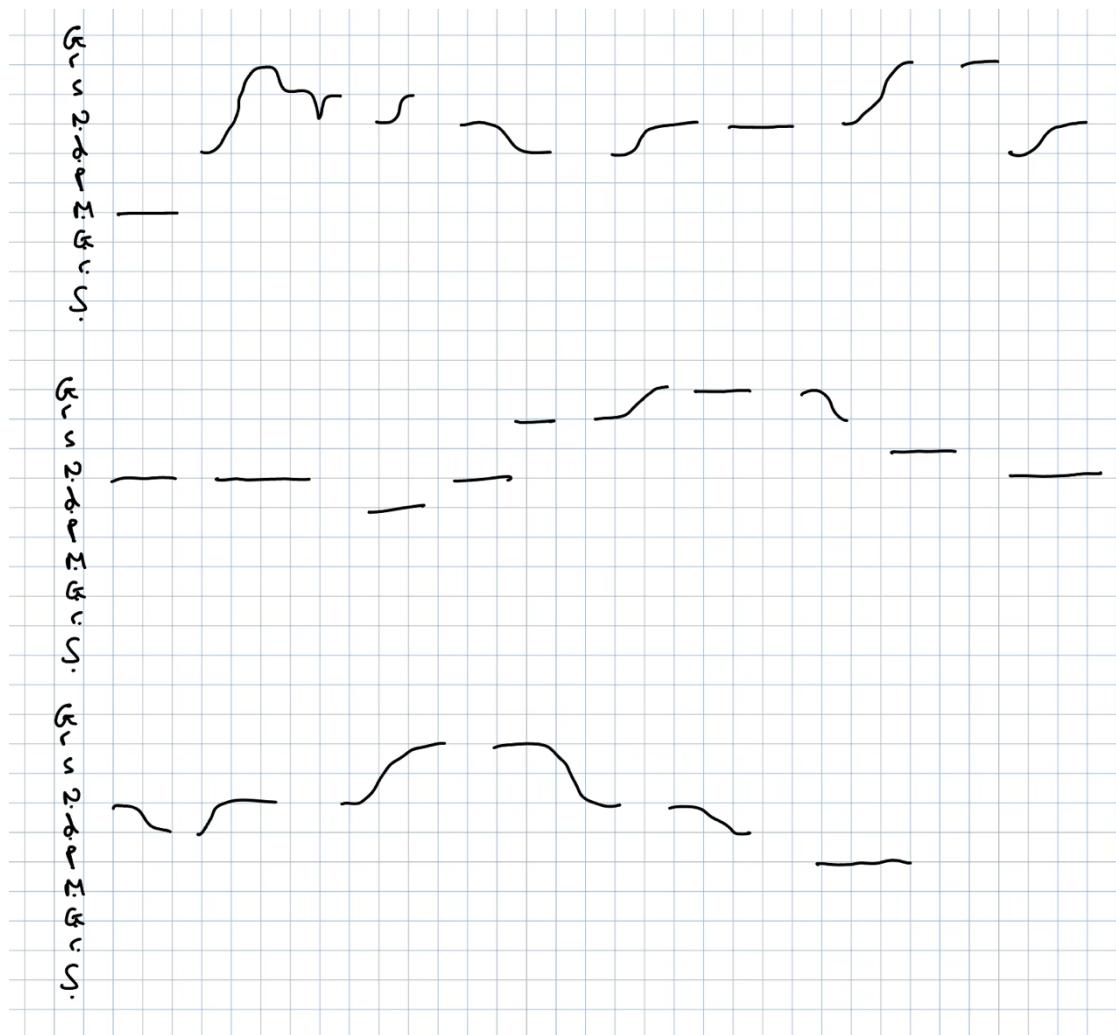Figure 5.1.7 first phrases of Puriya Dhanashri, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.1.4</u>.

Figure 5.1.8 melodic contour of first phrases of Puriya Dhanashri.

- Much like the opening movements of Paraj, which also dwell on *Ṇl*, the following movements in Puriya Dhanashri dwell considerably on *Ṇl*. *Ṇl* becomes the central pivot between *ḍha* from below and *re* above, as the *shruti*s of these three *swāra*s are repeatedly reawakened. *SA* is marked by its absence in these movements. This absent *SA* prevents any neutralising of the fizzing chemistry between the *shruti*s of *Ṇl, ḍha* and *re*, building anticipation and sufficient melodic momentum to reach beyond *re*, finally arriving at *GA*. This establishes that definitive movement of Puriya Dhanashri, *Ṇ r G*. Only once this definitive movement has been stated, does the melody finally fall to rest momentarily at *SA.* The effervescence of the *shruti*s of *ḍha, Ṇl, re,* and now *GA*, resounding together momentarily resolves to *SA.* The brevity of this delayed resolution enhances the scintillating colour and drama of Raga Puriya Dhanashri.

- Landing on resolution points after building a significant amount of melodic tension is also seen in the delayed arrival on *P̣A* in these opening statements of the *alāp*. Once *SA* has finally been stated, after being evaded over several strokes, the melody does not then fall back down to *P̣A,* as it does in Purbi or Basant. Even the Paraj opening, once reaching beyond *SA,* balances the ascent with an albeit embellished descent to *P̣A* to complete an arc movement. In Puriya Dhanashri, that dramatic energy of the chemistry between *ṆI, ḍha* and *re* is recalled once more like an aftershock, with the movement *Ṇ ḍ Ṇ r r Ṇ Ṇ ḍ P̣*. However, this time, instead of moving up to *GA* as before, the melody then finally falls from *ṆI* via *ḍha* to *P̣A*. *P̣A* is therefore stated considerably later than in the opening of the other three Purbi Ragas above.

There are other details within the *alāp* movements in the Purbi *thāt* ragas mentioned above, which exemplify playing the same *swāra*s with different melodic motion to establish the different melodic colours and textures specific to each raga. One such example is the use of *shudh ma*, which features in Purbi, Paraj and Basant. In Puriya Dhanashri there is no *shudh ma*. The ragas that do use *shudh ma* feel physically different to play. The *shudh ma* in the main *saptak* tends to be played with the middle finger, with the exception of one upward movement in Paraj. *Tivra MA* in Puriya Dhanashri, as a passing *swāra* is much more often played with the first finger, or in a *meend*, as part of a larger movement. On the occasions *MA* in Puriya Dhanashri are stopped with a middle finger, the distance to stretch the middle finger from *GA*, stopped with the index finger, is much wider than to *shudh ma*. Therefore, the ways in which I map out the terrain of the Ragas Purbi, Paraj and Basant along the neck of the instrument and in the fingers differ considerably from Puriya Dhanashri. The shorter stretch to *shudh ma* from *GA* also gives a feeling of a brief resting point in the middle of the main *saptak*. This is absent from Puriya Dhanashri, which adds to its distinctive aesthetic sheen.

In Purbi, *ma* is approached always from below, either from *re* or *GA* and must always fall back to *GA*. This is illustrated in Figures 5.1.9, 5.1.10, and 5.1.11. Very occasionally the movement from *GA* to *ma* can be embellished with *tivra MA.* This is illustrated in Figure 5.1.11*.* The use of *shudh ma* in Purbi must always be subtle and in the *alāp* it

is advised that it is not sounded with its own right-hand stroke, but it should be approached via a *meend* as part of a longer stroke. This prevents it from overpowering the raga, or from starting to sound like Paraj. *Shudh ma* is usually played near to an expression of *tivra MA,* either shortly before or after. This ensures that the *shruti* awakened by playing *shudh ma* is either resonating or reverberating alongside the *shruti* of *tivra MA*, as well as the *shruti*s of the *GA* or *re*, which immediately precede *ma.* The *shruti* of *shudh ma* in this context adds colour to the lower tetrachord of the raga, to give the specific shade of Purbi and to help the listener to differentiate it from Puriya Dhanashri.

Figure 5.1.9 use of *shudh ma* in the Purbi *alāp* movement 1, demonstrated in Video 5.1.5.

Figure 5.1.10 use of *shudh ma* in the Purbi *alāp* movement 2, demonstrated in Video 5.1.5.

Figure 5.1.11 use of *shudh ma* in the Purbi *alāp* movement 3, demonstrated in Video 5.1.5.

Shudh ma in Basant

Shudh ma is not actually considered a part of the melodic structure of Basant. However, as Irfan Muhammad Khan explains, it is used to amplify the beauty of the raga and to bring out the shades of raga Paraj in the raga. When it is stated, it is a bold statement with a profound effect, far less subtle than *shudh ma* in Purbi. Figures 5.1.12 and 5.1.13 illustrate the first two melodic movements that sound *shudh ma* in Basant.
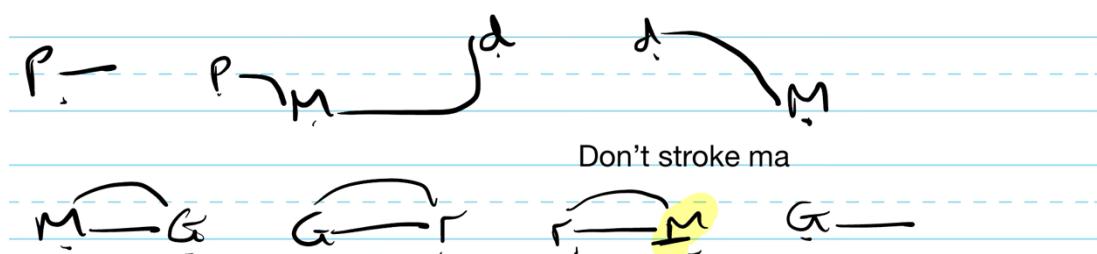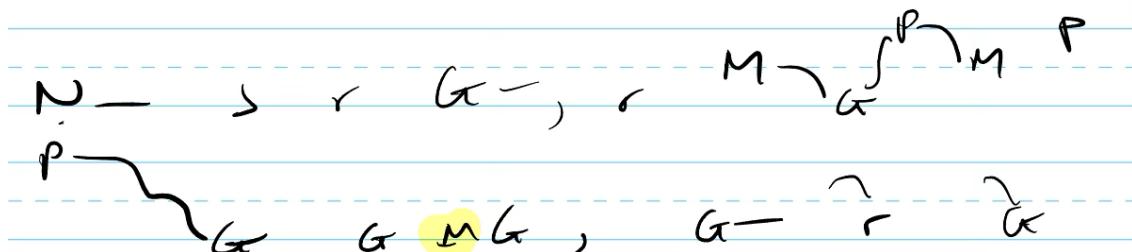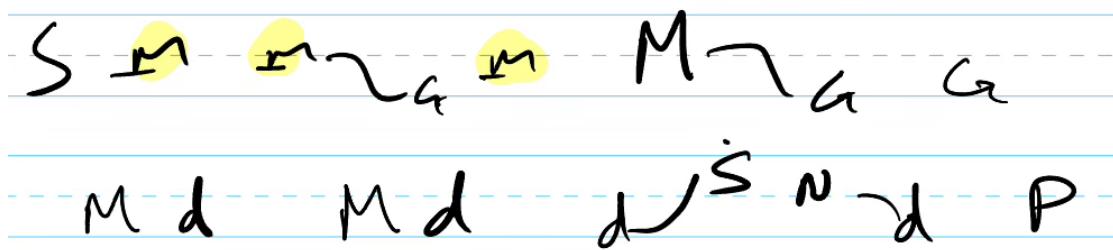
Figure 5.1.12 use of *shudh ma* in the Basant *alāp* movement 1, demonstrated in Video 5.1.6.
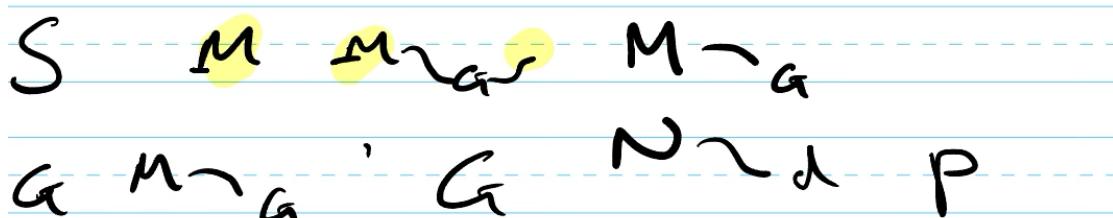
Figure 5.1.13 use of *shudh ma* in the Basant *alāp* movement 2, demonstrated in Video 5.1.6.

The basic movement in which *shudh ma* is expressed in Basant is usually *m (G)m M G.* It tends to be played once the melody has descended to *SA* in the previous movement. It was advised in class that this movement should be followed by the movements: *N d P; M d M d Ṡ N d P;* or *M d M d ṙ Ṡ N Ṡ.* The infrequent return of this *shudh ma* movement is what gives it its power. There is such a sense of satisfaction when it is played. This is illustrated in Irfan Muhammad Khan's 2020 performance (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020f, 1:06–1:20). As the movement resolves with *M G,* an audience member expresses '*acha*!' in appreciation and then the following *N d P* receives similar vocalisations and expressions of approval. The satisfaction from the correct placement of this movement illustrates the importance of temporal knowledge as an element of melodic knowledge. It is crucial to know when it is the right time to play this phrase, ensuring sufficient time and other melodic movements have unfolded since the last time it was sounded. Moreover, when this movement is played it should be given sufficient breathing room to maintain its specific affective quality. This temporal knowledge is embedded in the movements of the *alāp* as taught and performed by Irfan Muhammad Khan.

Shudh ma in Paraj

There is much more frequent use of *shudh ma* in Paraj than in Basant and, unlike Purbi, when it is expressed, it is done so explicitly. The two main *alāp* movements, which I was taught in Paraj that feature *shudh ma* are shown in Figures 5.1.14 and 5.1.15:
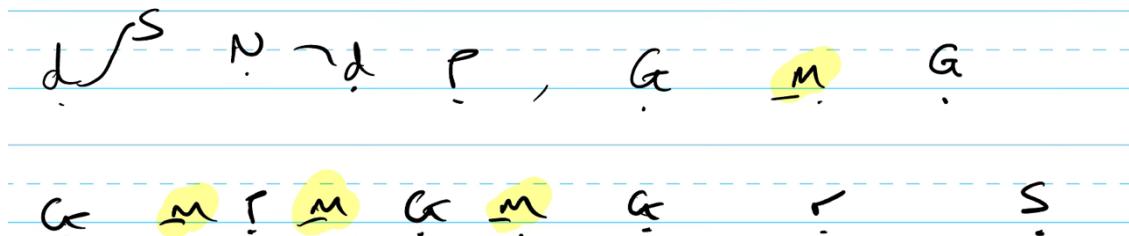
Figure 5.1.14 s*hudh ma* in Paraj *alāp*, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.1.7</u>.
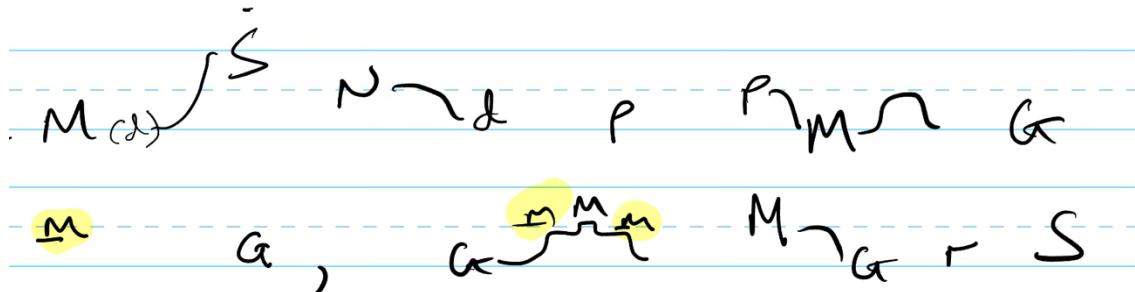
Figure 5.1.15 alternative use of *shudh ma* in Paraj *alāp*, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.1.7</u>.

In Figures 5.1.14 and 5.1.15, the first movement, descending through the upper tetrachord, resembles the descending movements of Basant. It is the role of the movement *G m G*, with a clearly stated *shudh ma,* following these descending movements that ensures that the listener is not hearing Basant. The resonance of *shudh ma* colours the *shruti*s of the *swāra*s, which came just before, differently to Basant. It softens the melodic sheen established by combining the *swāra*s, *NI, dha, PA, MA, and GA*. This is in part because of the way *shudh ma* changes the melodic relationship between *GA* and *dha*. It establishes a tenderness that can also be heard in Bhairav *thāt* ragas. As Parrikar (2002) writes, this phrase is commonly recognised to have a shade of the Bhairav *thāt* raga, Kalingda. However, it must be clarified that the following descending *M G r S* of Paraj places the *swāra*s *GA, ma, MA, PA, dha* in a completely different melodic context to Bhairav *thāt* ragas, whose descending movements tend to be *G m r r S*. This will be examined in more detail below.

In the subsequent movement of Figure 5.1.14, *shudh ma* is clearly sounded between each of its neighbouring *swāra*s above and below. This is more pronounced on sitar in its lower octave, played on the *jora* string, because each *swāra* must be sounded either by hammering on the second finger or by being stroked individually. It is too challenging to play large *meend*s on the *jora*, as it is constricted by its tension, its proximity to the *baj* and the fact that too much bending this more brittle string causes it to break. On cello and sarod these *swāra*s can be easily traversed via *meend*. In the version of this movement in Figure 5.1.15, the *shudh ma* shifts up to *tivra MA*, in the *meend*, *GmMm*. This *meend* is very similar to the very occasional *meend* of the same shape in Purbi, except it is coloured differently by the regular and more pronounced use of *shudh ma*. Furthermore, it is followed by the descending movement *M G r S*, which would make *re* too strong for Purbi, as explained below.

In the descent of Purbi, *komal re* is weak, so returning from *komal dha* to *SA* requires the musician to play *d M G r G r S*, barely touching the second *re* (Video 5.1.8). The strength of *re* results in part from the anticipation of reaching *SA*. The move back up to *GA* breaks this tension and shifts the emphasis back onto *GA*. *SA* then becomes an afterthought, which quietly falls from *GA*, with a brief awakening of the *re shruti* on the way down. In Puriya Dhanashri, however, the *re* has to be strong in the same movement from *dha*, so it must be played moving straight down, *d M G r S* (Video 5.1.8).

When learning these movements in both Purbi and Puriya Dhanashri, I was advised by Ustadji to play the *d M G* part of this on the *GA parda* (Video 5.1.9). In Purbi this helped to remind me to pull up to *GA* from *re* in my next movement and in Puriya Dhanashri it reminded me to play *re* straight, with no *meend*, before *SA.* This is an example of a simple instruction for the best place to play the *swāra*s of a raga on the instrument illustrating Ustadji's deep understanding of the motion of the raga not just in the way it sounds, but also kinetically and mechanically. By being advised to 'pull from Ga' (Irfan Muhammad Khan, 2023 and 2024, in class) not only was I learning the movements over the *swāra*s and learning to pick up on the *shruti*s these movements awaken. I was also learning how the placement and movement of the hand on the

sitar can be used to emphasise, or if placed incorrectly, disrupt that motion of the raga.

If I were to approach *re* in Puriya Dhanashri as a *meend* from *GA,* I would distort that motion by weakening *re.* Similarly, if I were to land on *re* in a *meend* from *GA* in Purbi, without moving back up to *GA* again I would be giving too much emphasis to *re*. Using Neuman's (2012) metaphor of ragas as pathways through melodic terrain, the movement *d M G* on the *GA parda*, is the portion of the pathway shared by both ragas. Then *re* is the fork in the road, where moving one way continues down the path of Purbi and moving the other follows the path of Puriya Dhanashri (Video 5.1.9). The instruction to play *d M G* from the *GA* Parda then was not just for ease of playing the notes of these ragas, but for developing a physical sense of moving through these two ragas. This instilled a firmer understanding of what movements are shared between the two ragas, where they differ, and where moving the wrong way in one risks veering too close to the other.

Like Purbi *thāt* ragas, Bhairav *thāt* ragas also feature *komal re* and *shudh GA*. The differences between the melodic motion through *komal re* and *shudh GA* of ragas of the Purbi thāt and those of the Bhairav *thāt* illustrate a broader point about the ways that melodic motion of different ragas affect which *shruti*s are awakened, and their emphasis. It is worth highlighting key movements that illustrate the difference in handling of *komal re* in ragas with the Bhairav *swāra*s *S r G m P d N Ś* (see Video 5.1.10) in comparison to the *swāra*s of the Purbi *thāt* above. As previously mentioned, I was taught by Ustadji to descend back to *SA* in Bhairav ragas using movement with the shapes, *N Ś d d P G m r r S* or *N Ś d d P G m G r r S* (see Video 5.1.10) This slight ascent to *shudh ma*, before falling to *re* builds a greater sense of momentum towards *re* than in any of the Purbi *thāt* ragas. This gives *re* a stronger audible presence in the raga.

The colouring from *shudh ma* awakens different *shruti*s between *GA* and *re* than in Purbi. In Purbi there is a sense that the larger space between *tivra MA* and *GA* pulls the *re* up in pitch. In Bhairav, the *re* has a feeling of being flatter in pitch,[3] due to the

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[3] Even if played on an instrument with fixed tuning, where the actual frequency of *komal re* is always the same.

shape and downward momentum of the movement from *ma* and its closer proximity to *GA.* The strength of this flatter *re* is compounded by the fact that in the *alāp* movements of the Bhairav *thāt* ragas, *re* is stated twice in descent before landing on *SA.* Not only is it struck twice, but it is played with *andolan* (slight oscillation in pitch– see [technique section]). It is worth noting that in Bhairav, *dha* receives the same treatment—it too is struck twice and played with *andolan.* In this sense the upper tetrachord of Bhairav mirrors the lower tetrachord.

The above analysis and comparison of just the opening *alāp* phrases and a small selection of other key movements of each of these four ragas show the extent of the melodic knowledge packed into each of the set *alāp* movements in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. This is why Irfan Muhammad Khan teaches his students to closely follow these movements of the *alāp* in study and performance of a raga. While learning the fixed movements that set a raga apart from other ragas, I would gradually come to know the affective atmosphere unique to the raga being played. It was like getting to know a new person, or space. It does not take long to know about people, or spaces, but it takes much longer to know them, their nature and how they make one feel.

Over time, as I became familiar with a raga, the movements it required to emerge and its aesthetic characteristics worked together to assist performance. The opening movements, as explained above, helped to establish the atmosphere, which then prompted clearer memory of the movements that follow. The affective quality of the raga directed the way in which I articulated its movements, which helped recall further movements from my psychophysical memory more clearly. The process of learning the *alāp* movements of a raga were therefore not merely to learn the movements, then recreate them in performance and establish the mood of the raga. The process was rather to: learn the movements; develop associations with these movements and the emotions and sensations they evoke; allow these sensations to determine expression of strokes in the right hand and ornamentation in the left hand; to perform, using the atmosphere and expressive articulation to assist in recalling the specific melodic shapes of the movements.

The melodic movements of the *alāp* follow a line through the generations of musicians of the *gharānā* and arrive back at the *Senia Kalāwant* musicians of the Mughal courts. Unlike the *gharānā*'s repertoire of compositions, which has been developed and added to over time, the set movements of the *alāp* will not have been consciously adapted and built upon in the same way, or to the same extent. Therefore, learning to perform these movements is an act of continuing an embodied archive of melodic knowledge from the earlier pillars of Hindustani music, whose torch Ustadji and now his students have come to bear.

In performance of the *alāp*, it was recommended by Ustadji in class that I should aim to use as few *Da* strokes per melodic movement as possible. This allows the melody to flow most effectively without interruptions from too many articulations of the *baj* being struck. For this reason, I followed the strokes of Ustadji: when he showed a movement, I would try and strike the string at the same points he did. It was advised not to use weaker *Ra* strokes in *alāp* because it is important to keep the strength of the strokes consistent throughout. This maintains the focus as much as possible on the melodic movements. On cello this was easier to achieve because the bow produces continuous sound, with smoother articulation. However, it was not possible to use only single direction bow strokes. I had been taught melodic movements and phrases with strokes, the integrity of which I wanted to maintain. To keep the same sense of articulation in the *alāp* I mostly tried to match when the bow changed direction to the timing and frequency of the sarod and sitar strokes in the *alāp* melodic movements.

Da strokes on sitar and sarod are punctuated by occasional *chik* strokes, but not too frequent as to spoil the mood and flow of the melodic movements. These maintain a sense that the instrument is still sounding, making up for the fast decay of the plucked string. On my cello, there is not a *chikārī* string, but the sustain from the bow fills sufficient space with sound that punctuating strikes from *chikārī* strings are not as necessary. Video 5.2.1 shows the *asthai* and *antarā* sections of the *alāp* of Raga Rageshri performed on sitar. Although it shows my posture prior to moving the foot and my hand posture has since been refined, it is shot in a way that clearly shows the use of *Da* strokes throughout. Video 5.2.2 shows the way I bow on cello the melodic movements of the *asthai* and *antarā* sections of the Raga Ahir Bhairav *alāp*.

The *alāp*, when played in full, in the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana style follows a structure of *asthai, antarā, abhog, sanchārī.* This structure harks back to the Dhrupad tradition of the Senia musicians who passed their knowledge on to the *gharānā*'s earlier exponents. The *asthai* covers most of the melodic movements of the *alāp* in both the lower *saptak* and the main *saptak*. Between each *saptak* a punctuating phrase is played, known as a *mohra*. The *mohra* (see Video 5.2.3) always follows a variation of this stroke pattern: *Da chik Da Da chikchik Da Da – Da*. The exact pitches

vary depending on which raga is being performed but usually the *mohra* is a variation of this melodic phrase: *Sa chik Sa Sa chikchik [ṇi/ Ṇl] [ṇi/ Ṇl] – Sa.* The *antarā* repeats the opening movements of the *asthai* in the upper tetrachord of the main *saptak* and the upper *saptak*, before returning to *Sa* of the main *saptak*, followed by another *mohra*.

The *abhog* and *sanchārī* that follow are much harder to identify and differentiate between. Their order and execution also vary between *gharānā* traditions. Moreover, these sections can only be presented fully on Dhrupad instruments such as veena or Seni rabāb. In Dhrupad, Ashish Sankrityayan (2020) describes the *sanchārī* section as 'exploring phrases with large spans starting with typical jumps from the lower to the mid-register, usually employing an ornament called the *hudak,* [as well as an ornament called the] *lahak, and gamak*' (Sankrityayan, 2020, p. 339). He then states that the *abhog* has the same character as the *antarā* of a Dhrupad performance, which he describes as exploring the higher register before resting on the high *Sa* (*ibid.*).

Sankrityayan (2020) acknowledges that the *sanchārī* and *abhog* sections differ across performance styles. He states, 'm*y* teachers of the Dagar tradition used to insist that it is the third part, which starts with a characteristic jump of a large span reaching into the middle or high register*,* [which] should be called the *abhog* and the fourth part the *sañcārī*' (Sankrityayan, 2020, p. 339). This terminology is the same as that of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Irfan Muhammad Khan explained that our tradition and that of the Dagars have this detail in common (Khan, personal communication, 23 January 2025). However, because of the limitation of the instruments, in sarod and sitar performance the *abhog* and *sanchārī* are more of a representation than a full presentation of these sections, as would be heard in Dhrupad. An example of these sections in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana can be heard in the *alāp* of Irfan Muhammad Khan's Raga Barwa performance (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023c, 9:43–11:05). The beginning ornament, followed by moving through the registers can be heard. He then plays a *mohra*, which transitions to the *jod* section. At this stage, if it is a shorter performance, a musician may choose to begin the *gat* section. However, if this is a full-length performance then the *jod* will follow.

The *jod* section follows a similar structure to the *alāp* in terms of melodic development. It differs in that it has a pulse, which gradually increases. I was taught by Irfan Muhammad Khan to progress through the *jod* section by beginning first with single stroke *gamak*s. A *gamak* is a form of oscillating ornamentation in which a *swāra* is descended into and ascended away from in a single right-hand stroke or vocal articulation. *Gamak*s are often represented in transcription and notation with a semi-circular symbol (Sanyal and Widdess, 2003), which represents the oscillating, arced sounding melodic shape of a *gamak*. The arced melodic shape and the accentuation, which peaks after the initial sounding attack of the *swāra* gives a *gamak* a guttural quality. It is felt in the stomach when playing it.

