# THE PERFORMING AND TEACHING PRACTICES OF IRANIAN TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS IN CANADA

by

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## Abstract

This study investigates change and continuity in the performing and teaching practices of musicians who have emigrated from Iran to Canada. Iranian communities in Canada are growing at a fast pace due to a variety of socio-political and economic challenges in Iran and the prospects of a better life in Canada. Therefore, the main focus of this research is on the ways in which immigration impacts the practitioners of Iranian Traditional music in this multicultural society.

Through employing a qualitative method, including ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews, this research examines how Iranian musicians living in Montreal and Toronto are adapting their performing and teaching practices to their new environment. Analysis of the gathered data has focused on a range of pre-determined, as well as emerging themes including the participants' musical background, their performing experiences in Iran and Canada (concert repertoire, audience, concert logistics), their teaching experiences in both locations (students and teaching methods), the musicians' perceptions of and attitudes towards life in Canada, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of this environment, and their adaptation/reception into society.

In spite of the growing presence of the Iranian population in Canadian urban centers, the visibility of the Iranian culture is still an issue and Iranian traditional music is struggling in finding its place on the musical map of the world. Therefore this research is a contribution to a growing international body of research on Iranian music, a subject that has received limited academic attention. The author also argues that a better understanding of how immigrant musicians are adapting their cultural practices to the multicultural Canadian environment can assist governments in the development of their community policies.

## Abstrait

Cette étude examine le changement et la continuité dans les pratiques de performance et d'enseignement chez les musiciens qui ont émigré de l'Iran au Canada. Les communautés iraniennes sont en pleine expansion au Canada en raison des nombreux défis socio-politiques et économiques en Iran et de perspectives de vie meilleure au Canada. Par conséquent, l'objectif principal de cette recherche est de déterminer les impacts de l'immigration sur les interprètes de musique traditionnelle iranienne dans cette société multiculturelle.

Grâce à l'emploi d'une méthode qualitative incluant une approche ethnographique et des entretiens semi-structurés, cette recherche examine la façon dont les musiciens iraniens vivant à Montréal et Toronto adaptent leurs pratiques de performance et d'enseignement à leur nouvel environnement. L'analyse des données recueillies met l'accent sur une série de thèmes prédéterminés, ainsi qu'une série de thèmes émergents incluant la formation musicale des participants, leurs expériences de la scène en Iran et au Canada (répertoire de concert, auditoire, logistique de concert), leurs expériences d'enseignement dans les deux emplacements (étudiants et méthodes d'enseignement), les perceptions et attitudes des musiciens envers la vie au Canada, les avantages et les inconvénients perçus à même cet environnement, et leur adaptation /inclusion dans la société.

En dépit de la présence croissante d'une population iranienne dans les centres urbains du Canada, la visibilité de la culture iranienne est toujours un problème et la musique traditionnelle iranienne a du mal à trouver sa place sur la carte du monde musical. Par conséquent, cette recherche contribue au corpus international de recherches sur la musique iranienne, un sujet qui a retenu une attention académique limitée jusqu'à présent. L'auteur fait également valoir qu'une meilleure compréhension de la façon dont les musiciens immigrants adaptent leurs pratiques

culturelles à l'environnement multiculturel canadien peut aider les gouvernements dans l'élaboration de leurs politiques communautaires.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

## Purpose of Study

This study investigates change and continuity in the performing and teaching practices of musicians who have emigrated from Iran to Canada. The purpose of this study is to examine whether these practices change after the musicians' re-location and, if so, to investigate such transformations. This study is particularly focussed on the challenges and opportunities that the musicians' new home offers them, and examines how they express what they see as the essential elements of their Iranian culture and identity. The research focuses on Iranian musicians who predominantly perform and teach Iranian traditional music, and currently live in Montreal or Toronto.

## Importance of Study

The chief purpose of this investigation is to address the need for more academic research on various aspects of Iranian traditional music and the challenges its practitioners are facing in introducing their art to audiences outside of Iran. An in-depth review of literature revealed the paucity of research on Iranian traditional musicians among the Iranian diaspora and the ways in which Iranian traditional music is practiced outside of the country by professional expatriates. In addition, no research has been conducted on Iranian immigrant musicians in Canada and their musical practices in this country. Existing studies of the Iranian musician diaspora predominantly focuses on pop, rock, or protest music, and they mainly investigate Iranian expatriates in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom (Hemmasi, 2010; Bozorgmehr, 1998; Leone, 2012; Maghbouleh, 2010; Naficy, 1998), with the one exception of Simm's Master's thesis on an Iranian immigrant musician's pedagogy in Toronto (1992). Although there is a growing body of research on Iranian music, this musical tradition receives

relatively less attention not only in concert halls and music festivals around the world but also in music departments, as well as academic journals.

Many key studies on the music of Iran, by both Iranian and Western scholars were produced during the 1960's and 70's when the Iranian govenrment enjoyed firendly political relationships with the United States and most European countries. In the late 1970's, with the country in socio-political turmoil of the Revolution, such scholarly endeavours came into a halt. It can be easily observed from a review of literature that Iranian music has experienced fluctuating attention that corresponds to the socio-political instabilty of the country. As such, there was a spike of interest in the field duirng the late 1990's and the early 2000's when M. Khatami became president. This trend has continued as a result of a growing Iranian immigrant population in North America and Europe, many of whom seek the opportunity to enhance knowledge on the arts and cultue of their country of origin.

The researcher argues, however, that the existing body of research on the music of Iran has predominantly focued on particular aspects of this music and lacks in-depth understanding of others. For instance, most of the studies produced since the 1960's have focused on the theory and structure of Iranian music (Caron & Safvat, 1966; Zonis, 1965, 1973; Gerson-Kiwi, 1963; Nettl, 1974, 1978, 1992; During, 1989; Farhat, 1990), improvisation (Nooshin, 1996, 1998, 2003), history (Khoshzamir, 1979; Lucas, 2010), and pedagogy (Simms, 1992; Fallah Safa, 2004; Koushkani, 2013). As such, investigation into the inter-relationships of culture and music, contemporary history, as well as the music among the Iranian diasporas have received limited attention.

By examining performing and teaching practices of Iranian immigrant musicians in Canada and comparing those practices before and after the musicians' immigration, the resarcher

aims to provide an understanding of how an indigenous music travels outside of its geographical place of origin and transforms within the new home culture through the actions and mentality of its practitioners. Furthermore, this research will contribute to a growing body of research on the music of Iran, inside and outside of the country, by shedding light on a musical culture that has long been overshadowd by the socio-political attention paid to its country of origin.

In light of a growing Iranian immigrant population in Canada and their participation in the evolution of Canadian demographics, this study will provide insight into the Iranian community in urban Canada and its cultural practices. The results will help elucidate how ethnic minorities adapt to, integrate in, and contribute to a Canadian multicultural society.

**Sub-problems**

The researcher interviewed practitioners of Iranian traditional music in Montreal and Toronto about their performing and teaching experiences in Iran and in Canada to investigate the ways in which they have altered their practices as a result of immigrating to Canada. As such, this research attempted to expound upon the following sub-problems:

1. How do the musicians' performing practices differ (in terms of the repertoire, audience, concert organizing etc.) from Iran?
2. How do the musicians' teaching practices (in terms of material, teaching method, teaching philosophy, lesson structure, students) differ from Iran?
3. Do any of these transformations influence other aspects of the musicians' professional activities? If so, how?
4. What are the perceptions of Iranian traditional musicians in Canada of the ways in which their performing and teaching practices change after immigration and what are the underlying causes of those changes?

5. What are the perceptions of the Iranian diaspora in Canada of concerts and lessons of Iranian traditional music?
6. How is Iranian traditional music being received by non-Iranians in Canada?
7. Why do Iranian musicians decide to leave Iran and immigrate to Canada? What are the musicians' perception of the integration and settlement process in Canada (specifically in their city of choice, Montreal or Toronto)?
8. Are Iranian musicians concerned about the way and the extent to which Iranian music is being presented in Canada? How, in their opinion, can Iranian music be promoted in Canada?

**Limitations**

Although Iranian music is a relatively new subject in academia and numerous aspects of it are yet to be studied by music scholars in various fields such as musicology, music theory and music education, the present study has focused on the issues stated in the purpose and sub-problems sections. The researcher interviewed eight Iranian musicians residing in Montreal and Toronto. These musicians were self-identified as performers and teachers of Iranian traditional music. Although the sample was limited in terms of demographic variables, including age, gender, education, time of and reason for immigration, and duration of stay in Canada, the researcher believes that the data represents a logical commonality among Iranian traditional musicians outside of Iran and as such the results can be cautiously generalized in understanding the issues of discussion. The sample was particularly limited to eight musicians, one of which was female. The female participant was also the only vocalist among the participants. In addition, participants were all young adults, with the age range of approximately 30-45, whose musical knowledge developed in the late 1970's and during the 80's.

**Personal Background**

I was raised in Tehran, in a family where no one was a musician. When I was seven, I started taking piano lessons as my father had bought a piano hoping that one day he would learn how to play music. I grew up with relatively little exposure to music; Iranian traditional music was not my parents' favourite music style, and access to classical music was difficult at the time. As a child and young teenager, my exposure to music was limited to a few albums of children songs, some Iranian and American popular music, and the informal singing that was the tradition of our family gatherings. Nevertheless I remember listening to the only cassette of classical piano we had at home, and dreaming that one day I would be able to play all the pieces. The piano lessons continued, and they were followed by performances in group concerts and competitions.

For high school, I attended one of the best girls' schools in the country. My parents were opposed to my decision to study music at university. Like most Iranians, they preferred that I study engineering or medicine and not the arts, especially music. The opposition towards music stemmed from the negative stigma associated with musicians in Iran. For centuries musicians were held in low status in Iranian society and were referred to as *motreb* (literally means entertainer). Thus, music has long been a profession passed on from father to son, thereby remaining within certain families.

I lost that battle with my parents and in 2000 I began my undergraduate degree in applied physics in one of the state universities in Tehran. During my undergraduate years I continued to expand my musical knowledge and activities. As a teenager I felt that I needed to rebel against my strict parents as well as the societal norms around me. Therefore, in spite of the difficulty of access, I started to listen to Western rock and metal music. Later in my early 20s, with my cousin

and some friends, we started a rock band. At the same time I began teaching piano at a music institute whose founder and director was Masoud Shoari, one of the most distinguished *setar* players, composers and music educators in the Iranian traditional music genre. Through Mr. Shoari, I was introduced to the rich world of the music of my homeland for the first time. It was then that I learned about different schools of thought amongst Iranian traditional musicians, their dialogues and disagreements and the much disputed dichotomy of tradition-modernity in Iranian music.

To my surprise, my involvement with both the underground rock music scene and the Iranian traditional musicians was received with a negative attitude from my music teachers. Soon I realized that I had crossed undefined boundaries. Classically trained Iranian musicians deemed Iranian traditional music as unsophisticated, while Iranian traditional musicians saw classical musicians as agents of westernization. Young members of the underground rock scene thought of both groups' musical practices as out-dated and irrelevant to life in the 21$^{st}$ century. I was interacting with all three groups on a daily basis. It was the much-heated yet instructive discussions with all of these musicians that made me realize how little we, as Iranians, know about the intricacies of our own cultural and artistic practices.

I immigrated to Canada with my family in 2007. Two days after arriving in Montreal, I auditioned for the undergraduate music program at Concordia University. Three years of studying classical piano performance at Concordia coincided with me trying to explore my new identity as an Iranian-Canadian. When asked about my principle instrument, my answer was often received with surprise. As a middle-Eastern woman I was defying certain codes by playing classical piano, especially because I was not from a privileged background. When asked about Iranian music, on the other hand, I found myself at a loss for an adequate response. I realized as

an Iranian I knew very little about the music of my own country. It was then that I also noticed how my classmates (Canadian, American, British, Chinese, and French) did not know anything about Iranian music. Soon I started to wonder why that was the case. Why is it that my classmates knew so much about Indian music but not Iranian music? Why is it that they could name some of the Turkish, Arabic or North African instruments but did not know how Iranian music sounds? Why is it that *I* grew up without any education about the music of my homeland?

The quest had already started, the questions were planted and the journey had begun. Soon I found myself uninterested in the highly competitive and stressful world of classical performance and much fascinated with the study of music and musicians, particularly those from Iran. Interacting with Iranian traditional musicians I noticed the absence of exposure and education on a broader range of musical styles for me, and most probably for many other Iranian musicians.

Seven years after coming to Canada, the love of classical music is still with me. I am still working on the repertoire of the Van Cliburn cassette that I used to listen to as a child, but now my *setar* is closer to me than my piano. My personal background, in addition to the mentioned intellectual curiosity has shaped the course of this project. I have observed a niche in the body of research on Iranian traditional music and the Iranian diaspora and am contributing to the development of a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of this musical culture.

**Definition of Terms**

The following presents the definition of key terms and concepts that are discussed in this study, many of which are concepts pertaining to Iranian traditional music.

***Iranian traditional music:*** A genre of urban music in Iran, as differentiated from Iranian folk music, religious music, various styles of popular musics, etc. The term *Iranian traditional*

*music* has been used by researchers and scholars interchangeably with *Iranian classical music, Persian classical music* and *Persian traditional music.* These terms, as well as the main term referred to this specific genre of Iranian music in Farsi itself have been disputed. The Farsi terms that refer to this specific genre include *sonnati* that means traditional, and *asil* which means authentic. Both terms, traditional and authentic, carry substantial cultural and historical weight. Whether a musician or scholar chooses one over the other, signifies the way they see the music's evolution, as well as its relation to history and the broader Iranian cultural elements[1].

Although it is beyond the scope of the present study to discuss these terms, it is important to note that the researcher is using *Iranian* instead of *Persian* because this music is being practiced and appreciated by all ethnic groups within Iran. While the term *Persian* refers only to only one of those ethnicities, the *Farsi,* or the people of *Fars* (Pars), which is one of the provinces of Iran.

***Master/Ostad:*** a prominent and well-respected performer/composer/improviser and teacher of music. As improvisation is the basis of Iranian traditional music, the term *musician* is predominantly used referring to a performer, composer and improviser. The distinction that in Western musical traditions exist among the three, are blurred to a great extent in its Iranian counterpart.

***radif:*** *Radif* is the repertoire of Persian melodies, many of which are derived of popular and folk sources, their origins obscured by the passage of time. During calls these "flexible melodies" (During, 2011). *Radif* was first organized by Iranian musicians in the 19th century, probably as a teaching aid. The oldest known *radif-hā* (plural form of *radif*) come from two

[1] For more on the discussion of associated terms with various genres within Iranian musics, their relationships and the philosophy behind each term, see During, 2001.

masters who were also brothers, Mīrzā 'Abdollāh (1843-1918) and Āqā Ḥosein Qolī (died 1913) (Talai, 2001).

***dastgāh:*** A modal system in Persian music, representing a level of organization at which a certain number of melodic types (*gūshe*s) are regrouped and ordered in relation to a dominant mode (*māyeh*). Each *dastgāh* takes its name from this dominant mode, which is always played in the introductory parts (During, 2011).

***gūsheh:*** (literally "corner" or "part"), a term in Persian music designating a unit of melody of variable importance, which occupies a special place in the development of one of the twelve modal systems (*dastgāh* or *āvāz*) (During, Gusha, 2012).

***kamāncheh:*** The *kamāncheh* is a small fiddle with a long conical neck, a round wooden body covered in animal skin, and a spike protruding from the base. The instrument rests on the player's knee or on the ground and is swivelled on the spike to meet the bow as it is played.

***santoor:*** Also *Satur*, is an Iranian hammered dulcimer that is in the shape of a trapezoid box and has 72 strings. *Santoor* is played with two mallets in each hand.

***setār:*** The main plucked string instrument from Iran. A long-necked lute that is played with the index finger plucking the four strings. *Setār* literally means "three strings". The fourth string was added two and a half centuries ago to improve the sound quality of the instrument.

***tanbour:*** Also tanbur, is a long-necked lute. The tanbour has always been considered a sacred instrument associated with the Kurdish Sufi music of Western Iran and it is believed that its repertoire is based on ancient Persian music.

***tār:*** (literally means string) Another important long-necked, plucked string instrument that appeared in its present form in the middle of 18$^{th}$ century in Iran. *Tar* is played with a special small brass plectrum.

***tahrir:*** A word of Arabic origins that means liberation. In Iranian traditional music it is a form of highly ornamented, improvisational tremolo singing, typically on an open vowel.

**Summary**

The present study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 will provide a brief review of history of music in Iran, Canadian immigration history and policy, recent immigration statistics and the presence of Iranian communities in Canada with a review of literature on the pertaining subjects. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology of the research, the interviews and other means of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the data gathered from the interviews and discusses the analysis results. Chapter 5 concludes the study with a final examination of the results, the questions that arose in the course of this research and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2: Background Information and a Review of Literature

Cultural interaction and exchange between societies is a phenomenon as old as human social history. Today this interaction takes a new format especially as a result of the growing rate of migration around the world. Wars, conflicts, political unrest, economic depression, as well as social and humanitarian crises are among the reasons why people leave their country of origin to settle in another. Immigration transforms the individuals as well their immediate environment (Akhtar, 2011). As immigrants do not sever all interactions with their country of origin, the socio-cultural aspects of this transformation go beyond the borders of the host society and affect the country of origin as well (Akhtar, 2011). In order to understand the outcomes, one needs to study both the country of origin and the host society.

In order to contextualize the interviews, the data and analysis that were derived from them, this chapter will present a discussion of the literature as related to the sub-problems detailed in the previous chapter. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief history of musical practices and scholarship in Iran. The second section examines Canadian history of immigration and urban multiculturalism in the past century and takes a look at the presence of Iranian communities in Canada.

Being familiar with the history of musical practice and scholarship in Iran is essential for a comprehensive perception of the eminent issues in the discourse of Iranian music in the past century. These include some of the underlying issues discussed by the interviewees in the present study. The participants' concern with disseminating their art and the authenticity with which Iranian music should be performed and taught is better understood when we are familiar with the dichotomy of tradition/modernity in Iranian society and its musical aspects. As such, the first

section of this chapter examines a brief history of music in Iran and concludes with a discussion of the tradition/modernity dichotomy in Iranian music.

The second section of the chapter will present statistics and immigration trends in Canada in the past century. It will then look at issues of immigrant integration in a multicultural society. This chapter concludes with a review of the Iranian communities' presence and cultural activities in Canada. A growing presence of Iranians in Canada and the relative unfamiliarity of Canadians with Iranian music are discussed.

## Brief Introduction to History of Music in Iran

Societal instability, conservative rulers, and a superstitious society are among the challenges that Iranian musicians have faced throughout history. However, music in Iran has enjoyed historical instances where the rulers favoured music and arts, and have sponsored musicians. It is also noteworthy that in periods of extreme violence or societal instability, musicians have immigrated to safer spaces where their art could flourish. These examples will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

## History of Iranian Music

**Why *Iranian music* and not *Persian music*?** Iran is a country with a history that can be traced back to at least 3000 B.C. The country was known as Persia from 600 B.C. until 1935 when it was renamed Iran. The word Iran means the land of the Aryans and the country is home to many different ethnicities with their particular religions, languages, customs, etc. The name Persia, however, refers to a specific region that corresponds to the province of Fars (Pars) in modern-day Iran. Hence the title Persian would only refer to Iranian people from that specific region, their language, culture and music. As a result, and as preferred by many modern scholars

of this area of research, the term *Iranian* will be used throughout this document to refer to the art music of Iran.

**Music in Iran before the advent of Islam.** The history of music in Iran spans five millennia. As Lawergren mentions, archaeological sources prove the existence of arched harps, lyres and trumpets in Iran dating back to the third millennia B.C.E. (Lawergren, 2009). Music in the vast area known as the greater Iran was not considered only an art, but it would also be heard and practiced in social settings in sacred as well as secular rituals or ceremonies (Sepanta, 2004).

There is a relatively substantial body of evidence describing the music in Iran from the Sassanian Empire (226-642 AD). The Sassanid kings were patrons of music and during this era musicians enjoyed promotion to the highest ranks in the court (Sepanta, 2004). A particular exmaple is Khosro Parviz II, "whose reign was a veritable Golden Age of Iranian music" (Lawergren, 2009). Barbod, one of Khosro Parviz' musicians is credited with the collection and organization of a musical system containing seven modal structures, known as the *Royal Modes* (Khosravāni), 30 derivative modes (Lahn), and 360 melodies (Dastān). The numbers refer to the days in a week, a month and a year (Farhat, 1990; Sepanta, 2004). The advent of Islam began in 633 A.D. and "when in 651 A.D. Yazdgerd III, the last Sasanian king, left Iran fleeing from the Arab troops, he took with him 1,000 cooks and 1,000 musicians" (Neubauer, 2009).

**First centuries after Islam.** Very little information exists on the musical life of Iranians and the Islamic territories during the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750 AD). The Caliphs were preoccupied by expanding their territory and establishing the Islamic rule. As a result, there was no particular patronage of music and "local musical traditions lived on in Iran, though on a provincial level" (Neubauer, 2009, para. 1). The Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258 AD), however, was increasingly secular and the caliphs were patrons of science and music alike. During this time

local Persian musical traditions regained their influences under the small dynasties (Neubauer, 2009). This trend continued until the beginning of the 16th century when the Safavid rulers established a centralized and powerful empire in the Persian territories.

It was in this era that the close relationship between Iranian poetry and music grew stronger. Iranian poets/musicians were increasingly using Arabic meters (rhythmic structures) that have influenced musical rhythmic structure in what is currently known as Iranian art music (Sepanta, 2004). Some musicians and composers who also wrote books and treatises on music following the Muslim conquest of Persia, until the Safavid Empire are: Ebrahim Mawseli (d. 804), Zaryab (789-857), Farabi (known as Pharabius, 872-950), Ebn-e Sina (known as Avicenna, 980-1037), Omar Khayyam (1048-1131), Safiaddin Ormavi (d. 1294), Qotbaddin Mahmud Shirazi (1236-1312), Abdadqader Maraqi (died 1434).

**The Safavid Empire (1501-1722).** The Safavid Empire was one of the most powerful and significant regimes in the history of Iran. During their time, greater Iran included all of Armenia, Azerbaijan, most of Georgia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and parts of Turkey, Syria and Pakistan. Although much interaction occurred amongst most of these cultures and they influenced one another's music (be it in rhythmic structure, melodic development of ornamentations, instrument development, etc.), during this era Iranian music began to differentiate itself from the music of its neighbours, such as Arabic, Turkish and Indian music. The Safavid era is known as the Golden Age of Persian Art (Canby, 1999). Persian architecture, the art of the book (miniatures and illustrated poetry), ceramics, gardens and Persian carpets enjoyed a period of substantial attention, development and prominence. However, very little information exists about the state of music and musicians during the Safavid dynasty. Most sources on the cultural life in this period lack a section on music. The Safavid kings were an

orthodox Sufi order. They established Shi'a Islam as the official religion of the country and thus marked an important point in the history of Islam and the history of region in general. It is because of their radical religious beliefs that music under their rule experienced extreme sanction and decline. There are paintings from this period that show musicians and dancers entertaining the kings in the court (Sepanta, 2004), but music and its practice was predominantly condemned and discouraged.