On sitar the effort of *gamak*s in the left hand is dispersed almost entirely along the vertical axis. The *baj* is pulled to bend into and/or (depending on the kind of *gamak*) away from a *swāra* on a given *parda*. The destination to or from which the *baj* is pulled is not a defined pitch. Despite not being defined, a *gamak* is a bound gesture because the oscillation tends to cover a distance that is comfortable for the sitarist to pull the string without strain. On fretless instruments and in vocal performance *gamak*s can span a much wider range of pitch. However, even then, covering too wide a scope of pitch would spoil the intended sounding effect of a *gamak.*

Irfan Muhammad Khan demonstrated the types of *gamak* he uses. Video 5.2.4 shows his demonstration followed by clips of my *riyaz*, as I was refining these techniques on sitar and cello. The four *gamak*s are described below:

Gamak 1. Arced descent into the *swāra*, especially in the upper tetrachord of the lower *saptak* on sitar. This is played at the beginning of the *jod* and employs only a *Da* stroke on sitar. On cello this cannot be stroked with repeated strong upbows, so it has to be played with single strokes of alternating direction. On sitar the effort of this direct movement of the left hand along the vertical axis, as the *baj* is relaxed, is felt as a gradual decrease in strength in the fingers, the forearm and the upper arm — the bicep in particular. The weight along the sagittal axis in the left hand is consistently strong. There is no greater variation in effort of the left finger along the sagittal axis, as the string is pressed, than when stopping a *swāra* when not playing *gamak*s.

Gamak 2. *Lahak* — different from the *lahak* played at the beginning of *abhog*, which features 'a long rapid *glissando* from an indeterminate pitch' (Widdess, 2003, p. 166). According to our *gharānā* the *lahak* in the *jod* and *gat*s is a zig-zagging *gamak* in which each of the sounding *swāra*s have their own micro-oscillation and are stroked independently. Played at an increased tempo, this *gamak* on sitar and sarod employs *Da* and *Ra* strokes. On cello, as above, to play this *gamak*, strokes alternate between single upbows and downbows. These *gamak*s tend to be played later in the *jod* and also in the *gat*, especially at a point when the performer feels it is time to increase the tempo and before moving to improvisations with double strokes.

Gamak 3. *Gamak*s on a single *swāra* with alternating *Da* and *Ra* strokes, or upbow and downbow strokes. These *gamak*s are combined to form melodic patterns. They tend to be played later in the *jod* and in the *gat*. Unlike single stroke *gamak*s, these multiple stroke *gamak*s begin at the *swāra* of the *parda* and the *baj* is then pulled, causing an arced increase in pitch, before the *baj* is then relaxed and the pitch decreases. The effort is felt as an increase in strength in the fingers, hand, the forearm and the upper arm followed by a decrease. The *baj* is struck by the right hand as it is pulled by the left. As with *meend*, the combined effort of striking the string with the right hand, pulling the string with the left hand, and maintaining the correct posture is felt as contraction in the stomach. As the pulling of the string reaches its peak and the left hand *baj* is then relaxed, the contraction of the abdomen releases.

Gamak 4. Oscillating movements, similar to *lahak*, but played with the strokes: *Da Dir Da Ra* and *Dir Da Ra.* On cello, to keep the correct emphasis, the first *Da* of *Da Dir Da Ra* would be slurred, so it would go: *uu-up-down up down*.[4] The second variation on cello would be *up-down up down*. This type of *gamak* would be played during the *drut gat*.

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[4] '*uu-up*' here signifies an upbow slurred across what would be two separate strokes on sitar.

Figure 5.2.1 notation demonstrating the four *gamak*s.

When I play multiple stroke *gamak*s on sitar (*Gamak* 3), I conceptualise the motion to be circular, rather than semi-circular. To play multiple consecutive *gamak*s the left hand oscillates the same approximate distance along the vertical axis. Imagining repeated *gamak*s as a circular motion, as opposed to semi-circular helps to keep the pitch to which the *baj* is bent, approximate. Although the left hand is oscillating, imagining the oscillation to be circular maintains the necessary level of freedom to the bound movement. Imagined circular motion also informs the correct timing of the right-hand stroke.

In order to achieve the sounding articulation of repeating *gamak*s, the *baj* is struck with the right hand only after a complete oscillation of the string. I re-strike the *baj* only after I imagine the circle to have completed. The sudden effort in the right hand followed by the gradual exertion in the left arm is mediated by a contracting and releasing abdomen. The movement as a whole gives a feeling at a postural level that

the effort in the body starts strong, gets stronger then lightens slightly. This gives the sense of circular momentum.

This conceptualisation and effort in the approach to playing *gamak*s on sitar is also applied to playing *gamak*s on cello. However, the way I play *gamak*s on cello is informed by both my sitar playing and Ustadji's sarod playing. As on sitar, the direction in which the finger oscillates is along the vertical axis on the cello. This oscillation is driven by the upper left arm and is felt in the left bicep. However, as with the difference in playing the various kinds of *meend*, the pull on the sitar is felt in the fingers too, but on cello the bend of the note is a result of the finger sliding along the string. For this reason, my approach in my forearm to *gamak*s on cello is more a translation of the way I have observed Ustadji playing *gamak*s on sarod, rotated 90 degrees.

Richard Widdess (2003, p. 80–81) explains that *gamak* in Dhrupad primarily tends to be performed in the *jod* section of instrumental Dhrupad and in *laykarī*. He claims that it is more associated with the veena style of instrumental Dhrupad, rather than the Seni rabāb style, as the frets of the veena more easily enabled such frequent oscillation in comparison to the strings of the Seni rabāb. Such a claim would make it plausible that Irfan Muhammad Khan's approach to playing the *jod* comes from the Shahjahanpur and Kalpi streams of the *gharānā*, as these were the streams that trace back to the Senia*s* who played the veena. However, when asked about this, Irfan Muhammad Khan corrected Widdess's claim, explaining that both *rabābiyas* and *bīnkars* played *gamak*s in the *jod* and *gat* sections of a performance. He knows this because *gamak*s were a feature in the sarod playing of both the Lucknow and Shahjahanpur streams, as opposed to only the Shahjahanpur stream that learned from *bīnkars*. This is an example of embodied knowledge — Irfan Muhammad Khan's oral history entwined with his practice — serving as a more reliable account of past practice than the claim of a respected Western academic.

The key to the validity of Irfan Muhammad Khan's oral history lies within his practice. He has learned his way of playing, in this case his approach to *gamak*s only from his ancestors, who knew and celebrated the origins and pedigree of their practice. Irfan Muhammad Khan has resisted the institutionally popularised forms of contemporary

practice with its mixture of origins. He has instead opted to sustain only the way of playing of his forbears. His approach to *gamak*s comes from his father. His understanding of and approach to playing *gamak*s then serves as an archive of past practice and its origins.

It is partly because of this that Katz (2017) challenges the narrative in the work of other academics in the field of Hindustani music (Widdess, 2010; Bakhle, 2005; Neumann, 2004), who claim that oral history and genealogical account is more a reflection of the present than the past. Katz states 'the scholar's choices of what to study, which sources to access, and how to forge disparate traces of the past into a coherent narrative are themselves acts of power with ideological causes and consequences' (2017, p. 13). These are subjective elements that situate a scholar's historical narrative as much in the present as the oral histories that the scholars above treat with caution. Yet what Irfan Muhammad Khan's account of *gamak* by *rabābiyas* offers that Widdess (2003) does not is accompanying learned action — an aesthetic sensibility, ways of moving, ways of sounding with identifiable historic threads. The tangible moving and sounding outcome of practice, refined over generations, reveals what contesting testimonies and accounts alone cannot. It could therefore be contended that the accounts of ethnomusicologists ought to be treated with the same caution as ethnomusicologists have treated the oral accounts of practitioners.

Once I have played sufficient melodic movements as *gamak*s, I begin a slow *jhalla* stroke. *Jhalla* strokes are fast, repetitive strokes, which involve alternating between striking the *baj* and the *chikārī* strings with different combinations. There are two moments in a performance when a performer may play *jhalla* strokes. The first is to conclude the *alāp* and *jod*. The second concludes the whole performance, which is expanded on in the next section. I was advised by Ustadji that it is prudent to use strokes in the *jhalla,* which follows the *jod,* that do not create too powerful and climactic a texture. Otherwise, there would be insufficient headroom above which to build the intensity throughout the rest of the performance. Therefore, the *jhalla* strokes at the end of the *alāp* should be predominantly on the *baj*, so mostly *Da* strokes, rather than *chik* strokes. The softer timbre of the *baj* being repeatedly struck creates sufficient intensity to conclude the solo section of the performance, whilst still leaving

space to reach a higher climatic point later in the performance. These *jhalla* strokes are demonstrated in Video 5.2.5.

The first *jhalla* strokes, *chik-Da-Da chik-Da-Da chik-Da* are played at a slower tempo in the lower *saptak*. I make sure only to play this stroke pattern in full on strong *swāra*s of the raga. The stroke pattern is divided across the other, weaker *swāra*s. For example, in the lower saptak of Raga Yaman the movement *M D M N D P* could be stroked: MA — *chik-Da-Da*, DHA — *chik-Da-Da,* MA — *chik-Da,* NI — *chik-Da-Da chik-Da-Da,* DHA — *chik-Da,* PA — *chik-Da-Da chik-Da-Da chik-Da.* The speed at which I play this stroke pattern slightly increases as the melodic movements progress. Upon returning to the *SA* of the main *saptak*, I change the stroke to *chik-Da-Da-Da chik-Da-Da-Da*. This is the stroke used through the main *saptak* and into the upper *saptak*. The speed increases gradually throughout this section until I reach a fast tempo, dwelling mostly in the upper tetrachord of the main *saptak* and in the upper *saptak.* The fast *jhalla* strokes that conclude the *jod* I tend to use are: *chik-Da-Da-Da chik-Da-Da-Da; chik-Da-Da chik-Da-Da chik-Da; chik-Da chik-Da chik-Da-Da-Da; chik-Da-Da-Da-Da chik-Da-Da.*

I was also taught to play double stroked patterns such as *chikRa-DaRa-DaRa-DaRa chikRa-DaRa-DaRa-DaRa*. These kinds of double stroked patterns feature much sooner in sarod performance and develop to a higher speed. Sarod right-hand technique, striking the string with the *jawa*, makes it easier to play and maintain such strokes for a longer period at a high speed. On sitar, however, Ustadji recommended that I only play these strokes for a small number of repetitions at the very end of this section. They are not as stable on sitar and too many repetitions will risk tiring the right hand and breaking its flow, which would spoil the flourishing sounding effect of the *jhalla* strokes.

Ilyas Khan's (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024c, 17:40) recorded performance of Tilak Kamod is one of the longest and most detailed recordings of him playing *alāp-jod-jhalla.* He starts to make more frequent use of *jhalla* strokes *chik-Da-Da chik-Da-Da chik-Da* at a relaxed tempo, interspersed by some *jod* style phrases and melodic runs. This enables a smooth transition from the pulsing *jod* strokes to the faster *jhalla* strokes. The tempo of the strokes increases and by 18:28 the *jhalla* stroke

is fully established. As the tempo continues to increase from here, Ilyas Khan maintains rhythmic variation, sporadically changing the order of the strokes, so instead of being in the combination 3-3-2, sometimes they go 2-3-3 and 2-3-2. By 21:48 he introduces the next stroke *chik-Da-Da-Da chik-Da-Da-Da*, then at 22:06 he introduces the stroke *chik-Da chik-Da chik-Da-Da-Da*. He alternates between these strokes, with sporadic additional variations, as the tempo increases throughout the rest of the *jhalla* section until the simple ending *Ṇ Ṇ S*. This recorded performance follows the same trajectory as that which I was taught and which Irfan Muhammad Khan plays, but Ilyas Khan also demonstrates some variation in execution.

The absence of *chikārī* strings makes playing *jod* on cello very different from both sitar and sarod. However, because the cello and sarod are both fretless instruments, I have drawn much more from the way Ustadji plays *jod* and *jhalla* on sarod. It is indeed possible to introduce pulse and build the tempo of that pulse using regular pulsing bow strokes, which I do employ. I can also make use of a combination of an open Sa string and stopped Sa on the lower *ṢA* string to create a similar effect to *chikārī*. However, the inability to retake the bow very quickly (discussed later in more detail) means there is very limited scope for different combinations of strokes compared with sitar. Therefore, to develop the *jod* on cello, gradually introducing different kinds of stroke combinations as demonstrated by Ilyas Khan (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024c), does not produce the same textural variation that keeps the attention of a listener. It is, however, possible to play a more aesthetically varied and satisfying *jod* on cello by emulating the *gamak-jod* that Irfan Muhammad Khan plays. In the same way as Irfan Muhammad Khan, I can build intensity through increasing the tempo and frequency of pulsating *gamak*s and then intersperse them with straight *swāra*s and melodic runs.

Jhalla is the most challenging section of a performance to play on cello in the instrumental, rather than Gayaki style, again because of the absence of *chikārī* strings and the inability to retake the bow at speed. I have taken influence partly from the way Nancy Lesh bows the cello in the *jhalla* at the end of her performance, as explained in section 4.3. I use the open *SA* string in the middle of the cello like a chikārī, then alternate between stopping *swāra*s on the *ṢA* string below and the *ma* string above. I also emulate some technique Irfan Muhammad Khan uses in the *jhalla* of the *jod*. For

example, at <u>17:30</u> in his Barwa performance (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023c) Irfan Muhammad Khan uses double strokes *chikRa-DaRa-DaRa-DaRa*. Then, at <u>18:06</u> he plays double strokes on the open *SA* and strikes single stopped *swāra*s on either the string below the open *SA* or on the *SA* string itself. This technique is translatable to cello, using double stroke bows in a similar way. Its refinement takes considerable practice due to the cello being fretless and single-stopped notes in different places are the hardest to play precisely in tune. My simplified adaption of these *jhalla* strokes to cello are demonstrated in <u>Video 5.2.6</u>.

<u>5.3 Gats</u>

Widdess (2003) explains the importance of compositions to hereditary musicians in Dhrupad. He describes the way in which they take on value as the 'property' and 'wealth' of a *gharānā* because they 'serve as repositories of esoteric knowledge, spiritual, musical and historical' (Widdess, 2003, p. 210). This is equally true of the repertoire of the instrumental compositions of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. However, Widdess concludes that this value as 'property' equates to a *gat* being an 'object, rather than a process' (2003, p. 209). While this conclusion is understandable, it is not the only possible conclusion that can be drawn from the value of *gat*s as fixed manifestations of embodied knowledge. Such a conclusion is open to the same critique as that of musical works in the Eurocentric aesthetic imagination made by Small (1998), Taylor (2007), Agawu (2016), and Yelding (2016). The suggestion that elements of a performance are either a process or an object presents a false binary. As Daboo (2010) explains, in terms of a performer working with the body, all performance is process — even the elements of a performance that draw on fixed choreographies and compositions.

Widdess (2003) is correct to state that compositions exist outside a single performance, which is why they can be reproduced. However, they exist as a framework of intentions and performance instructions. It is only through the process of enacting these instructions that the composition can be experienced. Therefore, the following exploration of the *gat*s of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, is not framed as an exploration of 'cultural objects' (Widdess, 2003, p. 210). Instead, *gat*s are considered as fixed directions, or instructions, for musical action — frameworks for melodic motion, rhythm, form and *bols*. The aesthetic and structural integrity of a

gat can be observed as meticulously as possible in performance, without conceding to the Eurocentric musical epistemology that perceives this form of embodied knowledge as an object.

The Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana has a unique and expansive repertoire of *gat*s, which come from the Lucknow stream, the Shahjahanpur stream, and the Kalpi stream. There are also numerous *gat*s composed by more recent generations of the *gharānā* — after the Lucknow and Shahjahanpur streams joined, following Sakhawat Hussain Khan's marriage to Kaukab's daughter. While it is not always clear which composition has come from which stream without being told, there are some *gat*s from each of these streams, with unique and identifiable qualities. A selection of these *gat*s from the repertoire of the *gharānā* are explored below.

All the selected *gat*s are in Tīntāl, a 16-beat rhythmic cycle, in which the *khali* (empty beat, which gives audible shape to the cycle) is on beat 9. There are compositions in other *tāls*, such as the 10-beat, Jhaptāl and the 14-beat, Dhamār that is used in Dhrupad. However, the majority of the *gharānā*'s extensive repertoire of compositions is in Tīntāl. This is because originally, this was the *tāl* of the Tantra *baj*. Other *tāls* were for other, usually vocal, styles. Irfan Muhammad Khan explains that the incorporation of *tāls* like Dadra (6 beats) and Rupak (7 beats) into performances of Hindustani music on sitar and sarod is a much more recent development, owing to the incorporation of elements from vocal styles by such *gharānā*s as the Imdadkhani Gharana and the Maihar Gharana (Khan, personal communication, 8 February 2024).

The Tīntāl compositions in the repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana have so many interesting rhythmic details and approaches to articulation, resulting from the embedded intricate *bol* (right-hand stroke) patterns. Such elements would be lost by modifying them into Dadra and Rupak *bandishes* to suit contemporary concert fashions. Keeping the compositions in Tīntāl is not an unwillingness to adapt, or a failure to modernise, because there has always been a spirit of invention and embracing new technology in the *gharānā*. This is illustrated not least by the development of new compositions by each generation, but also by the sense of invention and translation that runs through the lineage. Keeping most of the repertoire

in Tīntāl is about ensuring the crucial, defining elements of the *gharānā*'s repertoire are sustained in practice.

Every *gat* has a *bol* pattern, which brings out the shape of the melody resulting from the different emphasis of *swāra*s, depending on whether they are struck with a strong or weak stroke. A composition that only comprises *Da* strokes would be very dull, with no variation of articulation — like a poem spoken in monotone with no phrasing or punctuation. The combinations of strokes in a *gat* work within the rhythmic cycle of the *tāl*, sometimes reinforcing the shape and metre of the *tāl* and sometimes cutting across it. This right-hand element, the *bols* of a *gat,* is crucial to the compositions in the repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. McNeil states that 'the knowledge of [Senia] rabāb bols and their grammar have been carefully preserved, and rigidly adhered to, by successive generations of [Ilyas Khan's] family' (2004a, p. 126). The intricate knowledge of the way phrasing is bound with melody and rhythm has been maintained in *bols* of the *gat*s. Therefore, learning the *bols* correctly as a sitar student of the *gharānā* has been incredibly important, as has maintaining the integrity of these *bols* when translating right-hand sitar strokes to cello bowing. The following analysis and exploration of some of the *gat*s of the *gharānā* focus on the way the intricate melodic phrasing, rhythmic details and articulation of the *bols* interact.

5.3.1 Vilambit gats

The *gat* section of a full-length performance begins with a *vilambit gat* (slow composition). Exponents of the *gharānā* may decide to play a *vilambit gat* in the 10-beat cycle of Jhaptāl, as demonstrated by Irfan Muhammad Khan and his student Arnab Chakrabarty's recent performance of Shudh Sarang (Arnab Chakrabarty, 2024b, 36:23). Irfan Muhammad Khan's student Matyas Wolter, who has learned the Dhrupad elements of the *gharānā* on surbahar has also begun to perform the Dhrupad 14 beat Dhamar compositions on sitar, much like Yusuf Ali Khan and his *ustad*, Abdul Gani Khan. An example of Wolter's sitar playing in Dhamar can be seen in his performance of Raga Malkauns (Matyas Wolter, 2024). Despite such exceptions, usually the first composition of the *gat* section by a musician of the *gharānā* follows the *vilambit* Tīntāl *gat*, which is also known as the Masit Khani *gat*. Allyn Miner (1997) gives a detailed account of this type of *gat* and why it is named after Masit Khan.

The form of a Masit Khani *gat* follows a mostly consistent formula, with very little scope for variation, without detracting from its form. It begins on beat 12 and follows this *bol* pattern illustrated in Table 5.3.1:

						12	13	14	15	16
						Dir	Da	Dir	Da	Ra
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	*9*	*10*	*11*
Da	Da	Ra	Dir	Da	Dir	Da	Ra	Da	Da	Ra

Table 5.3.1 *vilambit* Tīntāl right-hand *bols.*

The weaker *Ra* stroke on beat 16 gives greater emphasis to the strong *Da* stroke on 1. Every first *matra* within a group of 4 *matras* in the *tāl* begins with a strong stroke. Each group of 4 *matras* follows an arc, so that the last *matra* in each grouping falls to a *Ra* stroke, either on its own or as part of a *Dir* stroke. This *bol* pattern also features two repeated phrases *Dir Da Dir Da Ra **Da** Da Ra*. The shape of the melody over this *bol* pattern leads from beat 12 to a climax or emphasis on the *sam* (beat 1) and then an answering phrase leads from beat 4 to the *khali* (beat 9). Despite the apparent simplicity of the form of the *vilambit* Tīntāl *bol* pattern, the slow tempo paired with the intricacy of the raga's melodic structure allow for extensive repertoires to develop, full of nuanced details and subtle variations.

The *bol* patterns also assist with a challenge in the body that arises from playing slow compositions. In performance (much more so than during *riyaz*) the space between each articulation of a *matra* in a *vilambit gat* feels very large. The addition of performance adrenaline makes it more tempting to speed up the stroke rate and therefore the tempo of the performance. This often manifests as tension in the feet and toes, the shoulders and increased rate of breathing. Earlier in my training, when I was less conscious of playing the correct *bol* pattern, I would try to hide this tension and resist this speeding up by playing one or sometimes even two, double speed, *chikari* strokes between each articulation of a *swāra*. This made my playing sound chaotic, rushed and unrefined. Moreover, I more frequently lost my place in the *tāl*, which I would mask with long meandering improvisations that often broke the mood of the raga as I tried to 'get back in'.

Paying attention to the *bol* pattern gave a stronger awareness of *lay*. It also allowed excess nervous energy to be directed somewhere productive. I would be more focussed on the correct direction of the stroke, as well as the melodic movement, at each moment of the performance. That extra focus reduced the perceived cavernous length between each *matra*, allowing me to breathe with the *lay* of the *tāl* and allowing my whole body to relax. As a result, I have become better at progressing performances of a raga more gradually, more comfortable repeating the *gat* multiple times, and more considered about when to improvise.

The *vilambit gat* in Raga Basant (Figure 5.3.1) traces back to the court of Lucknow, where it was taught to Niamatullah Khan. It is an example of a composition which adheres firmly to the *bol* patterns of the Masit Khani *gat*s but adds layers of melodic and rhythmic interest. One of the striking details about the *asthai* (the main repeating composition) of this *gat* is the way the *MA* lands on the *sam*. The trajectory of the melody keeps ascending beyond *MA*, reaching its peak on *ṠA* over the 3rd *matra*. The way that the melodic motion continues to ascend beyond the *sam* could trick the listener (and possibly the tabla player) into feeling that the strong beat falls at the peak of the melody, on *ṠA*. *ṠA* falling 3 *matras* later, on a weak stroke, causes the melodic motion to build in tension and release at different points of the *tāl* cycle to the points of emphasis of the *bol* patterns.

The *bol* pattern is maintained with no variation, but the *meends* on the 13th, 15th, 9th, 10th and 11th *matras* bring out more melodic decoration and rhythmic detail than the *bols* would permit if the *gat* only featured one *swāra* per stroke. These details show the importance of maintaining the stroke pattern. If the stroke pattern was altered, the subtleties of the melodic shapes cutting across the emphasis of both the *bols* and the *tāl* would be lost.

Figure 5.3.1 *Vilambit gat* in Raga Basant[5], demonstrated in Video 5.3.1.

The *antarā* is a complimentary answer to the *asthai,* which is played typically only a few times in a performance, if at all.[6] The melodic motion of the Basant *antarā* follows more directly the emphasis of the *bols*. The emphasis of *ṆI* on the *sam* feels like the start of a new phrase. The arc of the melodic motion over the previous 4 *matras* has resolved onto the *SA*. However, there are still melodic decorations and rhythmic detail

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[5] The *Dir* strokes here are written *Da Ra* to indicate the direction of each individual *swāra*
[6] Not every composition has an *antarā*

added, using *meend*. The *antarā* here also gives an opportunity to incorporate the extra *SA ma GA* movement, which was discussed in 5.1 Melodic movement. Taken as a whole, the *asthai* and *antarā* of this *gat* cover a significant number of the core movements and melodic details of Raga Basant in just two groups of 20 strokes over 16 *matras*. This is obviously the case for all compositions in this form. However, the finesse with which the melodic motion has been organised illustrates the depth of melodic, rhythmic and temporal knowledge embedded in such compositions.

It is not just the *Senia Kalāwant* musicians such as Pyar Khan and Basat Khan, who taught the early luminaries of the Gharana, who demonstrated such mastery over the melodic details of a raga within the simple framework of the Masit Khani *gat bol* structure. Irfan Muhammad Khan's father, Umar Khan, for example, composed the Bihag *gat* shown in Figure 5.3.3, which is full of embellishment to bring out the detail of the raga while still retaining the clarity of the strokes. The most notable melodic and rhythmic embellishment is the *murki* around *shudh ma* on the second half of the 14th *matra.* It adds so much more to the composition, awakening the *shruti*s above and below, adding another key detail of the melodic motion of Bihag to the *gat*. However, it must be treated carefully, because dwelling on this movement too long, not playing the *meend* fast enough, could result in going out of *lay*. As a result of this melodic embellishment there is also an element of rhythmic and articulated trickery similar to the Basant *gat,* between the 12th *matra* and the *sam*. The *GA* on the 15th *matra* sounds like it could be the resolving *swāra*, which should land on the *sam* but is two *matras* too early. However, it is leading down to the *SA*, before the descending *ṆI* phrase actually arrives on the *sam.* This artful display of using the set formula of the *bol* pattern of the *gat* to play with the sense of anticipation, by unexpected placement of the movements of the raga, is seen through much of the repertoire of the *gharānā*.
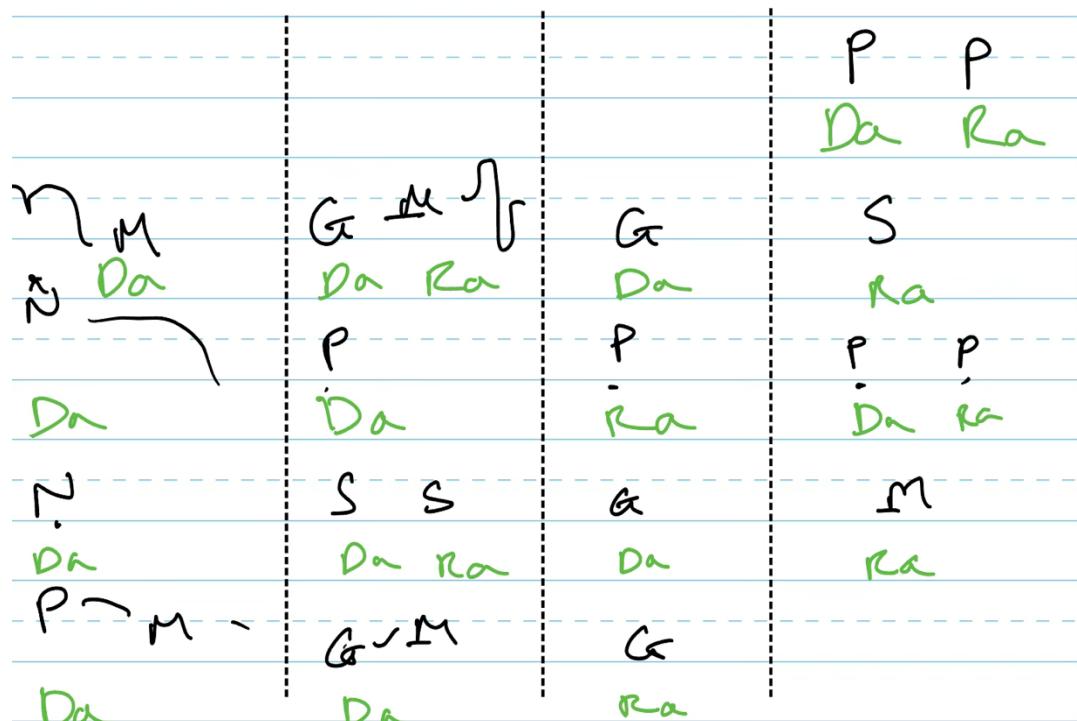
Figure 5.3.2 *Vilambit gat* in Bihag, demonstrated in Video 5.3.2.

There is an obvious difference between striking the strings, either with a *jawa* on sarod or with a *mizrab* on sitar and bowing the strings on cello. However, all three modes of producing sound with the right hand share the quality of a strong stroke when the hand sounds the string in one direction, with the opposite direction producing a weaker stroke. With either an overhand or underhand bow hold, it is therefore, to a certain extent, possible to translate the right hand *bols* of the *gats* to cello bowings. When bowing overhand on the cello, the strong stroke is a downbow when the bow is pulled to the right, and the weaker stroke, the upbow, is when the bow is pushed to the left. When bowing underhand, it is the inverse, so the stronger stroke is on the pushed upbow and the weaker, on the pulled downbow.[7] When bowing underhand, *Da* strokes become upbows and *Ra* strokes become downbows.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to map the patterns of the *bols* exactly onto cello bow strokes. This is because *gat bols* tend to require multiple repeated *Da* strokes. Repeated strong bow strokes would require multiple retakes of the cello bow. Retaking the bow takes a great deal more time than repeating a *Da* stroke with a

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[7] This is worth noting because should a cellist who bows overhand wish to replicate the bow strokes I have applied to the following *gats*, the cellist would need to invert the bowing, so upbows would become downbows and vice versa.

mizrab (on sitar) or *jawa* (on sarod). It requires circular motion of the whole forearm, as opposed to just the fingers or wrist. Playing multiple upbows, the equivalent of repeated *Da* strokes on a cello (bowed underhand), with the speed, control and precision necessary to perform a *gat* is therefore not possible.

I devised a number of ways to maintain the integrity of the *bols* without having to quickly retake the bow. One way is just to bow repeated *Da* strokes alternately (*up-down, up-down*). Doing only this, however, would reduce the complex articulation of *gat* phrases simply to *strong-weak, strong-weak*. The subtle emphasis of *gat* phrases would therefore be spoiled. I also group phrases of *bol* strokes into a single bow stroke, either slurred or detached. I have adapted the *bols* of each *gat* with different combinations of alternate bows and slurred or detached bow strokes. I considered the emphasis of the *gat's bols*, as well as its melodic movements and *meend* ornamentation, when devising the bowing. Figures 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 illustrate the way I have adapted the *bols* to accommodate the restrictions of the bow strokes of *vilambit gat*s in Ragas Basant and Bihag. Table 5.3.2 shows the modifications I have made to the two *gat*s alongside each other.
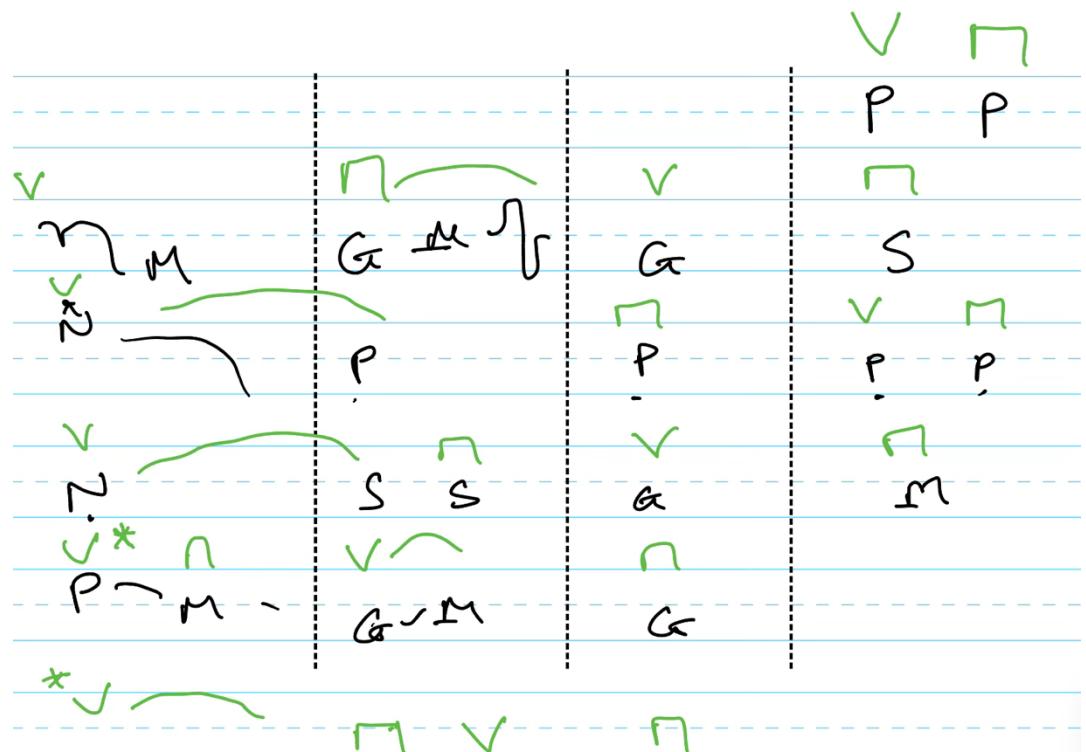
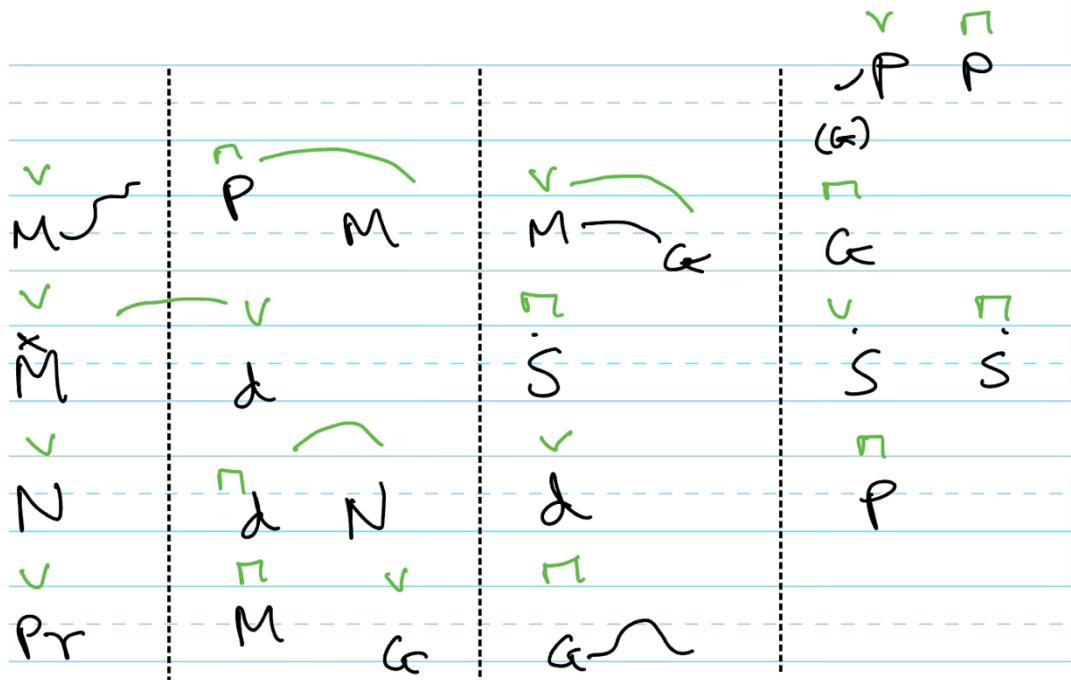Figure 5.3.3 Bihag *vilambit gat* cello bowing, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.2</u>.

Figure 5.3.4 Basant *vilambit gat* cello bowing, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.1</u>.

Matra	Bol	Bihag bowing	Basant bowing
12	Da Ra	Up Down — no change	Up Down — no change
13	Da	Up — no change	Up — no change
14	Da Ra	slurred down — the strong Da is replaced with weak downbow, but the next swāra is slurred so the weak Ra stroke aligns with the downbow	slurred down — the strong Da is replaced with weak downbow, but the next swāra is slurred so the weak Ra stroke aligns with the downbow
15	Da	Up — no change	Up — no change
16	Ra	Down — no change	Down — no change
1	Da	Up — no change	Up — no change
2	Da	Slurred into the previous upbow strokes, to allow the following stroke to land on the weaker down stroke.	Slurred into the previous upbow strokes, to allow the following stroke to land on the weaker down stroke.
3	Ra	Down — no change	Down — no change
4	Da Ra	Up down — no change	Up down — no change
5	Da	Up — no change	Up — no change
6	Da Ra	Slurred down — the strong Da is replaced with weak downbow, but the next swāra is slurred so the weak Ra stroke aligns with the downbow.	Slurred down — the strong Da is replaced with weak downbow, but the next swāra is slurred so the weak Ra stroke aligns with the downbow.

Matra	Bol	Bihag bowing	Basant bowing
7	Da	Up — No change	Up — No change
8	Ra	Down — No change	Down — No change
9	Da	Option 1: broken into Up and Down Option 2: slurred upbow	Up — No change
10	Da	Option 1 (continued): slurred up Option 2 (continued): broken into Down and Up, which shifts the emphasis, with the weak Downbow on the Da stroke, but suits the melodic motion slightly better than option 1.	Broken into Down and Up, which shifts the emphasis, with the weak Downbow on the Da stroke. But the Upbow on GA ensures the last *matra* of the composition lands on the weaker Downbow — completing the arc.
11	Ra	Down — no change	Down — no change

Table 5.3.2 Bihag and Basant vilambit bowing compared to sitar right-hand *bols.*

Whereas the vilambit Tīntāl *gat*s follow the same, or a very similar, formula, there is significant variation between different Tīntāl *drut gat*s (fast compositions). They begin in different places in the *tāl*, they have different *bol* patterns, some fit within one cycle and some span many. Below are a selection of *gat*s from the different streams of the *gharānā*, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur and Kalpi. The accompanying analyses to these *gat*s explore differences in their aesthetic details and the knowledge that underpins them. To translate the right hand *bols* of these *gat*s to cello bowing, I have used the same principle for translating the *vilambit gat*s above, identifying the points in the *gat* where the strong *Da* strokes are most important and ensuring these points are played with a strong upbow. Videos 5.3.3–5.3.14, which demonstrate the *gats*, show the way I have translated the *bol* strokes of each *gat* to bow strokes.

5.3.2 Lucknow drut gats

There are several *drut gat*s in Raga Jhinjhoti emanating from both the Lucknow branch and the Kalpi branch of the *gharānā*. The *asthai* of the Lucknow *gat* (see Figure 5.3.5) (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020b, 44:02) is similar in structure to Jhinjhoti *gat*s performed by Amjad Ali Khan (Mozumder, 2021, 14:01) (see Figure 5.3.6) of the Gwalior-Bangash Gharana and Vilayat Khan (Musicians Guild, 2020, 54:52) (see Figure 5.3.7) of the Imdadkhani Gharana. I asked Irfan Muhammad Khan about whether these *gat*s share the same origin. He explained that the *gat*s performed

by Amjad Ali Khan and Vilayat Khan come from a *tarānā*, which is why they differ in form to the Lucknow *gat* (Khan, personal communication, 22 November 2024).

Figure 5.3.5 Lucknow Jhinjhoti *drut gat*, *asthai* and *antarā*, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.3</u>.
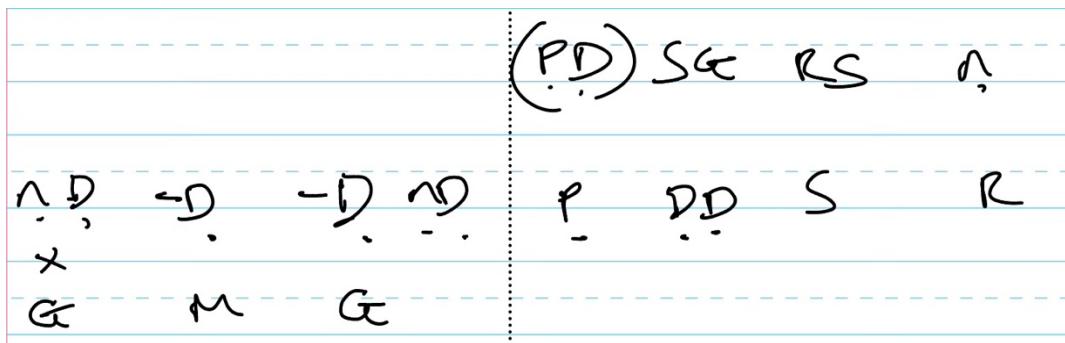
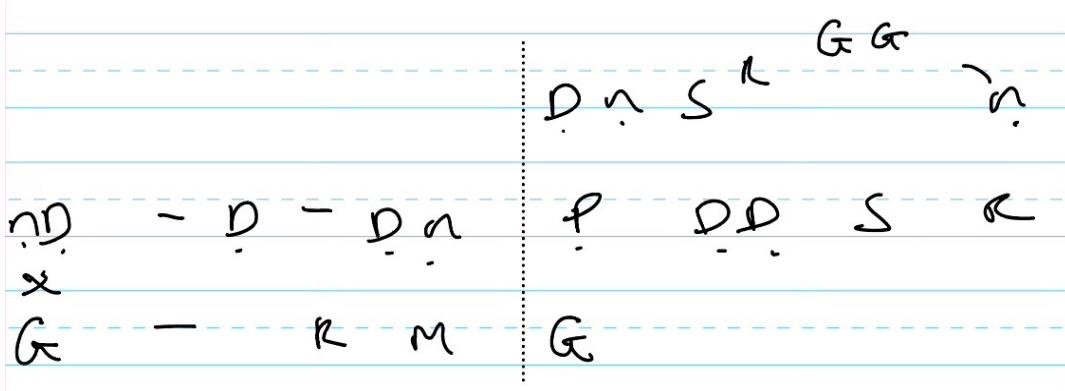Figure 5.3.6 Amjad Ali Khan *gat asthai* transcription.

Figure 5.3.7 Vilayat Khan *gat asthai* transcription.

Unlike the other two *gat*s, which begin squarely on the 5th *matra*, the first note of the Lucknow *gat* is played on the 6th *matra*. The opening phrase in the Lucknow *gat* gives a syncopated rhythmic feel, as though it is bouncing off the 5th *matra* and leading into the important phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ P̣.* This rhythmic detail creates a sense of playful momentum, which runs throughout the composition, capturing the jubilant mood of Raga Jhinjhoti. All three *gat*s feature the phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ,* followed either by *P̣A* (Lucknow *gat*) or *ṇi* (the other two *gat*s). However, in the Lucknow Gat, the phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ P̣* is anchored on the *khali*, one beat later than the phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ ṇ* in the other two *gat*s. The placement of this phrase on the *khali* gives it stronger emphasis in the composition. When performing the Lucknow *gat*, a musician can choose to return from an improvisation to the *gat* on the *khali* and still be able to play this phrase in full. Whereas, returning to the *khali* while playing the other two *gat*s, the musician would

land halfway through this phrase, which disrupts the structure of the *gat* and its sense of rhythmic momentum.
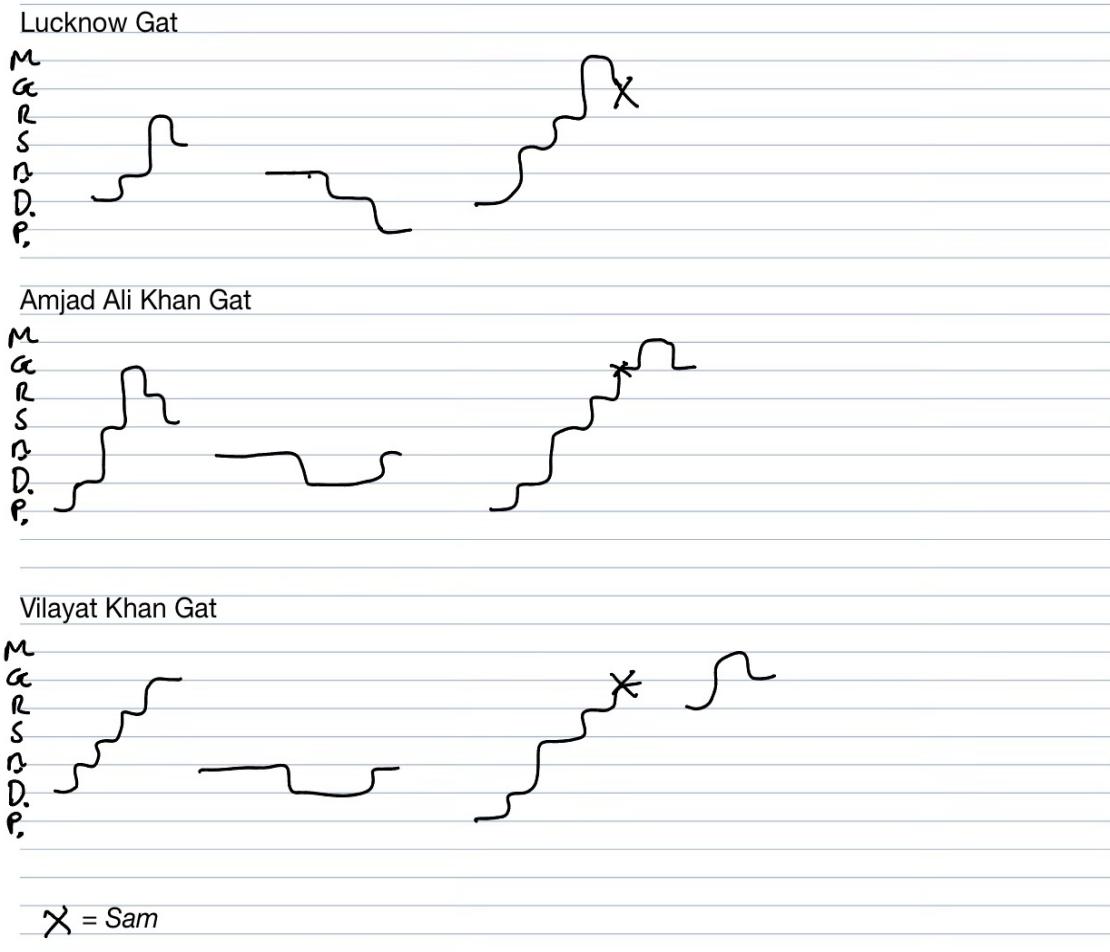

Figure 5.3.8 visual representation of the melodic shape of the *asthai*s of the 3 Jhinjhoti *drut gat*s.

The melodic motion of Raga Jhinjhoti is clearest in the Lucknow *gat*. I have drawn the shape of the melody in each of the *gat*s (Figure 5.3.8). In the Vilayat Khan and Amjad Ali Khan compositions the phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ* resolves upwards, on *ṇi. ṖA* is the starting point of the next phrase leading up towards *GA* on the *sam*. In Jhinjhoti *GA* ought to be approached from *ma*, the *swāra* above. To play through from *ṖA,* there are too many *swāra*s that need to be sounded to be able to approach *GA* from above in the four remaining *matra*s of the *tal*, without disrupting the *bol* pattern of the *gat*. It is technically not correct in Jhinjhoti to play *GA* in ascent to *ma* unless, after arriving on *GA,* the musician then descends a step to *RE* before going to *ma* — as seen in the final movement of the Vilayat Khan *gat*. The rebalancing of the melodic motion, which

the *R m G* movement provides in Vilayat Khan's performance, is not present in Amjad Ali Khan's performance. The motion of Jhinjhoti is therefore the least clear in Amjad Ali Khan's version of the *gat*. In contrast, in the Lucknow *gat*, *ṖA* is the point of downward resolution in the phrase *ṇ ṇḌ -Ḍ Ṗ*. The following phrase leading to *sam* then begins on *ḌHA*, instead of *ṖA* like the other two *gat*s. This enables a swift ascent to *ma* in the remaining four *matras* of the tāl, before a resolution downwards to *GA* on the *sam.* This is the final point of arrival in the *gat*, with no following melodic movements needing to be made to complete the raga before the *gat* begins again.

The Lucknow *gat*'s precise adherence to the melodic motion of Raga Jhinjhoti reflects raga structure as it would have been practised by the Senia musicians who transmitted their knowledge to Niamatullah Khan. Dhrupad compositions, which the Senias performed, are considered to be 'authoritative exemplars of Raga Structure' (Widdess, 2004, p. 38). Widdess explains that Khyāl compositions and compositions of other forms are more likely to 'take liberties' with the raga (*ibid*.). The comparison of the three Jhinjhoti *gat*s shows that the Amjad Ali Khan *gat* departs furthest from the core movement of the raga. Vilayat Khan's *gat* presents the movements of the raga with less clarity than the Lucknow *gat*. This reinforces Irfan Muhammad Khan's explanation that the Lucknow *gat* has a different origin from the other two *gat*s. Liberties tend not to be taken with the movements of the raga in the *gat*s of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, if any are taken, they would be during improvisation.

The *antarā* of the Lucknow *gat* differs considerably from the *antarā*s in Amjad Ali Khan's performance (Mozumder, 2021, 14:16) and Vilayat Khan's performance (Musicians Guild, 2020, 55:18). The *antarā* of the Lucknow *gat* spans more than one full 16-beat cycle; its variation from the *asthai* begins on the 4th *matra* and continues until the 8th *matra* of the next cycle, 3 *matras* into the *asthai*.[8] The *antarā* features two repeated, sweeping *meends* from the *sam*. These *meends* emphasise the relationships between *RE* and *ma,* and between *ḌHA* and *SA* in Jhinjhoti. Their expanse over 6 *matra*s adds rhythmic variation, cutting across the established metre*,*

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[8] The notation shows the return to the asthai on the *khali*, because although the RS on the 8th *matra* is the same in both asthai and antarā, in the antarā it feels as though it is answering the preceding variations, as opposed to restating the asthai. The asthai feels restated on the khali.

but giving a sense of circling melodic momentum in anticipation of the return to the *asthai*. The *antarā*s of the other two *gat*s stay within the confines of a single cycle and they do not shift or break the established rhythmic feel of the *asthai* to the same extent.

The relative obscurity of the Lucknow *gat* brings to light that in the latter half of twentieth century it was not necessarily authoritative knowledge of raga structure that earned a *gharānā* the right to be canonised as a 'main *gharānā*'. The *gat*s that are more widely known are those by Amjad Ali Khan and Vilayat Khan, due to their wider publication and dissemination. These two musicians are key figures, representing two of the three *gharānā*s that are considered in much of the twentieth century literature on Hindustani music as the 'main *gharānā*s' (Bagchee 1998, p. 244). Even though Vilayat Khan's and Amjad Ali Khan's *gat*s are masterfully performed, these compositions should not be considered more authoritative demonstrations of Raga Jhinjhoti than the Lucknow *gat*. Through getting to know the movements, expression and rhythmic flare of the Lucknow *gat* through practice, the significant difference between this *gat* and the other two *gat*s becomes more apparent.

The Lucknow stream is the source of several Thumri *gat*s, which are of great importance in the repertoire of the *gharānā*. The ragas of these Thumri *gat*s include but are not limited to: Gara (Figure 5.3.9), Kafi (Figure 5.3.10), Zila Kafi (Figure 5.3.11), Pilu (Figure 5.3.12), and Bhairavi (Figure 5.3.13). One of these *gat*s is usually selected to be performed as the final segment of a performance. All these *gat*s share *bol* patterns that are intended to be performed at high speed,[9] demonstrating the right-hand virtuosity that harks back to the Senia *rabābiyas* of the Lucknow Court and the Afghan rabāb playing ancestors of the *gharānā*.

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[9] That is not to say that cannot be performed at a slower tempo, but their dynamism becomes more apparent when performed at speed.

Figure 5.3.9 Lucknow *drut gat* in Raga Gara, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.4</u>.

Figure 5.3.10 Lucknow *drut gat* in Raga Kafi, demonstrated in Video 5.3.5.

Figure 5.3.11 Lucknow *drut gat* in Raga Zila Kafi, demonstrated in Video 5.3.6.

o
S   g g   R g   — S   R   N
Da   Dir Da Ra   Da   Da   Ra

x
S   —   S M   g   R   S   N
Da   Da Ra   Da Ra   Da   Ra

o
S   g g   R g   — S   R   N
Da   Dir Da Ra   Da   Da   Ra

x
S   —   —   —   S   R   M   P
Da   Da Ra   Da   Ra

o
n   D   —   PP   M   Mg   — g R
Da Ra   Dir   Da Ra Da Ra Da

+
R   PP M   P   —   M   G   M
Da Dir Da Ra   Da   Da Ra

o
G   M   dd PP   M   Mg   — g R
Da Ra Dir Dir   Da Ra Da Ra Da

MP   d   P M   g   R   S   N
Dir   Da Ra   Da Ra   Da Ra

Figure 5.3.12 Lucknow *drut gat* in Raga Pilu, demonstrated in Video 5.3.7.

Figure 5.3.13 Lucknow *drut gat* in Raga Bhairavi, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.8</u>.

The *asthai*s in all the Thumri *gat*s mentioned above span one cycle of Tīntāl and convey the key melodic movements of the respective raga in that single cycle. The *antarā*s tend to span around two cycles, though some are slightly longer. The ways in which each *antarā* brings out the differing colours and multiple shades of the respective raga with additional melodic movements is explored below.

Ragas Gara, Piloo, Zila Kafi and of course Kafi are grouped in the Kafi *thāt*. All these Ragas make use of *shudh GA* in addition to *komal ga*. The *antarā*s of the Thumri *gat*s above incorporate *shudh GA* in different ways. *Shudh GA* in the *antarā* of the Pilu *gat* (Figure 5.3.12) allows the melodic motion to then pivot to komal *dha*. In the first part of the *antarā,* the darker *komal ga* is balanced by the lighter *shudh DHA*. After the light-hearted atmosphere established in the lower tetrachord by the movement, *m G*

m, the darker shade shifts to the upper tetrachord with the *komal dha* of the movement, *G m dd PP*. I try to emphasise these shifts between light and shade, resulting from these different states of *swāra*s, by holding these changed *swāra*s a fraction longer or playing with a weightier right-hand stroke.

Of the Thumri *gat*s above, such shifts between light and shade are most pronounced in Pilu because in Pilu it is possible to use *shudh* and *komal* manifestations of all the *vikrit swāra*s, giving the raga many shades. However, there are similar shifts in shade in the other *antarā*s. The Gara *antarā* introduces the *shudh GA* with multiple repeats of *GA* and *ma* before descending from *PA* to *SA*. This is similar to the repeats of *GA* and *ma* in the *antarā* of Zila Kafi. However, in Zila Kafi there is more emphasis of the following *PA*, which only descends to RE. In Gara, the *PA* is only lightly stated and descends all the way back to *SA*. In the *antarā* of Raga Kafi, there is no descending stepwise movement from *PA* to *SA* after the stating of *shudh GA*. Instead, the *shudh GA* movement is a brief statement that concludes on *ma* followed by a silence: *G mm G P m –*. The material covering the *swāra*s of the *asthai* follows this silence, making the visit to *shudh GA* in Kafi a brief excursion. These *antarā*s have been composed in such a way that the atmosphere of the entire raga is established through a few extra subtle changes in melodic motion. This illustrates the deep understanding of raga that underpins this repertoire.

The *antarā* in the Bhairavi *gat* also brings out different shades of the raga, through the incorporation of *shudh RE* and one iteration of *tivra MA*. *Komal* ga operates as a pivot balancing two mirroring movements, the descent from *tivra MA* to *shudh ma* and the *shudh RE* descending to *komal re.* This movement and the other movements using *shudh RE* are much easier to perform on a fretless instrument such as the sarod or the cello than on sitar. To play this *antarā* in Bhairavi on sitar the *Re parda* is set to *komal re*. Unlike *Ga*, which has a *GA parda* and a *ga* parda, there is only one *Re parda* on sitar. The only way to play *shudh RE* is by pulling *meend* from either *SA* or *re*. On sitar, at high speed, it is difficult to correctly intonate sounding multiple *swāra*s in a single *meend*, as with the movement, *g R r S*, or playing such oscillating movements via *meend* as, *S g R g*. On cello, as with sarod, there is not this added difficulty because all *swāra*s are equally accessible. This *gat* maintains a strong connection to the *sarod* and *rabāb* players of the earlier generations of the *gharānā*. Evidence of this

can be seen in the 1912 reissue of the 1908 recording of Kaukab playing this *gat* (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023a).

5.3.3 'Kulfidar' Shahjahanpur gats

There are several unique *drut gat*s from the Shahjahanpur stream of the *gharānā*, which are very long for instrumental *gat*s, spanning multiple cycles. They have been given the name 'kulfidar' *gat*s. Irfan Muhammad Khan explained (personal communication, 1 February 2023), that this name comes from the fact these long *gat*s combine the *asthai* and *antarā*, meaning they can no longer be differentiated from each other. This is likened to a mould of *kulfi*: all the key ingredients are mixed and moulded so one ingredient cannot be differentiated from another.

There is no definitive explanation behind the decision to compose *gat*s in this way, but Irfan Muhammad Khan suggested that a plausible reason could be that it was to emulate elements of longer Dhrupad compositions (Khan, personal communication, 22 November 2024). This is a plausible suggestion to explain the creative impetus to compose these long *gat*s. Nevertheless, the *gat*s follow their own form, as opposed to reproducing that of a Dhrupad composition. The following examples of 'kulfidar' *gat*s in Puriya Dhanashri (Figure 5.3.14), Paraj (Figure 5.1.15), and Bilaskhani Todi (Figure 5.3.16) illustrate their rhythmic and melodic complexity.

Figure 5.3.14 Shahjahanpur *drut gat* in Puriya Dhanashri, demonstrated in Video 5.3.9.

Paraj

Figure 5.3.15 Shahjahanpur *drut gat* Raga Paraj, demonstrated in Video 5.3.10.

Figure 5.3.16 Shahjahanpur *drut gat* in Raga Bilaskhani Todi, demonstrated in Video 5.3.11.