Recently research is being conducted to show that musicians emigrated from Iran during the Safavid era, looking for a more open society to be able to practice their art[2] (Sepanta, 2004). Manuscripts are found in Constantinople, Greece, North India, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria and North Africa that are attributed to Iranian musicians and composers. Several research groups are currently working on this subject and recently found material from the Safavd era is being used as a source of compositional inspiration for Iranian musicians.

After the Safavid Empire, Iran experienced a period of political turmoil until 1785 when the Qajar dynasty took control of the nation, defeating or absorbing numerous small and local dynasties that were ruling differet provinces and ethnic groups in greater Iran. Sepanta (2004, p. 59), in his account of music history in Iran refers to the period since the fall of the Abbasid until the Qajar dynasty as an era in which theoretical studies in music declined significantly. According to Farhat (1990), from the 16$^{th}$ until the beginning of the 20$^{th}$ century, almost no substantial work of music was produced. Such weakening in music's presence in theory and practice, after an era of notable development and prominence, can be attributed to the instability of the region and the hostile attitude of the ruling governments towards music, due to their fundamentalist religious beliefs. Although no significant improvement in the cultural standing of

[2] Also from personal conversations with musicians and music scholars inside and outside of Iran, who are actively conducting such investigations.

music occurred during the following two centuries, the Qajar era marks a notable shift in Iranian arts and culture.

**The Qajar dynasty and the modernization of Iranian society (1785-1925).** During the Qajar Dynasty, trade and cultural exchange between Iran and the Western European countries significantly increased. The kings, especially Nasser-e-Din Shah (1848-1896) and Mozaffar-e-Din Shah (1896-1907), took numerous trips to Europe and were fascinated by the Europeans' advancement in science, technology, military capabilities and culture. The reign of Nasser-e-Din Shah saw aristocratic youth beginning to travel to Europe to study at universities and schools (Bozorgmehr, 2011; Kasravi, 1940). Such interactions between the Iranians and Westerners resulted in Iranian authorities and intellectuals setting out to 'modernize' Iranian society and culture. For example schools were opened with curricula based on European standards. Teachers for these schools were also trained by foreigners (Khaleghi, 1955).

To a great extent the Qajar kings were ignorant of the political discourse of the time and their distrust of their own advisors kept them from making informed decisions about the country's various issues and problems (Kasravi, 1940). Fear of losing control drove most Qajar rulers towards keeping the population uneducated, in poverty, and encouraging extreme religious and superstitious views (Kasravi, 1940). As a result, the status of music and musicians in Iranian society worsened significantly (Khaleghi, 1955). The majority of Iranians thought of music as '*haram*' (against religion's rule), and viewed musicians as '*motreb*' (entertainers, as discussed before this word carries strong negative connotations). Musicians had a very low status in society and as Sepanta (2004) and Khaleghi (1955) argue, music fell into the hands of non-professional and 'illiterate' entertainers.

According to travel journals of Europeans such as Edward Brown and Flanden, musicians were hired by the aristocracy and the monarchy for entertainment during lunch and other receptions. In general, however, music was pushed further into private settings and was mainly practiced by a few families whose lineage can be followed up to the 20th century Iranian musicians. These families are regarded as the preservers of what is today known as the *radif* of Iranian music (Fallah Safa, 2004; Khaleghi, 1955; Sepanta, 2004).

One important figure in this era is Ali Akbar Farahani and his two sons Mirza Abdollah and Mirza Hosseingholi. Mirza Abdollah, a virtuoso on *setār*, has been described as one of the most prominent musicians, music collectors and music educators in the modern history of Iran (Khaleghi, 1955; Sepanta, 2004). His collection and interpretation of *radif* has been the basis of composition and improvisation for generations of musicians after him. Mirza Abdollah had strong spiritual and Sufi beliefs. Sepanta quotes from Safvat (1965) that Mirza Abdollah associated his belief system with Iranian music to the extent that he asked his students to familiarize themselves with Sufism and to cleanse their spirits before pursuing Iranian music (Sepanta, 2004, p. 76).

Mirza Hosseingholi was a *tār* player and is famous for being a strict, serious performer and teacher. Most Iranian musicians today are followers of one of the brothers' school of *radif*. Due to Iranian society's extreme religious views at that time, musicians suffered greatly in this era. There are stories about the Farahani family as well as other musicians describing religious neighbours breaking the instruments and interrupting private music performances and lessons (Khaleghi, 1955; Sepanta, 2004).

During the Qajar era some Iranian instruments (such as *oud*, *chang*, *qanoon*) lost their prominence and others (such as *tār* and *setār*, *kamancheh*, *santoor* and *ney*) became increasingly popular (Sepanta, 2004). These instruments continue to make up most Iranian ensembles today.

European Classical music began leaving traces on various aspects of the music of Iran throughout the Safavid dynasty, but deeper and more apparent influences were seen from the Qajar dynasty onward (Darvishi, 1995; Youssefzadeh, 2000). During this era, Iranians were introduced to symphonic orchestras, opera, and ballet. One prominent figure who played a key role in what was referred to as 'modernizing' Iranian music is Ali Naqi Vaziri (known as Colonel Vaziri). Vaziri studied piano, harmony, counterpoint and composition at *École supérieure de musique* in Paris, and at *Hochschule für Musik* in Berlin. He returned to Iran and established the Tehran Conservatory of Music. Vaziri was greatly influenced by Western musical practices and upon his return to Iran gave a few famous lectures in which he described European artistic developments as a model for Iranians. He wrote numerous books and articles on instrumental pedagogy, music theory and history, and aesthetics. In addition Vaziri invented the *koron* and *sori,* the symbols indicating microtones in Iranian music. Vaziri emphasized that students first need to learn about music theory, rhythm and solfege, and be able to read music before taking an instrument and learning to play (Khaleghi, 1955; Darvishi, 1995; Sepanta, 2004). It has to be noted that until Vaziri music teaching and learning in Iran was carried out through oral tradition and the researcher has found no evidence of the use of notation prior to Colonel Vaziri's time[3].

**The Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979).** Reza Shah Pahlavi (ruled from 1925-1941), the first King of the Pahlavi dynasty and a military officer who took control over the country after a coup, was strongly concerned with nationalism and Iranian national identity (Youssefzadeh, 2005).

[3] For more on Ali Naqi Vaziri and his significant role in introducing notation and other elements of Western Art music to Iran, see Darvishi, 1995, and Sepanta, 2004.

Reza Shah tried to minimize the influence of foreign governments and powers in internal politics. Nevertheless, taking after Atatürk in Turkey and determined to further modernize Iran, he did not hesitate to sign contracts with European companies, engineers or consultants to develop industries, the railway system, national health care and educational system.

Like Atatürk, Reza Shah intended to secularize Iranian society, an attempt that resulted in increased dissatisfaction among the clergy and the more traditional parts of society. As part of his modernization plan Reza Shah sent many Iranians to Europe for education and training, including some who studied music at Western music institutions (Darvishi, 1995). The 'modernization' plans for Iranian society, like most cases around the world, did not limit itself to the industrial, economic and technological sector, but with the import of such capabilities came also a culture and notion of the 'West' serving as the model in most fields and endeavours.

It is not then surprising when Sepanta, Darvishi, Khaleghi and almost any other scholar who has written on the history of music in Iran, acknowledge the fact that Iranian music was summarily neglected during the Pahlavi rule. However, during this time Iranian music was not suffering due to religious beliefs, but mostly because Iranians thought of it as backwards, under-developed and unsophisticated (Darvishi, 1995; Sepanta, 2004).

In his book on the influences of Western music on the music of Iran, Darvishi brings a detailed account of how, in the first decades of the 20$^{th}$ century, Iranian 'traditional' and folk music was almost completely ignored by the authorities. All facilities, expertise and funding were dedicated to establishing performing practices and educational institutions that valued and promoted Western classical music exclusively (Darvishi, 1995, pp. 32-44). It was not until after the Second World War in Germany that ethnomusicology gained momentum and, as a result,

Iranian authorities and Western educated scholars began to recognize Iranian art and folk music as legitimate, valuable musical practices worth promoting and researching.

The first decades of the 20th century saw the establishment of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, the Tehran Conservatory of Music and Dance, and the National Ballet (Darvishi, 1995; Khaleghi, 1955; Fallah Safa, 2004). Later in the century, Iranian musicians were introduced to jazz and various genres of Western popular music. Transcription of *radif* and some folk music had already begun after the establishment of Dar-ol-Fonoon (Sepanta, 2004). The introduction of notation brought other Western musical concepts such as musicology, harmony, analysis, counterpoint, tuning, orchestration, etc. Some of these concepts, however, turned into issues of disagreement and conflict among Iranian musicians (Darvishi, 1995). Pride in national identity and culture from one side and the urge of modernization (which for the Iranian society was equalized to Westernization) divided Iranian musicians into two groups. One believed in rote as the only way of teaching and learning true Iranian music, thus strongly attempting to preserve tradition. The other side believed in 'modernization' of the music. They sought to introduce a process of slow adaptation to 'global' norms, thus emphasizing that music instruction be solely based on Western models (Darvishi, 1995; Fallah Safa, 2004; Youssefzadeh, 2005). Such a divide still exists among contemporary musicians who practice, perform, and teach Iranian traditional music, regardless of whether they remain in Iran, or immigrate elsewhere. This will be explored in further detail in following sections as well as in the discussion of the interview results.

After Mohammad-Reza Shah seized power from his father (1941), Farah, his Queen, became one of the leading figures in the establishment, promotion and advancement of arts. This included cultural activities and socio-cultural exchanges with the rest of the world, especially

with the West (Darvishi 1995, and Youssefzadeh 2005). The Queen also took important steps in promoting Iranian arts, literature and culture around the world. For instance, Farah was the main patron of the Shiraz Art Festival, held from 1967-77 in Shiraz and Persepolis. The festival had presented many major artistic fields, such as music, dance, theater and visual arts, and attracted such internationally renowned artists as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Yehudi Menhuin, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Ravi Shankar, and Andy Warhol (Gluck, 2007; Kennedy, 1973; Youssefzadeh, 2000; Youssefzadeh, 2005). The royal family's engagement in arts promotion influenced the way such activities were viewed by the revolutionaries after the Revolution.

**The Centre for Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Traditional Music.** A notable turning point in the recent history of Iranian music was the establishment of The Centre of Preservation and Propagation of Iranian Traditional Music in 1968. This centre was founded by Reza Qotbi, the director of the National Radio and Television, his wife (also a musician) Shahrzad Afshar and Professor Farhat. Its goal was to collect, record and preserve what was known of Iranian music, to promote research of this music, and to educate young musicians in its traditions. The centre played an invaluable role in saving and promoting the performance, teaching and learning of Iranian music (Darvishi, 1995; Miller, 1999; Sepanta, 2004).

**The 1979 Revolution.** Shortly after the 1979 Revolution in Iran, a group of conservative religious intellectuals proposed cultural reforms in Iranian universities. In a June 1979 speech, Ayatollah Khomeini compared music to drugs that corrupt youth. He banned the performance, teaching, and learning of all kinds of music except for military and religious purposes (DeBano, 2005; Keddie & Richard, 2003; Youssefzadeh, 2000). The Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, appointed the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council to oversee the integration of universities and other educational institutions into the Islamic state (Mojab 2004). This process is known in Iran

as The Cultural Revolution. As a part of the process, universities were closed for three years (1980-1983), curricula and content of subjects were revised and any Western or non-Islamic influence was removed (Mojab, 2004; Youssefzadeh, 2000). Students and professors who were not seen as aligning themselves with the moral and cultural values of the Islamic Republic either left the country or were purged. During the 1980s, all university music departments remained closed (music was offered at Tehran University and the University of Fine Arts, also in Tehran only as of 1991). Most private music institutions' activities were suspended as well.

From the outset of the 1979 Revolution, the Islamic Republic showed ambivalent policies towards music. These policies are recounted and interpreted differently depending on the source. Youssefzadeh indicates that concerts were infrequent, and if held, they were not publicized during the 1980s, because it was a sin to pay a musician (Youssefzadeh, 2000, p. 38). Ali A. Ramezanpoor, a former deputy minister to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, states that after the 1979 Revolution practitioners of most musical genres in Iran either left the country or moved their musical practices (performing and teaching) out of the public and into their homes. A few groups of musicians who retained their musical activities were those whose political views were to some extent in line with the authorities in the first years that followed the Revolution. These include some of the popular singers and composers as well as the traditional musicians who were affiliated with the Centre for Preservation and Propagation of Music (Ramezanpoor, 2014).

During the 1980s government policies, including their stance towards music, were centered on the war with Iraq. As such, only patriotic and revolutionary music was supported. Therefore, what is described as extremely conservative cultural policy by the critics of the Islamic Republic of Iran, can be interpreted as preoccupation of the government with a

prolonged, costly war. By the late 1980s "a decisive decree by Ayatollah Khomeini allowed the practice of 'ethical' music in Iranian society" (Movahed, 2004, p. 89). Movahed asserts how musicians and music scholars began a quest for "ethical" music, she continues to say that:

> In pursuit of the survival of Persian music, musicians turned to musical scholarship that would in turn lend virtue to their claim for the legitimacy of their art. An increasing number of musicians became engaged in historical and theoretical studies of Persian music and paved the way for the classification of good and bad, scientific and non-scientific, legitimate and illegitimate music in post-revolutionary Iran (Movahed, 2004, p. 89).

After the 8-year war with Iraq, the socio-political atmosphere slowly relaxed. As Sariolghalam (2008) describes, for 16 years (1989-2005), two Iranian presidents (Rafsanjani, and Khatami) made "unsuccessful efforts" toward economic, political, and cultural reform. Such reform emerged in terms of more liberal financial policies, development of foreign investment and trade, a more balanced foreign policy, and a less strict approach towards media, censorship, journalism, cultural progress, and exchange, etc. (Keddie & Richard, 2003; Sariolghalam, 2008; Youssefzadeh, 2005). In the late 1980s and continuing through the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance promoted folk, regional and traditional music, while gradually providing very few pop and rock groups with performing and recording opportunities.

With the prevalence of internet, satellite television channels and easy access to a larger quantity of music through MP3s the role of the Ministry of Culture turned from that of a promoting to a controlling agency (Ramezanpoor, 2014). In the 2000s Iranian society had access to a wide variety of musical genres and styles predominantly through illegal means. The presidency of Mahmoud AhmadiNejad, however, saw the return of more conservative cultural policies. During his presidency it became increasingly easier to obtain recording and performing permissions for pop music than for Iranian traditional and regional music. The reason for such policies is the mainly light nature of pop music and the perception of Iranian traditional music as

a deep and serious genre that is concerned with social issues (Ramezanpoor, 2014). As a result, many Iranian musicians left Iran or refused for their works to be broadcasted from state television and radio programs (IRIB will not broadcast Shajarian works, 2009; Inskeep, 2010).

June 2013 marked another shift in Iranian politics and the government's foreign and internal policies. Exhausted from the crippling international sanctions put on Iranian industry, trade, economy and research, Iranians chose Hassan Rouhani, a moderate cleric, as their new president. Rouhani promised political and economic reform and socio-cultural freedom in his campaign. Rouhani has participated in various artistic and musical festivals and in his speeches he has acknowledged artists and musicians' concerns. In January 2014, in a meeting that was held in Vahdat Hall, Tehran, with representatives of the artist community, he expressed his concerns that the Symphonic and the National Orchestras had stopped rehearsing. Rouhani promised to take all necessary steps to revive these cultural and artistic organs of Iranian society as soon as possible (Rouhani in a meeting with artists: We will revive the Symphonic Orchestra and we are not afraid of their yellow cards., 2014). In February 2014, at the premiere of Fajr Music Festival, Iran's minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Vazir-e Farhang o Ershad-e Eslami), announced that Iran's National Orchestra would soon begin regular rehearsals, that the musicians' contracts would be reissued and that the government was promising to pay special attention and dedicate specific resources for the revival of the art of music in the country (The Symphonic Orchestra and the National Orchestra will be revived, 2014).

**The Tradition/Modernity Binary and the Case of Iranian Traditional Music**

To an outsider it might seem that Iranian society's cultural consumption and behaviour is controlled by the government's ideological agencies. However, the paradoxical, and for the most

part tense, coexistence of the people and the state in Iran has its roots in a much deeper issue: the binary of tradition and modernity.

Interaction among cultures and societies have taken a new format in the past few decades and today it represents itself in many different, and sometimes not so obvious, ways. The ever-growing presence of foreign media, television advertisements, billboards, multi-national corporations, banks, retail stores, private as well as state-owned news agencies, and Western educational institutions are just a few examples of how globalization is defining itself on the cultural level. In this game of power those with the biggest revenue and capital will have the most influence.

An investigation into the cultural aspects of globalization shows how Western societies claim to stand at a superior cultural and civilizational position. It also reveals how this claim is being internalized by the peoples of the colonized societies. Although Iran has never officially been a colony of any other country, having a strategic and sensitive position between the Far East, Europe and Africa, the country has been on a trading route for merchants travelling to and from these locations. Hence, it is not surprising to observe cultural exchanges taking place alongside these trades. Such interactions have varied in the way and the extent to which they affected the Iranian culture, and they have played an essential role in the binary of tradition/modernity in the past century (Darvishi, 1995; Deylami, 2011). The global/national discourse and forces affect the identity development of Iranian musicians. These conflicting forces can shift an individual's national/ethnic identity without their awareness, causing them to make choices or contributions to one, as a mere reaction to the other(s).

It is beyond the scope of the current research to argue about the definition of 'modernity', but it is noteworthy that Walter Mignolo considers modern and colonial as two sides of the same

coin (Delgado & Romero, 2000). Bannerji also sees such relevance when explaining how *sociology of tradition* and the concept of a *traditional society* both "developed in the historical juncture of colonialism" (Bannerji, 2010). She goes on to say that "as such [sociology of tradition] is a discipline with a colonial context and a colonial content. Its organizing assumptions center around the concept of cultural difference between the colonizing and the colonized societies" (Bannerji, 2010, p. 158). Although it is crucial to recognize the reality of cultural differences, what becomes problematic is when the value systems are imported from one location, the location of the dominant culture, to another, and are implemented in the receiving culture without question. Bannerji contends that at the height of colonialism "Early bourgeois Europe became the focal point, a state of achieved civilization, in relation to which non-European societies were codified and judged (first world, second world, third world in terms of development and on such a scale)" (Bannerji, 2010, p. 159). This is what Mignolo, among other scholars, calls ethnocentrism.

Here, it is crucial to stress that although the very notion of ethnocentrism is problematic, it becomes even more problematic in the non-Western societies, when the imported value system and the superiority of the *other* is so engraved and internalized that it serves as a common goal of the people. Such internalized feeling of inferiority plays an important role in shaping the social as well as the individual identity. As Deylami mentions, "It hypnotizes subjects into believing that what the West has to offer is what they should desire; that they must mimic the West in order to progress" (Deylami, 2011, p. 246).

Since Western Classical music was introduced to the music society in Iran, the musicians have been divided into pro-modernization and pro-preservation groups. Most musicians who belong to the former group have been educated in Western, or Western-inspired, institutions.

Coming back to Iran, they viewed Iranian Classical music as limited and monotonous, lacking the grandiose effects of symphonic orchestras, and hence inferior in expression. This is what Darvishi (1994) calls "blind infatuation" with images of Western culture. Of course this is not to dismiss cultural exchange, as the interaction of cultures is a key factor in their unique processes of evolution, and the very characteristic which makes them alive and organic. The establishment of conservatories, music schools and symphonic orchestras in Iran could, on one hand, be interpreted as cultural exchange. But when Iranian musicians began implementing western teaching methods and material in all levels of music teaching and learning, and go beyond that by campaigning against Iranian folk and classical music in early 20th century, the colonial discourse might have been at play.

The researcher believes the tradition/modernity binary is carried with Iranian musicians regardless of where they live. The paradox that is at times accompanied with feelings of inferiority among the diasporas, becomes the quitessential element in two areas: it shapes the discourse around the highly contested genre of fusion music, in addition to informing the ways in which Iranian musicians introduce their music to non-Iranians.

**Canada, Immigration, and Multiculturalism**

Canada has always been a destination for diverse populations of immigrants (Kelley & Trebilcock, 2000; Tolley, Young, & ed., 2011; Kalbach; Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Carment & Bercuson, 2008; Day, 2002). In fact, the country has developed "an entire industry around immigration, settlement and integration" (Tolley, Young, & ed., 2011, p. 8). European settlers first moved to North America following the Industrial Revolution in search of land and natural resources, as well as economic and political prospects (Population, n.d.). Statistics indicate that until the 1960s, Europeans were the largest populations of migrants to Canada (Immigration,

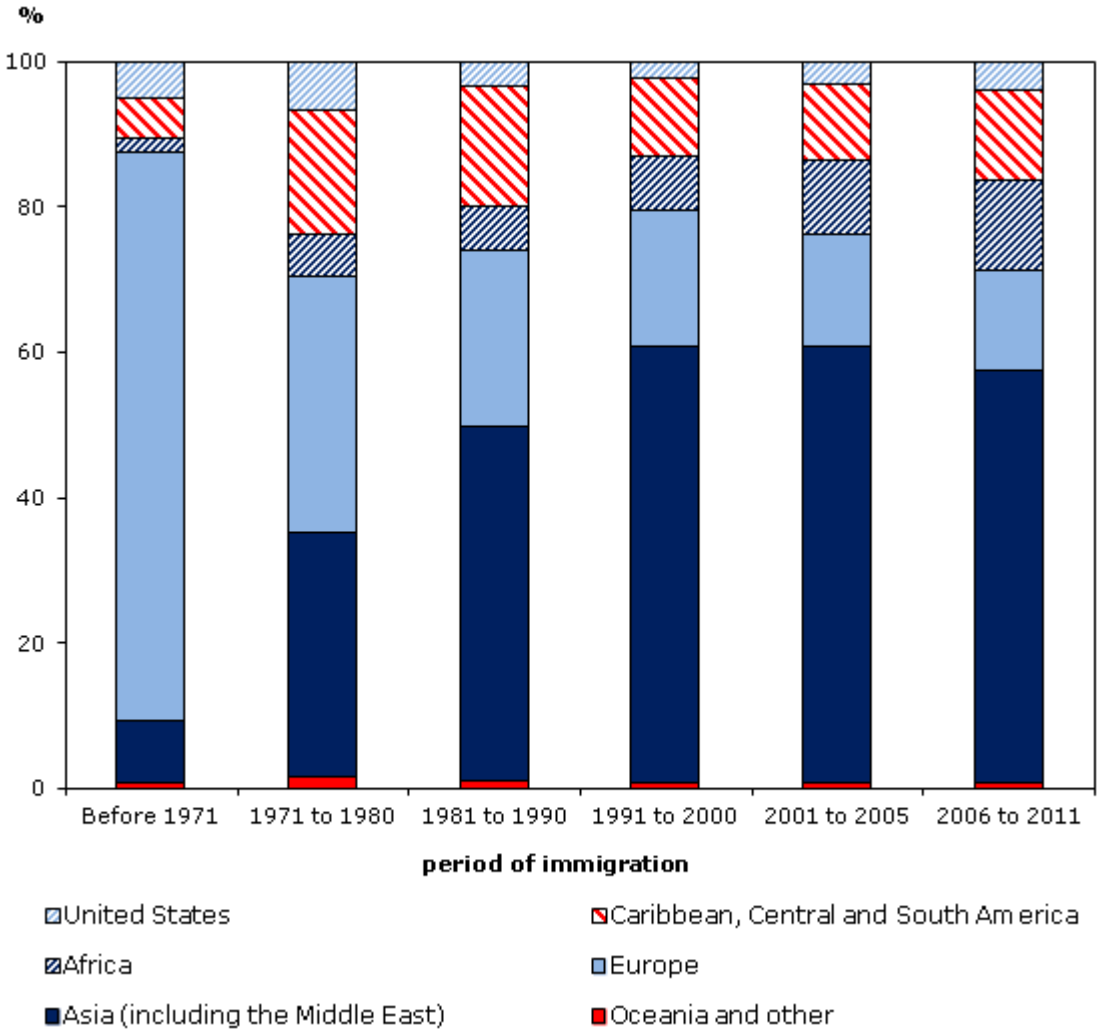
n.d.). This trend, however, changed with the transforming immigration policies of the Canadian government.