These 'kulfidar' compositions present a unique challenge when performing. It is common when repeating a *gat* multiple times in performance, for only a segment, leading to the *sam* to be repeated. Varying between a full cycle of the *gat* and only part of it creates more space for improvisation and ensures the performance does not get too repetitive. The most effective place at which these Shahjahanpur 'kulfidar' *gat*s can be shortened to allow space for improvisation is the first *sam*. Unless shortened to this first *sam,* both the Paraj and the Bilaskhani Todi *gat*s should be played in full. There are three possible places to repeat the Puriya Dhanashri *gat* when

playing it in full. They are marked in Figure 5.3.14 by different coloured repeat marks. The red end repeat mark relates to the red start repeat mark. Both black end repeat marks relate to the first black start repeat mark. In a recording of the Puriya Dhanashri *gat* performed by Umar Khan and his son Shahid Khan,[10] the *gat* is frequently shortened to allow Shahid Khan 'to cut in more easily' (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020c, 23:59; Khan, personal communication, 16 January 2025).

5.3.4 Kalpi gats

The Kalpi stream is the final stream of *gat*s to make up the repertoire of the *gharānā*. They became part of the repertoire only during the previous generation, as a result of Ilyas Khan learning them from Yusuf Ali Khan. The Kalpi *gat*s below (Figures 5.3.17– 19) have long, rhythmically intricate *antarā*s that complement the *asthai* in such a way that makes it tempting to repeat both sections together frequently during the performance. Their length and rhythmic complexity meant that I would often confuse Kalpi *gats* with the long Shahjahanpur '*kulfidar*' *gats* the first time I heard them. However, the two kinds of *gat* differ, as Kalpi *gats* do in fact have a distinguishable separation between *asthai* and *antarā*.

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[10] Ustadji's elder brother

Figure 5.3.17 Ahir Bhairav Kalpi *drut gat*, demonstrated in Video 5.3.12

Figure 5.3.18 Suha Kalpi *drut gat*, demonstrated in Video 5.3.13

Figure 5.3.19 Gaud Sarang Kalpi *drut gat*, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.3.14</u>

Learning at a distance rather than living in close proximity to Ustadji and being immersed in the repertoire, has made it necessary to use recordings and notation. Due to their fixed nature and time constraints, I have devised my own notation for learning the compositions. Enduring materials (Taylor, 2003) such as notation and recordings have utility when there is an element of a musical tradition that is supposed to be fixed, as opposed to evolving. Before *gat*s have been learned from muscle memory, recordings and notations ensured I kept as close as possible to the

directions and intentions embedded within them. However, relying on these enduring materials as a means to an end does not match the way in which Irfan Muhammad Khan can recall this repertoire. In most cases, when I asked him to demonstrate a *gat*, he would move his hand a little, maybe play a phrase or two if the *gat* did not immediately emerge, but it would be seconds rather than minutes before the *gat* was being played. Rahaim describes such deeply embodied memorisation of musical knowledge as the musician consulting the musicking body's intelligence (Rahaim, 2012, p.108).

Knowing *gat*s intimately, with minimal prompt means that they are performed with artful certainty. It is as though the *gat*s are known at a cellular level, meaning they can be not only intuited as soon as the musician steps into the affective world of a particular raga, but creatively modified in real time to suit the occasion. Ilyas Khan's spontaneous modification of *gat*s described by Miner (1997), is also demonstrated in Umar Khan's shortening the Puriya Dhanashri *gat*. Such real time adaptations provide rhythmic variation throughout a performance as well as functioning as ingredients for *toda*s, which are explored in the following section. It is partly the adaptability of the *gat*s to the moment that proves they are not objects but frameworks consisting of multiple socio-aesthetic factors.

The selected *gat*s in this section make up a tiny fraction of the vast repertoire of the *gharānā*. Over the period of this research, I have learned over sixty ragas and at least two *gat*s per raga. Irfan Muhammad Khan knows hundreds of *gat*s, as well as their origin, their specific *bol* patterns, and sometimes even wider contextual information such as which film songs were inspired by a particular *gat*, or which Dhrupad compositions a *gat* may relate to. This is why those familiar with the vast embodied repertoire of Irfan Muhammad Khan have described him as a 'treasure trove' (Chakrabarty, 2019; Khan, S.Y., 2021). However, describing these *gat*s as treasure, which conjures up images of precious objects, similar to Widdess's description of Dhrupad *gat*s, does not do service to the wider contextual and stylistic knowing that makes these *gat*s or any *gat*s special.

These *gat*s are musical choreographies, performance directions to play the correct melodic movements, rhythms and *bol* strokes. Following these directions unlocks the

intricate and potent sounding and kinetic knowledge of raga and *tāl*. However, the beauty and richness of these *gat*s cannot be revealed in isolation. It is only when entwined, through performance, with the wider knowledge of the performer, who responds to the *gat*s with their own improvisations, inspired by the melodic outcomes, that the beauty of this repertoire really shows. This is particularly the case when these *gat*s are set within the context of the wider knowledge which characterises the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. The following section explores the approaches to improvisation, the way improvisation relates to the *gat*s and the way improvisation structures a performance.

<u>5.4 Todas and Upaj</u>

Upaj — improvised development — between iterations of the *gat* is of great importance in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. *Toda*s is the term used to describe the improvised phrases, which are interspersed between iterations of the *gat*. They are devised and developed through a performance and the way in which they develop determines the development of the performance as a whole. Other *gharānā*s, styles and schools of thought may use the term, *tān*s to describe fast running phrases. However, according to the lexicon of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, *tān* is the term for a specific melodic movement, whereas *toda* is the term for the phrase as a whole. A *toda,* therefore, may comprise many *tān*s.

Unlike the *gat*s of the *gharānā*, *toda*s are not considered intellectual property in the same way. A musician would not be considered to be breaking from the style of the *gharānā* by playing *toda*s picked up from musicians outside the *gharānā*. I was encouraged to listen to the *toda*s of masters from other *gharānā*s as inspiration for composing my own. However, as Irfan Muhammad Khan stated on numerous occasions during my *talīm*, no one else in the time of Ilyas Khan was playing *toda*s in the way he was. This applies equally to Irfan Muhammad Khan, who has maintained his *gharānā*'s way of developing a raga, despite shifts in fashion and homogenising of style in recent years on the global professional Hindustani music scene. The *toda*s of the *gharānā*'s luminaries, like the *gat*s, should therefore be considered to be 'inherited routines, […] learned techniques of the musicking body, disciplined ways of melodic action achieved by years of training and practice' (Rahaim, 2012, p.130). There is growing recognition of the importance of the *gat*s of the *gharānā*. The aesthetic values underpinning intention, the vocabulary of melodic movements and the frameworks for developing improvisations do not currently have that same recognition beyond those who are already familiar with Irfan Muhammad Khan's unique playing.

There are approaches to improvisation that do not feature, and would be discouraged if the objective of a performer were to discerningly inhabit the style of the *gharānā*:

• Excessive use of *tīhai*s and complex *tīhai*s. There may very occasionally be a *tīhai* played to round off a *toda* mid performance, or a *tīhai* used at the end of a segment of a performance. However, even then such *tīhai*s are understated compared with the complex patterns, which are choreographed and counted out in detail in the performance styles of other *gharānā*s. The prominence of these detailed and complex *tīhai*s was popularised in part by Ravi Shankar's practice. As previously mentioned, Ravi Shankar was a dancer before he became a sitarist. He incorporated a great deal more of the *tīhais* and *chakradhars* from his dance practice into his sitar playing than would have previously featured in improvised *todas* of classical performances.[11] The popularity of this innovation, in and outside of Hindustani music, meant that it would become a key consideration for melody instrumentalists of the more popularised contemporary styles of sitar and sarod playing. However, these rhythmic patterns do not serve the expression of the raga. Furthermore, they tend to be meticulously planned beforehand, so their precision does not allow much scope for adaptation in the moment of performance. Excessive use of *tīhai*s can result in a performance sounding formulaic, despite their rhythmic detail. Ending improvisations with multiple long and complex *tīhai*s in performance has, therefore, never been a feature or concern of exponents of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.

• Excess emphasis of the *sam*. This relates to the above point about sparing, if any, use of *tīhai*s. In improvisation, especially in the vilambit *gat* section I was advised to aim to end my improvisations by the *mukra* (the return of the *asthai*), or the *khali,* as opposed to aiming to always land on the *sam*. The *sam* is already emphasised in the *gat*. Improvisations that finish at the beginning of the *gat* inherently then allow the

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[11] There is a long historic relationship between dance and sitar performance, as evidenced in Margaret Walker's early twentieth-century sources describing dance performances accompanied by sitar and sarangi (2014, p. 61). However, when discussing connections between instrumental *gat*-s and dance *gat*-s with Ustadji, he emphasised the instrumental *gat*-s of our *gharānā* developed from the musical knowledge of the Senias who taught the early luminaries and have little connection to dance *gat*-s other than the name (Khan, personal communication, 11 June 2025). I was also gently advised to avoid accompanying dance, as that was not the intended social purpose of our *gharānā*'s repertoire.

sam of the *gat* to make more of an impact. Conversely, too much emphasis of the *sam* during improvisation throughout a performance will detract from the impact of the *sam* in the *gat*. Moreover, sparing emphasis of the *sam* in improvisation makes more of an occasion of the improvisations in which the *sam* is emphasised. These improvisations are more likely to be played towards the end of a performance, during the *drut gat* section, as the tempo and rhythmic momentum build towards the climax of the *jhalla*.

• Dwelling on *meend*. The differences of approach to *meend* in *alāp* in the playing of Ilyas Khan and the style of Shahid Parvez of the Imdadkhani Gharana has already been stated. This disparity is apparent also in the way in which Shahid Parvez (Bazm-e-Khas, 2020b, 21:09–21:25) explores and dwells on *meend* in improvisation between iterations of a composition. His approach to *meend* in improvisation tends to draw the attention of the listener to the *meend* itself, as opposed to the motion of the raga. The sounding result is very melodious and demonstrates mastery over the sitar. However, it would be out of place in a performance in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in which *meend* tends to serve the motion of the raga, as opposed to the raga serving the *meend.*

• Calls and responses between melody instrument and tabla (*sawal jawab)*. Amjad Ali Khan's *sawal jawab* (darbarfestival, 2020) with Anindo Chatterjee and Kumar Bose exemplifies this call and response, which as mentioned in the transcript of darabar's (2020) video is a 'relatively young' concept. Again, this is more of an audience-entertaining technique, than one which serves the raga, so it would typically not feature in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. However, there is one example of it recorded by Ilyas Khan in his televised performance of Raga Desh (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2022, 8:06). Having listened to much of the available recorded archive of Ilyas Khan's performances, it is the only example of this that I have encountered. It is therefore likely that this instance of *sawal jawab* is more to do with appealing to the television audience than reflecting the usual practice of the *gharānā*. This relates to the previously explored issue of the need for musicians to cater to the technological and social constraints of recordings, meaning

recordings in isolation are not necessarily reliable representations of a musician's or *gharānā*'s style.

- Overly long improvisations. Irfan Muhammad Khan explained that performances used to last up to 45 minutes, an hour at most. They did not 'go on for 3 hours', with artists' improvisations 'stretching the raga', spoiling its melodic and affective nuances with too many repeated melodic sequences (Khan, personal communication, 9 December 2024). The basis of Irfan Muhammad Khan's criticism of some contemporary performers is that performing lengthy improvisations in this way centres the performer's stamina and detracts from the details of the raga. When I was playing with a tabla accompaniment in class and started to play lengthy *alāp* phrases in the vilambit *gat*, Ustadji stopped me and advised to aim for improvisations that generally last one or two cycles. Shorter improvisations between iterations of the *gat*, even when playing *alāp* style phrases, would encourage me to follow the motion of the raga more closely and would make for a more dynamic performance that continues to develop momentum. There may be a segment of the performance during the *drut gat* where I could play slower *alāp* material, which spans more cycles, to give the audience some respite from faster *toda*s, but even so, that too should not be overdone.

5.4.1 Vilambit gat todas

Figure 5.4.1 shows set *toda*s for Raga Kedar, which exemplify the kind of set *toda*s taught, especially early on, in the process of learning to inhabit the style of the *gharānā*. These set *toda*s offer a way through the raga when improvising. *Todas* 1, 2 and 4 span from *sam* to *khali* at single stroke speed in vilambit Tīntāl and should be followed by 3 strokes, or a *tān* over 3 *matras* leading to the *mukra* on the 12th *matra*. When these *toda*s are played from the *khali* at double stroke speed in *vilambit* Tīntāl, the *gat* is caught from the 13th *matra*. In *drut*, at single stroke speed, these *toda*s span 16 *matras* and at double speed they span 8. *Toda* 3 spans two cycles at single stroke speed in *vilambit* tīntāl and one cycle at double stroke speed. In drut it spans four cycles at single stroke speed and two cycles at double stroke speed. This *toda* finishes with a *tīhai*, but it is simple and if played it would probably only be once in each *gat*, or once in a whole performance. In Video 5.4.1 these *todas* are presented

between iterations of the Kedar *vilambit gat* at single stroke speed on cello and at double stroke speed on sitar. They are played straight, with no rhythmic or expressive variation for the purposes of demonstration. In performance these patterns form the basis for more varied improvisations in the moment, explored in more detail below.

1 S M̲G̲ P M P D P   Ś N D P M̲ M̲ R S

2 S N Ṡ R Ṡ N D P   M P D N Ṡ N D P

3 Ṅ S R Ṇ S R Ṇ S M P D M P D M P

   Ṅ Ś R Ṅ Ś R Ṇ S M P D M P D M P

   M P D N S N D P   Ṡ N D P M̲M̲ R S

   D P M P Ṡ — D P   M P S — D P M P
   ×
   Ṡ

4 Ṅ Ṡ D N P D M P   Ś N D P M̲M̲ R S

Figure 5.4.1 set *toda*s in Raga Kedar, demonstrated in Video 5.4.1.

These set *toda*s also function as a framework from which other improvisations can be made in the raga, whilst ensuring the melodic form of the raga is maintained. The patterns can be broken up, varied in speed, emphasis and rhythm. So, from this small number of *toda*s it is possible to devise an entire performance-worth of improvisations. Moreover, the patterns of these *toda*s can be adapted to the melodic motion of other ragas. *Toda*s 1, 2 and 4 (Figure 4.5.1) can also be broken down into *tān*s of 4 *swāra*s, which make up longer sequences. This is one common way of composing *toda*s in the style of the *gharānā*. The first half of *toda* 3 can be broken into 4 groups of 8, articulated as 123 123 12, so *ṆSR ṆSR ṆS* would be stroked DaRa Da DaRa Da DaRa. This is a common *tān* featured in the improvising style of the *gharānā*, the emphasis of which cuts across the *tāl* to make a more intricate rhythmic texture. Another common *toda,* variations of which are regularly played in performances of any raga, is: *ṆSGG RSṆS GMNN DPMP NṠĠĠ ṚṠNṠ ṆSGG RSṆS*. This *toda* is demonstrated in both the Kalyan and Purbi *thāt*s in <u>Video 5.4.2</u>.

The above *toda*s have been discussed in the sound-centric language of sounding patterns. From a movement-centred perspective the above patterns form a repertoire of different ways of moving. It becomes very important to think of *todas* as frameworks for movement, as opposed to pitch, when applying them to different ragas. When improvising in a different raga to that in which the pattern was originally learned, it is the muscle memory of the left-hand fingering and right-hand emphasis and *bol* pattern that are recalled. Remembering the above groupings as sounding patterns is more likely to lead to playing the wrong *swarā*s or veering away from the motion of the raga. Whereas, if recalled as movement, it is easier to apply the correct motion of the raga to the groupings of strokes and overall melodic shape of the *toda*. The intention is not to recreate the sounding outcome of the pattern, but the feeling of the movement which created the sounding pattern. It is this principle which underpins the purpose of examining the *toda*s I have been taught, as well as those from recorded performances of the exponents of the *gharānā*. Understanding the intention and movement of a *toda* in one raga, or one performance, makes it possible to apply its framework to any other raga or performance, thus widening the embodied repertoire from which improvisations can be composed in the moment of performance.

As well as widening repertoire, studying *toda*s in recordings and performances of Irfan Muhammad Khan and his forebears assists in the learning of how to structure the *gat* section of a performance. *Gats* are cyclical, so the sense of moving forward through a performance comes from other factors such as the gradual increasing of tempo and the frequency of strokes in improvisation. While it has already been established that I should not dwell too much on improvised passages that 'stretch the raga' (Irfan Muhammad Khan, personal communication, 9 December 2024), equally I was also advised not to progress towards double stroke improvisations too quickly. Doing so would make the performance feel rushed, would give insufficient time for the raga to develop, and leave little space for further development. Learning to sense the correct rate at which to develop improvisations through a performance is a form of temporal knowledge. It concerns the way in which melodic and rhythmic details are revealed and presented over time. Progressing a performance at the rate most suited to the occasion also requires a degree of social knowledge, as the performer will need to be able to read the social cues of the audience and other musicians. The best way of learning this is by observing the way masters and senior performers of the style and art form progress through performances and recordings of different lengths.

I asked Ustadji about how to develop *toda*s and improvisations in a full-length performance, within *vilambit* and *drut gat*s. Ustadji recommended that first I should begin with a few sparse a-rhythmic movements based on the *alāp* that last one, maximum two cycles. These are sometimes described as *vistāra* in Hindustani music literature. Because I will have just played a full *alāp*, these should develop fairly quickly to avoid going over the same ground. Then I should begin to play single stroke *toda*s that explore the raga. Ustadji explained that these *toda*s comprise *bahlawa ki tān*s, meaning in this context melodic movements that play with raga. These single stroke *toda*s develop in intensity and rhythmic complexity, as the tempo also gradually increases.

To mark an increase of tempo, before playing double stroke *toda*s, I could incorporate some *lahak gamak*s, after which I should start to play double speed (*dogun*) *Da Ra toda*s. These *toda*s lead to four times the speed (*chaugun*) *Dir Dir* stroke *toda*s. Then I finish the *vilambit gat* and begin the *drut gat*, which would follow the same framework. However, in *drut* there is the option at certain moments of high rhythmic intensity, during the *dogun* or *chaugun* stage, to give some respite and play some

vistāra phrases. Then, after this, building again towards the peak of the *drut gat* and transitioning to the concluding *jhalla* section. This is just a brief summary of the frameworks and approaches to developing improvisation in performance that I have learned. Nonetheless, this framework gives a potential listener of a performance in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana a clear idea of the way intentions for improvisation are structured.

Because the *vilambit gat* develops so much more gradually than the *drut gat*, it is more challenging to learn how to pace the development of improvisation. Irfan Muhammad Khan's (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a) performance of Bilaskhani Todi is a full, hour-length performance, in which the *alāp* progresses through *jod* and *jhalla* until the *gat* section, which develops gradually through the *vilambit gat* to *drut gat*. This recording, which took place in the music room in which he teaches, with an audience comprised only of his students,[12] is particularly useful for learning how to pace the placement and development of *toda*s in the *vilambit gat*. Figures 5.4.3 to 5.4.9 show a selection of transcribed *toda*s, accompanying an analysis of some of Irfan Muhammad Khan's improvisations during the *vilambit gat*, demonstrating the ways he works within the framework described above:

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[12] I was lucky enough to be one of those present in the audience to experience this performance first hand.

27:00 Gat x3

27:50 leaves a whole cycle to tune

28:14
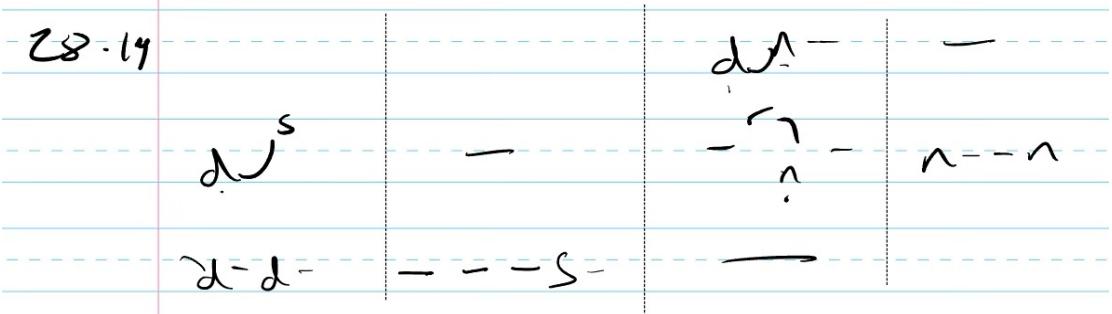
28:41
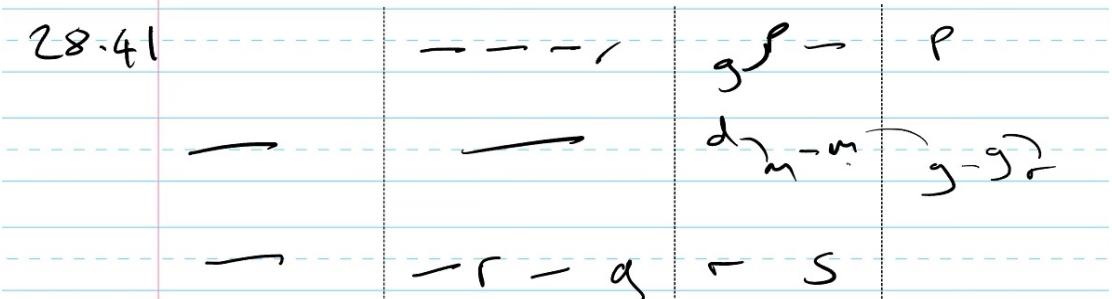
29:03
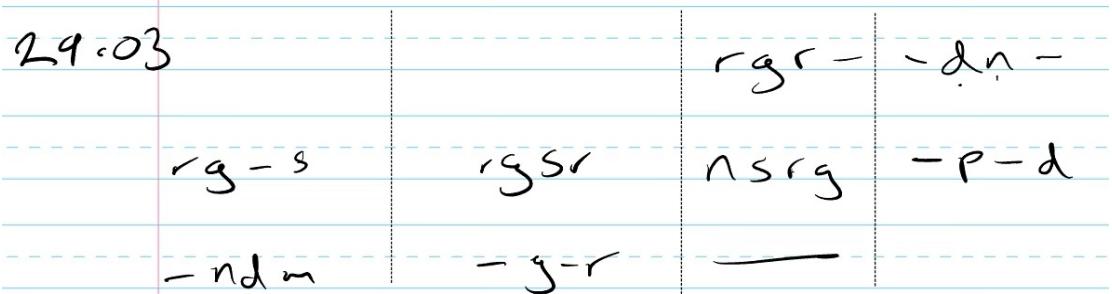
Figure 5.4.3 transcription of the beginning of the *vilambit gat* section of Irfan Muhammad Khan's performance of Bilaskhani Todi.

The Toda at <u>28:19</u> is the first in the *gat* section (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). The above transcription (Figure 5.4.3) illustrates the sparse nature of the strokes, as Irfan Muhammad Khan plays *alāp* material. Figure 5.4.4 shows the opening movement of the *alāp* in Bilaskhani Todi. The first *toda* in Figure 5.4.3 shows exactly the same melodic movements.
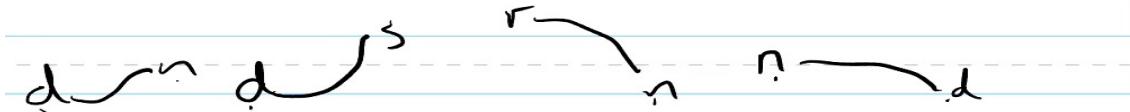
Figure 5.4.4 Opening *alāp* phrase of Bilaskhani Todi.

The amount of space left between strokes in the first two improvised sections is notably more than subsequent *toda*s. I spent considerable time during riyaz trying to get the right pacing and duration of early improvisations such as these. Often, I would either take too long or start to play too much too soon. I worked out that I was leaving too long a gap between the *sam* of the *gat* and beginning my improvised phrase, usually starting on the 4th or 5th *matra*. This meant I either had to rush through the movement to get back to the start of the *gat* on the 12th *matra*, or that I had to fill a whole cycle until the *gat* came around again. Irfan Muhammad Khan begins his first *alāp* style improvisation on the 3rd *matra* (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a, 28:19). I found that beginning these early improvisations by the 3rd *matra* at the latest gave enough time to play a single *alāp* phrase at a steady rate, neither too rushed nor too drawn out.

The *toda* transcribed in Figure 5.4.5 is the first to span longer than a single cycle. The strokes are still a combination of single *Da* strokes, with a few *Da Ra* strokes. However, their placement on weak subdivisions of the *matra*s gives a syncopated and swung rhythmic feel, as it cuts across the metre of the *tāl*. This is very characteristic of Irfan Muhammad Khan's playing and is something I have sought to emulate in my own playing. The *tān* in Figure 5.4.5 that spans the last 3 *matra*s of the cycle, through the *sam* ('x') and into the first 3 *matra*s of the next cycle are indicative of the way Irfan Muhammad Khan achieves that syncopated rhythmic feel: *- g - P | d - n - | - d - m | - Ṡ - - | ṙ - n - | - d m - |*. This could have been played straight, as a single stroke *tān* that leads to a clear statement of the high *ṠA* on the *sam*: *g - P - | d - n - | d - m - | Ṡ - - - | ṙ - n - | d - m - |*. Instead, Irfan Muhammad Khan begins the *tān* off the beat and alternates between playing the following *matra*s on and off the beat. Evidently there is no preoccupation with a need to emphasise the *sam* in the *toda* within which this *tān* is situated. Instead, the *sam* is left empty and the high *ṠA* is stated just after. So much can be learned from this *toda* about ways of playing with rhythmic emphasis and feel in improvisation. It is possible to make complex syncopated *toda*s by

breaking them down and alternating between playing their constituent *tān*s on and off the beat. Also, more rhythmic interest can be created by avoiding over-emphasis of the *sam*.
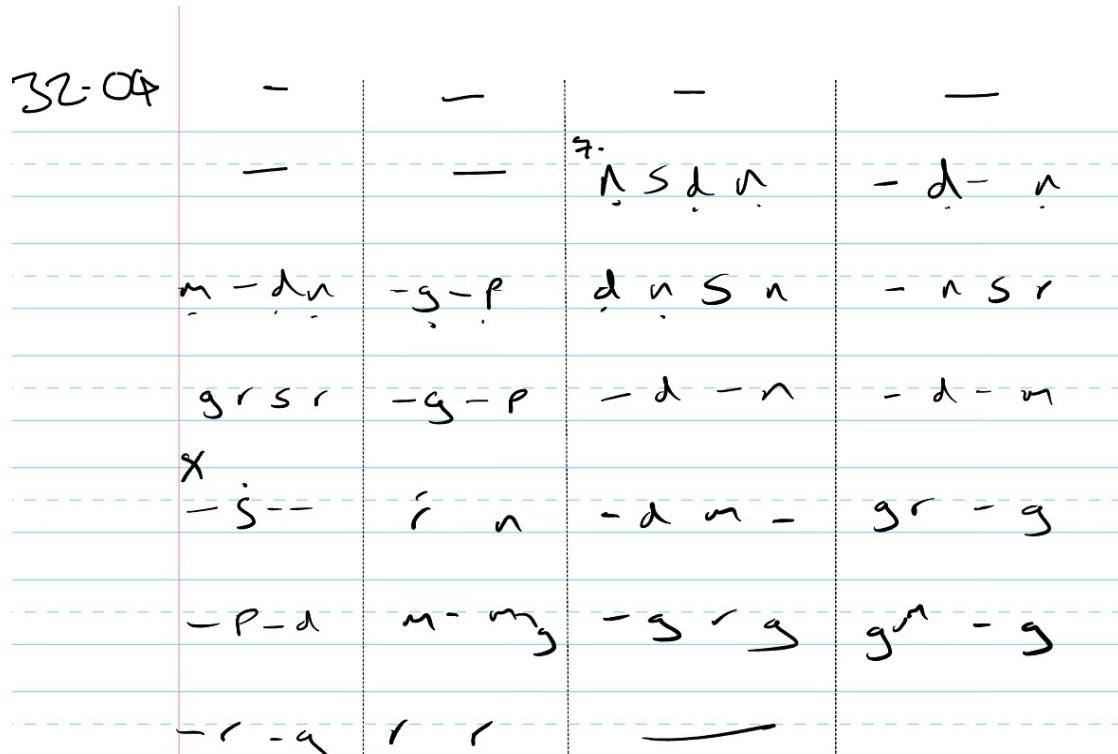
Figure 5.4.5 *toda* at 32:04 of Bilaskhani Todi performance.

In addition to alternating between straight and syncopated strokes, at 34:18 Irfan Muhammad Khan introduces *gamak*s (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). These *gamak*s give the rhythmic and melodic character of the improvisation a breathlessness, pushing the momentum of the performance forward. However, it is important not to rush the strokes themselves. A challenge in performing these *gamak*s is to correctly capture the space between each stroke, which creates tension against the feel of the *tāl*. The transcription in Figure 5.4.6 shows the approximate rhythmic placement of the *gamak*s.
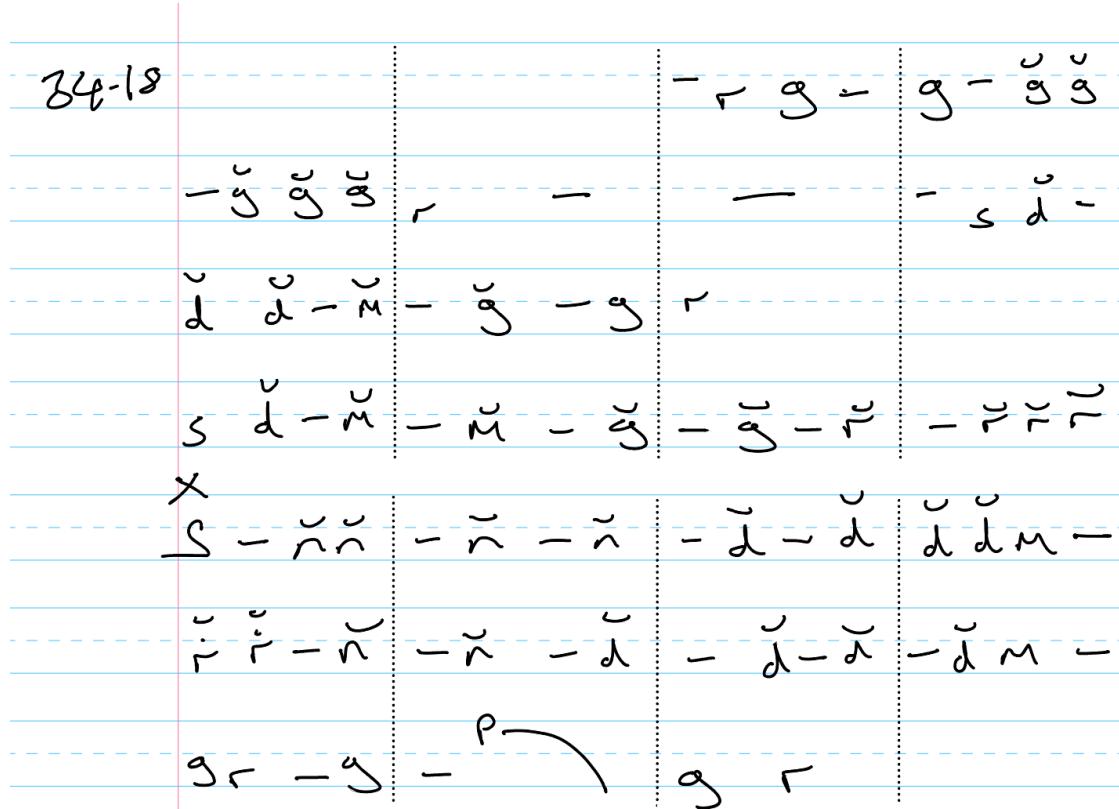
Figure 5.4.6 *todas* at <u>34:18</u> of Bilaskhani Todi performance.

After creating some space between *gat*s and *toda*s, at <u>38:39</u> (Figure 5.4.7), Irfan Muhammad Khan signals to Sanjib Pal to increase the tempo, communicating this with increased tempo of his right-hand strokes but also signalling via nodding his head (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). This is a form of body language, which I have learned from him to indicate an increase in tempo to tabla players. The transcription of the *toda* following the increase in tempo only shows the *swāra*s, which follow a zig-zagging pattern. The video footage shows that this zig-zagging melodic movement is stroked alternately with *Da* and *Ra* strokes and each sounding *swāra* has a slight micro-oscillation. This *toda* is therefore an example of playing *lahak* as the tempo increases. This moment in the performance demonstrates: temporal knowledge, sensing that it is time to increase the tempo; intersecting with social knowledge, communicating with the tabla player with specific body language; and the melodic and mechanical knowledge required to adapt the *lahak* effect to the correct grammar of the raga on the instrument. These elements combine to create an overall sounding and visual aesthetic experience that characterise the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana.
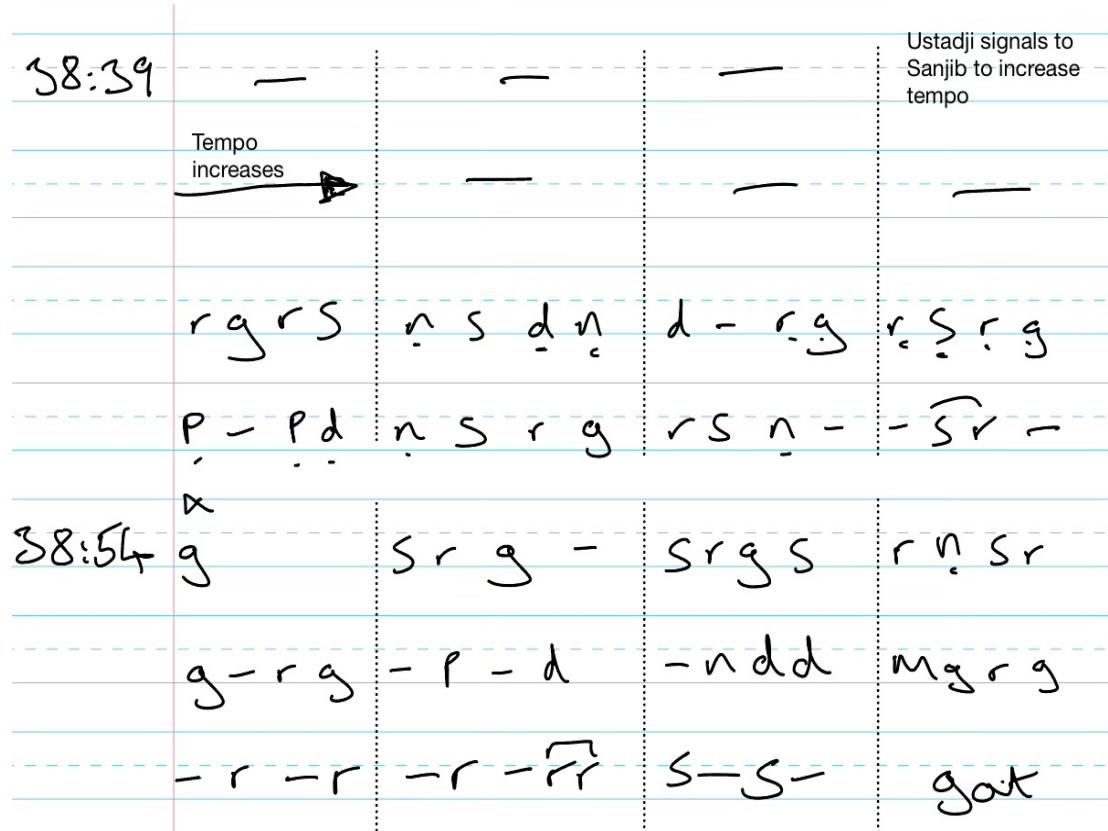
Figure 5.4.7 <u>38:39</u> of Bilaskhani Todi performance.

The *toda*s transcribed in Figure 5.4.8 illustrate Irfan Muhammad Khan's masterful delivery of *laykarī*, playing at a different tempo to the established tempo (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a, <u>39:23</u>).[13] In the first *toda* transcribed above, Irfan Muhammad Khan stretches the tempo of each *tān*, dividing each *matra* into 3 (rather than 4). In the following *toda* he diminishes the stretch slightly, dividing *tān*s across 2 *matras* approximately into 7 (rather than 8). This is rhythmically incredibly complex.

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[13] For a musician reading more familiar with Anglo-centric musical terms, this is similar to a metric modulation.
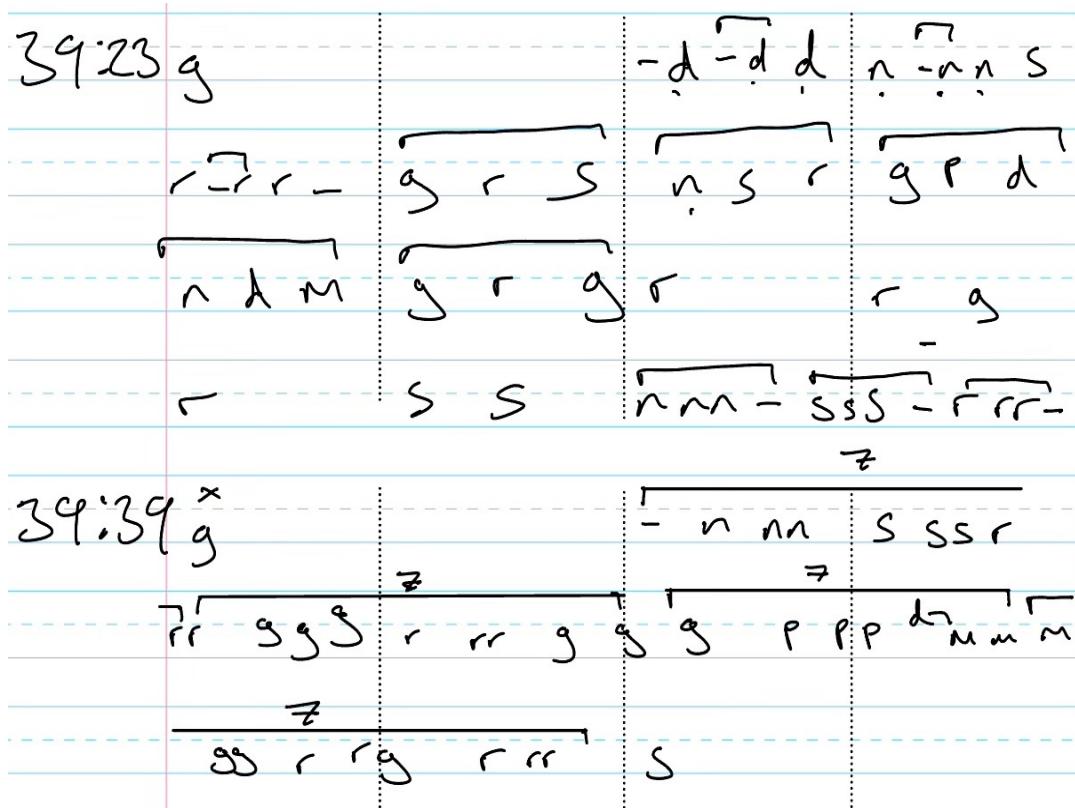
Figure 5.4.8 39:23 of Bilaskhani Todi performance.

In a *riyaz* session it did not take too long to be able to play a version of the complex rhythm illustrated by groupings of 7 at 39:39, transcribed in Figure 5.4.8 (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). However, it took 2 days to work out exactly how this complex rhythmic variation works for transcription. This is an example of rhythmic complexity that is easier learned by feeling rather than by explanation or notation. Ustadji never explained to me that he is playing approximately in 7s and if he had told me to try and play a *toda* composed out of groups of 7, starting off the beat, I would never have been able to recreate this *toda*. Even with the notation of the transcription above, without the recording and the context of having heard Ustadji play phrases like this before, it would have been unlikely I could have picked this up. However, the feel of the rhythmic momentum of this whole *toda* has such a distinct quality that I was able to understand it far quicker in the bodymind than through disembodied, analytical, intellectual comprehension.

Another example of this kind of *laykarī* can be heard in Irfan Muhammad Khan's 2011 recording of Ahir Bhairav (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023d, 20:08),

which presented similar challenges when trying to rationalise, despite being able to get close to recreating it in practice. However, this Ahir Bhairav *toda* was harder to learn from a recording because there was no visual cue from Irfan Muhammad Khan's body moving, to help understand the placement of the *swāra*s, and the speed of the strokes.

Having worked them out independently, I played these approximately septuplet rhythmic *toda*s back to Ustadji and asked him about them in an online class. He knew immediately what I was referring to. He taught me the actual principles underpinning this *laykarī*. It comprises *Da RaDa* strokes on a single *swāra*, played consciously across the speed of the *tāl* being played by the tabla player. His first recommendation for playing this correctly was 'if you follow the tabla, it will not come' (Khan, personal communication, 18 December 2024). Then he explained that first I should play this stroke at *barābar lay* (primary pulse), then *dogun* (dived into 2), then *tigun* (divided into 3), then *chaugun* (divided into 4) and so on. Moreover, that I should play one speed after another. If I came back to state the *sam* between each increase in speed, it would 'lose its charm' (*Ibid.*).

A challenge of playing this kind of *laykarī* is the need to resist the body's entrainment with the pulse of the *tāl*. There is plenty of literature that covers the ratios and patterns of the sounding outcomes of *laykarī* (Bagchee, 1998; Clayton, 2000; Widdess 2003) but significantly less acknowledgement of the way it is felt in the body. Cutting across the beat of the tabla feels like walking the wrong way up an escalator. It demands a great deal more mental and physical effort to articulate a constant pattern that cuts across the *tāl* than being carried by its natural current. Ustadji had advised that I practise my *palta*s at different speeds so I can comfortably play *laykarī*. Practising the same strokes at different speed ratios trains the internal metronome to entrain with the speed of the stroke as opposed to the speed of the *tāl*. Tuning into the breath is crucial to this internal entrainment. Once this feels comfortable, the ear then hears the ways in which the strokes, at a speed that is decoupled from the *tāl*, still relate very much to the metre of the tabla. They just lock in differently. *Laykarī* becomes easier once the ear and the rest of the body is used to this process of simultaneously decoupling and locking into the primary pulse of the *tāl.*

The approach to *laykarī*, of increasing the speed ratio of strokes, is the same as the process in Dhrupad described by Widdess (2003, p. 241). Widdess also states that *laykarī* at a ratio of 1:7 is rarely heard in vocal Dhrupad performance but is heard occasionally in instrumental Dhrupad performance. The complex division, approximately into 2:7, transcribed in Figure 5.4.8, therefore reveals yet another connection between the instrumental style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and Dhrupad instrumental performance. However, the division into 7 is not from a conscious, premeditated mathematical choice. To put it crudely, Ustadji did not say to himself 'I am going to play sevens now'. Nor was the speed ratio he chose a random shot in the dark, otherwise he would not have consistently maintained the speed ratio in all the strokes of this *toda*. The exciting and wonderfully complex rhythmic modulation was a result of having committed to muscle memory the ability firstly to cut across the *tāl* at different speed ratios, secondly to ignore the tabla player and intuitively decide (and stick to) a speed ratio that creates the most aesthetically exciting sounding outcome.

I could recreate the sound of this *laykarī* after listening to it in recording and video. However, only after Ustadji explained the undergirding principle and way of practising this element of improvising in the style of the *gharānā* could I then apply the principle and practice more broadly. This illustrates the importance of embodied knowledge accompanying enduring materials. If the only point of reference was the sound in recording — even as a committed student with embodied knowledge of other aspects of performance in the style — this approach to improvisation would never have been fully understood.

Figure 5.4.9 shows a transcription from 40:50, which contains several details that feature later in the performance (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). Over 10 minutes into the performance, it is the first time that Irfan Muhammad Khan starts to double the stroke speed to *Dir* strokes. He combines *Dir* strokes and *Da Ra* strokes, building the rhythmic detail to match that of the eventual *drut gat*. This is followed by a *sapāt tān* (discussed below). Then the following *toda* uses more *Dir* strokes than the previous. However, despite the growing rhythmic intensity, he still leaves space for the ideas to breathe, with the open strike in the middle of the *toda*.

Then, in the final of these 3 *toda*s (41:18), from the 4th to the 7th *matra* he quotes the phrasing and rhythm of the actual *drut gat*.

Figure 5.4.9 40:50 of Bilaskhani Todi performance.

Using segments of the *gat*s to turn into improvisations is an approach to improvisation in the style of the *gharānā* that Miner (1997) has documented. It is not just the segments from the *gat*s, or variations of the *gat*s that are played in the performance that are used like this, but also other *gat*s both from the repertoire of the *gharānā* and *gat*s from other *gharānā*s. Ustadji taught me a composition from Murad Ali Khan in Puriya Dhanashri because he explained it was full of rhythmic and melodic complexity,

so it was worth learning. However, he recommended that instead of performing it, it is good for teaching as well as inspiration and source material for my own *toda*s. Having learned a few *gat*s in a raga, I could then choose which I am going to perform with on the day and then the others I could break up and use to compose *toda*s. This is a creative way of generating new ideas to improvise with, without deviating too far from the repertoire of the *gat*s. This kind of approach, recycling and reinventing repertoire in this way relates closely to the variations of compositions that happen in a Dhrupad performance. Moreover, this approach illustrates the importance of *gat*s in the *gharānā*. The wider the repertoire of *gat*s, not only the more likely it is that a performer will play a *gat* not already known by the audience, but also the more material the performer will be able to draw from for for *upaj*.

From 42:54 (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a) the *toda*s are all played with *Dir* strokes. The melodic motion of these *toda*s is very similar to that of the earlier single stroke *toda*s*.* The *Dir* strokes with which these movements are articulated combine different emphasised groupings, such as 2-3-3-2-2-4. This kind of improvisation is more common in sarod playing owing to it being a fretless instrument. High speed improvisations get to a point where the left hand cannot go much faster without sacrificing intonation, so the left hand slows down and the right-hand speeds up. This principle also applies to cello, which has the same problem. Once I feel my left hand has reached a speed it cannot go beyond, I increase the speed of my bow strokes.

Having built dramatic rhythmic energy with his *Dir* strokes, Irfan Muhammad Khan pulls it right back at 43:59 (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a). He returns to *vistāra*-like, sporadic melodic movement, leaving wide spaces punctuated with *chikārī* strokes. This juxtaposition gives a more varied arc of intensity to the form of the performance. It enables the tension to be built up once more, through the rest of the *vilambit* section. The transition to the *drut gat* is very subtle. Following the end of the tabla solo at 45:55 Irfan Muhammad Khan plays a series of *sapāt tān*s. The final one lands on the *sam* at 46:28 and that marks the end of the *vilambit gat* and the start of the *drut*.

A *sapāt tān* is a fast-moving run that follows a stepwise linear trajectory. It could ascend through the *swāra*s of the raga and then descend, or it could even descend from the middle of the raga, ascend, then descend. In the style of the *gharānā*, these fast-flowing *sapāt tān*s tend to be (but are not always) played in the lead up to an articulation of the *sam*, especially during the *drut gat*. The kinetic approach both in terms of the motion of the left hand and the speed and articulation of the right hand should swoop to the *sam* with a sense of impact.

The way I came to understand this principle was when Ustadji told me an anecdote of Ilyas Khan explaining to him that once the decision has been made to emphasise the *sam* in a *toda*, 'you should approach the *sam* in the way an eagle catches its prey' (Khan, personal communication, 2 February 2024). From this I understood immediately the principle of this swoop through a *sapāt tān*, or similar fast moving *tān*s to catch the *sam*. This imagery was compounded by the fact that during class the sound of the city birds of prey, the eagles and kites of Kolkata, can always be heard overhead. The calls of these birds hover above and cut through the backdrop of the sounds of the city: the children playing on the street where Ustadji's house is situated, adults tending to their daily duties, traffic passing by, and cats, dogs, cows, chickens and crows. The extent to which I was affected by this imagery exemplifies the importance of the stories around the exponents of the *gharānā*. These oral histories are connected intimately to the ways of playing. They take on such greater potency when they are encountered in context, as opposed to relayed in the way I am doing now in this document.

The conversation about *sapāt tān*s came after I had finally learned the principle of the technique, when I was learning Raga Gaud Sarang. The final *toda* of the *drut gat* that I was being shown was a *sapāt tān.* The melodic movement was PMPŚ ŚNDPmGRS. However, the way it is played creates an explosive effect, which gives the feeling of the whole raga being illuminated at speed. Although I quickly understood the shape of the melodic movement, I was unable to pick up the correct speed or feel in the left hand, or the correct kind of strokes in the right hand. This was partly because I was trying to emulate directly on the sitar Ustadji's way of playing this on the sarod, as opposed to translating what he was playing into sitar technique. I was also thinking

too much about playing each of the *swāra*s, when I should have been thinking more about the movement as a whole. I was focussing too much on the sound knowledge, overlooking the necessary kinetic knowledge.

As I was not correctly getting the feel and articulation of this *sapāt tān*, Ustadji put down his sarod, instructed for the tabla app to be switched off and for a recording of Ilyas Khan performing Raga Kafi on sitar to be played. We listened to Ilyas Khan's first few improvisations, before he started to play *sapāt tān*s. As usual, I was sitting opposite Ustadji, but now I was watching him listen rather than play. He appeared to be concentrating, with his head down, waiting for the moment he wanted to show me in the recording. As soon as we heard the first *sapāt tān*, Ustadji became animated, indicating the momentum of the *tān* with a pointing gesture. As the *tān* went up, his finger pointed down, as though the climax of the *tān* was a result of pushing, or even chopping, into the ground. He did this again, the second time we heard a *sapāt tān*. On the third time, Ustadji swayed his upper body to the right, as though he was leaning into the climax in tension of the *tān* — illustrating that tension with his top lip, which he curled upwards as Ilyas Khan's *tān* ascended. He then swayed to the left as the *tān* descended, as if he was leaning towards the *sam*, which, it appeared, he gently bounced off, as he re-centred himself. This moment can be seen in Video 5.4.3.

I was responding with my voice and body to what I was listening to and seeing, like an echo. I vaguely mimicked the melodic movement of the *tān*s with my voice, accompanied by my own interpretation of Ustadji's movements. From these echoed responses, Ustadji appeared to have decided that I had finally understood the feeling of this kind of *tān*. He smiled and announced to the room "he's got it", before quickly instructing for the recording to be switched off and picking up his sarod to capitalise on my understanding, before it could slip away. We immediately played this *drut gat* in Raga Kafi, which I had not learned before, but was able to quickly tune into. Then Ustadji played the *tān*: *gRSRgmPDnṠnDmgRS,* which I repeated on sitar. It felt different, freer, more relaxed, and considerably faster. I was thinking more about the fluidity of the melodic movement, illustrated by Ustadji's animated response to hearing it, than each individual *swāra*. I had learned the movement, which could then be expressed through the mode of sitar playing. This is a clear example of having to

learn melodic motion and musical gestures in the body first before translating from one instrumental mode to another.

Once I had understood the principle of the overall effort of the movement — a fast sweep across the horizontal axis, played with fast and light right-hand strokes, I was able to translate this horizontal left-hand movement to the vertical axis along a single string of the cello. The right-hand *Dir* strokes along the vertical axis would become fast underhand bow strokes along the horizontal axis. This was one of the instances where the underhand, viola da gamba style bow hold was particularly useful, as it enabled my right hand to move at speed with precision, but without the weight of the arm inherent in the overhand bow stroke. An overhand stroke would have got more power, but the lightness, especially at speed, would be lost.

This lightness in the right hand, on both sitar and cello, is required to play another *toda* that features a great deal in Ilyas Khan's *drut gat* improvisations. It is a predominantly rhythmic *toda*, which tends to only alternate between three *swāra*s and usually occurs at the climax of the *drut gat* section. It can be heard in Ilyas Khan's performance of Gaud Sarang (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2021a, 27:35). The upper of the 3 *swāra*s is struck once, then the middle is struck with multiple *Dir* strokes. Then the upper is struck once and the lowest is struck with multiple *Dir* strokes. The number of *Dir* strokes reduces, creating a diminishing rhythm, which increases anticipation for the next *toda*, or the ending phrases of the performance. I began to incorporate this *toda* into my improvisations on sitar in 2022, when I contributed a performance of the Lucknow Jhinjhoti *drut gat* to the memorial celebrations of Umar Khan in which each of Irfan Muhammad Khan's students played (peteyeldingsounds, 2024, 00:47). I have since translated this *toda* to cello (see Video 5.4.4). The gap after the upper *swāra* gives me time to retake the bow after it is sounded, which allows the following *Dir* strokes on the lower *swāra* to be played starting with another upbow.

The final selection of *toda*s presented in Figures 5.4.10–5.4.14 show some of the set *toda*s, which tend to accompany the Thumri *gat*s. The frameworks of these *toda*s are the same or very similar across all the Thumri ragas — especially those grouped within the Kafi *thāt*, with attention paid to ensuring the correct melodic motion of the raga is

maintained. Learning these *toda*s and being able to apply them to multiple Thumri ragas is a crucial part of learning to inhabit the style of the *gharānā.* These *toda*s can be heard in multiple recorded performances by artists from multiple generations of the *gharānā*. For example one of the *toda*s in the recording of Ilyas Khan playing the *Gara drut gat* (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2021b, 09:25) follows the same pattern as Sakhawat Hussain Khan's *toda* at 2:08 in his Gara recording (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023e). This *toda* can be heard applied to Zila Kafi, at a slower tempo, in Irfan Muhammad Khan's recording (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2023f, 09:36). Below is a selection of these kinds of *toda*s that I have learned set to Ragas Gara and Pilu. When performing a Thumri *gat*, usually at the end of a full-length performance, I will use these and other set *toda*s*. Doing so situates my performing in a continuing thread of exponents of this style, pulling on this particular repertoire of *toda*s to play between iterations of the *gat*.

GMPM gRS—   GMPM gRS—

DnSR MgR—   DnSR MgR—

ŚnDP MgRS   SRgM P DnŚ

ś n—D P — Pm   —gR⁔R S Ṇ—

ś n—D P — Pm   —gR⁔R S Ṇ—

ṡ n—D P — Pm   —gR⁔R S Ṇ—
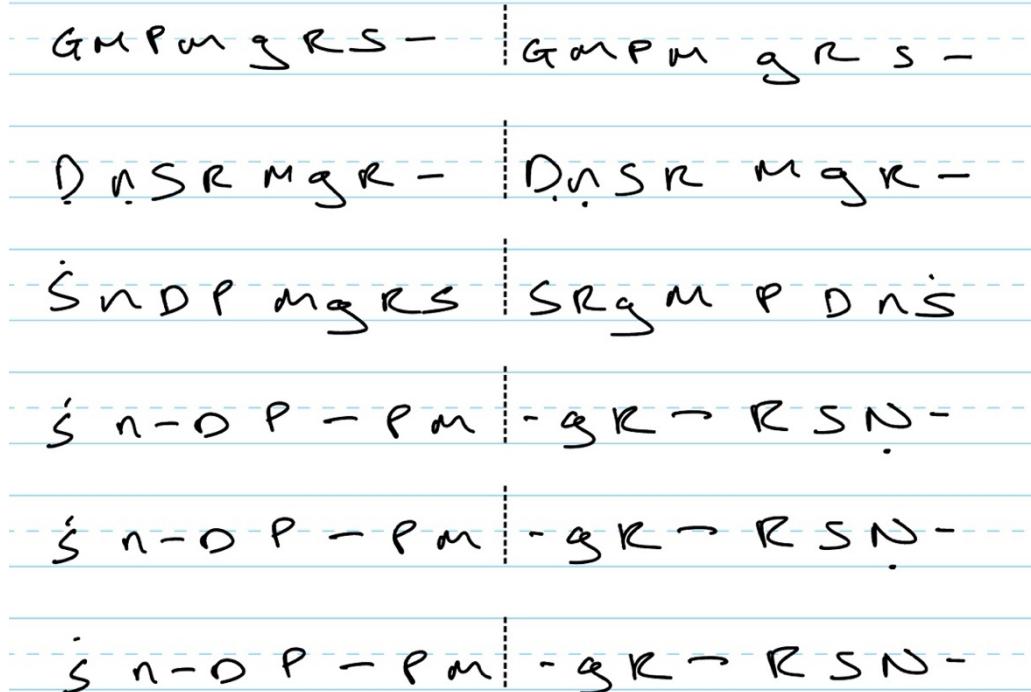
Figure 5.4.10 *Toda* in Gara 1, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.4.5</u>.

P PMgRS   P   Pmg

MP GM GM GM   PMg RS—GM

PMg RS—GM   PPG MPP GM

P P M gRS   SRg MP DnŚ

Ś n D P P   gRS —MD P Ḍ   ṆSṆS
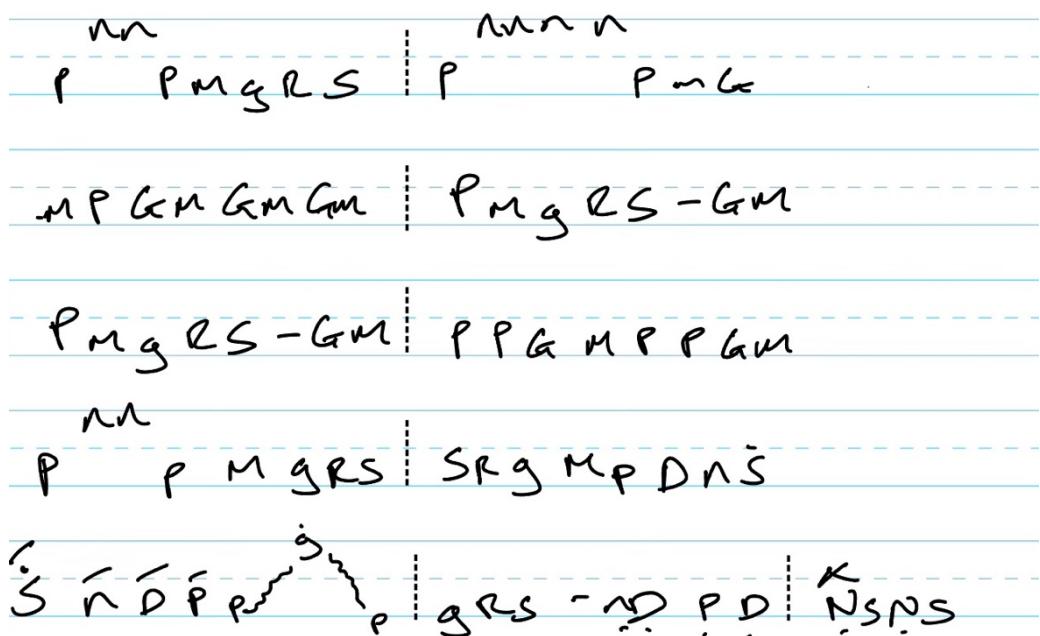
Figure 5.4.11 *Toda* in Gara 2, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.4.5</u>.