**Transforming immigration policy: growing ethnographic diversity.** Due to global changes and challenges, as well as the revision of immigration policies, Canadian ethnographic diversity has substantially increased in recent decades (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002; Carment & Bercuson, 2008). After the Second World War, Canada gradually became an industrial power. Post-war immigrants were drawn predominantly from Europe towards urban Canada, filling jobs in the manufacturing and construction sectors. Under the pressure of the previous generations of immigrants who refused to assume second-class status, Canadian immigration laws underwent substantial changes (Troper, 2014). In 1962 the federal government eliminated laws that discriminated incoming immigrants on the basis of race, religion and country of origin (Immigration and Citizenship Canada, 2010). In 1967 a point system was introduced to determine the eligibility of a candidate for immigration to Canada. The criteria that determine the desirable candidates for immigrating to Canada include age, education, level of fluency in English and/or French and the individual's job skills (Immigration and Citizenship Canada). Abu-Laban and Gabriel suggest that immigration policy in Canada has been shaped, throughout the history of the country, by economic criteria, the needs of the labour market and on a conception of an *ideal* or *model* Canadian citizen (2002).

Wars, conflicts, political unrest, economic depression, as well as social and humanitarian crises are among the reasons why people "leave their region or country of origin to settle in another" (Halli & Pedersen, 2013, para. 1), often hoping for more opportunities and a better life. Although until the 1960s Europeans (Eastern and Western) constituted a significant percentage of immigrants to Canada, as shown in Figure 1, recent statistics demonstrate (Milan, 2011) that

today, Asians (Eastern, Southern, or Western) account for the majority of immigration. These new immigrants are settling predominantly in urban locations, such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (Chui, Tran, & Maheux, 2007).

**Figure 1. Region of birth of immigrants by period of immigration, Canada, 2011**




**Immigration, multiculturalism and the issue of acculturation/integration.** Canadian diversity and the history of multiculturalism as a concept as well as government policy have been shaped around the country's history of immigration and the policies developed in relation to that history. Until the 1930s the Canadian view of their society as one of the world's eminent immigrant-receiver countries was close to that of the American view, *the melting pot.* In the

decades following the Second World War, Canadian authors and scholars began criticizing the standing rhetoric of assimilation of the arriving immigrants into the predominantly white Anglophone Canada (Burnet & Driedger, 2014). The Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988. Based on this law:

> The Constitution of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians. And the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada (Governmetn of Canada, Justice Law Website, 1988).

According to the 2011 census, Canadians are from more than 200 different ethnic origins, one out of every five Canadians was born outside of Canada, and 93.5 percent of Canadians are able to converse in one of the official languages as well as their mother tongue.

**Immigration and coping with the trauma of displacement.** Immigration has been described as a traumatic experience that affects almost every aspect of the individual's life and expands to the immediate environment around them (Akhtar, 2011; Berry, 1997). Immigrants seek elements of their past life, i.e. their life at home, as a means of coping with the pain of dislocation. These elements include ethnic food, homoethnic friends, attending festivals and dinner parties, and living in homoethnic neighbourhoods. Akhtar (2011) postulates that in their social lives immigrants interact with two groups; the first group consists of other immigrants coming from various cultures. With this group, the individual shares similar psychosocial struggles. The second group is what the immigrant sees as the *natives*. Of course the clarity of the definition of *native* highly depends on the country of residence, as well as the individual's perspective.

The immigrants' sense of "un-belonging" (Akhtar, 2011) can be the source of distrust and envy towards the native peers, which in turn keeps immigrants from further socializing with

them. Therefore in highly multicultural cities such as Toronto one witnesses segregated neighbourhoods of ethnic minorities. In a study of the processes of acculturation, the researchers describe the basic goals of immigrants in multicultural societies as: maintenance of heritage culture; participation in the host society; and maintenance of psychological as well as physical health (Safdar, Lay, & Struthers, 2003).

Immigrants of the same ethnic origins tend to settle in the same neighbourhood after immigration. This process of "re-territorialization" (Faryadi, 2008), lets the new-comers build a community. This way the new immigrants receive assistance and support from their expatriates in the first phases of settlement while they retain some connection to the culture of their country of origin. On the other hand, the same settlement pattern can lead to isolation, especially of the first generation of immigrants from the host society. In some cases where a large community of expatriates exists (such as Toronto or Los Angeles), immigrants live for decades without learning the language of the host country, by limiting their contact to the community of their expatriates (Faryady, 2008; Safdar, Lay, & Struthers, 2003).

The need to create a new homeland in exile is in constant friction with the need to integrate and create a new life in one's new home country, which causes an ongoing internal battle for immigrants. This study argues that the results of such battles are witnessed in two distinct manners, attributed to two groups in the case of the Iranian diaspora and their relationship with music of the homeland. The first group, the Iranian community at large, participates in musical activities such as attending concerts and taking music lessons and in this way they connect to the cultural heritage of the homeland and resort to nostalgia as a means to cope with the drastic changes in their environment. The second group, however, constitutes

Iranian professional musicians who aspire to practice and flourish in their art freely and openly, and wish to introduce their musical tradition to the new society.

## Iranian Communities in Canada

Iranian communities throughout Canada are growing at a rapid pace (Chui, Tran, & Maheux, 2007; Milan, 2011; Iranians) due to various socio-political and economic challenges in Iran and the prospects of a better life in Canada. What follows is a look at several waves of Iranian emigration in the past century and the presence of an Iranian community in Canada.

**Iranian emigration.** According to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at least five million Iranians live outside of Iran (Iranians abroad, Interview with Hassan Ghashghavi, 2012). In the absence of official statistics, estimates of international organizations (such as Migration Policy and International Organization of Migration) as well as statistics provided by the countries of destination (such as the United States, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom and Sweden etc.) reveal several waves of Iranian emigration in the past century.

The first wave of emigration from Iran occurred between the 1950s and the 1979 Revolution. During this period, Iranians who emigrated included children of upper and middle-class families seeking higher education, families closely associated with the monarchy as well as members of religious minorities who left in the early stages of the Revolution (Bozorgmehr, 2011; Hakimzadeh, 2006). The second phase was immediately after the 1979 Revolution, when many of those with political views in opposition to the Islamic Government fled the country, followed by young men who escaped the possibility of being called for military service at the dawn of the Iran-Iraq war (Bozorgmehr, 2011; Hakimzadeh, 2006).

The third wave of emigration from Iran has surfaced in the 21$^{st}$ century. From the data provided by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Table 1) it is noted that

the number of Iranians entering Canada (via permanent residency or student visa) peaked three times in the past 14 years. These peaks are observed in 2002, 2006 and 2010, and can be attributed to socio-political instability in the region as well as inside Iran.

**Table 1. Iranian immigrants admitted to the United States, Canada, Germany, the UK and Sweden: 1961 to 2005**

| | 1961-1970 | 1971-1980 | 1981-1990 | 1991-2000 | 2001-2005 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **USA** | 10,291 | 46,152 | 154,857 | 112,597 | 55,098 |
| **Germany** | 7,298* | 14,173 | 67,022 | 24,131 | 6,024** |
| **Canada** | 620 | 3,455 | 20,700 | 41,329 | 25,350** |
| **Sweden*** ** | 384 | 3,249 | 38,167 | 16,804 | 6,086 |
| **UK** | --- | --- | --- | 12,665 | 8,640 |

*Notes*.
*excludes 1961
**excludes 2005
*** In some years Swedish data was based on Iranian immigrants by place of birth while in other years it was based on place of last residence. (Hakimzadeh, 2006)

**Iranian communities in Canada.** According to the 2011 census, there are 163,290 Iranians in Canada, 17,825 of whom live in Quebec, and 92,635 live in Ontario. As shown in Table 3, since 1991, Iran has been among the top ten countries with the largest population of immigrants to Canada. During this period, each year between 6,000-8,000 Iranians immigrated to Canada (Milan, 2011). According to the preliminary data from the 2011 census, more than 25% of Immigrants who identified themselves as Iranian have arrived in Canada between 2006 and 2011. However, the official number of Iranians living in Canada, as reported by the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is more than 450000. The Ministry claims that the unofficial number is actually higher than this.

**Table 2. Immigrants according to the 10 main countries of birth, Canada, 1981 to 2009**

| 1981 | | 1991 | | 2001 | | 2009 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **UK** | 18.915 | **China** | 37,954 | **China** | 43,765 | **China** | 30,770 |
| **China** | 14,001 | **Poland** | 15,802 | **India** | 30,801 | **India** | 29,171 |
| **India** | 9,414 | **India** | 14,305 | **Pakistan** | 15,974 | **Philippines** | 28,415 |
| **US** | 8,700 | **Philippines** | 12,729 | **Philippines** | 13,624 | **US** | 8,154 |
| **Vietnam** | 8,163 | **Lebanon** | 12,224 | **South Korea** | 9,545 | **UK** | 8,069 |
| **Philippines** | 5,979 | **Vietnam** | 8,889 | **Iran** | 6,161 | **Pakistan** | 6,927 |
| **Poland** | 4,094 | **El Salvador** | 7,164 | **Sri Lanka** | 5,843 | **Iran** | 6,645 |
| **Haiti** | 3,702 | **Sri Lanka** | 7,160 | **Romania** | 5,717 | **South Korea** | 5,860 |
| **Guyana** | 3,018 | **Iran** | 6,681 | **US** | 5,288 | **Morocco** | 5,524 |
| **Jamaica** | 2,688 | **UK** | 6,451 | **Russian Fed.** | 5,159 | **Iraq** | 5,376 |

***Note.*** In addition to the country of birth, Citizenship and Immigration Canada also collects data on the country of last permanent residence of immigrants. Data available as of November 17, 2010.
**Source**: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
Asia, including the Middle East, was the major source of immigrants to Canada in 2008 and 2009 as it was in many previous years. Overall, Asian countries accounted for 57.1% of all immigrants to Canada in 2008 and 56.4% in 2009 (Milan, 2011).

It is important to note that having any official numbers regarding the Iranian diaspora is impossible due to various reasons. First, many Iranians who leave the country do not inform the Iranian government of the change in their residency status. As a result, the Iranian government does not possess accurate data on Iranians living abroad (no such statistics were found on the official websites of the government). In addition, for reasons that are beyond the scope of this research, many Iranians tend not to identify themselves as such while filling census forms in their country of residency, which results in unreliable data provided by organizations such as Statistics Canada and the U.S. department of Homeland Security.

The amount of research available on Iranian diaspora depends predominantly on the size as well as the duration of the community's presence in each location. The Iranian community in the United States, being the largest constituent population of the Iranian diaspora, has produced a significant body of research on its issues, characteristics and activities. Such research is scarce in the case of Canada, although it is growing both in terms of quantity and area of focus. Some recent studies have focused on immigration and the issue of religious identity among the Iranian diaspora, transnationalism and the internal diversity in the Iranians communities, women in higher education, and the integration of Iranian communities into the health-care system in Canada.

One such study was conducted by the *Diaspora, Islam and Gender Project* (DIGP, 2005) at the York University in Toronto in 2005 that focuses on Afghan, Iranian, Pakistani and Palestinian communities in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. This study was conducted based on the 2001 census data; however, the results could be generalized to the currently larger Iranian community with caution. According to the DIGP report and as seen in Figure 2, "the Iranian community has a relatively high level of post-secondary education: 38 percent have University education, followed by 33 percent with 'other' educational qualifications, which includes Trades Certificates and College Diplomas" (DIGP, 2005, p. 69). In addition, the results reveal that the top fields of study for the Iranian community are Engineering, Management, and Health Professions and related technologies (Figure 3). The top occupations of the Iranians in Canada, as shown in Figure 4, are Sales, Management, and Natural and Applied Sciences and related occupations. In both cases, Arts (including Fine Arts) are among the least popular fields for the Iranians. This issue was frequently mentioned by the participants of the current research and will be discussed in following chapters.

**Figure 2. Education level of males and females of the Iranian community in Canada, in percent**

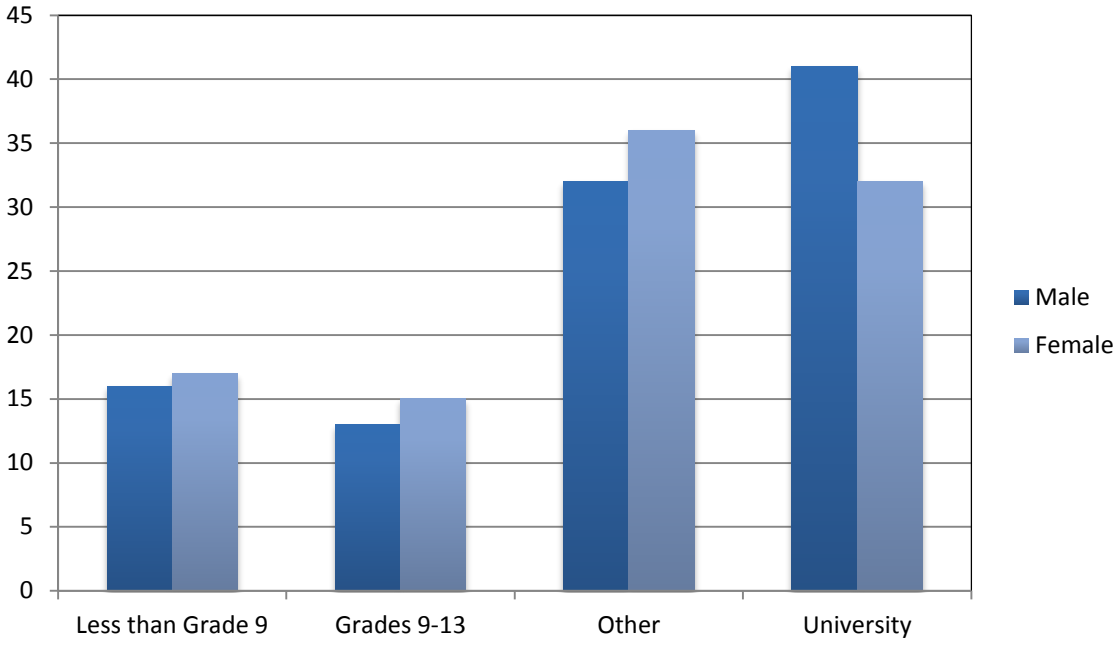



**Figure 3. Field of study of the Iranian community in Canada, in percent**

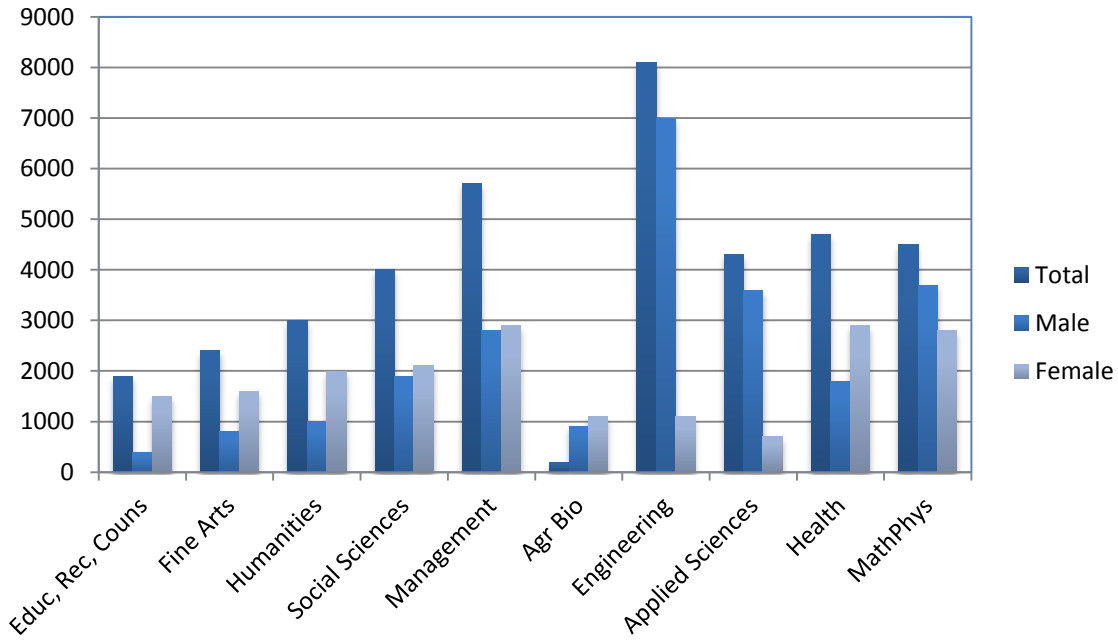
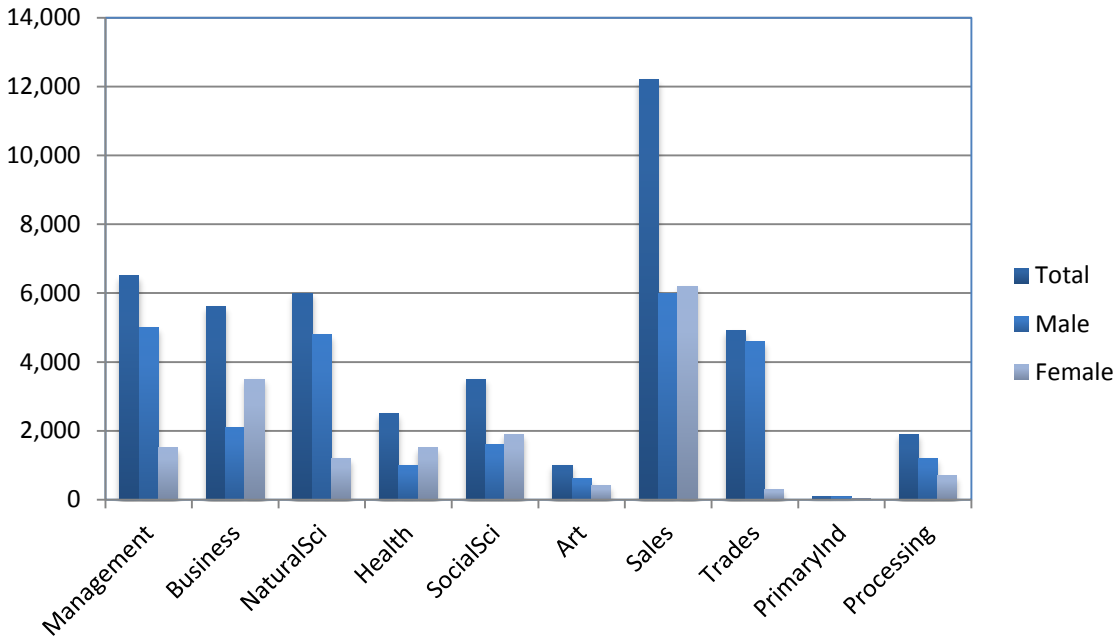


**Figure 4. Occupation of the Iranians in Canada, in numbers**




Source for all three tables: Statistics Canada Census 2001. Data Matrix 97F0010XCB01041

*Note.* ***Educ, Rec, Couns:*** Educational, Recreational and Counselling Services, ***Agr Bio:*** Agricultural, Biological, Nutritional, and Food Sciences, ***MathPhys:*** Mathematics, Computer and Physical Sciences.

***Iranian community's cultural activities and the presence of Iranian music in Toronto.***

With 76,265 members, Toronto is home to the largest Iranian community in Canada (2011 Census, Household Survey). This community consists of some of the most prominent authors, journalists and artists of the Iranian diaspora. Shahrvand Weekly, the largest Farsi Newspaper in North America, is prepared and published in Toronto (Shahrvand Publications). Tirgan, a festival whose vision is "to celebrate and showcase Iranian art, culture, and history at its best to raise public awareness and to facilitate a cross-cultural dialogue" (www.Tirgan.ca), is held at the Harbourfront Centre, Toronto and is the largest cultural gathering of Iranians outside of Iran. The International Society of Iranian Studies is based in the Department of Sociology at the University

of Toronto. This Society is the organizer of the biennial Conference of Iranian Studies. Although there is a growing number of Iranian students in the music departments of both the University of Toronto and York University, neither of the departments have offered courses specifically on Iranian music and instruments. A number of theses and dissertations on Iranian music have been produced under the supervision of Dr. Rob Simms of the Ethnomusicology department of York University. Furthermore, Dr. Hemmasi, an ethnomusicologist whose research focuses on the Iranian diaspora music, was a recent addition to the Ethnomusicology department of the University of Toronto, which should draw more resources and attention to this area of research.

***Iranian community's cultural activities and the presence of Iranian music in Montreal.*** According to the 2011 Census 16,585 Iranians live in Montreal, which makes this city the third largest Iranian community in Canada (Vancouver being the second). Iranian artists in Montreal participate in a variety of festivals including Festival du Monde Arab, Montreal International Film Festival and Festival Accès Asie. Concordia University has in recent years established a Centre for Iranian Studies. In collaboration with this centre, the Department of Music at Concordia has recently introduced an undergraduate course titled "Persian and Indian Musical Traditions", taught by Professor Rosemary Mountain.

**Summary**

The transformation of the urban demographic in Canada will inevitably result in the establishment and/or growth of diverse neighbourhoods and their increased contribution to the cultural and artistic scene. Such trends in immigration have and will in the future cause the Canadian government to constantly revise and modify its citizenship and immigration policies as well as its approach towards an ever-growing multicultural society.