P – PP G M – MM R g   gg s R – P M : D n

S – SS S R – RR g   MM g R S – D n : DD

n – n nn S–ss R   M–m grs –DD : D n

S – S R G M G M   G M G M g R S –

n – n P m g R S –   S R g M P M P –

P M g R S – P M   g R S – N N S –

P M g R S – P M   g R S – N N S –

P M g R S – P M   g R S – – m D P D   N S N S

Figure 5.4.12 *Toda* in Gara 3, demonstrated in Video 5.4.5.

α

G — G G | — mm M M
— gg g g | — R S R :|
D — D D | — nn ∧ ∧
— DD D P | — M ___(P) P :|
N — N N | — s̈s̈ N ṡ
— nn D n | — D P P
Ŕ — Ŕ Ŕ | — ġġ ṙ ġ
— ġġ ṙ ġ | ṙ — N N
N — N N | — s̈s̈ N ṡ
— nn D n | — D P P :|
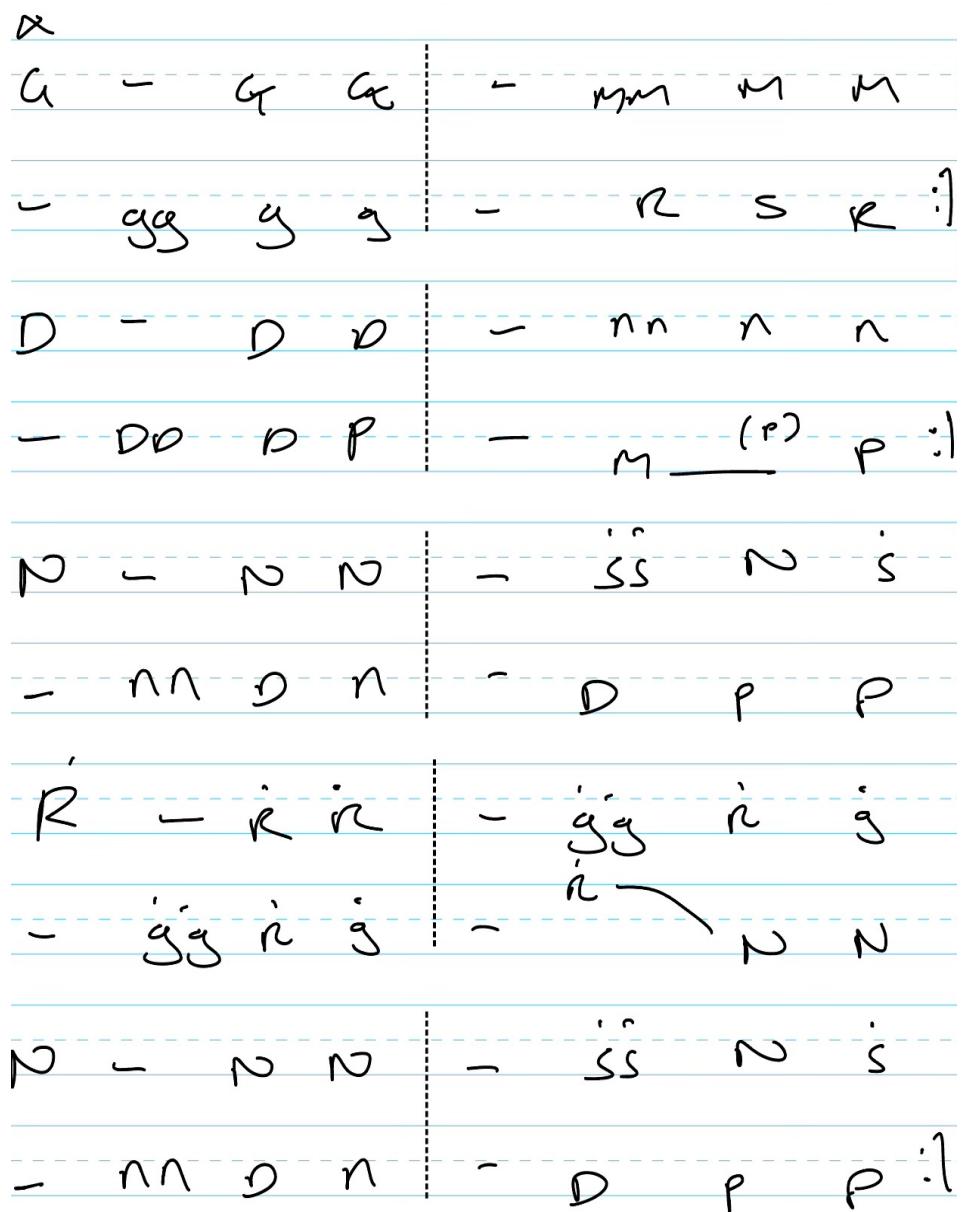
Figure 5.4.13 *Toda* in Pilu part 1, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.4.6</u>.
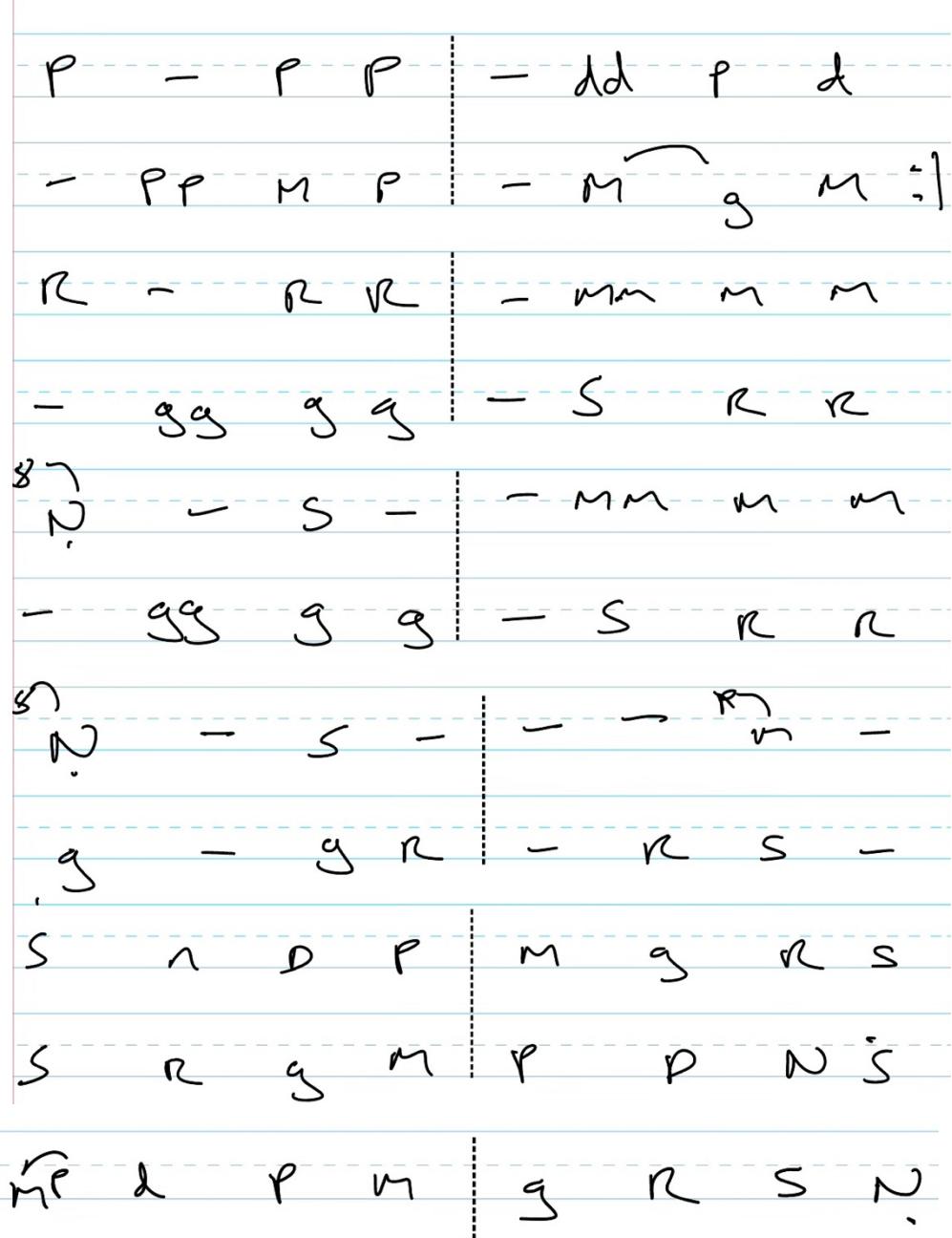
Figure 5.4.14 *Toda* in Pilu part 2, demonstrated in <u>Video 5.4.6</u>.

5.4.3 Concluding a performance

The *drut gat* builds into the concluding *jhalla* section. The repeated *jhalla* strokes that conclude the entire performance should be predominantly on the *chikārī* strings, for example: *Da-chik-chik-chik Da-chik-chik-chik, Da-chik-chik Da-chik-chik Da-chik, Da-chik Da-chik Da-chik-chik-chik,* or *Da-chik-chik-chik-chik Da-chik-chik*. The brilliant, sizzling timbre of the *chikārī* strings being repeatedly struck with the *chik* strokes creates a higher intensity sounding effect in the performance than the softer timbre *jhalla* strokes that conclude the *alāp*. The masters of the *gharānā*, including Irfan

Muhammad Khan, reach astonishing speed in the concluding *jhalla* of a performance. This can be seen in the respective conclusions of Sakhawat Hussain Khan's recorded rendition of: Pilu (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020d, <u>4:09</u>); Ilyas Khan's mid–1970s performance of Raga Chhayanat (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2024d, <u>29:01</u>); and Irfan Muhammad Khan's 1986 recorded performance of Bahar (Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020e, <u>13:57</u>).

I have not yet refined my right hand to a level where I can match the speed of these luminaries. However, I adopt the approach of playing slow *alāp*-style melodic movements with the left hand, as the right hand is pushed to the peak of its ability to strike the instrument at speed (see <u>Video 5.4.7</u>). On the cello, I adopt a stroke for this *jhalla* section inspired by sarod strokes, which alternate between two strokes on the second string and two strokes on the top string (See Video 5.4.7 <u>2:26</u>). In keeping with the general style of improvisation, when it is time to finish, luminaries of the *gharānā* only tend to do a simple *tīhai* to communicate to the tabla player that it is finishing and to round off the performance, instead of playing a lengthy *tīhai* or *chakradhar* as may exponents of other *gharānā*s. The performance remains in the service of the raga until the last *swāra* rings out.

Todas as repertoire of the *gharānā*, like *gat*s, are recognisable by their sounding parameters: their rhythmic, melodic and formal frameworks. Whereas the more rigid frameworks of *gat*s are adapted to the overall time and social requirements of the performance, *toda*s are much looser frameworks. The set patterns of *toda*s are adapted spontaneously, in the moment to suit the way in which the performer is feeling and the stage they are at in the performance. There are differences of approaches to adapting *toda*s on different instruments, based on their mechanics and what is kinetically possible. On the cello, especially at speed, I have adopted more of the approaches to varying and developing *toda*s from what I have observed on sarod, than from what I play on sitar.

Regardless of which instrumental mode, sarod, sitar, or cello playing, a performer is improvising within, there are determining factors that comprise the ways of improvising in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. There is a mindset of centring the raga and showing virtuosity primarily through the expression of its

nuances. This mindset ensures that ways of improvising based on demonstrating what can be done on the instrument, or through premeditated mathematical rhythmic calculations, instead of expressing the raga, are avoided. Rather than rhythmic virtuosity in the style of our *gharānā* coming from calculated patterns like lengthy *tīhais*, it comes from mastery of right-hand strokes — to the point that they can be presented in multiple configurations and at multiple speeds, which lock in and cut across the pulse of the *tāl.*

The established approaches to progressing through the raga ensure that the combinations of *Da, Da Ra, RaDa* and *Dir* strokes, as well as the various *gamak*s are introduced at the right time and the performance is paced appropriately. Much of the mindset and the techniques employed to develop the raga in the improvised sections of a performance come from or are heavily influenced by Dhrupad, continuing the threads of knowledge and practice from the Senia *bīnkars* and *rabābiyas*. Furthermore, the entwined relationship between the Thumri *gat*s and their bank of set *toda*s proves that the approach to improvising is often inseparable from the *gat*s. The *gat*s and the *toda*s are part of the same repertoire. You cannot have one without the other, without losing some of the aesthetic particularities and charm of this repertoire. Therefore, sustaining the repertoire of the *gharānā* means learning to inhabit, perform and teach the *gharānā*'s style of improvising as well as the *gat*s.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This project offers a number of contributions to both the field of music studies generally, and, specifically, to the subject of Hindustani music. The first section will focus on broader contributions to music studies. The second section will focus on the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. The third section will explain what has been revealed as a result of the translation of the *gharānā*'s repertoire and performance techniques to cello. In both the second and third sections contributions to Hindustani music studies, the extent to which my findings support the premise of the body as the musical archive, and the scope for future exploration will be discussed. The final section will return to discussing my methodology of learning to inhabit as a critical intervention in music studies.

6.1 Contributions to music studies

My ontological model has continued the line of Small's (1998) argument that music is an activity rather than an object that is produced. I proposed that musical activity does not simply produce 'patterned sound phenomena' (Agawu, 2016, p.38), but produces embodied musical knowledge, which can be dispersed into multiple constitutive elements. In this project I have adopted the seven categories — sounding, kinetic, temporal, mechanical, social, spatial, linguistic — to explore and present the embodied musical knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. There is scope to extend this model to other music research areas, adding further categories, for example spiritual knowledge. However, the categories I have adopted have enabled elements of this endangered musical lineage's knowledge, which may have otherwise been overlooked, to be examined in detail. My framework of categories has, therefore supported the testing of my hypothesis that the body is, or bodies are, the nucleus of a living musical tradition's archive. Moreover, the enduring materials such as recordings, notations and other physical documents, that are usually considered to be central to the archive, are supplementary — their utility is principally supporting living bodies to continue practising the tradition.

Despite the work of Christopher Small (1998), Timothy Taylor (2007), Kofi Agawu (2016), Phillip Ewell (2021) and others, there is still often a lack of specificity in many areas of English language music-focussed research, when trying to establish what music and musical knowledge actually is. Literature on music cognition and discussions about music in scientific fields, for example, often adopts broad and

general musical terms instead of examining precise elements of musical knowledge and practice (Peretz, 2006; Stewart and McDonald, 2008; Todd and Lee, 2015; Lezama-Espinosa and Hernandez-Montiel, 2020). This is surprising, considering the importance in scientific research of accounting for all possible variables and determining factors.

If the ontological model devised in this research was applied to scientific studies of musical cognition and participation, different results may be yielded based on approaches adapted to whichever element of musical knowledge was the focus. Similarly, choosing to approach musical knowledge as a composite of multiple elements could lead to new perspectives about the tradition, or traditions, in which a musician participates. Therefore, in the same way that provincialising Eurocentric approaches to historicising (Chakrabarty, 2000) leads to richer historiographies, the application of the model for musical knowledge devised in this research, and other similar models, may lead to richer music studies.

While this project is by no means the first to adopt a body-centred approach to music practice and analysis, the way in which movement and sensation was examined to inform translation between instruments offers a novel approach to exploring embodied musical knowledge. Other practising musicians will be able to look to this project as a way of adopting somatic perspectives to bring another dimension of understanding to their own practices. Deeper understanding of the embodied experience of instrumentalists would also offer valuable insight to composers, orchestrators, record producers, and concert programmers, as well as ethnomusicologists. Furthermore, a critical mass, which is thankfully already growing, of body-centred music researchers will remove the artificial boundary between music and movement practices, bringing Anglo-centric music studies more in line with the majority of the world's musico-choreographic traditions (Agawu, 2016).

Another of this project's contributions to the field of music studies is the adoption of becoming an exponent as an alternative mode to mastery, in other words becoming an expert or authority. However, the process of becoming an exponent is not presented as an extension of Singh's (2017) argument for unthinking mastery, but an alternative, related strand, beginning from the same starting point. On the one hand, music studies

within an equitable academia in which scholarship of the Global North is not hegemonic must depart from the process that Agawu (2016) critiques: ethnomusicologists and other music researchers appointing themselves as the authority of a specific subject or tradition. On the other hand, Singh's (2017) contestation that technical skill is inherently untrustworthy in a redistributive re-imagination of scholarship and society does not allow sufficient space for the joy and forming of community that occurs through devotional and refined creative practices and performance traditions. Becoming an exponent resolves the tension between these two positions.

I have demonstrated throughout this project that expertise and refined technical skill is crucial to becoming an exponent of the *gharānā*. I have trained my musicking body to operate as part of a larger, collective body, spanning generations. The technical skill I have developed on the instruments I play is examined as calling forth musical knowledge in the body through different modes. The differing modes of sitar playing and cello playing are manifestations of mechanical knowledge, with their own genealogical threads that entangle with those of my body in unique ways. Furthermore, arguing for becoming an exponent has allowed in-depth research to take place without de-centring the principle figure of the *gharānā,* Irfan Muhammad Khan. Becoming an exponent then offers musicians and music researchers an equitable position in the spaces in which they study and practice. Rather than dominating a subject, which implies processes of extraction and enclosure of knowledge, exponents inhabit a subject and carry knowledge with them.

6.2 Sustaining knowledge and practices of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana

At the beginning of this research the concept of the body as the musical archive was not only proposed to counter dominant Eurocentric perspectives and approaches to archiving musical knowledge, which centre enduring materials such as recordings and scores. Framing the body as the musical archive was also intended to function as a way of communicating the importance of Irfan Muhammad Khan's wealth of embodied knowledge that he has inherited from his forebears. He is able to access, through movement and affective association, hundreds of ragas and *gat*s from the *gharānā*'s repertoire with minimal external prompt. He has also maintained a style of performing that has retained techniques absent or lost from mainstream Hindustani music. Scholars and practitioners of Hindustani music would be all the poorer if Irfan

Muhammad Khan's unique and crucial knowledge was lost. This project was therefore an exercise of sustaining endangered knowledge through practice.

The initial aim for this project was to spend three years focusing on *talīm, riyaz* and translation, to come to know in the body a small cross-section of the repertoire of the *gharānā* and its performance style on sitar. I could then translate this knowledge to cello, as part of the process of learning to inhabit the *gharānā,* bringing in my whole practice. However, the objective of sustaining the practice of the *gharānā's* style and repertoire led to a tension between the process of learning a small amount of repertoire deeply in the body, and the desire to learn as much of the repertoire as possible over the duration of the project. The latter would require more assistance from enduring archival materials, which could undermine my body-centred argument.

It quickly became apparent that the more repertoire I learned, the closer I came to fulfilling the objective of identifying the ways of moving and playing, as well as other crucial elements that make up the particular embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. With each raga, *gat*, performance technique, and *toda* another part of the picture of the *gharānā*'s practices was unveiled. Recordings of class and transcriptions as visual representations of what I had learned played far more significant a role in learning and memorisation than initially intended. The process of archiving was, therefore, not solely in the body. The archive I have developed of musical knowledge passed on to me from Irfan Muhammad Khan comprises: the recordings of class; the transcriptions of compositions, *alāp* movements, and *todas*; and the performance technique, physical disposition and repertoire that I have managed to submit to muscle memory through practice.

Even if the *guru-shishya parampara* approach to learning, in which the student lives with the ustad for extended periods, was logistically possible, I would still not be able to archive the full extent of the knowledge of the *gharānā* I received through *talīm* in the body alone, in the time frame of the project. However, on sitar I have learned and refined through intensive practice: the fixed *alāp* movements and some of the *gharānā*'s unique repertoire of *gats* in over 60 ragas; set *todas* and approaches to developing improvisation as practised by Irfan Muhammad Khan and his ancestors;

and an aesthetic sensibility that values the realisation of the motion and mood of a raga as the primary objective in a performance.

Working with my ontological model, I successfully realised the objective of widening the scope of music analysis and archiving beyond fixed, material texts and recordings. My body-centred approach incorporated somatic exploration of the posture, gestural movement and physical disposition that underpins the performance technique in the style of the *gharānā*. This offered insights into aspects of the *gharānā*'s practices that have not previously been explored in Hindustani music literature. For example, while there has been writing about the *gharānā*'s sarod and sitar techniques (Miner, 1989; McNeil, 2004a), this project went into greater depth and was the first to discuss the importance of stillness as a guiding principle in the *gharānā*'s performance style.

The comparative analyses between the posture and disposition of Ilyas Khan and sitarists from other *gharānā*s of his generation, as well as between the Lucknow *gat* and similar-sounding *gat*s of other *gharānā*s, challenge the idea of there being only 'three main' instrumental *gharānā*s (Bagchee, 1998). No previous work has examined sitar posture of this *gharānā*. Similarly, the comparison between the Lucknow Jhinjhoti *drut gat* of our *gharānā* and the *tarāna* origin of the Jhinjhoti *gat*s from the other *gharānā*s was an original contribution to Hindustani music studies, which revealed the extent of aesthetic differences between the *gat*s.[1] These comparisons were not intended to diminish the musicianship or status of the exponents of other *gharānā*s. The intention was to offer a critique of the notion that gaining the most exposure in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries warrants being classed exclusively as a 'main *gharānā*'.

The historical narratives running through this project also challenge the 'three main instrumental *gharānā*s' narrative (Bagchee, 1998). Many of these narratives have been presented in more detail by Katz (2017) and Schofield (2023). However, there are some details from the *gharānā*'s oral history that have not been documented before. For example, the point that Niamatullah Khan was more widely accepted to have been the first to fashion the modern sarod by adapting the Afghan rabāb prior to the passing

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[1] This is important, because, anecdotally, I have been told by instrumentalists from other *gharānā*s that these *gat*s are from the same source.

of his grandson, Sakhawat Hussian Khan. After he died, musicians from other lineages, who were gaining a more prominent position in the developing international concert scene were able to claim this development to assist in establishing their profile as artists.

Another challenge to the three *gharānā*s narrative is the evident continuation of the thread of Dhrupad from the past practices of the Senias in the style and repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. Every contemporary *gharānā* is undoubtedly a continuation of the meshwork of practice weaved by the Senias out of Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic treatises and philosophies on music over centuries. This is why claims to authority and prestige in Hindustani music tend to relate to claims to inheritance of knowledge and practice from descendants of Tansen. However, the prevalence of residual elements of Dhrupad in the practice of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana reveals a particularly strong connection. Such a robust and identifiable thread in practice ratifies the oral histories, written accounts and genealogies that situate this lineage as a prominent continuity of the knowledge of Senia *rabābiyas* and *bīnkars*. Looking to the practice and embodied knowledge of the *gharānā* may well also provide further evidence to challenge dominant narratives that have delegitimised and marginalised the *gharānā*, such as the contested claims to the origin of the sarod. Further comparative interrogation of the extent to which, and why, elements of Dhrupad have, or have not, been retained in the styles of other instrumental *gharānā*s, which claim the adaptation of the Afghan rabāb to the sarod as part of their history, may be revealing.

The approach to improvisation in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana was demonstrated both in practice and through analysis of Irfan Muhammad Khan's performance of Raga Bilaskhani Todi. There was not a direct comparison with approaches to improvisation in other *gharānā*s, for which there is scope for further exploration. However, it was explained that the approaches to improvisation in the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana do not align with aesthetically fashionable contemporary approaches adopted by other styles. Adopting the improvisation style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana in performance therefore challenges dominant fashions and their determining socio-political forces. I will reach new audiences and familiarise more people with this particular style and its history

through future performances on both sitar and cello. Performing in the style of the *gharānā* will therefore potentially expand general understanding about Hindustani music, dispelling myths, providing further aesthetic nuance and wider context — especially in the UK, where the range of accessible styles and historical narratives is much narrower than in India. This will help the practice of the *gharānā* to survive.

The extent of repertoire and technique learned and recorded during this project will take years of subsequent *riyaz* to continue to refine and submit to muscle memory. Some immediate areas for development were identified in Appendix 3. Furthermore, I will continue to modify my transcriptions as I revisit recordings of class and revise the repertoire in continued *talīm* with Ustadji. My transcriptions are not intended as scores: to convey a finalised essence of the *gats* and *todas* of the *gharānā*'s repertoire. Throughout the process of *rīyaz* my transcriptions of repertoire were edited frequently as I developed my embodied understanding of the ways of playing that they represented. Changes included the shape or emphasis of a *meend*, or the rhythmic placement of a *swāra*.

Despite having learned a large number of ragas over the duration of this project, Irfan Muhammad Khan knows hundreds more, as well as *gats* I am yet to learn in ragas that we have already covered. Therefore, as the cyclical and dynamic process of learning to inhabit the style of the *gharānā* unfolds beyond the end of this project, I will continue to learn new ragas and compositions in *talīm*. A section of the *gharānā*'s repertoire that was not explored on any instrument were the Dhrupad compositions. Although I have researched Dhrupad in literature on Hindustani music and am familiar with the elements of Dhrupad that are present in the Tantra *baj*, I have not yet learned to perform in the style of Dhrupad.

The only musician currently in the process of archiving through practice the Dhrupad repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is Matyas Wolter. He learns and performs this repertoire on both surbahar and, like Yusuf Ali Khan of the Kalpi line, sitar. There is scope in future research to follow Nancy Lesh's example of taking advantage of the range and timbral qualities that make the cello suitable for Dhrupad and learning the *gharānā*'s Dhrupad repertoire on cello. This would also make for more varied concerts in the future. The performance that accompanies this thesis presents

the same framework for the exposition of a raga on two different instruments. A more varied, therefore potentially more captivating, overall experience for future audiences would be to present the *gharānā*'s Dhrupad repertoire on cello in one half and the *gat-toda* repertoire on sitar in the other half. This would also transmit a fuller understanding of the expanse of the *gharānā*'s repertoire.

Other dedicated and established students of Irfan Muhammad Khan, such as Matyas Wolter, and Arnab Chakrabarty are sustaining the style and repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and practice for posterity in different ways. However, their perspectives and contributions are not examined in this research. Further research exploring the future of the *gharānā* and its continuing threads would need to consider the direction in which these other artists have taken the knowledge they have learned from Irfan Muhammad Khan. In this thesis my progression from an intermediate student to a performer of the style has been presented. However, examining the ways in which these artists have modified their playing styles and performing bodies since coming into the fold of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana would undoubtedly reveal new perspectives on practice.

6.3 Revelations about the *gharānā* from exploring the process of translation

Niamatullah Khan's fashioning of the first sarod in the nineteenth century to accommodate his rabāb technique in the style of the Senias was the first notable instance in the practice of the *gharānā* of reconfiguring an instrumental mode to facilitate translation. Expressing the *gharānā*'s repertoire through different instrumental modes in different ways has since been a feature of the *gharānā*'s practice, evidenced by: Kaukab's fashioning of the sarod banjo; Umar Khan's recordings on both the sarod and surbahar; and Irfan Muhammad Khan being able to teach the body knowledge of his uncle's sitar playing despite being principally a sarod player. In light of this, translating what I have learned on sitar to cello was not only part of the process of learning to inhabit the tradition by bringing my cello practice into the fold of the *gharānā*. Translating to cello was also an original way to continue a creative process of multimodal translation that resides very much within the tradition of the *gharānā*.

Through the course of the project, it became apparent that it was not a linear translation taking place, from sarod playing, to sitar playing, to cello playing. The process of translation from sitar to cello possibly led to more detailed exploration of playing in the style of the *gharānā* than if I had only focussed on sitar playing. As it became apparent that cello playing in the style of the *gharānā* required a hybrid of sitar and sarod technique, translating to cello allowed me to inhabit certain sarod elements of the *gharānā* style that I would not be able to adopt on sitar. The performance that accompanies this thesis (see Appendix 3) demonstrates the process of calling on the body to transmit the knowledge of the *gharānā* through the modes of sitar and cello playing in real time.

Despite being an experienced cellist, my newly adopted mode of cello playing that has developed as a result of this research requires more refinement. The left-hand technique of playing almost exclusively with two fingers presents challenges with precise intonation, which have not yet been fully overcome. The process of translating the right-hand *bols* of the *gats* was considerably easier than translating other right-hand techniques such as *jhalla* techniques. In retrospect, this was not surprising, considering the process of translating *bols* was very similar to adjusting bowing directions in orchestral cello parts to maintain the correct emphasis of musical phrases — something I had learned to do over many years. However, getting my bowing hand used to emulating *jhalla* strokes, especially strokes inspired by sarod playing, with which I was relatively unfamiliar before studying with Irfan Muhammad Khan, was a new sensation. Therefore, as my practice develops beyond this project, the left-hand and right-hand cello techniques that I have devised will continue to be refined.

While significant changes to my mode of cello playing were made, the mechanical process of invention that led to Niamatullah Khan's fashioning of the sarod and the invention of the Kaukab banjo was not explored in this project. No mechanical cello modifications besides string tunings took place. I had considered adding a steel plate to the fingerboard to see if this changed the timbre of the sound, but I would not wish to do that on an instrument as old and fragile as my 1890s cello. For the same reason, I did not attach sympathetic strings to the instrument. So, unfortunately the resonance of awakened *shruti*s hanging in the air after a melodic movement has passed is not a

timbre that currently features in my cello playing. A steel plate attached to the fingerboard and the addition of sympathetic strings are modifications worth experimenting with in future work, on a more robust and less sentimentally precious cello.

In translating the repertoire, aesthetic values and approaches to improvisation of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana to cello, the same embodied knowledge is presented in a new context. This challenges notions that the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is not contemporary, or unable to accommodate innovation, which are implicit in claims that the *gharānā*'s style simply went out of fashion. The process of translating to cello that I have learned on sitar, with Irfan Muhammad Khan's permission, proves that there is plenty of scope to engage creatively with the embodied knowledge of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana. That is, without disrupting the specific details and approaches, which set it apart from other styles and which connect it to the masters of the past.

This project was the first to adopt somatic approaches, attending to sensation, effort and action in the body, to examine the playing style of a *gharānā* on one instrument embedded in the Hindustani music tradition, and then to inform the playing style on an instrument from outside the tradition. The influence of somatic perspectives enabled me to remain focussed in practice and analysis on the constant variable between the two instrumental modes of sitar playing and cello playing — my body. At the stage of translation, my attention was primarily directed towards the transference of kinetic and mechanical knowledge. These were the elements that changed most significantly between the modes of sitar and cello playing. The temporal, linguistic, social and spatial elements of the style and tradition did not significantly change in my body, regardless of whether I was playing cello or sitar.

There were some changes in the sounding outcomes between the two instrumental modes, which included: the register in which I played, as my main octave on the cello was an octave lower; the timbre of the instruments; the articulation resulting from bowing instead of striking; and the way *swāras* sound as they are stopped, owing to the cello being fretless and sitar being fretted. The axes across which melodic motion is expressed changed between sitar and cello, but the shapes of melodic movements

stayed mostly the same. My body-centred approach to translation has therefore assisted to answer the question of what is retained and what changes when the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana is expressed through a new instrumental mode. However, far from being a new discovery, when situated in the historical context of the *gharānā*, my body-centred approach should be considered a continuation of Niamatullah Khan's somatic awareness. When he fashioned the sarod to be able to accommodate the musical knowledge of Basat Khan and the other Senias with his rabāb technique, he demonstrated that only certain kinetic and mechanical elements of his existing practice needed to be adjusted. The rest was in the body.

6.4 Learning to inhabit

The most significant critical intervention of this project to the field of music studies is my methodology, learning to inhabit. This method for practice-led research moves beyond Baily's (2001) learning to perform, which involves a linear process of acquiring musical knowledge, wherein a researcher learns about a tradition, then performs a representation of it, and finally draws conclusions about the tradition. Instead, with learning to inhabit, performance is presented as part of an iterative and dynamic cycle of gradually becoming an exponent through receiving ongoing tuition, rehearsal, performance, and reflexive analysis of embodied musical knowledge.

A notable difference between this process and Baily's method is that learning to inhabit includes as key variables: the past and present entanglements between the experience and positionality of the researcher's body; and the knowledge, practices and bodies of other practitioners of the tradition. These entanglements are explored during each of the stages of the cycle, through reflexive positioning and somatic attunement — attending to sensation in the body — in real time. They are also examined retrospectively, during archival research and ethnographic analysis — which then goes on to influence the other iterative stages of the cycle.

The importance of learning to inhabit as a methodology to music studies lies in its applicability to both ethnomusicological research and creative performance practice. In fact, it removes the dividing line between these disciplines. Learning to inhabit also demands of researchers a much longer-term commitment to the art form. Inhabiting occurs through forming long term relationships, requiring commitment to continued

practice, participation, creative exploration, and support of the tradition. It is a method that places the researcher in service of the tradition, rather than in a position to define it from the outside.

The diagram below (Figure 6.1) is a more general version of Figure 3.2, showing how learning to inhabit could be adopted in other research practices.
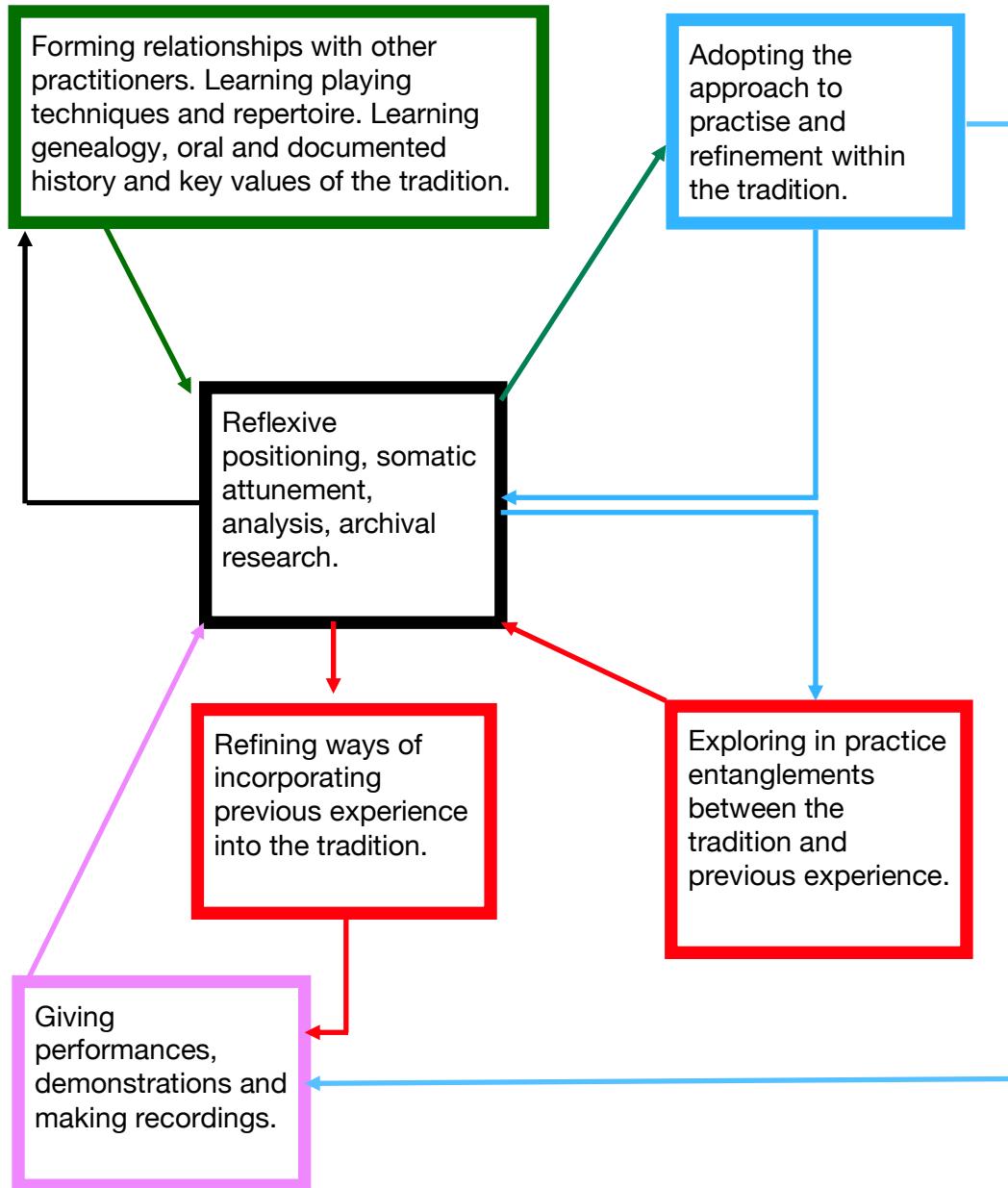
Figure 6.1 diagram illustrating the process of learning to inhabit as a general method.

My critique of Baily's (2001) learning to perform may appear contradictory to my suggestions that much of the impact of this research will be as a result of public performances and that only in the moment of performance does the content of this thesis come together. However, my argument for reframing learning to perform as learning to inhabit is not about abandoning or discouraging performance. It is about acknowledging that performing is just one process within a larger process of developing a way of musically being, which is constantly evolving. Learning to perform suggests performance is an object or product created at the end. Learning to inhabit

is cyclical and approaches performance as a way of sharing the knowledge as it is manifested in the body.

The body in moments of performance is, arguably, under-explored in this project because the focus has been the earlier stages of the cycle of learning to inhabit, in order to allow in-depth technique and knowledge of the *gharānā* to be embodied and confidently transmitted. Future practice-based research will employ a body-centred approach for critically exploring the concept of learning to inhabit in performance. More attention could be directed to sensing motion in relation to space and the ways my performing body transmits the knowledge of the *gharānā* to other bodies. These studies of performances would then inform further analysis, *talīm* and *riyaz*.

Multi-modal translation has been repurposed in the context of learning to inhabit a musical tradition. The purpose has not merely been to extract and transfer knowledge and meaning from one culture to another, making the unknown knowable to external onlookers. Translation has instead been approached as a way of bringing experience of the past into dialogue with the experience of the present when learning a specific music tradition. It has therefore been a process enabling me to dwell and participate, as a body, effectively and honestly in a specific physical and imaginary space, governed by specific socio-aesthetic principles.

This project offers a framework for practice-led and practice-based music research in other contexts, where the objective is not only to inhabit a specific practice but to be able to express it through different modes. The point at which this process was studied in my research was when I consciously decided to bring the cello into the fold of the *gharānā*. However, prior to this, my mode of cello playing had already been affected by psychophysical changes resulting from being a sitar student. There is scope for other practitioners to examine what happens to their existing practices at this earlier stage, after commencing training of the body on another instrument in another tradition. By studying translation in this way, positionality and past experience become variables that assist the learning practitioner to form dialogic relationships with other practitioners, and embodied understanding of the knowledge of the tradition. It is often at the points of tension or resonance resulting from paths converging where rich understanding, meaning and connection are found.

Going through the process of learning to inhabit the style of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana to contribute to the sustaining of its determining knowledge and techniques in my own performance practice has also helped to address a tension relating to being in the world. I am a descendant of performers who travelled with their practice nomadically for generations and inhabited many social and geographic spaces, but I am also a beneficiary of a society which profited from violently inhabiting space through colonisation. This leads to a perceived tension between, firstly a firmly held belief that all people should be free to move and inhabit the world as they need, and secondly an unwavering support for decolonisation and land back movements. This tension is resolved by Ingold's perspective, firstly, of dwelling, and secondly, of wayfaring — that is 'being along paths', which he contends is a 'fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth' (2011, p. 12). Ingold's perspective inspired calling my research method learning to inhabit.

Forming meaningful ways of being through connecting action-oriented paths offers an alternative way of relating to knowledge and practice that avoids representing essentialised notions of culture in performance. In the same way, moving through and inhabiting space as a series of dialogic interactions and connections counters essentialised notions of existing within nation-states, which simultaneously restrict nomadic movement across boundaries and deny space for indigenous dwelling.

The interrelation between the particularity of learning to inhabit the practices of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana and the universal experience of ways of being determined by wayfaring is illustrated by an experience following my first period of study with Irfan Muhammad Khan, prior to this project, in 2020. Because of the claims that Romani people, from whom my father's family are descended, originate from Rajasthan, I went to spend some time there. I was expecting to feel a deep sense of belonging resulting from a romanticised view of this geographic location being the starting point for some of my ancestors over a thousand years ago. However, apart from some uncanny similarities between designs of wagons and carts in Jodhpur and from photos of my family's wagons, I felt very much like a visitor.

But then, when other musicians saw me carrying my instrument case, we exchanged waves and nods in passing, which implied shared ways of being in the world. It was when interacting with musicians that I felt a deep sense of belonging. This feeling is in part because of my family's hereditary occupation of performing resonating with other groups of hereditary performers. However, it is as much, if not more, because of the shared experience of relating to the world through inhabiting musical traditions. From these interactions I understood that, while people's origins play an important role in life choices and affinities, it is through the material experience of shared practice — what we do and with whom — that determines our sense of inhabiting the world.

From my research I have had the opportunity to make what I do become entangled with the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana, a particular trajectory within the meshwork of the tradition of Hindustani music. I have re-fashioned my practice as a new link in the chain of transmission of musical knowledge (Neuman, 2012; Rahaim, 2012; Katz, 2017), elongating it a step further and increasing potential for subsequent connections. Only with the efforts of my *gurubhais* and I, training our paramparic bodies (Rahaim, 2012), archiving the knowledge of our *ustad*, Irfan Muhammad Khan, and his ancestors through practice, will the various trajectories of the chain of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana continue for another generation.

Glossary

Abhog a section of the *alāp* performance, or a Dhrupad composition.

Acha a term of acknowledgement.

Achal immovable (relating to a *swāra*).

Alāp opening solo section of a performance, in which the key movements of the raga are presented.

Andolan a slow oscillating *meend.*

Ang style.

Antarā the second section of an *alāp* or the complimentary section in a composition.

Asthai opening section of the *alāp* or the repeating primary section of the composition.

Bahlawa ki tān a melodic movement which 'plays with' the raga.

Baj style.

Bandishes compositions based on songs in Dhrupad and Khayal.

Barābar lay single speed tempo.

Bhava an artist's inner emotion.

Bīnkar a Senia musician who played the veena.

Bol pattern of articulation, represented in speech. *Bol* literally translates as speak.

Buddhi rational mind.

Chakradhar a repeated *tān* or *toda* that lands on the *sam.*

Chalan the movement of the raga.

Chaugun 4 x stroke speed.

Chik a strike of the chikārī string.

Chikārī the high-pitched percussive strings on instruments sitar, sarod, veena, etc.

Cittam consciousness, comprising 'awareness, perception, or the attunement/direction of one's attention-in-action' (Zarrilli, 2011, p. 254).

Dhrupad The oldest style of Hindustani music, considered to be generally slower and more austere, with a longer form, with both the *alāp* and the composition comprising four sections or stanzas respectively: asthai, antarā, sanchārī and abhog.

Dogun 2 x stroke speed.

Drut gat fast composition.

Gamelan an Indonesian musical tradition.

Gamak guttural, oscillating ornamentation of a *swāra.*

Gat instrumental composition.

Gat-toda a term to describe the instrumental style, which comprises *gats* (rather than *bandishes*) and improvised *todas*.

Gender wayang Balinese *gamelan* style.

Gharānā a musical lineage, which relates to the concept of a school of practice, or a musical house. *Gharānās* are sustained by hereditary lines or lines of transmission to students.

Gitkiri a left-hand sitar technique where, in a single stroke, the index finger moves over multiple pardas, before landing on the destination *swāra*.

Glissando a straight slide from one pitch to another, without a great deal of attention to the other pitches awakened on the way.

Guru master teacher.

Guru-shishya parampara the process through which the student gradually absorbs the knowledge of the teacher through living and practising in close proximity.

Gurubhai a term that acknowledges the shared, sibling-like experience of fellow students of the same master teacher.

Hudak a type of ornament usually performed in a Dhrupad performance.

Jawa a sarod plectrum.

Jawari the flat surface bridge of sitars, tanpuras and veenas, on which the strings rest and buzz.

Jhalla the fast percussive section of an instrumental performance.

Jod the pulsing solo section that follows the *alāp.*

Jora the *Sa* string on the sitar.

Kalāwant hereditary Dhrupad musicians, who usually either played the veena or the Seni rabāb.

Kampan a small, held oscillation of a single *swāra.*

Kan briefly sounding a *swāra* or *swāras,* before gliding to land on another for a longer duration.

Khali the empty 'wave' beat of a *tāl* cylce

Khalifa chief

Kharaj in the context of sitar, the lowest string, which is often hooked out of the way, unless being played during *alāp*.

Kharaj pancham a type of sitar that has the low Sa and Pa strings, made by Yusuf Ali Khan, long before it became associated with Ravi Shankar.

Kharaj saptak the low octave

Khatka gliding into a *swāra* but the glide starts instantly, so there is no impression of a starting *swāra* sounding before the main *swāra* is landed upon.

Komal flattened pitch.

Krintan a technique in which, when a *swāra* stopped by the left-middle finger is struck, the left-middle finger then plucks the string to sound the *swāra* below, which is stopped by the index finger.

Kulfi ice cream.

Kya baat hai a term conveying appreciation to a musician, loosely meaning 'how beautiful was that'.

Lahak a type of gamak style ornament.

Lay musical timing.

Laykarī playing with the sense of musical timing, often employing some kind of metric modulation.

Madhya lay gat medium tempo composition.

Mana consciousness in the body.

Matra equivalent to a beat, or a a measure of time.

Meend often used as a general term for focussed gliding through notes, but specifically, it is used to describe a glide through *swāra*s in which each *swāra* that is sounded is equally spaced apart in time.

Mirasī historically low status hereditary musician and entertainer.

Mizrab sitar pick.

Mohra a punctuation phrase in the *alāp*, like a musical paragraph marker.

Mukra the portion of the asthai that signals the return of the composition.

Murki a 'turn' around a principal tone (Slawek, 1987, p.40).

Nawāb a nobleman, patron, or person of high status.

Pakad a catchphrase of a raga.

Palta a *riyaz* exercise.

Pān a mixture comprising betel nut and other ingredients, such as herbs, spices and tobacco.

Pancham the fifth *swāra* (*Pa*).

Paramparic a state of having absorbed knowledge from a guru or ustad.

Parda node, or fixed point on a scale. In relation to sitar it is equivalent to a fret.

Pranām offering respectful gratitude.

Prakrit unchanged, or immovable.

Prana breath, or 'wind' that gives power to the body.

Rabābiyas Dhrupad musicians who played the Seni rabāb.

Rasa emotional essence that is performed and received.

Riyaz intensive practise.

Sam the first beat of the *tāl* cycle.

Sama 'spiritual audition' (Kapchan 2009, p. 67).

Sañcārī/ Sanchārī a section of the *alāp* performance, or a Dhrupad composition.

Sapāt stepwise.

Sapāt tān stepwise melodic run.

Saptak octave.

Sargam the system of *swāra*s: *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni (Śa)*

Sarodiya sarod player.

Sawal jawab call and response between melody instrument and tabla.

Senia a descendent of Tansen.

Senia kalawant a descendent Dhrupad musician of Tansen.

Shruti the smallest division of the *saptak* and the harmonic tones that are awakened from melodic movements.

Shudh equivalent to natural pitch, rather than sharpened or flattened.

Swarā equivalent to note.

Tāl rhythmic cycle.

Talīm intensive, committed tuition from a knowledgeable master of the tradition.

Tān melodic movement.

Tantra baj instrumental style of Hindustani music.

Tarabs sympathetic strings.

Tarānā a type of vocal composition, using vocalised sounds, but not words with meaning.

Thāt useful for grouping ragas, it refers to placement of the pardas, or one of ten delineations of *swāra*s as 'parent ragas': Asaveri, Bilawal, Bhairavi, Bhairav, Kafi, Khamaj, Marwa, Purbi, Todi, Kalyan.

Thumri gat light classical form composition.

Tigun 3 x stroke speed.

Tīhai a concluding pattern that repeats three times.

Tivra sharpened pitch.

Toda improvised pattern comprising melodic and rhythmic ideas.

Upaj improvisation.

Ustad master teacher.

Uttarang occupies the upper register.

Vikrit changeable (relating to *swāra*).

Vilambit gat slow composition.

Vistāra arythmic improvised movements based on *alāp* phrases.

Wah equivalent to 'bravo'.

Zamindar governor of land during the Mughal period.

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Appendix 1 Approach to Notation

Melodic motion in text

- There are several different approaches to *sargam* notation, writing the tuning of *swāra*s (notes) of a raga, which are, from the root to the seventh degree: *Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha* and *Ni*.

- When referring to *swāra* as a concept or to describe a degree in the raga, if it is irrelevant whether it is *shudh* (natural), *komal* (flattened), or *tivra* (sharpened), the *swāra* will be capitalised: *Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni*.

- When it is relevant to indicate whether a *swāra* is *shudh, komal, or tivra*, my approach uses upper and lower cases:

    - because they are always *shudh*, SA and PA will always be upper case.

    - *Re, Ga, Dha and Ni* can either be *shudh* or *komal*. When they are *shudh* they are upper case: *RE, GA, DHA, NI*. When they are *komal*, they are lower case: *re, ga, dha, ni*.

    - *Ma* can either be *shudh* or *tivra*; when it is *shudh*, it is lower case: *ma*; when it is *tivra*, it is upper case: *MA.*

    - Solely for the purpose of illustration, a chromatic scale represented in this way would therefore look like this: SA re RE ga GA ma MA PA dha DHA ni NI ṠA.

    - To indicate a *swāra* in the *saptak* (octave) above, a dot is placed above: *ṠA ṙe ṘE ġa ĠA ṁa ṀA ṖA*. To indicate a *swāra* in the *saptak* (octave) below, a dot is placed below: *ṆI ṇi ḌHA ḍha ṖA ṂA ṃa ĠA gạ ṚE ṛe ṢA*.

    - For legibility when presenting melodic movements in text, the vowels are removed: *S R G m P D N Ṡ*.

    - A strike of the *chikari* strings is indicated with an apostrophe, so *SA-chik-chik-chik* would be S ' ' '.

Indicating rhythm

- Using spatial placement of letters to indicate rhythm is a widely adopted practice in Hindustani music.

- A single letter separated by a space indicates a single speed stroke: *S R g R S '*
  Ḍ ṇ S ' ' '.

- Two letters or apostrophes together indicates a double speed stroke: *SS RR gg*
  RR S' '' S' ''.

- A dash indicates a silence that lasts a full *matra* (beat): *S R gg R S – Ḍ ṇ R – – –*.

- A hyphen indicates a silence that lasts half a *matra*: *G mm GG PP m mg -g R S –*
  – R m g R S.

- Where it is useful to see groupings of beats in a *tāl* cycle I use lines. In this example
  the lines indicate a 16-beat cycle divided into 2 groups of 8 *matras:* ‖: *D n | S R gg*
  R S ṇḍ Ṗ Ḍ | Ṇ SS Ṇ S – S :‖.

- In text examples the *sam* (the first beat of the cycle) is marked in bold.

- In my handwritten notation, explained below, I indicate the *sam* with an 'x' over
  the letter and I indicate the *khali* (the 'empty' *matra*, which in *tīntāl* is the 9th *matra*)
  with an 'o' above the letter.

- I occasionally borrow the repeat sign from staff notation: ':‖'. This is an indication
  to return to the beginning of the notated melody, or a previous part of it, indicated
  by the reverse: '‖:'.

Three-line notation to accommodate the vertical and horizontal axes

Allyn Miner (1989) criticises Stephen Slawek (1987) for using Western staff notation,
which would not be understood by the majority of sitar players in the world, and
which poses a logistical limitation. Using flat, natural and sharp symbols next to
notes, or key signatures is fine for representing sounding pitches to those who can
comprehend the notation system, but when dealing with the melodic nuances of a
raga, staff notation obscures important aspects. *Sa*, the root note, the pitch of the
drone from which melodic motion emanates, is usually constant in raga-based
music. The exact tuning of *Sa*, in relation to which all the other *swāra*s are tuned,
depends on the preference of the individual musician and the mechanical
requirements of their instrument or voice. Indicating exact pitches according to
Western staff notation does not account for the fact that different performers will
perceive the same melodic movements from different root notes. What is more
important in raga-based music is the position of the melodic step in relation to *Sa*.

The system of *sargam* is far more adept at conveying this. My approach to notation is therefore predominantly informed by *sargam* notation. It is intended to be a descriptive notation that can be read by those familiar with *sargam* scripted with Latin lettering.

There is some scope for instructing the body in Western staff notation. For example, there are textural and timbral instructions, as well as instrument-specific symbols that indicate particular techniques and where on the instrument to play certain pitches. However, there is no scope to indicate whether melodic motion is along the vertical or horizontal axis. Furthermore, neither *sargam* nor Western staff notation alone, while effective for indicating the placement of *swāra*s, are sufficient for indicating the melodic intricacies of *meend* and *gamaka*. This is why Ramesh Vinayakam (Woodruff, 2016) devised a three-line system to indicate the nuances of *gamaka* in Carnatic music. In order to make descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) notation of melodic motion on sitar, for which I have adopted a three-line template manuscript paper which is readily available, usually intended for teaching handwriting, with its two solid lines and single dotted line in the middle.