I believe that a better understanding of the growing Iranian immigrant population, their cultural activities and practices, the ways in which they are adapting to their new environment, as well as their attempts in introducing their cultural heritage to their new country will assist Canadian society in understanding its transforming demographic. Such an understanding can in turn inform policy and decision makers as they adapt their approaches and guidelines. The following chapter will focus on the methodology used for conducting this research, including the procedures that were followed to collect and analyze the data.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

This research project employed a qualitative methodology including ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured interviews. A qualitative approach permitted the researcher to establish a more personal and informal relationship with the participants, to "maximize the understanding gained from each participant interviewed or each situation observed." (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003) Both historical and descriptive research methods were used for 1) obtaining data on historical as well as current conditions or procedures; 2) establishing relationships among factors or conditions; and 3) determining needs or trends (Phelps, 1973). The participants were recruited from a "culture-sharing group" (Creswell, 2004), i.e., Iranian immigrants who are active performers and teachers of Iranian traditional music, residing in two specific locations: Montreal and Toronto. My own identification as an Iranian-Canadian helped me to build a personal and professional rapport with the musicians and to observe their culture by immersing myself in their cultural activities with minimum obtrusion. My role in this research would be best described as a participant observer (Brsler & Stake, 2006; Creswell, 2004) as I interviewed the musicians, attended concerts, jam sessions and listening clubs, visited their teaching studios, and spoke with their students and audiences.

## Review of Literature

To contextualize the historical and socio-cultural factors of Canada and Iran, an in-depth review of literature was completed. In some cases, the Farsi translation of an English source was used if the English version was not available. The written sources for this study were both in Farsi and English, and were predominantly the basis for the review of important literature, presented in the following chapter.

I bought some of the Farsi books from bookstores in Tehran during my trip to Iran in the summer of 2012. While in Tehran I also borrowed multiple issues of the monthly music journal *Mahoor,* which is the leading professional and academic music journal published in Farsi in Iran. Due to time restrictions, I scanned all relevant articles and brought the scanned files to Montreal. I also bought some Farsi materials from an Iranian bookstore in Montreal.

Following the Government of Canada's closure of the Iranian embassy in Ottawa in the fall 2013, the political relationship between the two countries were severed and Iran was reclassified to level-four security rating. The immediate result of this measure was that Canadians were strongly advised against travelling to Iran. In consequence, I did not receive permission from the responsible academic body at McGill University to travel to Iran to conduct fieldwork and obtain the necessary sources for my initial project. In response I prepared a new research proposal laying out the current study. Due to a shortage of sources on my topic in Canada, I spent two weeks in Washington D.C. in the winter of 2013. I was informed by a family friend who is a scholar in the field of Islamic studies and Iranian politics and was at the time a researcher at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, that the Library of Congress possesses the largest collection of written sources on and about Iran, outside of the country (Iran). Following his advice, I visited Washington, where my time was predominantly spent in the African and Middle Eastern section of the Library of Congress. With the invaluable assistance of Mr. Dinavari, the reference librarian (Iranian World) I found numerous pertinent sources, some in English but most in Farsi.

Other written sources were predominantly obtained from McGill University Libraries, Concordia University Libraries and the Quebec National Library and Archives.

As a participant observer, during the process of data collection I attended concerts and cultural events such as the Tirgan Festival in Toronto. The written material obtained in these events, including concert programs and Tirgan's booklet was all in English and/or French, and served as valuable sources to gain insight into the participants' professional activities.

**Interviews**

Interviews were a form of co-investigation, where the interviewer and the participants construct knowledge together (DeVault & McCoy, 2002). I familiarized myself with background information for each of the participants before the interview dates. The interviews were semi-structured, so I could remain receptive to emerging themes that would appear during the processes of collecting and analysing the data. Interviews took place between May and November of 2013. I conducted 11 interviews, four in Montreal and seven in Toronto. Three of the interviews from Toronto were used for data triangulation as it became clear during the interviews that the interviewees' profiles did not correspond to the purpose of this research. The interviews were conducted at a location of the interviewee's choice. Pooria Pournazeri, Sepideh Raissadat and Araz Salek invited me to their apartments for the interviews, as their apartments function also as their private studios. Interviews with Siamak Nasr, Kiya Tabassian, Nima Rahmani and Shahin Fayaz took place in their music academies (Nasr Music Academy, Constantinople's office, Zangooleh Music School and Sarv Music Academy respectively). Finally, I interviewed Saeed Kamjoo in my own apartment as he contended that was easier for him. Interviews lasted between 49 and 115 minutes, and the average length of the interviews was 86 minutes.

All interviews were recorded with M-Audio MicroTrack II digital audio recorders, which were borrowed from the McGill University's Marvin Duchow Music Library. All recordings

were transferred to my personal laptop on the day of each interview to secure the information. I personally translated and transcribed all interviews in their entirety using the free version of the software Express Scribe that is licensed for non-commercial use, and were saved on Microsoft Office Word files in the same folder as the audio files. I made three copies of all audio files of the interviews as well as all transcriptions. One copy is kept on my personal laptop, one on a USB key and one copy on my personal tablet.

**Interview questions.** Sample interview questions were generally based on Schippers' (2009) *Sample Questions for Interviewing World Musicians on Learning and Teaching.* Questions were added to the guide based on pre-determined themes and excluded if they were not relevant to the purpose of this study. As the interviews were semi-structured sample questions (found in Appendix A) acted as a guideline for my interviews. Although questions had been prepared in advance, they were not always followed in strict order or in their entirety. Occasionally, the conversations moved into new and unexpected territories and so produced new information. Additional questions were asked during the interviews based on the interviewees' interest or concerns. Although this style resulted in longer interviews, it was deemed to be important to remain open to potential emerging themes.

**Recruitment of participants.** Participants are Iranian musicians who identify themselves as practitioners of Iranian traditional music, were born and raised in Iran, received most of their music education in that country, later immigrated to Canada, and maintained ongoing professions in performance and teaching of Iranian traditional music. They were selected through various methods such as Maximal Variation Sampling, Typical Sampling, and Snowball Sampling (Creswell, 2004). As an Iranian born and raised in Iran, who speaks Farsi fluently, I had few problems approaching the participants. However, as a classically trained pianist whose research

interest is Iranian traditional music, a genre in which I am not an expert, I was regarded as an outsider with doubtful understanding of the music, its characteristics, and my motivation for studying this subject. A copy of the Oral Recruitment Script can be found in Appendix B.

**Locations: Montreal and Toronto.** I chose to focus on Iranian immigrant musicians from Montreal and Toronto for the following reasons:

Montreal, along with Toronto and Vancouver, is a major destination for Iranian immigrants. Like most immigrants, Iranians prefer to settle in urban centres (Statistics Canada; Kalbach, 2013; Halli, 2013). Although French presents a language barrier and poses a challenge for many Iranian immigrants, Montreal is increasingly becoming a favourite destination due to the fact that processing times are shorter for immigration to Quebec than for the English-speaking provinces (Processing Times: Permanent Residence-Economic Classes, 2012). In addition, Montreal attracts artists and musicians of various cultural backgrounds including those from Iran. The Iranian community in Montreal is involved, for example, in the city's multicultural festivals including Festival du Monde Arab, Festival Accès Asie and Montreal International Film Festival.

Toronto, known as one of the most multicultural cities in the world, is home to the largest Iranian community in Canada (Statistics Canada). Because Iran's second language is English, Toronto is an attractive choice. The Iranian community in Toronto is dynamic and culturally active. This community has founded various cultural centers and holds a number of annual festivals celebrating Iranian culture, music, literature, folklore, dance and cuisine. Among the Iranians in Toronto are a number of prominent intellectuals, writers, cartoonists, musicians, philosophers, scholars and journalists.

***Montreal: Saeed Kamjoo, Siamak Nasr, Pooria Pournazeri, Kiya Tabassian.*** Having lived in Montreal since my arrival in Canada in 2007, I had developed pre-existing relationships with many Iranian musicians, prior to undertaking this project. Two of the participants in this study, Saeed Kamjoo and Siamak Nasr, were interviewed in 2012 as part of a project for a seminar course at McGill, which later became the pilot study for the current research. After getting approval for the proposed project, I spoke to both Saeed Kamjoo and Siamak Nasr on the telephone and met once with each of them to explain the details of the study. The interview with Saeed Kamjoo was scheduled for August 6th, 2013. As requested by Saeed, we met in my apartment. As Saeed was supposed to leave for rehearsal, and the interview was not finished, we met for a second interview the following day at the same place. Siamak Nasr's interview was scheduled for September 20th, 2013 at Nasr Music Institute.

Constantinople is a renowned ensemble in Montreal's music community, and the Tabassian brothers' names were mentioned in previous formal and informal conversations with other Iranian musicians. Having already heard contradicting views on their musical practices I decided to interview Kiya, who is also the artistic director of Constantinople. After speaking with Constantinople's receptionist on the phone, I was connected to Kiya Tabassian who asked me to email him my biography in addition to the research proposal. Kiya noted that I would be contacted. However, all formal means of contact with Kiya Tabassian were unsuccessful and I was only able to schedule a meeting with him after being introduced through other musicians and finally meeting him in person after their concert in Tirgan Festival in Toronto, in July 2013. The interview took place in November 2013, six months after I first spoke to Kiya on the phone, and was the last interview conducted.

I met Pooria at a house concert and was later told by Saeed that he would be a suitable candidate for my research. I set an appointment with Pooria at a café in Montreal, during which Pooria intended to inquire about my motives for the study, as well as my musical taste and my understanding of different genres and styles of music. He agreed to participate and we set the interview for the following week, May 7th, 2013 at his apartment. This was the first of 11 interviews I conducted.

***Toronto: Shahin Fayyaz, Nima Rahmani, Sepideh Raissadat, Araz Salek.*** I have known Shahin Fayaz since before he moved to Toronto in 2009; I requested his Toronto contact information from Saeed Kamjoo and called him from Montreal to explain the project. He agreed to participate and told me I was welcome to visit him in his newly established music academy in Toronto.

In my conversations with my Iranian musician friends in Montreal, I was told about a few Iranian traditional musicians in Toronto, but I was also told to contact Reza Moghaddas for more information and to be introduced to the Iranian music community there through him. Reza Moghaddas is an Iranian musician/sound engineer/music producer who was "a key member of Iran's underground rock scene. As well as managing Bamahang Studios in Toronto, he is a board member and co-founder of Godot Art Productions, one of Toronto's leading multi-disciplinary art foundations" (Biography, 2009). As a result, Reza Moghaddas is personally acquainted with almost every Iranian musician in Toronto, if not in Canada. Through him I received the contact information of a long list of musicians. It has to be noted that his help was instrumental in the process of data collection in Toronto. Based on the information that Reza gave me, I decided which musicians would suit the research and began contacting them via my McGill email address first, followed by telephone conversations prior to the interview dates. This step was

taken especially due to time constraints in Toronto. I sent a copy of the oral recruitment section of my ethics application along with the consent form to every interviewee and made sure they understand the nature of my research and that they were comfortable to participate. From a list of almost 20 musicians I scheduled 7-8 interviews during the week of May 11th-18th 2013.

As Sepideh Raissadat was leaving for France, we met the same day I arrived in Toronto on May 11th. The rest of the interviews were scheduled according to the musicians' availability. After my conversations with Shahin Fayaz over the phone, I was invited to a music listening club that was being held every Monday by Sarv Music Academy in North York. While there I met some of the musicians Reza had talked to me about. I had short conversations with the musicians and decided to go back on Thursday, May 16th for three interviews with Shahin Fayaz, Kousha Nakhaei, and Mahin Mohajer.

Kousha is the co-founder of the Sarv Music Academy and I was told by Reza and Shahin that it was important for me to interview him. Although the purpose of the study was already explained to him, during the interview I realized Kousha had immigrated to Canada as a teenager with his family and had almost no performing and teaching experiences in Iran; I also found out that his main instrument was classical violin and he had only begun playing Kamancheh a few years ago. As suggested by one of the participants I also interviewed Mahin Mohajer, a voice teacher in Sarv Academy. Later during the interview it became clear that she had no performing experiences in either Iran or Toronto, and that she had just started teaching a few months prior to the interview. Kousha Nakhaei's and Mahin Mohajer's interviews were used for triangulation of the data rather than being analyzed with the main participants.

I was also advised to interview a Tonbak player in Toronto. However, in spite of numerous attempts in scheduling an interview with her (in person, or via Skype) the appointments were delayed and finally cancelled without any explanation.

**Consent forms.** In accordance with the ethics regulations outlined by McGill University, participants were asked to complete a written consent form. By completing this form, participants allowed the researcher to include their images and/or words in the final document. I explained the consent form to all participants in my first contacts with them (via email or on the phone), along with the purpose of my research. Before starting each interview I gave the interviewee a printed copy of the consent form and told them they could read the form and either give me the signed form at the end of the session, or send me the scanned version via email. Participants were informed of the opportunity to remain anonymous and/or to discontinue their involvement with the study at any time, however, none of the participants decided to remain anonymous. The interview questions can be found in Appendix A, a copy of the oral recruitment script in Appendix B, and the consent form is found in Appendix C.

***Video-recording and photography.*** During the first stages of planning for this study I initially intended to video-record the interview sessions in order for both a triangulation of the data and as a back-up in case the recording equipment failed to work properly. I made that decision aware that any added piece of equipment in ethnography tends to make the interview environment less natural and the participants less comfortable and more self-conscious (Jackson, 1987). I also intended to take photographs from my interview sessions to use in my thesis and other presentation opportunities. Upon arrival for my first interview, I realized that the presence of a video camera could be jeopardizing my research and the comfort of my participants. Several interviewees pointed out they would be much more confortable without a camera recording our

conversation. I brought both video-recording and photographic cameras to my Toronto interviews but faced similar reactions from interviewees. I took some photos before and/or after some of my interviews if time allowed, but sometimes due to a prolonged interview or the interviewee's engagements taking photographs was not possible.

It has to be noted that one of the reasons I had initially included video-recording in my methodology was because I intended to take one lesson with each participant but later decided that step would exceed the scope of the research. In addition, by my third or fourth interview I had reached the conclusion that I would not be video-recording any interviews both because several participants had expressed discomfort at the presence of a video camera, and the use of video recordings for further analysis was deemed to be unnecessary. As a result, when explaining the consent form I told the participants that I had decided to exclude video recording; most of them expressed immediate relief.

***Trust.*** Since my first contact with each interviewee I clearly explained the purpose and the context of my research and ensured they all felt comfortable participating in the study. I did so because being an Iranian, I am aware of a general distrust that exists among Iranians especially towards their compatriots. Such distrust is mainly due to fear of potential problems with the government of Iran. The Iranian government is highly sensitive to all criticism of its policies and the socio-cultural circumstances inside the country, especially if such criticism comes from Iranian nationals (inside or outside of the country), and any audio, video and/or written proof of such criticism could potentially be used against those individuals by the government, if for any reason and at any time they decide it is posing a threat. As a result, most Iranians are highly aware of who is present, especially if the subject of the conversation is even slightly political, if it entails any criticism of the government policies and behaviour, or if they

are revealing details of their own personal lives. I believe that I faced minimal resistance from the people I chose to study, because either the musicians knew me personally, or I approached them through a trusted musician friend in the community. Nevertheless, and in spite of the non-political nature of my study, I decided not to video-record the interviews, and I made sure to keep in touch with the participants after the interviews for clarification and confirmation of interview transcripts, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

**The transcription and translation of the interviews.** All interviews were conducted in Farsi, as it is the participants' and as well as my own first language and they all explicitly said they will be more comfortable speaking Farsi. Furthermore, some interviewees mentioned the existence of untranslatable concepts in the Farsi language and the Iranian culture and arts that would make it difficult, if not impossible, to pursue the interviews in English. As a result, the already time-consuming task of transcribing the interviews proved to be more challenging as I had to translate and transcribe the interviews at the same time. For this purpose I used a free version of Express Scribe that was suggested by my supervisor Dr. Lorenzino and which I downloaded on my personal computer. The text was typed on Microsoft Word 2010 and the transcriptions were saved as .docx files in the same folder as the interview audio files on the researcher's personal computer. In order to make sure the translations were accurate, I either asked the participants to clarify their statements during the interview or I contacted them after the interview was transcribed and asked them to proof-read the transcription and let me know if they wish to make any changes so that the true meaning of their statements can be reflected in the English translation of the interviews. Translation of certain vocabulary and expressions were also checked with other individuals who were fluent in both Farsi and English, and were experts

in the domain of arts and literature. Transcription from the main interviews, excluding those for triangulation, totalled 288 pages in all.

It is important to note that during the process of translating and transcribing the interviews I realized how important the issue of 'untranslatable concepts' was in my study. These concepts could impair an Iranian musician communicating with others (musicians, students, audiences) who do not speak Farsi or are from cultures that do not share the same values as the Iranian culture. Such communicational issues have their roots in a fundamental difference between the Iranian and the Western culture (that dominates Canadian society). One example is the student-teacher relationship and the ways this relationship is inferred from the terms used for teacher (*Ostad:* a respected master in an art) and music student (*honarjoo:* a person who seeks to learn an art). Awareness of such differences can be helpful in understanding the ways in which Iranian (among other) musicians are adapting and settling in this society. Notes taken by hand during formal and informal interviews, concerts and other cultural and social events and gatherings were in either English or Farsi, whereas all typed notes were in English.

**Other Fieldwork**

In trying to fulfill my role as a participant observer, I attended concerts of Iranian traditional and folk music in both Montreal and Toronto, along with cultural events and gatherings that included musical performances where participants of this study were present and/or were performing. Extensive notes were taken during these events.

One particular event that I attended was the Tirgan Iranian Festival in July 2013 at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto (Tirgan Iranian Festival, Persian Cultural Event in Downtown Toronto, 2013). During this 4-day cultural festival, that attracted more than 130,000 people,

various concerts, dances, lectures, workshops and exhibitions were scheduled. The organizers claim that Tirgan is the largest Iranian cultural festival in the world. Many of the participants in this study performed and held workshops during the festival. Particularly, the Sarv and Zangooleh Music Academies had booths where they were showcasing their classes, teachers' and students' achievements as well as offering instruments and CDs for sale.

## Other Sources

**Oral sources and field-notes.** Oral sources exist in the forms of: 1) notes written by hand during and shortly after interviews, concerts and other cultural events; 2) notes typed following interview sessions and concerts; 3) recorded interviews and cultural events.

I took notes during most interviews and informal personal conversations with participants (especially because I had decided not to video-record the interviews). Note-taking by hand shortly after interviews were done if I needed to pay specific attention to aspects of the interview, the participants' attitude or body language, or their interactions with their surroundings and where doing so during the interview would have been impolite. All hand-written field notes were later typed on Microsoft Word using my personal ThinkPad Lenovo laptop.

**Visual and web-based sources.** Photographs were taken using an SLR digital Nikon camera. I took 25 photos during cultural events, concerts, and music lessons. I also photographed some of the participants in their teaching studios and music academies. In addition, participants' websites as well as their music academies' websites were visited and studied before the interviews in order to gain more information about the interviewees and during the coding and analysis of data for verification of information.

## Coding and Analysis of the Data

Interview transcripts were read carefully and each interview was analyzed and reduced to the most pertinent parts (predominantly in bullet forms) and important quotes. This pared-down data was transferred to another Microsoft Word file that was saved in the same folder as the full transcript. The next step was preliminary exploratory analysis (Creswell, 2004), where I wrote notes on the margins of the transcripts and assigned codes to the sections of each interview that I intended to focus on. For each major and minor theme that emerged from the preliminary analysis, one .docx file was created and the relevant segments of the interviews were copied to that file. The major themes were predetermined as the subjects of the four main interview questions (i.e, performance experiences in Iran and in Canada, and Teaching experiences in Iran and in Canada). The minor themes were decided upon later, based on what emerged from each interview in reference to each major theme. Similar responses were grouped together, and important quotes were copied from the analysis files into the presentation and discussion of data in Chapter 4.

**Triangulation of the data.** As I was determining possible participants, some of the musicians did not fit the profile I sought; however their experiences as an Iranian immigrant musician were relevant to aims of this study and as a result they were used in triangulation of the data. In addition, I used my informal interviews and conversations with Iranian immigrant artists in other fields for this purpose.

## Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings and Discussion

As discussed in the previous chapter, this study employed an ethnographic method that included 11 semi-structured interviews. The interviews were designed to compare participants' performance practices and teaching methods in Iran versus Canada (before and after immigration). The interview questions therefore (Appendix A) focused on the participants':

1. Musical background, presence of music in the family, and musical education;
2. Performances in Iran, repertoire, audience, and concert logistics;
3. Teaching experiences in Iran, students and teaching methods;
4. Performances in Canada, repertoire, audience, and concert logistics;
5. Teaching experiences in Canada, students and teaching methods;
6. Attitude towards and suggestions about the presence and promotion of Iranian music in Canada.

After all interviews were translated, transcribed, and analyzed, the information provided by interviewees was cross-referenced based on pre-determined and emerging themes. The results will be presented in the current chapter based on two major themes: participants' teaching experiences, and their performing experiences.

Prior to the introduction of Western notation in the mid-19$^{th}$ century, Iranian music was an oral tradition. As such, it was transmitted by rote. The efforts and emphasis of musicians who received parts or all of their musical education in Western musical institutions, such as Vaziri, not only affected various aspects of Iranian music itself (i.e., form, content, ensemble instrumentation, sound quality, etc.), but also influenced the musicians' approach towards their teaching methods and material. The publication of instrumental method books for the Tehran Conservatory of Music (*Honarestan-e Ali-e Musiqi*) was one of the outcomes of such a shift in

approach. These books were prepared by Western-educated musicians and were based on method books of Western instruments (Darvishi, 1995). However, later in the 1970s and 80s, some Iranian intellectuals and artists began to show resistance towards decades of 'westernization'. This resistance presented itself in a search for a national identity and a unique Iranian voice in Iranian music. The pioneers of this movement (Majid Kinai among them) emphasized a return to the oral tradition and conducted their lessons by rote (Shahrnaz Dar, 2004).

**Teaching Experiences**

In order to better understand how and whether Iranian musicians' teaching changed after moving to Canada, as well as to determine what influenced such transformations, three sets of questions were asked during the interviews. Interviewees were asked: 1) the ways in which they learned music (first experiences, teachers' pedagogical methods and any comments on those methods); 2) teaching experience in Iran (teaching methods, material, students, etc.); and 3) teaching experience in Canada (teaching methods, material, students, etc.)

**Learning music.** Although of differing ages, participants in the study received their musical education in the 1970s and 80s. This is when music in Iran was going through transformations and the attitude towards Iranian traditional music was changing. As predicted, interview results proved that the musicians' upbringing (having musicians in the family, being surrounded by artists and musicians, etc.) as well as exposure to various teaching methods through lessons with teachers from different schools of thought informed the participants' pedagogical methods.

***First musical experiences and the influence of family.*** Six of the eight participants grew up in an environment where they were surrounded with music from early childhood. They

acknowledge that their environment was influential in nurturing their taste in and understanding of music as well as their future musical career. Seven of the interviewees attribute the start of their music education to an immediate family member or a close relative and in four of these cases, those who motivated them to begin music lessons were prominent musicians themselves. Pooria Pournazeri recounts:

> I grew up in a musical family. Everyone is a musician in the Nazeri and Pournazeri family. I began learning *tonbak* from my dad when I was four and very soon I moved on to *tanboor* and *setār*. Most of my music education took place at home, with my dad and my uncles and in family gatherings. Every child would take up an instrument at some point and someone would start teaching them (Pournazeri, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat also significantly benefitted from her family's network of artists:

> I owe the start of my musical education to my family. My parents or siblings weren't musicians. What really motivated me to learn music and inspired my relationship with music were the musicians who were friends and acquaintances of my parents, who used to always come to our house, great Ostads of music, people like Milad Kiāei, Mr. Javad Lashgari, the Gorgin Pour family, Ostād Meshkatian. Forood Gorgin Pour[4] was the one who encouraged me to start taking lessons from Miss Parisa (Raissadat, 2013).

Growing up in an environment that encouraged musical activities played an important role in the participants' interest in music and motivation for choosing it as their profession.

Most of the participants began their musical education on an Iranian instrument, and like many other Iranian musicians, are multi-instrumentalists. Only two of the participants mention taking lessons on a single instrument. Nima Rahmani began his musical education by attending Orff classes but soon switched to *santoor*. Siamak Nasr choice of trumpet as his first instrument was influenced jazz. It wasn't until after the 1979 Revolution that he decided to learn *setār*. He states:

> [I chose trumpet] because of its range and the way it was used and the styles of music we listened to, like Armstrong's music. It was a very attractive and popular instrument. […] But then after the Revolution I realized that trumpet has no place in our society. I began taking *setār* lessons. My ancestors on my father's side were Sufis. So I was always

[4] Forood Gorgin Pour is a prominent folk musician and a master of Qashqai music.

> exposed to this music and tradition. I think I was drawn to it later, not when I was younger and during my adolescent years but later when I was more mature (Nasr, 2013).

The choice of instrument can be attributed to the musicians' earliest experiences with music, which in all cases was Iranian traditional music.

***Participants' own learning experiences and their teachers' pedagogy.*** All of the interviewees had multiple teachers in the course of their musical development. The teaching methods varied from one master to another and all participants expressed how these varying perspectives influenced their attitude towards the instrument, Iranian music in general, and how they later approached teaching. Sepideh Raissadat recounts that she had taken lessons from 16-17 great masters in Iran. She states: "I learned different things from them all. So I consider myself very lucky to have had those opportunities and now that I'm not in Iran I feel the absence of those; I know what I'm missing" (Raissadat, 2013). Many of the participants also mention how their teacher's passion, be it for music itself or for teaching, motivated them. Araz Salek remembers how witnessing Arshad Tahmasbi's passion and dedication was a turning point in his life (Salek, 2013). After meeting Mr. Tahmasbi all he wanted to do was to practice and play music.

*Concerns and criticism.* When asked to comment on the ways they learned music, participants sometimes raised concerns about their teachers' methods. These comments were notable as they were later translated into their own pedagogical approaches (which will be discussed in subsequent sections). Pooria Pournazeri remembers wondering why students progressed slowly in Iran and why many would quit after a short time.

> At first I thought the teachers were the problem. But then I realized the problem was the teaching method, because there was no teaching method that would engage the student's mind and soul in the music they were learning. You see, the music classes in Iran, at least in Iranian traditional classes, are very strict, dry and stressful (Pournazeri, 2013).

He continues on to suggest some problematic areas:

> For instance, a student who is just starting to learn music, who has never held an instrument in their life before, would come to the first lesson. During the first lessons the student and the teacher get to know each other and the student learns how to hold the instrument, etc. From the second lesson, the teacher would put the book in front of the student and start by introducing the five staves and where the notes go and would ask the student to memorize that for the next week. Very early on, very soon and very rigidly the student is introduced to the serious side of music. This is absolutely wrong. What I've realized is that you need to create an interest and motivation in the student (Pournazeri, 2013).

Other participants criticize some of their teachers' approach as well. For instance Nima Rahmani mentions how one of his teachers had a 'very radical and traditional mentality' (Rahmani, 2013). Nima states:

> He believed strongly in *radif* of Iranian music, specifically the *radif* of Mirza Abdollah. Even his teaching method was, and still is really particular. A real beginner, someone who has never played an instrument will have to start by learning *radif* of Mirza Abdollah with him. He is a fantastic and brilliant musician and artist, and in my opinion he is the only living musician who knows *radif* the way it should be. But this [extremism] is part of his teaching methodology and his philosophy (Rahmani, 2013).

On the other hand Nima thinks Ardavan Kamkar is a very 'technical' performer and teacher. "He changes the tuning of *santoor*, eliminates the micro-tones, and approaches the instrument like a piano. He uses a lot of chords and arpeggios. But in the end, *santoor* is not a piano, it's more limited" (Rahmani, 2013). The idea of achieving a high level of technicality, and as a result resorting to virtuosic performing tools that resemble those of Western classical music, has been exhausted especially by *santoor* players and *kamāncheh* players as Nima Rahmani and Saeed Kamjoo both indicated in their interviews.

The two teachers that Nima talked about represent the two schools of thought among Iranian musicians as discussed in Chapter 2. One group prefers to eliminate all Western influences from Iranian music, while the other believes that Iranian music has fallen behind by not creating a polyphonic sound and lacking in the degree of virtuosity that the Western musical culture has developed, especially since the Romantic era. This issue was raised by other

participants. For instance, Saeed Kamjoo recounted that one of his teachers, Ali Akbar Shekarchi, used to employ violin method books for teaching *kamāncheh* and for a while he experimented with playing the instrument like a cello, advising his students to do so as well. Later, after being introduced to what Saeed calls 'Majid Kiani's movement', Shekarchi "put all of his method books away and began teaching us aurally and by ear" (Kamjoo, 2013). When I asked Saeed about his opinion on using violin method books (such as bowing techniques, right hand technique etc.), he said:

> [Those method books and exercises] could help with technique if the instructor himself/herself knew what they were doing and what the goal of each exercise was. I mean just teaching a book or using a method in your lesson doesn't mean the student will learn what's intended in the book or that method. The instructor should be well-informed and aware of it. I don't think these teachers truly understand those methods or what they were intended for and how they needed to be used at that time (Kamjoo, 2013).

He does indicate that as a result of such an approach "the technical level of *kamāncheh* playing has progressed incredibly"; however he believes the musical and interpretive aspects of the music have suffered. Saeed believes for this teaching approach to work, the exercises need to be customized for the particular instrument. In addition, the overall temperament and nature of Iranian music (phrasings, ornamentations, nuances, etc.) need to be carefully considered so the delicacies of the music are not compromised for virtuosity.

*Group lessons.* Like in many other oral traditions, Iranian musicians have valued the concept of collective learning. As a result group lessons have long been part of the tradition. Three of the interviewees exclusively mention having had group lessons of some form in Iran. Saeed Kamjoo explains that Ali Akbar Shekarchi held lessons in his house. Students would take lessons in one room and practice in another. He says:

> I would learn part of the piece with him (Mr. Shekarchi), let's say five phrases. Then I had to go to the other room and practice that until I knew it, while another student was having their lesson. After that I would go play those phrases for my teacher and learn the next part. I was the more experienced student, so I would be like the teacher's assistant.

> We used to call that person 'khalifeh'. In the other room I would check the other students' playing and correct them. So our lessons would last for hours (Kamjoo, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat remembers Miss Parisa's voice lessons which were held at the singer's apartment. Parisa, arguably the most prominent female vocalist in Iran and whose professional career as a musician was confined to private performances and voice lessons in her own basement, also taught group lessons. Sepideh states that each group consisted of approximately ten students, all female. Lessons were also performing opportunities. Each student would have their lesson but would also be present during the rest of the class' lessons. "Miss Parisa teaches Mahmoud Karimi[5]'s *radif*" Speideh explained and continued:

> […] but because her technique is better, she has made some alterations to it. What she teaches is closer to Davami's *radif*. It's technically more elaborate and musically richer. She begins by going through all the simple and small *gusheh*s of the *dastgah*s (except for Segah, Chahargah, Rast Panjgah and Nava) [all *dastgah*s of Iranian traditional music], those that are technically easier and have less *tahrir*. Then she would go back with the student and teach the more difficult and elaborate *gusheh*s. She believes this method gives time for the student's voice to form and develop. Miss Parisa's focus is on imitation. She always records the lessons for every student (Raissadat, 2013).

Finally, Shahin Fayaz remembers how inspiring Ostad Alizadeh's group lessons were:

> We had group lessons that would last three to four hours. This was a very good experience. We were seven to eight musicians who played together. Once we would only work on our strumming, going from the highest C to the lowest C. One interesting and enjoyable exercise was when he asked everyone to keep a five beat rhythm. Then he would choose a phrase as the refrain to be played and point to each one of us to come in and improvise on that. He would help us while we were playing or suggest how to continue (Fayaz, 2013).

As will be discussed in subsequent sections, participants who enjoyed group lessons with their teachers, later included group lessons in their own pedagogy, be it in the form of master classes or as a routine, once-per-week practice for anyone to join.

**Teaching music in Iran.** One of the main purposes of this research was to investigate continuity and change in Iranian musicians' pedagogical methods and material after immigrating

[5] Mahmood Karimi was a notable Iranian singer whose interpretation and recording of *Radif* is the reference for most singers in the Iranian traditional style.

to Canada. Therefore, participants were asked about their teaching experiences in Iran. Except for Kiya Tabassian, who immigrated to Canada with his family as a teenager, the remainder of the participants began teaching their principle instruments in Iran. Almost all of the participants stated that they began teaching at an early age; some started before graduating from high school. Apart from being a source of income, teaching music lessons was recounted by some of the participants, like Sepideh Raissadat and Shahin Fayaz, as a way to review their material, specifically the *radif*. Participants were asked about: 1) their students (age, gender, reason for taking lessons, level, and seriousness about music) and whether there were any potential professional musicians among them; 2) their teaching methods, material and repertoire they chose, and their focus on technique, improvisation, composition, and rote versus notation. The following section will focus on the topics that were mentioned or emphasized by many of the participants, or those that were significantly related to the participants' teaching experiences in Canada.

***Students: their age, level and motivation for taking lessons.*** Araz Salek, Nima Rahmani and Siamak Nasr emphasize that most of their students were very serious in Iran. They all indicate they had students travelling from other cities or even provinces for lessons. Siamak Nasr, for instance, had students who travelled for hundreds of kilometers to take *setār* lessons with him. Araz Salek states:

> Most of my students [when teaching at the music club at university] were from lower class and/or religious families. I remember one of my students was from a (religious) family and I remember her coming to class looking like she'd been crying. Her father was strongly opposed to her buying a *setār*. These were what I call serious students! People who, in spite of such obstacles, and real, serious obstacles, would still come every week, practice hard and make progress. I also remember students who used to travel from Isfahan and other cities to Tehran for lessons. This is how serious students are in Iran, and of course among those, you can find good musicians who have the capacity or motivation to become a professional (Salek, 2013).

Nima Rahmani, remembering how passionate and serious his students used to be in Iran, argues:

> In Iran if I were to just teach until the end of my life, I would have loved it! This is something I miss here. There was one student who was blind and he travelled from Isfahan for lessons once a week. He used to be Ardavān Kamkar's student, but he couldn't afford it so he started taking lessons with me (Rahmani, 2013).

When asked about their students' age, the interviewees responded that most of their students were adults. They taught some teenagers but said that children rarely take lessons on Iranian traditional instruments, implying that the music is too 'heavy' for children. There is a common belief among Iranians that the content of Iranian traditional music, namely the lyrics as well as the musical content, is complex, heavy and melancholy for the most part.

Saeed Kamjoo's and Shahin Fayaz' teaching experiences, however, included receiving Orff training early in their careers. Both talked about their memories and experiences with children and teenagers in these classes. Saeed Kamjoo's teaching philosophy and approach is greatly influenced by these experiences. He explains how children develop an emotional bond with their teachers and, as a result, he became emotionally attached to his students. Saeed indicated that he would rarely teach *kamāncheh* to children and that the only children who took *kamāncheh* lessons were those who completed their Orff classes with him. When it came to choose an instrument, they chose *kamāncheh* only because they wanted to continue taking lessons with Saeed.

***Teaching methods, material and the structure of lessons.*** It is often said that 'Teachers teach the way they were taught'. This maxim was present in all interviews. Every interviewee indicated that when they began teaching, almost exclusively they used the same material and pedagogical methods as their teachers. As most of the interviewees had taken lessons from more than one teacher, their choice of materials and methods would either be a combination of all they had experienced or those they regarded as most effective and efficient. However, as they gained more experience, all interviewees modified their pedagogical strategies. This section focuses on

the participants' attitude towards their teachers' pedagogical techniques and the ways in which the interviewees developed their own teaching philosophy and strategies accordingly.

One aspect of the previous generation's approach towards teaching that the participants criticized was the Ostads' unrealistic expectations of their students, which often caused a feeling of disappointment in the younger generation. The interviewees acknowledged their teachers' mastery and dedication. However, they criticized the older generation's excessive emphasis on training professional musicians instead of focusing on the learning process for each individual, and therefore being frustrated when faced with the reality of a different generation. This frustration is illustrated through examples outlined by the interviewees.

Nima Rahmani suggests that a professional musician should not constantly compare students and their learning process to his/her own process:

> Unfortunately most music teachers in Iran make this mistake. From the very first sessions, they start comparing the student's situation with their own when they were learning music. And sometimes they get so disappointed that would even kick the student out of class and tell them never to come back again or cause the student serious trauma or complexes. I remember when *I* [interviewee's emphasis] was taking lessons from Mr. Fayaz I used to memorize my new piece in the cab, on my way home from my lesson, without even playing the instrument. But I don't expect my students to do the same thing. I would like to emphasize, though, that there is no difference between Iran and here (Rahmani, 2013).

Nima continued to explain that the new generation's approach has improved from that of their predecessors. He believes that since the older masters had fewer opportunities and had to overcome challenging circumstances, they tend to think that one cannot learn music and appreciate its real value unless they endured some hardship. Nima then recited a poem, the equivalent of the English proverb 'no pain, no gain', adding that the old masters still believe that being a musician is a virtue that "should not be achieved easily, or you won't know the value." (Rahmani, 2013)

Similarly, Araz criticizes Iranian musicians' and music educators' focus on what *they* deemed important, therefore ignoring the student's preference. Araz argues that a music instructor should focus on the learning process instead of expecting every student to practice like a professional and treat music as if it would be their career.

> I try to talk to my students and ask them about their taste in music. I try to find out what they want to take from our classes, why are they taking music lessons. Then I try to teach them what they want to learn. Gradually, and slowly I introduce them to some other kinds of music, other pieces too. We have to be realistic. Not everyone will become a professional musician. But at least we can help them develop a better understanding of music, to be able to listen to music and appreciate it (Salek, 2013).

It is understandable, however, that for a generation of musicians who experienced a constant fear of the loss of their art, the priority is to train individuals who would dedicate their lives to performing and transmitting this musical culture. Hence, for these teachers, working with students who have no intention of becoming a professional would seem as a waste of time and energy.

*Absence of appropriate, effective teaching methods for Iranian instruments.* The next issue brought up and discussed by most of the participants was the absence of teaching methods, which motivated them to develop their own pedagogical techniques. As an oral tradition, Iranian music has predominantly been taught and learned by rote or imitation (During, 2001). As such, instructors did not use any particular pedagogical techniques or tools until notation and, later, technical exercises were introduced to Iranians by Western music educators.

Music educators in Iran have been inspired by teachers from a variety of cultures and genres. For instance, Pooria believes that the atmosphere in Iranian music lessons is too dry and rigid. He argues that having been introduced to the underground rock scene in Iran, and in order to find a solution, he resorted to rock music and some of its legendary performers and teachers. Pooria began reviewing and learning about musicians such as Malmsteen, Jimmy Page and Steve

Vai (Joe Satriani's teacher). He was looking for "musicians who were both successful performers in addition to being teachers who had mentored successful performers."

Deriving inspiration from these legends' pedagogical philosophies and techniques, Pooria claims he designed studies and exercises targeting specific technical and musical techniques. He asserted that he tried to create a happy and friendly atmosphere for his students. Pooria added that because *tanbour* is not a *'dastgahi'* instrument[6] and that still no teaching method exists for it, teaching *tanbour* depends on the instructor's creativity. Thus, he developed his own pedagogical techniques for his principle instrument which includes a combination of notated exercises that focus on specific hand and finger techniques as well as rote learning.

In addition to Pooria, Shahin Fayaz and Nima Rahmani also brought up the issue of teaching methods and music classes in Iran as being too rigid and dry. Shahin remembered how, at the beginning of his teaching career (which began when he was only 18), he had no experience so he would use the same material that as used at the conservatory (*Honarestan*). After a while, he decided he needed to revise his strategies:

> I began looking at other books and other methods, like Mr. Zolfonoon's method, Mr. Alizadeh's books, etc. For instance I would begin by teaching the *Honarestan* books, if I saw the student was really good, I would add Mr. Alizadeh's book to the method. If I saw it was a bit difficult for them, I would work on Mr. Zolfonoon's book with them, which is easier. After those books, I would start working on *radif* (Fayaz, 2013).

On the other hand, Nima Rahmani thinks that the content of existing method books in Iran are 'too old and boring' for the new generation of musicians (Rahmani, 2013). Nima began by using Mr. Payvar's *santoor* method books, which were popular among *santoor* teachers then. He thinks these books nurtured and helped develop a generation of accomplished *santoor*

[6] Tanbour is associated with the Ahl-e Haqq sect in Kurdish areas and in Lorestan, Iran. Reserved solely for sacred music, it has a distinctive repertory, forming one of the most secret and inaccessible musical traditions of the Middle East (Qassim Hassan, Conway Morris, Baily, & During) . Tanbour music does not include the usual micro-tones of Iranian *dastgah*i music.

players. However, Nima suggests that material "was being used in the wrong era, for the wrong audience". He continues to add that "it was up to the teachers' creativity and passion to include extra material in the lessons to motivate their students." Nima postulates that Iranian music had gone through significant transformation since the publication of Payvar's method books and that the new generation needed fresh material that would be relevant to the music that is currently being composed and performed. According to Nima Rahmani, a real revolution occurred in *santoor* teaching technique when Pashang Kamkar published his method book. Pashang Kamkar, being aware of what was missing in Mr. Payvar's method, employed simple notation and simple arrangement of folk tunes as well as tunes and pieces that almost every Iranian would be familiar with and interested in learning:

> This way, after four lessons, the student could play some kind of a folk piece, in a simple format. This method book changed everything. I started teaching this book. And based on each student's personality, motivation etc. I would take pieces and lessons from Mr. Pāyvar's or other books too. So before starting to teach or before they start playing anything I would talk to my students. I wanted to be closer to them to get to know them better; this would help me understand what piece to choose, what method, what approach suits them better (Rahmani, 2013).

During the interview, Sepideh Raissadat raised an interesting issue about many Iranian musicians' lack of a well-defined pedagogical strategy. Sepideh asserted that many of these musicians were never trained to be educators. Women in particular were trained as professional performers/singers and were deprived of any performing opportunities after the 1979 Revolution. These musicians/singers did not begin teaching "out of love and passion for teaching", as Sepideh articulates, but the social circumstances forced them to change their path. They regarded transmitting what they knew as the only way to keep their art alive. Sepideh emphasizes that voice is uniquely different from other instruments:

> At the first lesson, on any other instrument as a beginner, the teacher will [describe the instrument for you and explain how to hold it, the angles and hand positions etc.]; whereas most voice teachers would begin by asking the student to sing something. And

> you have to sing on the spot. And god knows how you'd sing under those circumstances, people looking at you, pressure and stress. Then they would tell you that your voice doesn't have *tahrir* and tell you to leave. I didn't go through this because I had the *tahrir* in my voice since childhood, but I saw so many people quit because of that (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh continued to say that she could not accept such an approach towards students. She disagrees that only those who have an inherent capability (*tahrir*) can benefit from voice lessons. Sepideh attributes this problem to Iranian singers' lack of teaching methodology. Therefore when she began training singers, she was already on a quest to find a more effective and inclusive teaching approach.

Sepideh Raissadat, like her own teacher Ms. Parisa, holds group lessons for her students. She says her teaching has been highly influenced by all of her teachers (Raissadat, 2013). Like most voice instructors in the Iranian tradition, Sepideh prefers the oral tradition and imitation to the use of notation (During, 2001).

When asked about his teaching in Iran, Saeed Kamjoo indicated "Well, what you learn and the way you learn music from your teachers will strongly affect the way you end up teaching. I mean I'm pretty sure anyone who took lessons with Ardeshir Kamkār, will teach in the same system and method." Saeed recounts how he divided his lessons into two parts: in the first part he would use various method books and written pieces, so the student would learn to read music and be familiar with notation and some theory. He continued to explain that at first, like every other *kamāncheh* teacher at the time, he was using the violin method books that were prepared by Khaleghi in the 1960s. These books included Iranian material (pieces and compositions) and were intended for violin players in the Iranian tradition. Saeed clarified that this violin method was used by all *kamāncheh* instructors until about 17 years ago when another *kamāncheh* player wrote a method book specifically for the instrument. The second part of his lessons, however, would focus on "musicality and the soul of music" (Kamjoo, 2013). He asserts

that oral tradition is a quintessential aspect of Iranian music; therefore in the second part of his lessons he puts the score away and works with the student by rote.

*Theory as a pedagogical tool.* Resorting to theory as a pedagogical tool was brought up by Saeed Kamjoo and Sepideh Raissadat. Saeed mentions that he would try to analyse the melodies and their forms, break them down to smaller sections and point out similarities in order to make it easier for the student to memorize pieces (Kamjoo, 2013). He would use this approach especially when teaching by rote and while listening to the piece together with the students or while he is demonstrating the sections to them. Sepideh concurs that having some theoretical knowledge of music would make the learning process more meaningful and efficient. She elaborates that not having 'the theoretical support' for her meant she did not know *what* she was learning and that she was only memorizing and imitating:

> I believe there was information that could be added to my musical education to expand my knowledge and understanding of what I was learning, I had the *radif* memorized, and the *avāz* memorized and I was young so it would memorize them fast and easily. But I didn't know that *Abu Atā* is not a *dastgāh*, it's an *avāz*. But why is that? What is a *dastgāh*? What's the difference between *dastgāh* and *avāz*? I didn't even have this basic knowledge. I think this information should have been provided with my voice lessons (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh indicates that she is still searching and researching to develop a more effective and inclusive pedagogical approach to Iranian voice. Like her, most participants (Araz Salek, Nima Rahmani, Saeed Kamjoo, Shahin Fayaz, Pooria Pournazeri and Siamak Nasr) assert that their teaching philosophy and techniques have transformed on a continuum since they began taking students and continues to evolve after immigrating to Canada. Therefore in many cases the participants would explain one approach they had in Iran and would continue to say "It's not different here" or "I still do the same thing" or "I'm using the same material here".