- Partly influenced by staff notation, each set of three lines is equivalent to a staff and the vertical lines in the *gāt*s function in a similar way to barlines, indicating sub-groupings of *matra*s in a cycle (Figures A1.1)
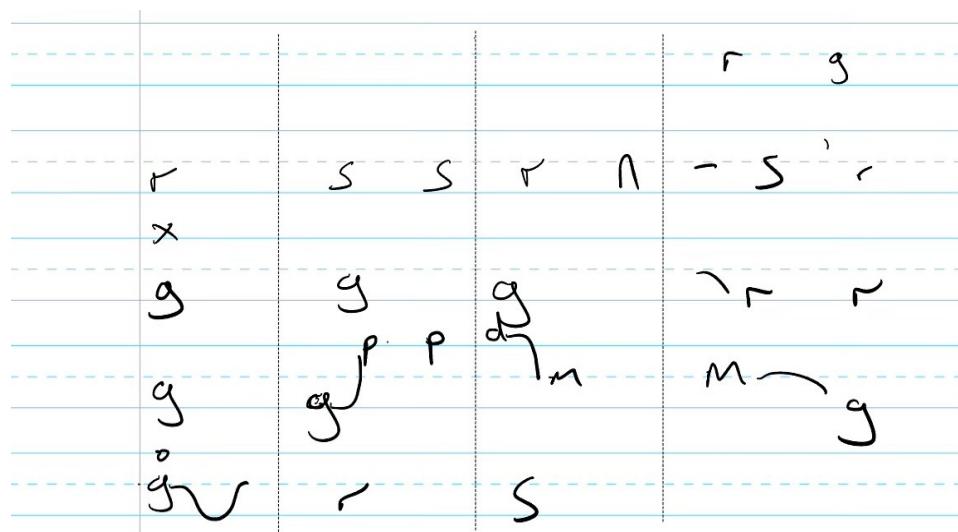

Figure A1.1. *asthai* of Bilaskhani Todi *vilambit gāt* in Tīntāl

- I also adopt symbols from staff notation in addition to those already mentioned, such as: slurs to indicate connecting notes in a single stroke (Figure A1.2 phrase 3); brackets to indicate the division of a *matra* into more than 2 strokes (Figure A1.3); I use slanted lines to indicate fast strokes, in the same way they are used to indicate subdivisions of the beat and *tremolos* in Western staff notation (Figure A1.4); a line through a *sargam* letter with a slur, similar to the way a grace note is notated in staff notation, to indicate a hammered-on *swāra*. *Krintans* follow the same notation as hammered-on *swāras*, but with 'Kr' written above them. Both a hammered-on *swāra* and a *krintan* can be seen in the phrase numbered '6' in Figure A1.2.
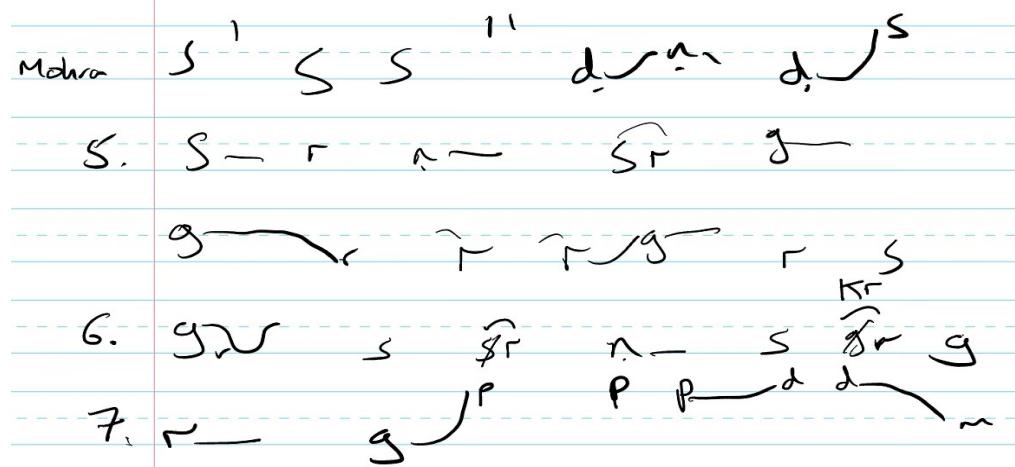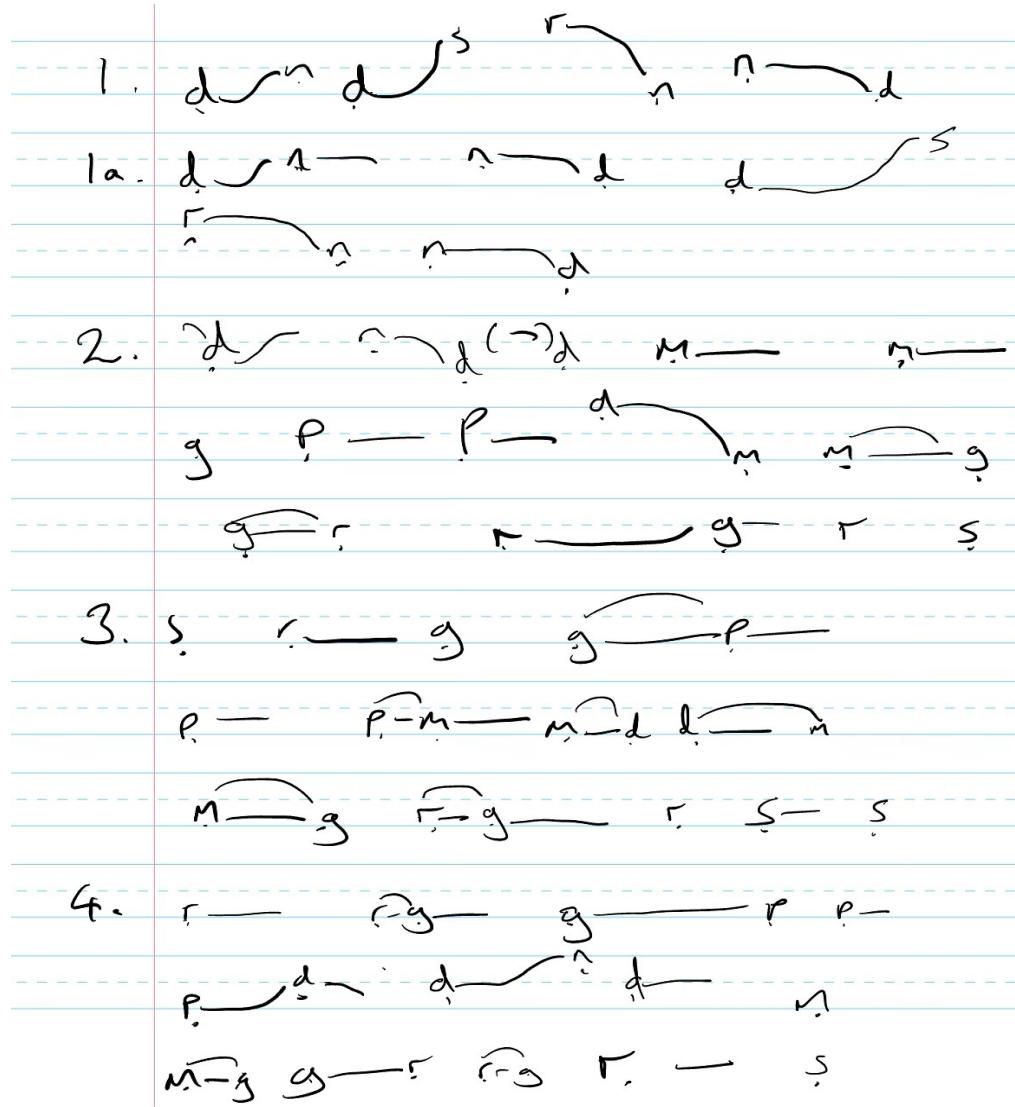
Figure A1.2. Opening movements of Bilaskhani Todi *alāp* using three-line notation. The phrases are numbered to assist in memorising them.
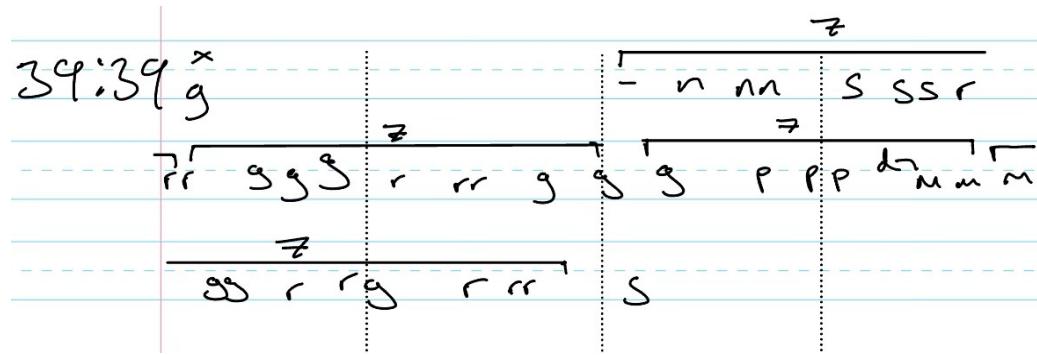
Figure A1.3. Transcription of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan's 2020 performance of Bilaskhani Todi at 43:06 (Lucknow Shahjahnpur Gharānā, 2020a) illustrating use of brackets to indicate approximate rhythmic groupings.
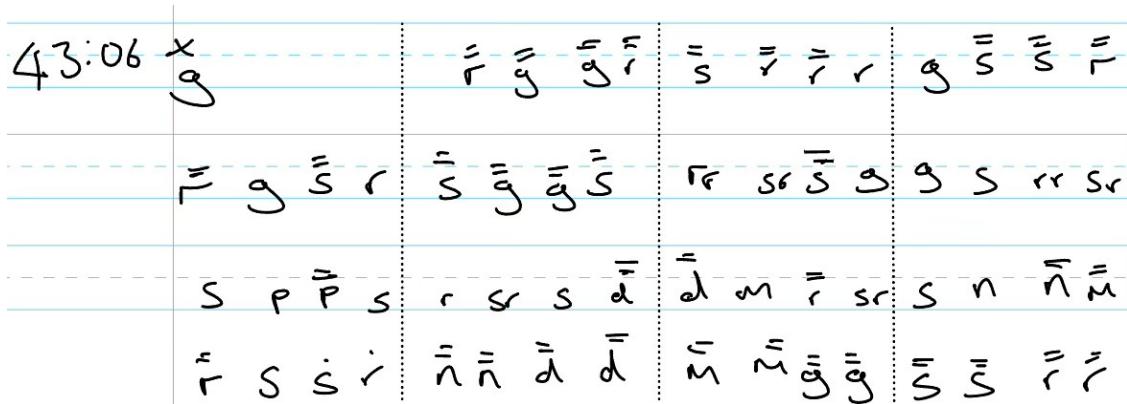

Figure A1.4. Transcription of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan's 2020 performance of Bilaskhani Todi at 43:06 (Lucknow Shahjahnpur Gharānā, 2020) illustrating lines that indicate *dir* strokes.

- A notable difference between Vinayakam's *Gamaka Box* (Woodruff, 2016) and my system of notation is that the G*amaka Box* places the *swāra* from which a *gamak* begins underneath the box and uses lines, curves and other symbols to indicate the shape and articulation of the *gamak* (Figure A1.5). I, on the other hand, place *swāra*s and curved lines on the three lines of manuscript paper. This enables a visual representation of melodic motion along the vertical axis of pulling *meend* and *gamaka*, as well as motion along the horizontal axis of stopping the fingers along the string. This is illustrated in A1.2 and A1.3 above.
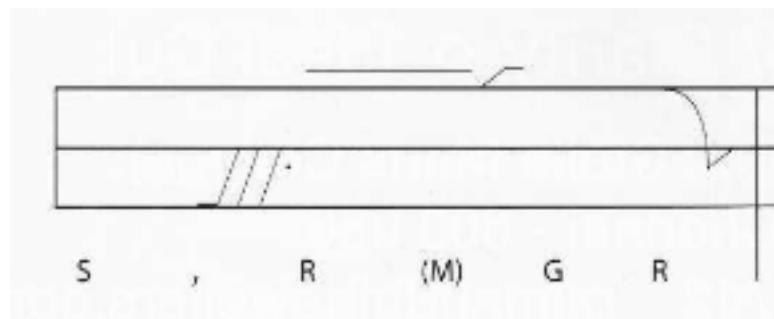

Figure A1.5 a screenshot of Gamaka Box notation (Woodruff, 2016, p. 52)

- In my notation the bottom line of each three-line 'staff' indicates the starting *swāra* of the *parda* on which the finger is placed. The bottom line therefore indicates horizontal motion. The lines above the bottom line indicate vertical motion. The middle line indicates the next *swāra* above, the top line the *swāra* above that. I then use the spaces above the line to indicate any further *swāras*, but on sitar *meends* tend only to go as far as four *swāras*.

- The handwritten *swāras* follow the same upper- and lower-case system as that which I use in text, described above, with one exception: *M* and *m*. My handwriting is not neat enough to indicate clearly a difference between an upper- and lower-case *m*. For the lower case, *shudh ma* I add a small line under the first stalk. This can be seen on the fourth *matra* of the *gāt* in Kedar, which uses both *shudh ma* and *tivra MA,* in Figure A1.6.
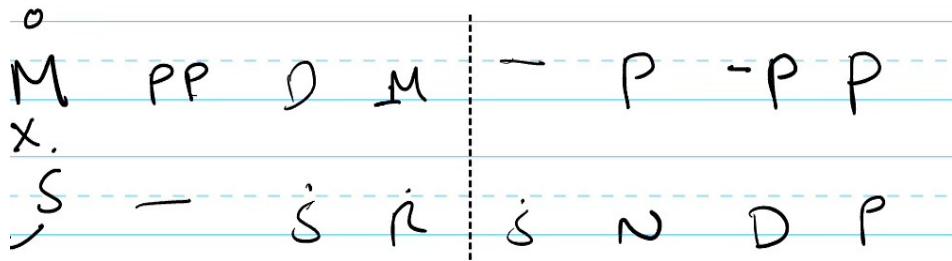
Figure A1.6. Kedar *drut gāt* in Tīntāl

- I draw curved lines on these manuscript lines to indicate the shape of the motion from one *swāra* to the next. These can be seen in the notated *alāp* of Figure A1.3. The direction a line may travel may not be direct, as often it will indicate oscillations between and through *shrutis* and *swāras*. Many of the shapes of these curves share qualities with the shapes used in *Gamaka Box* notation. This is because there are many common ways of moving through melody shared between Hindustani music styles and Carnatic music styles. Visual representations of these are inevitably similar.

- It may also be the case that a certain melodic gesture will involve a *meend* to just above or below the next *swāra*, in which case the drawn line will sit just above or below the manuscript line. When I place a letter of a *swāra* on a line or space above the bottom line, this indicates that the *swāra* is played by pulling the string from the *parda* indicated on the bottom line, but there is no sounding of the bend. The *swāra* is to be articulated with no sounding *meend*. This is illustrated in Figure A1.7, in the *n d* movement 3 *matra*s before the *sam* (x) and the *g m* movement 3 *matra*s after the *sam*.
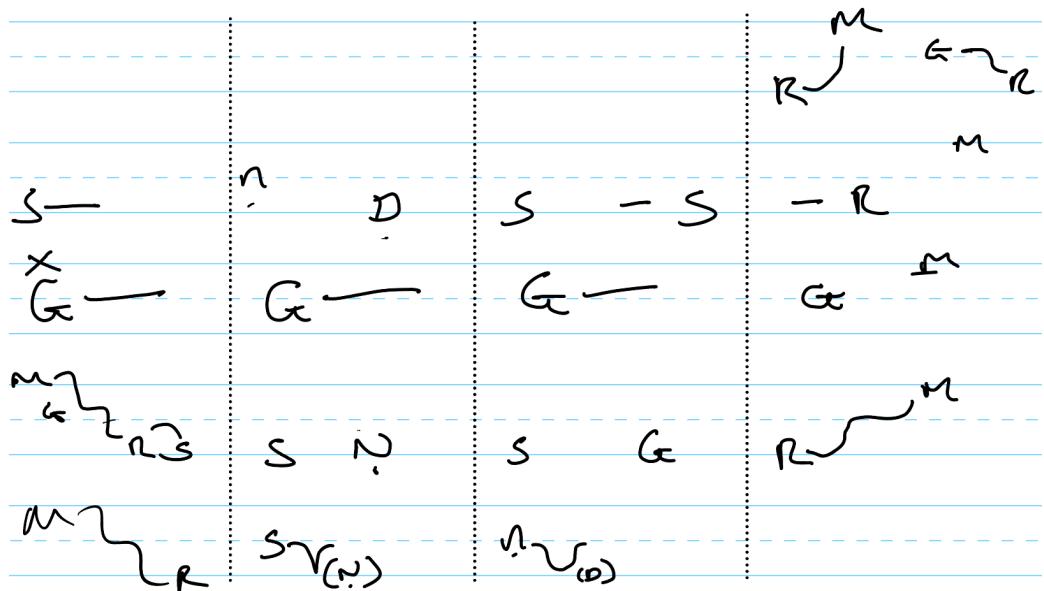
Figure A1.7 Raga Jhinjhoti *vilambit gāt*.

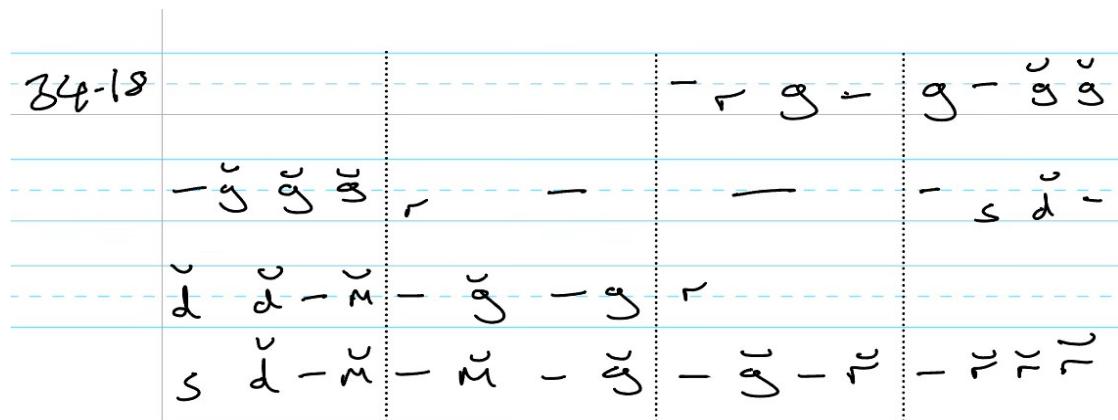- *Gamaka* are indicated with a semicircle above (Widdess, 2003) (Figure A1.8).

Figure A1.8. transcription of Ustad Irfan Muhammad Khan's 2020 performance of Bilaskhani Todi at 34:18 (Lucknow Shahjahanpur Gharana Archive, 2020a) illustrating *gamaka*.

- *Andolan* and *kampan* are indicated with a wiggly line (Figures A1.3 and A1.4).

Figure A1.9. *kampan* on *ni.*
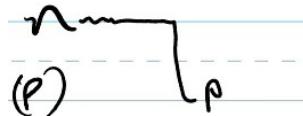

Figure A1.10. *andolan* from *ma* to *ga.*

- Brackets around a *swāra* (Figure A1.9) indicate either that it is optional or to clarify the *swāra* from which a *meend* is being pulled.

- Horizontal lines connecting *swāra*s indicates sliding the finger to the next *parda* (Figure A1.11).

Figure A1.11 sliding the finger from the *ma* parda in the lower saptak down from *ma* to *ga*.

Appendix 2 Intention in the body and sensing posture

<u>Right hand</u>

My thumb should feel flat, resting on the side of the neck, positioned after the final *parda*, ideally upon the line where the neck of the instrument and the scratch plate meet.

At slower speeds, I should feel my fourth fingertip often making contact with my palm as my hand closes.

I need to think of my hand as a whole unit and keep fingers together as much as possible. When they start to separate, it can be a sign of tension in the hand. I also need to be mindful of the second, third and fourth fingers, which need to be elevated slightly behind the tip of my index finger. This elevation prevents them from catching the strings.

My thumb should remain touching the neck as much as possible. Some bounce is inevitable at higher speeds but should be minimised. Holding it there should not be tense, but using strength to keep it in place should give some purchase, allowing the fingers to feel softer and more relaxed as they open and close. This will make playing at speed more consistent.

I should feel soft curvature in my wrist, as the back of my hand pivots slightly outwards in the direction of the *jawari*. To keep the arm in the right place, I should feel the decoration of the sitar gourd on the side of my forearm, the bone of my arm just making contact with the wood. My wrist should be clear of the edge of the sitar.

<u>General posture</u>

I need to be constantly aware of my shoulders, if they start to rise, it is a sign of tension. To remedy this, I need to breathe into my stomach, make sure my spine is strong and aligned — correct any slouching — and allow the shoulders drop.

The view of the sitar neck should rest on the top side of the neck, the *tarab* pegs, and the tips of the *parda*s. I should feel like they are at a distance. If the *tarab*s feel close

in my view, then that is a sign I am slouching and I need to sit up, breath and realign my spine.

The top *ma parda* should be just below my right kneecap, as the sitar crosses my thigh and shin at a slight diagonal.

The sitar should feel slightly tilted forwards, resting in the inner sole of the foot. Allowing the neck to sit back and appear 'straight' will mean it is actually tilted back, which will make it more likely to lose control of the instrument and the right hand. The slight forward tilt will enable faster, stronger, clearer strokes.

My left foot should be relaxed, toes pointing in the direction of my elbow, the top of the foot should have contact with the ground. If the toes flex so they are pointing forwards I will get tension in my right hand.

Old right foot position

My right leg crossed my left knee clear of the kneecap. My ankle was beyond my left thigh. I felt contact between my right lower leg, well above the ankle, and my left thigh, about a 3rd of the way up. This allowed my fifth toe, all the way until my foot starts to narrow, to rest on the ground. I am slightly hyper mobile, meaning I risk pushing my right knee too far rightwards, which can strain my knees, cause dead legs, and make my right arm go wide.

New right foot position

My right leg crosses my left knee, with the back of the shin touching the left kneecap, about a hands width from the ankle. I should feel the whole side of my right foot resting on the ground.

I should feel 3 points of contact with the ground, my right foot, my left foot, and my left thigh and buttock. I should feel the right foot helping to tilt me upright, making it easier to stop myself leaning forwards. My chest should therefore be open, shoulders back. I will naturally lean forward as I'm playing, but this position will help me to rock myself back to upright.

Appendix 3 Reflections after the recital, 12 May 2025

The recordings of the recital (Videos A.3.1 and A.3.2, below) feature excerpts rather than the full-length performances because they serve a wider promotional purpose, highlighting the most successful sections of the performances. They are publicly available, as an indicator of my practice to potential employers and audiences, and will be used to secure future performance opportunities. The videos are short enough to meet the demands of the current attention economy. Key areas for development, and aspects of the performance I felt did not work well are discussed below.

Video A.3.1. Excerpts from first half of recital, Raga Puriya Dhanashri on sitar: https://youtu.be/lM4DB9FN8BY

Video A.3.2. Excerpts from second half of recital, Raga Jaijawanti on cello: https://youtu.be/H3bJ32DkDLs

<u>Before the performance</u>

We had been notified that doors were open and we had half an hour until we were to go on. I was sitting in the dressing room at Burdall's Yard, the recital venue. Sitting next to me was my accompanist for the evening, the internationally acclaimed tabla maestro, Ustad Shahbaz Hussain. He has accompanied Ustadji and my *gurubhai*, Arnab Chakrabarty a number of times. As well as being the first-choice accompanist for many prominent artists coming to perform in Europe and the UK, he is also familiar with the performance style and repertoire of the *gharānā*.

<u>Nervous talking</u>

I was nervous — especially about the cello portion of the performance. This would be the first time I had presented a raga in full on cello using the techniques I had developed over the period of the project. I spent the next half hour, prior to going on, chatting with Shahbaz Hussain, partly because of nerves and partly because I wanted to talk with and entertain the far senior musician I was performing alongside. After the concert, as we were reflecting on the performance, it came up that Shahbaz Hussain usually likes to have a few minutes of quiet contemplation before going on.

Reflecting on pre-performance psychophysical attention

Prior to this, throughout my performing career pre-performance preparation is something so simple that I had not incorporated into my practice. It dawned on me that my first impulse to engage in conversation and appear hospitable and welcoming had potentially undermined my ability to give the strongest performance. For most of my career, even though I always took music I was playing very seriously, living with it in the moment, my mindset and predisposition as a performer had been that of an entertainer. My concern was entertaining those I was performing with and then going on to entertain the audience. This is understandable as a descendent of entertainers. However, it counteracts inhabiting the psychophysical state necessary to convey a raga and the repertoire of the Lucknow-Shahjahanpur Gharana with clarity and the sense of coming out of and returning to stillness that is applicable to so many performance contexts. Until I went on stage, my attention was directed towards my head and my mouth. I was not directing my attention to my shoulders, my wrists, my spine, fingertips, knees, calves, toes, the space and the other bodies within it.

Future attention

In focusing more on the learning repertoire and *riyaz* stages of learning to inhabit, I had overlooked crucial elements of social and kinetic knowledge around the moment of performance. I thought back to the concerts I had attended when Ustadji was playing. He had a similar approach of adopting a sense of quiet contemplation prior to going on. When I spoke to Ustadji about this after my recital, as I fed back to him how it went, he confirmed that he always takes a few minutes to settle his thoughts and think through what he was going to perform and how. Ways of behaving and ways of preparing the body to perform are crucial to conveying the knowledge of the *gharānā* and they need more attention as my practice develops. Both Ustadji and Shahbaz Hussain explained that I will develop such habits the more experience I accumulate performing as an exponent of the *gharānā*.

Walking onstage

We walked onstage, sat down and started to tune our instruments. I introduced Shahbaz Hussain and then gave some context to the audience about the project. After announcing I was going to play Raga Puriya Dhanashri, I breathed in and finally directed my attention to my posture. I paid particular attention to my right leg and

right shoulder, arm and hand. However, the sudden wave of adrenaline that always comes when walking onstage, compounded by nerves and excitement about sharing this knowledge with the audience, was flushing through a body that had not been fully prepared in the half hour before the concert. When I played the opening *alāp* phrase of Puriya Dhanashri, from the first note, I noticed there was a lot more physical movement than I anticipated.

Composure and nervous energy

Even though I had kept my posture and breath in mind, I did not feel as settled in my body on stage as I have during *riyaz*. The spike in adrenaline caused my left hand to feel stronger, meaning that the resistance from pulling the string when pulling *meend* was less. As a result, as opposed to this strength giving me more confidence, I was more cautious when pulling *meend* because I did not want to over-exert and play sharper than the *swāra* was intended to be. Nervous and excited energy was fizzing through my right hand too, but because the *alāp* strokes were slow, I felt more in control of that than of my left hand.

Temporality of nervous energy

There was a temporal aspect to my unsettledness. When there are nerves and excitement in performance, 10 seconds can feel like a minute. To counterbalance this, I told myself to imagine I was playing considerably slower than in *riyaz*. That way I would ensure I was playing the *alāp* at about the right speed. I did notice when I was starting to move my body too much and attempted to return to stillness by refocusing on my breath and adjusting my shoulders. The first clip in video A.3.1, from 0:00, demonstrates this, showing the first movement in the main *saptak* (after playing all the melodic movements of the lower *saptak*).

There was head movement, as I was enjoying the sound of what I was playing, but that enjoyment also manifested as tension in my left shoulder, which can be seen. In retrospect, my left shoulder had been overlooked during *riyaz* owing to more attention directed to the right shoulder. At about 00:21 I noticed this tension and movement, so I relaxed my shoulders, then tried to steady myself a little, widening the spread of the tripod of my feet and buttock. This can be seen as a little wiggle at 00:24. My body is much stiller as the camera shot changes to show the whole stage at 00:27. The

process of noticing movement and tension, then trying to return to stillness and resettle, took place many times throughout the performance.

Summary of sitar *alāp*

The delivery of the *alāp*, *jod* and *jhalla* was largely successful. There was more physical movement than intended and delivery was a little more tentative and unsettled than how I played during *riyaz*. However, I felt that the melodic movements of the raga had been clearly and expressively communicated and the way in which we progressed in our *gharānā* from *alāp* to *jhalla* had been followed effectively. Clips from the *alāp*, *jod* and *jhalla* can be seen in video A.3.1, from 0:00–4:56.

Sitar *gat*s

The *vilambit gat* (clips in A.3.1 from 4:56 — 9:36) was largely successful. There were small mistakes, like a missed or misplaced note, but these were largely recovered well enough for the audience not to notice, even though some of them were familiar with the art form. By following the process of developing a raga through improvisation learned from Ustadji, I remained mostly in control of my intentions, my body, and the sounding feedback as a result of my movement. However, after the clips selected in A.3.1 and before the *drut gat*, things began to unravel a little. I started to feel what I have described before as 'jelly-hand' in the right hand. I was trying to play faster *toda*s and my right hand was not cooperating; it was tense and not striking the string correctly. This led to increased tension and so my shoulders went up, I felt a rush of adrenaline through my body and the timing of the improvisations started to slip. I was able to recover this tension by slowing down my *toda*s, playing some *alāp* material and then communicating the end of the *vilambit* section to Shahbaz Hussain.

The *drut gat* clips (Video A.3.1 from 9:36 to 11:41) show the more successful *toda*s of the performance. However, there were a number of *toda*s that landed slightly out of *lay*. This was a result of that surge of adrenaline mentioned above — I was struggling to regulate my temporal delivery of the melodic movements I was wanting to express. I could not quite settle into whether I was playing *toda*s at double, triple, or quadruple — *dogun, tigun*, or *chaugun* — speed. This meant that the *drut* section was much less disciplined than the *vilambit* section and therefore indicates that much more work needs to be done to strengthen my right hand and maintain composure at faster

tempos. The *jhalla* section (<u>A.3.1</u> from 11:41) was much more successful, as its fast tempo was an outlet for the excess adrenaline, and therefore kinetic energy, I had accumulated during the performance until this point. However, my ending phrase was sharp because of that extra strength found in the left hand, indicating that more work is needed to control *meend* at a fast tempo.

<u>Cello performance</u>

My body throughout the cello performance (Video <u>A.3.2</u>) was much more relaxed, owing to greater experience of performing on cello — even though not in this tradition. I have become very familiar with the sensation of being observed with a cello on stage. Whereas, on sitar, until recent years I have only been observed like wallpaper in a wedding or a restaurant, or in class. This recital was only my third outing as a sitarist in which my sitar practice was on an equal footing with my cello practice.

Despite the greater physical comfort while playing, difficulties throughout my cello performance centred largely around intonation. I was finding I was over-extending my left fingers and therefore playing *swāra*s slightly out of tune in some melodic movements. This led to tension in my left hand, causing further over-exertion. The open *ma* string felt like an obstacle breaking up the melodic flow of *toda*s as I was improvising in the moment. Therefore, there were several moments I did not feel satisfied with in this performance because I did not fully communicate the mood or emotion of the raga I was presenting.

In conversation with Shahbaz Hussain afterwards, he correctly identified that my performance on cello was not 'singing' the raga — it was too self-conscious. For this reason, in future work, I may return to experimenting with the ↓*PA ṢA ṖA SA* tuning, which would enable a more comfortable flow of improvised passages in the upper registers on the top string, thus allowing my playing to sing more. The right-hand technique, however, felt largely controlled throughout.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Inhabiting the correct demeanour and psychophysical state to convey a raga in performance requires developing specific ways of behaving, which take time to develop. In discussion with Ustadji about this performance, he explained that gaining

experiencing performing ragas in these focussed listening spaces is a crucial element of *riyaz*. The heightened sensations in the body during the process of performance reveal more about the elements of my practice that require refinement, than can be revealed in the comfort of private *riyaz*. The social aspects and methods of preparation are also not able to be practised outside of the process of performance. Therefore, a crucial area to develop my practice is to gain more performance experience, which will further inform the cycle of learning to inhabit the knowledge and practices of the *gharānā*.