**Teaching music in Canada.** All participants reported both performing and teaching activities, although it was clear that the emphasis was placed on one or the other. Araz Salek,

Kiya Tabassian and Saeed Kamjoo are primarily performers who teach on the side. Shahin Fayaz, Nima Rahmani and Siamak Nasr, on the other hand, are more focused on teaching, although they also actively seek opportunities to perform in public. This was either explicitly stated by the interviewees, or inferred from the interview transcription by analyzing to what extent the interviewee discussed each activity.

Financial need was found to be the factor that determined the participants' choice of emphasis. However, there were participants who reported teaching out of passion, despite the absence of financial constraints (Sepideh Raissadat). Araz Salek and Saeed Kamjoo indicated that music, in general, is not their primary source of income. Kiya Tabassian, on the other hand, is a prolific performer and the recipient of frequent federal and provincial grants. Araz, Saeed and Kiya each reported having only 2-3 students. Pooria Pournazeri is another participant who has few students. However, Pooria emphasized that his decision not to focus on teaching is only due to the eminent prioritization of settling in Canada, learning French and finishing the recording projects that began in Iran.

Participants' eagerness or reluctance to teach after immigrating to Canada was determined by analyzing the questions related to their performing and teaching practices in Canada. Some (Saeed Kamjoo and Araz Salek) openly expressed the reason for their reluctance to teach. In other cases (such as Kiya Tabassian) this was inferred from the interview by comparing the length and the depth with which they answered questions regarding their performing and teaching activities.

For Araz Salek, for instance, the gap between his students in Iran and those who take music lessons in Toronto is so large that he feels he is unable to accomplish anything with those in Toronto: "I *would like* to develop my own teaching ideas and methods but I can only achieve

them with serious students." He says he cannot be creative with people who take lessons just as a hobby and practice only a couple of hours per week.

> It takes great devotion, commitment and love, and a lot of time. You can accomplish a lot with someone who has passion for learning music. But students here, they come and they're constantly checking the time. They want to leave exactly in half an hour (Salek, 2013).

For many Iranian musicians who were trained in the tradition of master and disciple, where lessons last for hours and students would run errands for their teachers as a means of showing their devotion and respect, it is disappointing to face the time constraints of busy immigrants who do not necessarily share these musicians' level of passion for or dedication to music. Other musicians, on the other hand, are more understanding of their students' situation. Shahin Fayaz, for example, acknowledging the difference between music students in Iran and their Canadian counterparts, postulates that he understands his ex-patriots' time constraints and that learning music is not exactly a priority for them. Shahin thinks it is the teachers' responsibility to motivate their students and instil the same passion for music that was once the driving force for them. To him, being realistic about the students' expectations, motivation and level is the key to a joyful teaching experience (Fayaz, 2013).

For first generation immigrants, pursuing one's artistic interests does not take priority. Integrating to the new society entails spending significant amount of time and energy on learning the new country's language, studying in a language other than their mother tongue and finding a job (preferably in their own field of expertise). Most participants, while contending that they understand that expatriates need to prioritize such activities over artistic endeavours, expressed discontent because of their students' lack of practice and dedication. Nevertheless, some of the musicians decide to become proactive and to motivate the community of their expatriates towards a better understanding of their own culture. Nima Rahmani, for instance, asserted that

upon his arrival in Toronto he discovered a *santoor* player, who had only begun taking music lessons three years before that, was now teaching *santoor* in Toronto. Nima was shocked that someone with such basic knowledge would be able to teach music lessons and that the community would accept it. He proposes that when there is a shortage of experts in a field, even those who lack the necessary training or the credentials would teach music. As a result, the public is falsely educated. For Nima Rahmani work ethic is vitally important. He emphasized that witnessing non-professionals teach music was what determined him to found the Zangooleh Music Academy where he only hires professional musicians with both music degrees and teaching experience (Rahmani, 2013).

***Students: their age, level and motivation for taking lessons.***

*Students' age.* As mentioned before, Iranian music is considered to be too sad and serious for children. As a result, even in Iran, students would begin taking lessons in this style when they were in their late teens at the earliest. Therefore, it was not surprising to hear the participants report that most of their students are adults. Shahin Fayaz said he has only two children taking lessons with him and that most of his students are over 20 years of age (Fayaz, 2013). Nima Rahmani stopped teaching children two years ago. He explains that in his opinion, most children take music lessons in this particular genre under the pressure of their parents, thus they would quit after a short while. Nima asserts that feelings of nostalgia held by Iranian adults for Iranian music motivates them to encourage their children to play Iranian instruments. He further states that he only kept three young students because he has been investing time and energy in them, as he has seen a special talent and capacity (Rahmani, 2013).

*Students' level.* One of the disappointing aspects about teaching in Canada for the participants is their students' skill level in music. Participants stated most of their students are

beginners, which means participants are missing both the stimulating challenges that arise from teaching more advanced students, as well as the hope for training a professional musician (Pooria Pournazeri, Araz Salek, Saeed Kamjoo, Siamak Nasr and Nima Rahmani). Pooria Pournazeri indicates:

> I had at least 40-45 students in Iran. Here, most of them study or work (in unrelated fields), and they come to take lessons for fun or as a hobby mostly. But I am still hopeful and looking to find someone who would continue music professionally. I have a couple of students who live in Toronto. Their lessons began from the first month I arrived here through the internet. They, however, are not beginners, they had taken lessons before and were in a semi-professional level, and now they want to continue (Pournazeri, 2013).

Shahin Fayaz, conversely, has both beginner and advanced students. He says some of his students are very good and take lessons seriously (Fayaz, 2013). Sepideh Raissadat also teaches students who are beginners and others that are at a higher level. She works with some professional singers. Sepideh is the only interviewee who states that some of her students have professional lives as performing musicians (Raissadat, 2013).

Nima Rahmani regretfully claims that if in Iran maybe five out of every ten of his students would become professionals, that number in Canada is probably one out of ten (Rahmani, 2013). For Saeed Kamjoo having to teach music at a very basic level is so disappointing that he prefers not to be a teacher. He stresses that he loves teaching but does not want to 'be a teacher like this'. Saeed contends that outside of Iran almost all students are beginners, and, as such he has to resort to teaching techniques that he would use when working with children and teenagers. In his opinion such a mentality affects him as a composer:

> […]because I have, for a long time, worked with kids, and when you're teaching children you need to really simplify your material and subject. But on the other hand these simplifications might affect your artistic creativity. I don't like simple music and I don't want my music to be predictable. I've seen people who want to be creative musicians but they're practically only teachers. I see how they don't improve as a performer after a certain point. I think the teachers' mentality and the performers' mentality possess two different kinds of creative process. And the challenge of performing and composing is more exciting for me compared to teaching (Kamjoo, 2013).

*Students' motivation for taking lessons.* Few studies have looked into the Iranian diaspora's educational background in Canada. The existing data shows (Selected Communities of Islamic Cultures in Canada: Statistical Profiles, Diaspora, Islam and Gender Project, 2005) that a significant percentage of Iranian immigrants in major urban centres in Canada are professionals in fields such as engineering, management and natural sciences. Even though many Iranian young adults know how to play one instrument (personal communications with young Iranian immigrants in Canada), and once they have the financial means, some take music lessons or engage in musical activities, these are only leisure activities. One's financial situation is a determining factor, especially for the first generation of immigrants, when deciding whether to take music lessons. For the most part, however, pursuing one's artistic interests occurs once the new immigrant has settled into their new environment.

Among the participants Araz Salek, Pooria Pournazeri, Nima Rahmani and Saeed Kamjoo explicitly stated that most of their students take music lessons as a hobby. In Araz' opinion this means the student does not take the lessons seriously and thus does not dedicate enough time and energy to the art. As mentioned earlier, this is one of the main reasons Araz is discouraged from teaching music in Canada. Araz Salek (among others such as Saeed Kamjoo, Nima Rahmani, Shahin Fayaz and Siamak Nasr) recalls that when he used to go for music lessons, the lesson would continue for multiple hours, sometimes into the evening. He is disappointed that music learners here "come to lessons without having practiced and they keep looking at their watch and want to leave as soon as their 30 minutes are over" (Salek, 2013). Pooria and Saeed, on the other hand, are more understanding of their students' situation. Saeed notes:

> My lessons usually go beyond one hour, because *this* is how I learned music! I can't stop after half an hour. Of course it depends on how much the student has practiced…and they

> don't really practice! (he laughs) and that's understandable! They're not planning on becoming a professional musician. Most of those who take [music] lessons and live outside of Iran want to just keep ties to their country and culture (Kamjoo, 2013).

Apart from Saeed, other interviewees also mentioned that their students take lessons out of feelings of nostalgia for Iran (Araz Salek, Siamak Nasr, Pooria Pournazeri, Sepideh Raissadat, Shahin Fayaz). Sepideh Raissadat indicates:

> [M]any would come and take lessons because of their feelings of nostalgia and that they miss Iran. I think for some, it's about keeping their ties with their culture, the culture of their home country, and to know and to learn something about their culture (Raissadat, 2013).

Studies of diaspora communities show that the pain of displacement is relieved by re-searching for identities and re-connecting to the past. As Stuart Hall argues, this is what Frantz Fanon once called "passionate research" (Hall, 1990). According to Hall, diasporas seek to discover a desired era, object or activity in their past that rehabilitates them in the present. Reconnecting to cultural activities of the home country, such as singing or playing an instrument, would help immigrants find peace within their new environment. Of course individuals vary in their degree of involvement in such activities. As Sepideh Raissadat puts it "some see singing as a kind of a therapy" for their pain of displacement, whereas, for Shahin Fayaz, students in Toronto show even more appreciation for Iranian music than those in Iran:

> Things that I always dreamed of teaching in Iran [but couldn't], here my students beg that I teach them. For example, *radif*; I always wanted my students in Iran to play and learn the *radif*. They thought it was boring. But students who take lessons with me here, say it's one of their dreams to be able to play and learn the *radif*, or old pieces. They can relate to those (Fayaz, 2013).

Although having motivation and interest improves the learning process, many of the interviewees argue that exposure to the music plays an important role as well. Shahin Fayaz is the only participant who believes his students, and Iranians in general, listen to music more in Canada than in Iran. However, his examples mostly include his students listening to music from

other cultures and genres. Increasing exposure to musical styles and traditions other than one's own is a common experience among immigrants. Nevertheless, and as argued by the other participants, immigrants' exposure to their own musical culture declines immediately after immigration and is only bolstered by their intentional effort to listen and to attend concerts.

Decreased exposure to music has a negative impact on the student's learning process. This is especially the case with oral traditions where a major element of the learning process depends on listening and on sensitivity in perception and execution of delicate ornamentations or nuances. Saeed Kamjoo asserts:

> People who live here and want to learn [Iranian] music have a much less organic relationship with it. They have much less exposure, so you have to simplify things for them. Whereas in Iran, one can hear Iranian music while walking on the streets, driving their car, in the taxi, on the radio. They experience the music and the culture in the atmosphere there, on a daily basis. […] you don't need to make too much of an effort to hear the music and be exposed to the culture and the music, you hear it, you can't help that. But here, you have no choice but tolerate their lack of practice and you can't be too strict with them (Kamjoo, 2013).

Another issue that participants raised was the teacher-student relationship. Araz Salek, Nima Rahmani, Shahin Fayaz and Saeed Kamjoo specifically mention how their attitudes towards their own teachers in Iran were significantly different from what they witness here in Canada. They attribute this, at least partially, to the change of generation, explaining that the younger generation of musicians, even in Iran, has changed. One of the participants remembers how he "used to run errands for his teachers, help them move or do anything they asked". What these musicians experienced with their own teachers was a master-disciple relationship, in which the disciple cherishes the time they spend with their teachers and shows their appreciation anyway they can. While the participants undoubtedly wish for more respect, they indicate that they do not expect their own students (especially those for whom music is not a profession) to

follow such traditions. Most participants mentioned during the interviews that they need to be realistic with their expectations. Saeed states:

> I have learned *here* that I shouldn't disappoint anyone. Here, they don't tell their students 'your playing is terrible'. They say 'you need to improve this and that aspect of your playing and you'll be better'. I mean this is a very basic concept here in their educational system but we didn't have such subtleties in Iran! […] You try to keep your students and keep them interested; so they continue playing and being involved with music. It's very easy to discourage people and cause them to stop playing (Kamjoo, 2013).

Among all the participants Shahin Fayaz is the only one whose teaching experience in Canada has improved from that in Iran. In his view, students in Iran "take what they have for granted" whereas outside of Iran music learners have a deeper and more meaningful appreciation for their culture because they miss it. He explains:

> You need to be realistic about your students and their expectations and motivations and level. Not everyone will become a professional musician. If a 70-year-old man wants to play *setār* and enjoy the music, it doesn't really make a difference if his technique is not perfect. [Some of our musicians and music educators here] complain that the students are not motivated. Well, it's the teacher who should motivate their students! As a teacher *you* should create that motivation and if it's there, at least don't kill it! (Fayaz, 2013)

***Teaching methods, material, structure of lessons, and group lessons.***

*Teaching by rote or with the score? The use of recording and written method books.*

Choosing to teach by rote or using written pieces and instrumental method books for each musician depends on a variety of factors such as their instrument, availability of method books for that particular instrument, as well as the teacher's (and in the case of Kiya Tabassian the student's) preference. Sepideh Raissadat, like most other Iranian singers, teaches exclusively by rote. Nima Rahmani, Shahin Fayaz and Siamak Nasr take advantage of method books for their instruments. Nima Rahmani, for instance, talks about a series of *santoor* method books that were published by Pashang Kamkar. Even though, according to him, the series has been prepared meticulously, Nima does not support the author's decision to include the recording of all the pieces. He argues:

> […] because in these CDs they play the piece as if it's an exercise. For instance they say ok the tempo in this song is 50, so they play the whole thing at 50 like a robot. No artist will come out of this system! (Rahmani, 2013)

Nima believes that during every session the teacher has to play the new lesson/piece for their student and record it for them. Therefore the recording would be customized for that particular student, according to his/her specific "talent, capacity and understanding" (Rahmani, 2013).

Saeed Kamjoo, Kiya Tabassian and Sepideh Raissadat also record their lessons for every student. In the case of Saeed and Kiya, where method books exist for both *kamāncheh* and *setār*, the musicians emphasize the value of teaching by rote because 'Iranian music is an oral tradition after all' according to both of them. For Sepideh Raissadat, recording is the most important tool that helps students practice between lessons. During the lesson, each student sings the previous Goosheh or song they learned and Sepideh works on technique, nuances, *tahrir* and other subtleties of the piece. After everyone had sung their piece, Sepideh teaches the new lessons and asks everyone to sing after her. Every student receives a recording of the new lesson and practices by listening and imitating the teacher's interpretation of the *gūsheh*.

Saeed Kamjoo and Kiya Tabassian both assert that they try to teach by rote but that they use the score as a reference and pedagogical tool. Kiya Tabassian indicates that since he was mostly self-taught, he prefers to teach his students in the same manner. He guides the students in a way that they can contribute to their own learning process. He prefers to teach by rote but if the student knows how to read notation and asks to be taught that way, Kiya uses the scores. Saeed Kamjoo sees his teaching strategy as a continuation of what he used to do in Iran. He divides his lessons into two parts. In the first part, Saeed teaches pieces and songs he chooses specifically for each student from written method books or transcriptions of composed songs. In the second part of the lesson he puts the score away completely and works only by rote. During this part of

the lesson he focuses on teaching "musicality and the soul of the Iranian music" (Kamjoo, 2013). The score, along with some basic lessons in theory and analysis are Saeed's pedagogical aids.

*Music theory: a pedagogical tool for instrumental instruction.* In addition to Saeed Kamjoo, Nima Rahmani also teaches the basics of music theory to help students better understand their pieces. While Saeed teaches music theory as related to the particular piece the student is learning, Nima dedicates 10-15 minutes of every lesson to music theory. He does so through the two music theory books that are taught in Iranian music departments, written by M. K. Poor Torab and Parviz Mansouri. Saeed Kamjoo, on the other hand, explains that he needs to introduce some theory to his students to compensate for their lack of exposure to music:

> The first thing is that they should learn the structure of the melody and the piece. What I really try to focus on is that a piece is not just one page of notes written down, or five minutes of sounds. You can teach them about the form… for instance I would teach one part and I'd tell them ok let's call this 'A' and the next part 'B', then we have 'A' again… so in a way I'm teaching them the form of the pieces so they can memorize the piece more easily. Sometimes I might even break down each phrase into parts so they can more easily remember them. I used to do this before but nowadays I used it more and more. Because people who live here and want to learn this music, have a less organic relationship with this music, (they have much less exposure) so you have to simplify things for them. They also learn to analyze the pieces themselves. We practically do work on music theory, because in the first part [of the lesson] when we're learning from the score, I need to explain to the student why and where F is sharp and what happens when F is sharp (Kamjoo, 2013).

*Teaching the radif.* For most instructors of Iranian music, teaching the *radif* depends highly on the level of the students. Instrumental teachers nowadays would rarely choose to teach the *radif* to a beginner, with the exception being those who are strongly influenced by traditionalists such as Majid Kiani and their school of thought. Among the participants Kiya Tabassian, Saeed Kamjoo, Shahin Fayaz and Sepideh Raissadat teach the *radif* of Iranian music to their students.

Kiya Tabassian thinks learning the *radif* is at the heart of learning to play Iranian instruments, but he emphasizes that choosing the right time and the appropriate method of teaching *radif* is key to a successful learning experience:

> Playing the *radif* at the beginning is difficult. So the student needs to first be familiar and comfortable with the instrument and learn some technique. But yes, with the students who are more advanced, I have worked on *radif* too. I teach *radif* orally, by ear. But then for those who have learned how to read notation I would give them the scores too. I give them Mr. Talaei's notation of *radif*, because his is the best notation of *radif* and it is the kind of score that you actually have to teach orally and learn by ear. It shows you the structure of each *gūsheh* visually. So I always give that to my students, especially because some people learn better through their visual faculties. They can see how this box is being repeated here again and… it makes it easier for them when they can see it. But as for learning to play the *gūsheh*s, I play it for them, and record it and ask them to play the same thing for me. This is how I learned the *radif* with Mr. Ghassemi, with Mr. Kalhor, Mr., Torabian; this is how we worked (Tabassian, 2013).

Saeed Kamjoo teaches the *radif* to two of his students, one of whom is a French-Canadian woman. Saeed further emphasizes that both students have been taking lessons with him for some time now and that they are not beginners. He began teaching them the *radif* at their own request. Another participant who began teaching *radif* to his students is Shahin Fayaz. Shahin says he was pleasantly surprised when some of his students in Toronto asked if they could learn the *radif*: "When I was teaching in Iran, my students would run away from *radif*, they said it was boring. But here, it seems like being able to play the *radif* is their dream." (Fayaz, 2013) Such enthusiasm can be attributed to the immigrants' feelings of nostalgia, in addition to the perception that playing the *radif* is a professional musician's endeavour and not of the common people. The *radif* of Iranian music, being the quintessential part of this musical tradition, is a symbol for the diaspora's connection to the heart of their homeland's culture.

While teaching the *radif* is a celebrated pleasure for Saeed, Shahin and Kiya, to Sepideh Raissadat it constitutes the core of her voice lessons. She explains how she incorporates the *radif*, recording, theoretical background and the score in her lessons:

> The basis of my teaching method and material is *radif*, but I also work on the students' voice developing techniques and I also teach *tasnif.* [7] During the lessons we talk about music, music theory, music history, the relationship between anthropology and music, the connection between music and culture, and I try to talk about different musicians… I try to include all of these in my lessons. I teach the *radif* that I learned from Ms. Parisa. I also use the *tasnif*s that Mr. Davami had sung and Mr. Payvar transcribed. I use those notations but I don't give them to my students. I usually send all of my students a recording of the new lesson, everyone has the same recording as a reference and they will come back to the next lesson singing the same material, everyone as a group (Raissadat, 2013).

*Teaching improvisation and encouraging students to compose.* Improvisation is a fundamental aspect of Iranian music. However, according to most Iranian musicians including the participants in this study, one can only begin to improvise when they are well versed in the repertoire (i.e., the *radif*). Therefore, again, the issue of music learners' level outside of Iran arises. Pooria Pournazeri, as an accomplished musician in Iranian folk and traditional styles, and as someone who has been involved with Iranian underground rock bands, has a vast and diverse repertoire to draw improvisational ideas from. He encourages his students to do the same.

> Because I have been improvising and studying different improvisational techniques for a long time, I am very eager in my lessons to encourage my students to improvise, that is if they're at the level that they can do it. I even give them assignments. For instance to begin, I play a melody for them and ask them to learn it by ear. Then they have to go home and develop it, expand it, continue it for the next lesson. Then in our next lesson I listen to what they've brought and I'll guide them, tell them what's good and/or how they can improve it. Later, that becomes a composed piece of music, but composed from an improvisatory ambience and mood. When you do this a few times, the student will get to know what improvisatory space and approach is. […] At first when I tell a student to improvise, I face resistance, because they're terrified of improvising. But I encourage them. I also tell them this is an obligatory part of our lessons. At first, they play very basic stuff. Then I encourage them and give them suggestions, so after a while *they* are the ones motivated to improvise and *create* music (Pournazeri, 2013).

On the topic of improvisation, Saeed Kamjoo states that he has initiated the process with the same two students that are learning the *radif*. Although Saeed is not convinced whether what he is teaching is improvisation or composition, his method closely resembles that of Pooria.

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[7] Tasnif is a genre in Iranian vocal music "which generally implies a kind of strophic song composed in a fixed meter" (Tsuge, 1987)

> One other thing that I try is I give them a melody and tell them to learn the melody first and then see what they can do with it, whether they can add something to it with their own taste. So whatever they come back with, is theirs! If they weren't satisfied with it, it means they didn't work hard enough. If they were satisfied and played it for me, then we can work on that evolving product together. This process will develop their taste, technical and musical skills, understanding of music, and creativity. So this would stimulate their creativity to see what they have inside them what will they do with everything they've learned so far (Kamjoo, 2013).

When Saeed describes whether he would categorize this part of the lesson as working on improvisation or composition, he suggests it would be composition.

> Because in these kinds of music that are fundamentally oral traditions, you can't really teach improvisation. There are classes and workshops that claim to be teaching improvisation but I don't really believe in those. At some point, (to be able to improvise) you need to have played the repertoire so many times and know it from beginning to end perfectly. By repertoire I mean the *radif* and the way various performers (Ostāds) have performed it. This is partly related to people's aural memory. In my opinion, you can't improvise unless you improve your auditory memory. Now there are some techniques to improve in improvisation…. Well, the thing is that the boundary between improvisation and composition is a fine line! (Kamjoo, 2013)

Kiya Tabassian and Nima Rahmani claim that because they were always interested in composing and improvising, they encourage their students to do so. For Kiya Tabassian, these two steps come after the student has sufficient technique and familiarity with the instruments as well as the basic rudiments of the music. In order to prepare the student for these higher levels Kiya trains their musical ear. "I tell them to close their eyes and listen to what I play and imitate the ornamentation and nuance as closely as possible"(Tabassian, 2013). Nima Rahmani on the other hand owes his passion for composition to his mentor Mohammad Reza Fayaz:

> I remember, when I was taking lessons with him, I really wanted to compose. Every time I had composed a song or a piece, he would encourage me and gave me advice on how to improve it, without exception. This approach pushed me forward. I progressed by leaps. Now I do the same with my students. Now during my lessons, the students who are interested, and bring something to play for me, I would do the same Mr. Fayaz used to do. And those who are not interested, or don't have that capacity, I would take a folk tune, or something they're familiar with, I tell them to go figure the tune out by ear. I developed this technique by experience. Before, I used to tell them to figure out some *tasnif* but it was too difficult, they couldn't even figure what the first two notes were (Rahmani, 2013).

*Playing duets with the students.* Some of the participants indicated that they accompany their students during the lesson and they emphasized this is an essential aspect of Iranian music with which any musician should be familiar. Sepideh Raissadat accompanies herself and her students on her *setār* while they are singing. She recounted that she decided to take *setār* lessons when she saw her own teacher use this method. Nima Rahmani has taken *tonbak* lessons both to improve his own sense of rhythm and to be able to accompany his students during lessons. Nima postulates that being accompanied, especially with a *tonbak*, enhances the musician's rhythmic perception in addition to sensitizing them to intricacies of phrasing and nuances (Rahmani, 2013). In order to achieve the same goal, Shahin Fayaz has dedicated his Sundays to group lessons. He has started a *setār* ensemble and a *tār* ensemble. Each group consists of five to six students: "We get together and play for two hours. We play some old tunes, improvise and enjoy ourselves, like what Mr. Alizadeh used to do in his group lessons, but with a bit more fun!" Shahin explains (Fayaz, 2013). He then proudly adds that their ensembles have had performances on the Iranian television channel in Toronto as well.

*Establishing music academies.* Nima Rahmani, Shahin Fayaz and Siamak Nasr the participants that have founded the Zangooleh Music School (Zangooleh Music School), Sarv Music Academy (Sarv Music Academy) and Nasr Music Institute (Nasr Music Institute) respectively. Kiya Tabassian recounts that when they founded Constantinople and opened an office, the idea was to hold private and group lessons there but he admits that he is teaching less frequently recently. Since Kiya has a busy performing schedule throughout the year, it is not surprising to see that the Constantinople website does not mention anything about music lessons. On the other hand, having established music schools, Nima, Shahin and Siamak have determined

teaching to be a major part of their musical endeavours. As such, they all stress how holding student concerts is crucial in keeping the musicians from all levels motivated and diligent.

*Teaching non-Iranians.* Some of the participants recount having taught non-Iranian students in the past and some currently have non-Iranian students. Shahin Fayaz remembers how he used to teach a Quebecois man in Montreal whose Farsi was fluent and who had extensive knowledge of Iranian culture. He currently has an Afghani student (whose language, culture and music are compatible to those of Iran) and a Russian student who is also familiar with Iranian music. Saeed Kamjoo is teaching *kamāncheh* two Canadian women. Elise is married to an Iranian and has travelled to Iran several times. During these trips she even met with and took lessons with Saeed's teacher, a. Akbar Shekarchi. Professor Rosemary Mountain, the other student of Saeed's, is a viola player, composer, musicologist and professor of music at Concordia University. Dr. Mountain taught a course on Iranian and Indian Musical Traditions in the winter of 2014. Kiya Tabassian also asserts that he has taught non-Iranians. He indicates that his teaching method remains the same with non-Iranians. Siamak Nasr says he has over 20 non-Iranian students from various cultures and backgrounds. He customizes his teaching strategy according to the student's familiarity with Iranian music and culture.

**Performing Experiences**

**Performing in Iran: advantages and disadvantages of performing 'at home'.** Almost all the participants began their musical careers after the 1979 Revolution. Those born before the Revolution have recollections of the pre-revolutionary music scene and performing conditions and are thus able to describe the challenges present after the Revolution. The Islamic Republic's conservative policies towards arts and culture, such as prohibition of concerts and music in the first decade after the Revolution and restrictive regulations regarding concert permissions and

album releases, introduced serious challenges for musicians. Despite these obstacles, performing in Iran has its share of advantages. All participants emphasize the value of collaboration and constructive competition with professional, highly-skilled musicians. They also stress the importance of having a semi-professional, demanding audience.

***Performing and recording with prominent musicians and ensembles.*** Six of the participants in this study were accomplished, renowned musicians in Iran at the time of their immigration to Canada. Pooria Pournazeri, Sepideh Raissadat, Shahin Fayaz, Saeed Kamjoo and Siamak Nasr all had dynamic performing and recording careers, collaborating frequently with other prominent musicians, including their own mentors. All six of these interviewees emphasize the importance of such collaborations. They describe the experience as inspiring and invaluable.

Having grown up in a family of prominent musicians, Pooria Pournazeri recounts how, through his uncle and his mentor Keykhosrow Pournazeri, he became acquainted with various musicians and ensembles. As a result, Pooria was invited by his uncle to perform with the *Shams Ensemble*. They toured Iran and recorded an album that became the best-selling album of the decade in the 1990s. In his early 20s, Pooria became involved with the Iranian underground rock scene. Performing with some of the pioneers of underground rock music in Iran meant expanding his musical understanding and repertoire. They toured a number of cities in Iran and recorded several albums, some of which have never been released due to blockage of official permissions.

Shahin Fayaz and Saeed Kamjoo both remember performing with their teachers and colleagues. Shahin recalls playing as a *tār* soloist with the military band during his service, as well as performing on numerous occasions under the direction of Hossein Dehlavi's *Mezrabi Ensemble* (*orkestr-e mezrabi*, literally translated as "the plucked instruments ensemble"). Shahin Fayaz and Saeed Kamjoo, who were friends and colleagues in Iran, established the *Aftab*

*Ensemble* in collaboration with a few other musicians. For both, their performances with the ensemble are among the most creative and treasured performing experiences. Saeed remembers:

> We used to sit as a group of 10-12 musicians and compose together. Everyone would write their own part but it was a real collaboration, everyone inspiring the others. It was such a great experience, one of my best experiences ever! And then I came here in 1997 and I lost all of that! (Kamjoo, 2013)

Sepideh Raissadat was raised in an environment where she was often surrounded by distinguished musicians. As such she recounts having had the privilege of performing and recording with such great artists as Parviz Meshkatian, Arshad Tashmasbi, and Mehdi Azar Sina. Nima Rahmani and Siamak Nasr have also performed and recorded with their mentors, as well as other celebrated colleagues. Siamak Nasr states that, after taking *setār* lessons from Jalal Zolfonoon, he toured with the master's ensemble frequently. They toured in Europe, eastern and southern Asia, and Iran. Nima Rahmani has been performing continuously since he gave his first major performance at age 12. Nima has recorded albums and performed on prestigious concert halls in Iran, as well as touring in Europe and North America with prominent musicians such as Davood Azizi, Pari Maleki, Hesamodin Seraj. He founded his own group named *Sahba Ensemble* with whom he has performed in Europe and Canada.

***Government control: Concert and album release permissions.***[8] In the past 35 years, no musician has had a public performance or released an album in Iran without going through the exhausting process of applying for government permissions. The complexity of the process to apply for concerts depends on the venue and its capacity, but in general requesting permissions for a concert or an album consists of filing an application with the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and The Music Centre. If the group has a singer, the lyrics have to be submitted to a council that overlooks their content. For an album to be released, the musician or

[8] Names of the interviewees were omitted in this section due to the sensitive subject of the discussions.

musicians have to request a recording permission and a specific permission for the release of the album. Even after obtaining those permissions, they can be cancelled just hours prior to the performance and CDs can be collected from the shelves after the release of an album.

One of the interviewees mentions he has recorded at least two albums that were never released and mentions three that are awaiting permissions from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. Describing his performing experiences in Iran, he remembers how the moral police and inspectors from the Ministry would attend the concerts to ensure rules were being followed.

"I came to Canada […] because life was becoming impossible in Iran" another interviewee notes. He remembers being questioned by the intelligence services and police for his concerts inside Iran and abroad. Another interviewee stresses that in Iran he would always leave the responsibility of applying for permissions and the concert logistics in general to others:

> I was never in charge of organizing concerts, never. I was either the [instrumentalist] or the composer of the group and I was always opposed to the idea that the musicians themselves arrange the venue and take care of the permission, marketing, etc.

He postulates that one of his closest friends and mentors who had a fatal heart attack in the studio at the age of 48, succumbed to stress cause by organizing his own concert.

During the interviews participants recalled instances when concert permissions were rescinded days or hours before the concert, even when a distinguished master was scheduled to perform. Interviewees contended that this kind of harassment and interruption would happen to musician regardless of level of success or performance style. One of the interviewees suggests that, for the Iranian authorities, Iranian traditional musicians pose an even greater threat than those involved in the pop music industry[9] or the underground rock scene[10].

[9] Most Iranian pop musicians fled the country after the 1979 Revolution and settled in Los Angeles. Among Iranians, the genre that resulted from this diaspora is known as LA Pop (*Pop-e Los Anegelesi*). After the

*Sepideh Raissadat: The special case of female vocalists in Iran.* Since the 1979 Revolution in Iran and in accordance with the Iranian constitution, women are not allowed to sing where their voice can be heard by men other than their immediate family. As such, female singers are prohibited from having public performances unless performing for a female-only audience indoors. Six of the participants in this study criticize the Iranian government's policy towards female musicians. They emphasize that this attitude has eliminated half of the population from the music scene during the past 35 years. Sepideh Raissadat is the only female musician among the eight participants. Her recollection of experiences offered valuable insight into life as a female singer in Iran. Sepideh remembers her first serious recording project as a singer:

> I was 12 I think. They came to our school and auditioned a few of our classmates. They chose me and we recorded the song. It was the first time I sang in a studio but it didn't get permission to be released or broadcasted I mean I was still a child. But the authorities at the ministry said this is a woman's voice and it won't be permitted to be heard by the public. They said that because I had been training and singing the *radif*, so I didn't sound like a child (Raissadat, 2013).

At age18 Sepideh became the first female singer to give a public performance as a solo singer after the Revolution.

> My first serious and formal work was with Mr. Meshkatiyān. I was 18 when we released an album. Two weeks later we had a concert. We performed for five nights in Niyavaran Cultural centre with *Norouz Ensemble*. The concert was initially scheduled for three nights. To our complete surprise we didn't run into any problems with the authority. So the next weekend we performed for two other nights. We all came on the stage and everyone was carrying an instrument and I was the only one on the stage without an

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government's cultural policies began to relax in the 2000s, pop musicians inside Iran began receiving permission to record and release music that was closer to the style of LA pop. These musicians have been relatively active inside Iran and face fewer challenges than musicians in other genres. For more on Iranian pop music industry, LA Iranian pop music scene and the underground popular music scene in Iran see (Nooshin, The Language of Rock: Iranian Youth, Popular Music, and National Identity, 2008) (Nooshin, "Tomorrow is Ours": Re-imagining Nation, Performing Youth in the New Iranian Pop Music, 2009) (Nooshin, Hip-hop Tehran: Migrating Styles, Musical Meanings, Marginalised Voices, 2011) (Hemmasi, 2010)

[10] The rock and metal bands in Iran do not normally receive permission for a public performance, therefore the concerts are mostly held at underground venues such as basements and country houses. If police learn about these concerts, the musicians and the audience would be arrested and face serious charges.

> instrument; it was clear that I was the singer. There were microphones in front of everyone to pretend that everyone was singing so we wouldn't run into problems in terms of religious laws (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh notes that this was her first and last performance in Iran. After the event, Sepideh Raissadat never received permission for any performances, recordings, or album releases. She sadly remembers having prepared numerous pieces for recording to only be informed that the composer had decided to give the piece to a male singer. Sepideh contends that even though those pieces were not her own compositions, having spent months preparing and rehearsing, she developed a great sense of attachment to the works.

> Sometimes they would try once to get the recording licence. Other times they wouldn't even try! And this behaviour seemed very logical and acceptable to them. I had worked for months on the album and they would come and take this child I'd raised and give it to someone else. Another singer, a male singer would take the piece, the piece that *I* had prepared, record it and then go on a Europe tour with it. Their reason? They told me they'd want their works to be released. I have so many examples like this. I don't even have my own recordings of some of those pieces (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat argues that Iranian musicians are at least partially at fault with regards to the challenges faced today in Iran. It is her opinion that when the Islamic Republic first started enforcing cultural restrictions, had the musicians resisted and demanded more freedom or refused to go on stage without their female colleagues, the situation would not have reached such a dire state. Sepideh recounts some instances of resistance, such as the Kamkar family. The Kamkars, a family of musicians who perform together, refused to go on stage without their sisters, daughters and nieces. However, a collective protest could have led to a complete prohibition of all those musicians from any musical activities. Despite her call for widespread protest, Sepideh recognizes that resistance could have led to a complete prohibition of Iranian traditional music.

> *Some* music is better than none! So maybe it was for the best. They might have saved music in Iran. Maybe we should be thankful that at least some musicians were able to continue working. We never know, and we can never tell for sure (Raissadat, 2013).

***Audience.*** The audience plays a crucial role in the fluidity of a performance. Performing for an enthusiastic and well-informed audience can be empowering for both the performers and the audience. All participants in this study noted that, compared to an audience of expatriates outside of Iran, traditional music is performed for a more appreciative and demanding audience within Iran.

Pooria Pournazeri categorizes his listeners into four groups: 1) the government officials who are present to listen and evaluate; 2) the public, i.e., normal people who like music and attend concerts as a hobby; 3) professional musicians for whom attending performances of their peers is part of their professional development and a form of support for their colleagues; and 4) amateur musicians, for whom those concerts are also a part of their professional development and among their most effective educational opportunities. Pooria mentions how being able to attend such high-quality performances by masters of the art is a privilege, in addition to being a powerful learning opportunity (Pournazeri, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat has officially only performed once in Iran. As mentioned earlier, the concert was originally planned for three nights, but was later extended for two additional nights. Sepideh recounts that, based solely on fear of disruption by government officials or the police, the concert was exclusively advertised among musicians and their students. As a result, for the first three nights the audience contained only professional and amateur musicians. When the news spread and the *Norouz Ensemble* did not face any challenges from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance or the police, the performance was extended and, according to Sepideh, "this time, anyone who had heard about the concert came. The news travelled fast, the venue was packed and there were people sitting up to where the stage was. We had listeners of all kinds and levels!" (Raissadat, 2013)

Shahin Fayaz, while admitting that generally the public attend concerts as a hobby and "just to enjoy themselves", adds that when performing with the *Aftab Ensemble*, their listeners were more advanced:

> With Aftab, our audience was mainly university students. Because the music we were performing was experimental music and sometimes polyphonic Iranian music. I mean it wasn't the kind of music that the public would enjoy or like. […] We wanted to explore. Student concerts are mostly experimental; therefore they attract a particular kind of audience (Fayaz, 2013).

Nima Rahmani posits that the demographics of the audience depend on the genre of music. He notes when he was performing with Davood Azizi, their music was mainly *Khanqah-i* music (music of the Khanqah[11]), thus their audience mainly consisted of dervishes and people who loved Molana (Rumi)'s poetry and the rhythms of *Khanqah-i* music. However, with big acts such as Pari Maleki there would be "a huge variety of audiences" as Nima puts it. He continues: "All kinds of people would go to those performances, because Ms. Maleki has an extensive network."

***Fusion music.*** The most successful attempts at creating fusion music are in time-spaces where artists have enough exposure to and familiarity with various genres of music. The artists need to immerse themselves in the styles they want to fuse and bring them together in the most organic and believable way. Thus, it is less likely for this creative process to occur in societies with strict cultural control and censorship. After the 1979 Revolution, Iran saw great socio-political instability that was caused by the post-Revolution upheavals, as well as eight years of war. The government's cultural policy during this time can be best described by the revolutionaries' slogan "not the West, nor the East, just the Islamic Republic". Such cultural

[11] Khanqah (also Kanaqah) is an Islamic institution and physical establishment, principally reserved for Sufi dervishes to meet, reside, study, and assemble and pray together as a group in the presence of a Sufi master (Arabic, šay<u>k</u>, Persian, pir), who is teacher, educator, and leader of the group (Encyclopaedia Iranica).

policy means promote religious nationalism while discouraging traces of the 'other' within the country's cultural fabric.

The government's socio-cultural policies loosened to some extent after Khatami became president in 1997. As a result of an improved economy and more open foreign policy, Iran began interacting to a greater extent with the rest of the world. The first attempts to create fusion music occurred in the late 1990s and the early 2000s. As such, fusion music is fairly young in Iran and has yet to reach its maturity. Some of the participants in this study (Nima Rahmani, Siamak Nasr and Pooria Pournazeri) talked about their experiments with fusion music in Iran.

Siamak Nasr's introduction to fusion music began after he started touring with the late J. Zolfonun. He recounts improvisational performances and jam sessions with local musicians while on tour in India and Singapore. Although none of those performances occurred in Iran, his extended stays in India have influenced his future musical career greatly. In particular, Siamak Nasr speaks about an artist residence close to Delhi where accommodation, food and other facilities are provided by the Indian government for six months to a year to artists of various mediums. He says, "We had to compose, improvise and work together with other musicians, learn about Indian music and culture and create music. So we were rehearsing and working together for the duration of our stay" (Nasr, 2013). To him, such investment in promoting a country's culture and art is a notable example for the Iranian government to follow.

Nima Rahmani has played a fusion of various styles of music within the Iranian culture such as Iranian traditional, folk and *Khanqah*-i music. With his own ensemble, Nima has experimented more. He indicates that sometimes he would borrow instruments from other genres or musical traditions (such as using *divān*[12] in his ensemble after being introduced to it in a

[12] *Divan* is a plucked string instrument whose origin is in Turkey and it belongs to the larger family of *bağlama* instruments.

concert in Turkey) and introducing intervals and modes from other styles such as jazz, African jazz, etc. However, he stresses that:

> The fusion music we played in Iran was very amateur. I was young and inexperienced. I wanted to explore Iranian music's capabilities. I was curious to see how I could use elements of our music alongside other genres. I did get some interesting results too. For instance, I recorded a duet for *santoor* and *doudouk* with Mr. Gasparyan in Chahargāh (Rahmani, 2013).

Alternatively, Pooria Pournazeri was introduced to the underground world of rock music in Iran during his early 20s. He learned to play drums and other percussion instruments. With these rock bands Pooria performed live and recorded albums in Iran. Some of those performances and recordings received official permissions and while others were held back from distribution and released underground. During the interview, Pooria emphasizes having been exposed to a wide variety of styles and genres of music since early childhood and stresses that he has always been open to ideas and inspirations as long as they helped improve the creative process of music making.

**Performing in Canada.** The participants differ in the degree to which they engage in performing activities. All participants stress that settling in one's new country is a lengthy process; therefore, musicians usually find stable performing opportunities only after they were able to establish themselves amongst their expatriates and eventually within the broader community. Among the participants, those who have lived in Canada longer demonstrate a higher degree of confidence in pursuing their profession that can be attributed to their familiarity with various aspects of the concert-organizing process.

Overall, it is clear that Iranian immigrant musicians expand their choices in performing venues, repertoire and audience members, as they settle in their new society and broaden their views. Of course, such developments depend on the individual's personality. Notable differences

between participants were inferred from the ways in which they stated their goals and future plans; some are more focused on the local population (Shahin Fayaz, Siamak Nasr), while others are pursuing an international career (Kiya Tabassian, Sepideh Raissadat).

***Finding performance opportunities.***

*First performances.* Upon arrival in their new country, immigrants usually reach out to the community of their expatriates for emotional support and to help with the first steps of settling. All participants report that they contacted the Iranian musicians who were already in the city of their residence shortly after arrival (some of the participants stated they communicated with the Iranian musician community before arriving in Canada). In fact, in all cases the participant's first performance in Canada was with an Iranian musician or ensemble that was already established to some extent. Some participants state they later parted ways with those colleagues and do not belong to the same circle of artists anymore. This happens predominantly when the artists have fundamental differences in musical taste, style of expertise, the audience they target, and their general attitude towards a musical career. However, even in such cases participants acknowledge how those first performances initiated their careers in Canada.

In Montreal, Kiya Tabassian is among the Iranian musicians who have been in Canada the longest. Kiya came to Canada in 1991 and is now the artistic director of Constantinople, an ensemble as well as what Kiya refers to as a "non-for profit, artistic organization" (Tabassian, 2013). Kiya has supported and mentored many Iranian musicians when they first arrived in Montreal. Among the participants in this study, Pouria Pournazeri, Saeed Kamjoo and Shahin Fayaz launched their musical careers in Canada with the help of Kiya. Pouria Pournazeri, for instance, indicates that he contacted Kiya before arriving in Montreal. His first performance in Montreal was part of Constantinople's seasonal concerts. Eventually Pouria met Saeed Kamjoo

and Peyman Sayyadi (a singer and *tanbour* player residing in Montreal) and had performances with them.

For Kiya himself, support came from Mr. Davari, a well-respected musician in the Iranian community in both Montreal and Toronto whose musical activities (teaching and performing) have declined in the past decade.[13] Kiya remembers contacting Mr. Davari shortly after he arrived in Montreal with his family:

> … when we came here, we didn't know anyone, no family or friends. One day we walked into an Iranian store and we saw an Iranian journal. Mr. Davari had an advertisement there, for music lessons and an ensemble. I told my dad let's go and see what's going on there. Se we met him, he asked me to play for him and then invited me to join his ensemble (Tabassian, 2013).

*Performing with Iranian musicians from Iran and around the world.* Another performance opportunity for the participants appears when their peers, either from Iran or other parts of the world, organize concerts in Canada. These performances are sometimes scheduled as part of a tour or as individual concerts. As prominent musicians, all participants are connected with the broader community of distinguished Iranian musicians around the world and as such they reported having performed with their peers in Canada. Examples of statements made to this effect include:

> …and once my cousin, Siavash Nazeri[14] came to Montreal and we had two concerts here in Montreal… (Pournazeri, 2013).

> … for the concerts of Iranian music, I like to perform with a friend of mine, a *tonabk* player, Pedram Khavar Zamini. But he does not live in Canada, so bringing him here for the concert is expensive. It becomes a big expensive project, for which we need to advertise and attract any kind of audience to the venue, to be able to sell the tickets and pay for the performers' expenses at least (Salek, 2013).

> During all these years we've been here, we've kept our connections to Iranian musicians around the world and especially in Iran. For example, Ziya (Kiya's brother and a member

[13] The researcher has not been able to contact Mr. Davari, although interviewing him was strongly suggested by the participants.

[14] Siavash Nazeri is the nephew of Ostad Shahram Nazeri and an accomplished singer and Daf player who was mentored by his uncle.

> of the Constantinople) has worked with Keyvan Kalhor on a few of his recordings with the Kronos Quartet and the Silk Road Projects. We have also collaborated with Siamak Aghaei, Ali Samad Pour, there are others too… (Tabassian, 2013).

> My solo performances and lectures aside, I'll talk about the ensembles I've played with. Iran's National Orchestra, conducted by Kamal Taravati, I've been their *santoor* player for 10 years, since 2003. Some say it's a weak ensemble some say it's good. I don't care about that; I only do this because of Mr. Kamal Taravati. Mr. Taravati has done so much and taken a lot of trouble to put this ensemble together. For that reason, any time he asks me to play for him, I will do it wholeheartedly. […] We had a concert with Alireza Ghorbani here in Toronto; a concert with Homāy in Roy Thomson Hall; with Vesāl Ensemble; with Arjang and others we performed in Tirgan Festival (Rahmani, 2013).

Saeed Kamjoo states that he has performed with his friends from Europe and California, friends he met when he was still in Iran, or through collaborations with other musicians. For Sepideh Raissadat, her first official concert in Canada was with a distinguished *tār* player, Hamid Motebassem. They performed in Toronto and Montreal in October 2012. Their concert in Montreal was scheduled as part of the Festival du Monde Arab.

Except for Siamak Nasr, whose network of musicians is separate from the other participants, almost all other participants have performed with each other. Nima Rahmani, Araz Salek, Saeed Kamjoo and Shahin Fayaz have performed with each other on more than one occasion, and Saeed Kamjoo, Shahin Fayaz, Pouria Pournazeri and Sepideh Raissadat have all performed with Kiya Tabassian.

*Expanding the network, finding more opportunities.* As the immigrant musicians settle in their new home country, they expand their networks. Those who are more motivated to engage with Canadian society improve their language skills and attend local concert, jam sessions and gatherings of musicians and artists. They explore various venues and opportunities beyond the Iranian community, such as music festivals, cultural centers, concert halls and cafés. Finally, they learn about applying for local, provincial, and federal grants.

Araz Salek recounts many performances at cafés and jazz bars in downtown Toronto with musicians of various cultural backgrounds. “I’ve played music with Mexican musicians and have recorded CDs with them. I’ve played with Indian and Indonesian musicians. I’ve done jazz, free jazz, free improv. I even have a hip-hop experience” (Salek, 2013). Araz stresses that all those performances took place in downtown Toronto, not in the Iranian neighbourhood. He also remembers performing with a renowned chamber music society in Mississauga, Ontario. The show was a story-telling session for children and a large scale program that extended into four days, with two performances per day in a 1200-seat hall (Salek, 2013).

Kiya Tabassian has developed a notable network both locally and internationally since arriving in Canada. He notes that as his French gradually improved, and especially after he attended Conservatoire de Montreal to study composition, he established productive relationships with his colleagues and peers in Quebec, as well as visiting artists from around the world. Kiya emphasizes that he has always been interested in new ideas and musical challenges. His enthusiasm has fostered an extensive network of international musicians who collaborate with the Constantinople ensemble in their seasonal concerts, both in Canada and around the world. Kiya states that almost all of their projects are realized through municipal, provincial, or federal grants from agencies such as the Canada Council for Arts (Tabassian, 2013).

Saeed Kamjoo recalls forming an ensemble with some members of the Constantinople ensemble, including Kiya Tabassian. He explains that for those three to four years, while he was constantly performing and touring, (with friends from Europe and the United States, as well as with Constantinople), he could earn a living as a musician. Generally, he notes that musicians predominantly have another job in an unrelated field to be able to support themselves:

> Although our music is sort of exotic for people here, I mean Canadians and Quebecois, but still…it’s not easy to enter the local network. You know… there are a lot of artists

> and musicians here, there is so much competition. But there is this established Montreal musician community. They've gone to school together. They've known each other for years, even decades. And we come here and expect what? Yes, our music is *interesting and exotic* for them. But how long would that last? The most important issue is the language barrier. We have to improve our French if we want to survive as musicians. Even as a *person* you need to exist in the society, if they take away your instrument you have to be able to communicate and talk to them. In a gathering of musicians they play music for 30 minutes. The rest is socializing and networking… (Kamjoo, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat suggests that Montreal is a more sympathetic city for immigrant musicians than Toronto:

> The situation is different in Montreal though. It's better in Montreal in my opinion. I was only in Montreal for a year and I wasn't very active. I was busy with TOEFL exams and classes. But from what I saw, there are a few festivals where Eastern music is presented and performed, and Iranian musicians perform as part of those festivals. For instance the performance we had in Montreal in October was part of the Festival du Monde Arab. But as far as I have searched here, I haven't found anything like that in Toronto (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh argues that when an Iranian musician intends to organize a concert, they have no choice but to approach Iranian organizers.

> Because nobody knows about us, about our music and no one is aware of our presence here. When I want to have a concert I *have to* talk to an Iranian organizer. We don't have much of a presence on the Canadian musical scenes or festivals (Raissadat, 2013).

She contends that she is trying to bridge the gap by finding performing opportunities outside of the Iranian community, preparing brochures in both Farsi and English, and introducing the pieces and the poems in English to the audience.

According to Shahin Fayaz it is easier to find performing opportunities in Toronto than Montreal.

> In Montreal, everyone knows Constantinople but they don't play Iranian music! We could even reach into the non-Iranian community in Toronto. And we could communicate easier. In Montreal I can say at least I couldn't do that! I don't know why… they didn't let me in their circles. One problem in Montreal is the language barrier, French. [he laughs] Well, my French was not good! But in general Montreal's music community was unwelcoming, they wouldn't let you in! (Fayaz, 2013)

Shahin adds that with the *Sarv Ensemble* he has had frequent performances in small cafés and galleries. He is happy to report that those performances have been successful.

***Audience.*** Except for Kiya Tabassian, who immigrated to Canada as a teenager, and Sepideh Raissadat, who was only able to perform once in Iran, all other participants have had thriving performing careers in Iran. They argue that their audiences in Iran had higher standards and had a better understanding of music in general. To them, having professional or semi-professional musicians in the audience encourages creativity and persuades the performers to improve. Nima Rahmani observes a great difference between his audience in Iran and in Canada:

> Here, our audience is 80 percent non-musicians. In Iran it's the opposite. In Iran, most of our audience is[15]… not necessarily musicians, but they're artists. Not here. In my opinion, people who come to concerts [here] are not musicians but they are music lovers and come to support (Rahmani, 2013).

Similarly Araz Salek complains about the Iranian audience's understanding of music outside of Iran:

> The Iranian community wants nostalgia. They don't want or expect creativity from you as an artist, at least not in music. They want you to give them what they used to listen to before they immigrated. They want you to re-create their memories for them. And what *they* like is not necessarily what you are creating currently. They don't appreciate novelty and this kills creativity in you as an artist, as a musician (Salek, 2013).

He adds that for his more experimental performances at cafés and jazz bars in downtown Toronto, he invites friends but generally finds that Iranians do not attend those shows. When asked why that is, he responded, "I can't bring that kind of music to the Iranian community! They will throw tomatoes at me! They don't understand or like that kind of experimental music" (Salek, 2013).

In general, participants observe that when performing Iranian music, a significant majority of their audiences are Iranians. However, the more the music becomes experimental or

[15] Nima Rahmani continues to perform in Iran with his colleagues.

fused with other styles, the audience becomes more diversified, includes more Canadians, and loses its conventional Iranian population. For instance, Pouria Pournazeri states that when performing with Constantinople, whose style tends to be more fusion, the audience was mostly Quebecois, not Iranians. Kiya Tabassian notes that at the beginning of his performing career, he played only Iranian traditional music and the audiences were predominantly Iranian. As he expanded his network and diversified his repertoire, he realized that half of his listeners were Iranians and the rest were other Montreal music lovers. Shahin Fayaz explains that for their performances in small cafés and galleries, they try to create an intimate experience with their audience who are mostly non-Iranian. He adds:

> Kousha[16] suggested that if we perform Iranian traditional music, I mean authentic and pure Iranian traditional music, we would attract more Canadians and more audience in general than if we make fusions with other kinds of music. We tried that and we actually saw that was true! We had a series of small performances in cafés or galleries downtown Toronto. We wanted to create an intimate experience for our audience, so there are no microphones, we keep the lights low, the audience would be sitting on the floor, close to us, we would also sit on the floor; we began with seven-eight listeners. And in our last performances of that kind, we had 70-80 listeners (Fayaz, 2013).

Shahin adds that the Iranians who attend these smaller shows are mainly university students who are more open to novel experiences. He continues:

> But as for our concerts with the *Sarv Ensemble,* we perform Iranian music, and only recently we've been having non-Iranians attending our concerts. But that's because Kousha has a broader network of friends and colleagues that include non-Iranians. He invites those people from university, you know, York music department and other places, which we appreciate (Fayaz, 2013).

Sepideh Raissadat intends to attract both Iranians and non-Iranians to her performances for different reasons:

> I would love to have Iranians in my audience! That is something I really missed in Italy because as much as they loved my music and they listened to it with all their heart, they couldn't understand what I was singing, the words. And I'm sure they couldn't relate to

[16] Kousha Nakahei is a young Iranian Kamancheh and violin player who immigrated to Canada with his family as a teenager. He is the co-founder of the Sarv Ensemble and the Sarv Music Academy.

> many aspects of my music (which is possible for an Iranian listener too). So I'm really thrilled to have Iranian audience; but at the same time, I feel non-Iranians should be able to benefit from our music and take advantage of our cultural presence in this society. So I intended for my concert to be downtown so it could be accessible to everyone. The concert was held in a church. Many Iranians don't like this idea; they feel uncomfortable in that kind of a setting for a concert. I wanted my classmates and teachers to be able to come to the concert and enjoy it. The program was in English. I introduced the concert in two languages myself (Raissadat, 2013).

Sepideh strongly believes that it is the responsibility of Iranian musicians to organize the concerts in a way that is accessible for a more diverse audience. In her opinion, this is the more effective way we can introduce our music and culture to the world.

***Repertoire.*** It is inferred from the interviews that all participants perform mainly Iranian music when collaborating with their Iranian peers in Canada. However, they appreciate the opportunities that living in a multicultural society offers them. As such, all participants, except Sepideh Raissadat, reported performing fusion music.

Pouria Pournazeri has performed lullabies from around the world with an Iranian-American singer and musicians, Azam Ali. With Constantinople they performed compositions of Kiya Tabassian and Pouria in Iranian traditional style, while with his cousin, Siavash Nazeri, they performed Siavash's compositions (Pournazeri, 2013). At the time of the interview in the summer of 2013, these were Pouria's only performing experiences in Montreal. However, in the summer of 2014, Pouria Pournazeri, Saeed Kamjoo, Ziya Tabassian and Aditya Verma (an Indian *sitar* player) performed in Moyse Hall as part of the Festival Accès Asie. Two weeks later he participated in another fusion concert with Constantinople in Montreal's Botanic Garden.

Araz Salek contends he has performed and had jam sessions with musicians of numerous genres, styles and cultural backgrounds. He refers to the music they performed as "experimental improvised music with no harmony, and no easy rhythm to follow", and continues:

> This is where the actual dialogue happens, because you have a different approach to your own instrument. You can't do your normal thing, you're listening to the other player(s),

> and you're playing accordingly. But in such a performance, the instrument distances itself from its historical background, it parts from its identity as *tār*, as an Iranian instrument with that specific repertoire; it enters another space (not just my instrument, but all instruments used in a fusion performance/production) and the instrument is used as a sound-making tool, in a discrete and abstract sense (Salek, 2013).

When he first began performing within the Iranian community in Montreal, Kiya Tabassain exclusively chose his pieces from the Iranian traditional repertoire. At the Conservatoire de Montreal, Kiya met Mike Cole, an American Lute player who was interested in Renaissance music. Later Mike joined Constantinople and together the two began studying old manuscripts, looking for compositional inspirations for the ensemble:

> Mike and I used to bring the pieces. We mostly selected the pieces and then arranged them for our ensemble. We would go to libraries and find manuscripts and re-arrange them for ourselves. […] Most of our pieces were European; Medieval and Renaissance pieces mostly. Some were from the French and Italian Medieval repertoire, and some from the French and Spanish Renaissance music. Some of the pieces were monadic, or when they're polyphonic, they're only written with a basso continuo line. But it was clear to us that the melody was an improvisatory line over the bass. On the other hand, in the monadic pieces there is a written melody line that is meant to keep the melodic course, but we would take liberty with the ornamentations and to decide how to improvise on a given bass line or how to elaborate a melody we would mostly borrow and derive ideas from Iranian music. So these were Constantinople's first projects (Tabassian, 2013).

Constantinople still collaborates with a wide variety of instrumentalists and singers from diverse backgrounds, including Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern, North African and Sephardic, to name a few.

Shahin Fayaz recounts two types of performances with different repertoires. The performances that are in cafés or galleries in downtown Toronto are divided into two parts. The first part consists of solo or duets by Shahin and Kousha (and sometimes other colleagues from the *Sarv Ensemble*):

> … and in the second part, a Canadian friend, who is really interested in Iranian literature, tells Iranian stories in English while Kousha and I play Iranian music. For instance, he tells the stories like *Sheykh-e San'ān*, *Haft Peykar* (famous Iranian myths and stories). And the audience enjoys it a lot, especially Canadians! (Fayaz, 2013)

Performing this kind of a program for non-Iranian audiences is an appropriate choice. This is especially true because the non-Iranian audience, who are interested in learning about the Iranian musical culture, will be acquainted with one of the main characteristics of Iranian traditional music, which is to create intimate spaces between the performers and listeners where music accompanies Persian poetry and literature.

***Performing fusion music, Canadian multiculturalism.*** When asked about their performing repertoire, participants presented differing opinions about fusion music. For some, like Pouria Pournazeri, Siamak Nasr and Nima Rahmani, experimenting with other styles and musical cultures had begun in Iran, while others introduced this practice to their music as a result of living in multicultural cities like Montreal or Toronto. To that effect, participants' attitudes on fusion music offers insight into different schools of thought that currently exist within the broader Iranian music community.

Saeed Kamjoo believes that currently there is too much emphasis on harmonizing Iranian music, especially in ensembles. He suggests instrumentalists employ too many passages and arpeggios that resemble Western classical style and that they do so in order to be able to perform in ensembles with Western instruments:

> This is becoming problematic. I mean the discourse in Western music is fundamentally different from Iranian music. In Western music, for the purpose of that style and to convey its specific discourse, you need specific technical skills. The musician has to reach a certain level of technicality. So it's out of the context when you take those virtuosic passages and arpeggios and play them in the Iranian traditional repertoire. They do not necessarily belong there. But the thing is that something happened *inside* our music. Our society was changing [in the 1980s and 90s], the age demographics were changing. The new generation wanted new material. So to attract more listeners, our musicians began introducing polyphony and speed into their compositions. Yes our music became more technical but it lost its soulfulness. And the same thing is happening with today's fusion music. Most of it is superficial. Juxtaposition at best! (Kamjoo, 2013)

Sepideh Raissadat states that she has very rarely performed fusion music, although she has been trained in various styles (including jazz and opera) and has performed repertoire from around the world.

> I have sung many different musics from many different places around the world, be it Italian music, French, Turkish Ottoman music, Arabic music, etc. But I have always tried to learn *their* music. I have tried to sing like them, instead of trying to fuse our music with theirs or take elements and aspects of their music and fuse it with ours (Raissadat, 2013).

In Kiya Tabassian's opinion, "All kinds of music are fusion", he continues:

> When we started with Constantinople, the idea was for each of us to draw elements, techniques and improvisational material from our own genres and try to fuse them together and see what happens. […] Well, it would end up being somewhat fusion, but every music is fusion. There is no non-fusion music. In my opinion every music that appears from the mind of any musician/composer, has the influences of everything that the artist has experienced, listened to, or been exposed to in their life. All those elements are fused and combined together in their works (Tabassian, 2013).

Conversely, Araz Salek is strongly opposed to the idea of the term 'multiculturalism':

> Multiculturalism happens when there is a dialogue among people. But it is just a branding tool, for getting grants, or for producers who claim they want the dialogue between east and west to happen. I take issue with it. It doesn't mean anything if you ask me. I mean… Cultures don't meet, people do! My culture is not an entity, to be able to have a dialogue or discourse with another culture. I'm Araz Salek, I'm an individual, not the/a representative of Iranian culture. An individual can have a dialogue, musical or non-musical, with another individual. So to put the multicultural label on anything is to make it marketable, is to sell it. It is used to sell a concert, a city (like Toronto)… It's absurd! (Salek, 2013)

Both Araz and Sepideh assert that although Toronto is labelled as the most multicultural city in the world, in reality every ethnic minority has their own neighbourhood and they rarely interact. Araz adds "Life, even here in Toronto, is pretty segregated. Yes, they all live in a larger entity called Toronto, but within that they're divided" (Salek, 2013). He suggests that one can witness the same issue with most fusion music that is created in the city too, a juxtaposition of musicians from different cultural backgrounds.

**Summary**

The sample chosen for this study was limited in terms of the number of interviewees, their age, gender and the time they have spent in Canada. Specifically, the age limit of the participants needs to be addressed as it could have impacted the results reported in this chapter. As mentioned in the first chapter, the participants' age ranged from about 30-45. This means that these musicians received their musical education predominantly in the late 1970's through the 1980's and as such they have been significantly influenced by the same political and socio-cultural events. Almost all interviewees immigrated to Canada in the 2000's (except for Kiya Tabassian, who arrived in 1991). Being from roughly the same age range and moving to Canada around the same time means that interviewees had very similar experiences before and after immigration. However, as the most recent wave of immigration from Iran has occurred mainly since the early 2000's, I would argue that the experiences of participants in the current study are representative of most Iranian immigrant musicians whose area of expertise is Iranian traditional music. It has to be noted that although it was brought to my attention that a few musicians from the previous generation live in Montreal and Toronto, and in spite of my numerous attempts in contacting those musicians (who most probably immigrated to Canada immediately after the 1979 Revolution), I was not able to speak with any of them. It is my understanding that they are no longer active members of the community.

I believe the results discussed in this chapter reveal important issues that need to be addressed and can be cautiously generalized to a broader population of Iranian traditional musicians outside of Iran. Loss of consistent stimulating contact with a professional community of peers is among the participants' eminent concerns. Furthermore, teaching mostly beginner

students and those with time constraints affects the musicians' motivation to a great extent, as it was asserted by almost all participants in this study.

The next chapter will present a final discussion of the findings. This report will then conclude with recommendations for future research that have stemmed from my research.

# Chapter 5: Concluding Discussion and Future Research

This study investigated change and continuity in the performing and teaching practices of Iranian immigrant musicians in Canada. In the course of the research, the participants' invaluable contributions informed the development of more in-depth, and at times new, research questions. To conclude this thesis I will present a final discussion of my principal findings, and will offer answers to the previously detailed research questions. I will then state the questions that arose as a result of the present study. This chapter will end with suggestions for future research.

## Opportunities and Challenges

**A multicultural society: opportunities to explore.** When asked about their reasons for coming to Canada, all participants responded that whether immigration was their own choice or their parents' (in the case of Kiya Tabassian), they came hoping for a better life, both personally and professionally. Like most other immigrants, participants in the present study came to Canada in search of opportunities they did not believe were attainable in their own country. Of course each individual had their personal 'wish list', but it was inferred from the interviews that they all appreciated the possibility of meeting and collaborating with musicians from different cultures, as well as having relatively easy access to concerts and festivals of music from various genres, styles and cultures.

It is important to note that although such access is easily attainable for citizens of the Western world, it is not part of everyday life in Iran. Crippling sanctions imposed on the Iranian people for more than three decades, and the rule of a religious government with conservative cultural policies, meant limited and controlled cultural-artistic interactions with the rest of the world. It is for these experiences and the prospect of fruitful opportunities in Canada that Iranian musicians are full of gratitude and hope upon their arrival in Canada. One of the main purposes

of this research was to determine whether the interviewees' hopes and expectations for life in Canada were realized.

Immigrants differ in the degree to which they integrate into the host society. Some keep closer ties with the community of their expatriates and even remain physically in the same neighbourhoods, while others prefer to integrate, and become part of the broad community. Both tendencies were found among the musicians I interviewed. My conclusion is that the determining factor is the personality of the individual. In other words, if one seeks to expand their network and broaden their repertoire, both Montreal and Toronto offer numerous opportunities. All participants in this study, with the exception of Sepideh Raissadat, have experimented with fusion music to some extent since moving to Canada. Sepideh clearly emphasized that she prefers to perform pure Iranian music and not to fuse it with other musical cultures.

Of note, I found that the unfamiliarity of Canadian society with Iranian traditional music was an essential element that encouraged the musicians to experiment with fusion music. Furthermore, performing a genre of music that is not developed specifically for their principle instruments offers the musician a sense of freedom and, as described by the participants, an excitement to explore the capabilities and limitations of the instrument beyond their Iranian traditions. The degree to which they participate in such performances (or jam sessions) depends on their level of comfort with the broader musical community as well as on their personalities.

**Away from home.** For a musical tradition to develop and flourish, the practitioners of that tradition need to be surrounded with the culture that gave birth to the music. The interviewees repeatedly assert that lacking the companionship of their *ostad*s meant missing valuable learning opportunities. Furthermore, a notable advantage of a musical career in Iran is constructive and inspiring collaboration and stimulating competition with a significantly larger

population of highly-skilled professional Iranian musicians. As stated by all participants, this dynamic environment is difficult to achieve outside of Iran, due to the prohibitive financial cost of gathering musicians from around the world.

**An exotic musical tradition?** Performing Iranian traditional music outside of Iran poses particular challenges to the practitioners of this genre of music. Although, as stated by the interviewees, this music is still exotic and interesting to non-Iranian audiences, it remains relatively unknown outside the country. In comparison to other, nonetheless closely related, musical cultures, such as North Indian and Turkish musics, Iranian music is significantly less present and researched around the world. Consequently musicians have fewer performing opportunities. To tackle this problem, some decided to attract a more diverse population of listeners by presenting a modified version of Iranian music, fused with other more familiar musical cultures or styles, while others preferred to educate their audiences about authentic Iranian music.

**Educating the non-Iranian audience.** One recurring issue in all interviews was that in concerts of Iranian music, the non-Iranian audience is not able to fully appreciate the performance due to the absence of concert programs. When brochures are printed, the information is presented only in Farsi. As stressed by all participants, educating the audience about the genre of music, the instruments, the *dastgah* in which the pieces are presented, as well as the importance of poetry in Iranian traditional music are all need to be addressed. Advertising the performances beyond the Iranian community is the first and primary means of promoting the music.

**The Iranian audience and nostalgia.** Music is a powerful means through which diasporas re-construct elements of the life they had in their homelands. As such, concerts of

music from the country of origin mainly serve as nostalgic reminders, with all the conservative implications that necessarily follow. Recent studies of the Iranian diaspora (Hemmasi, 2010; Yaghoubi, 2013) indicate how Iranian audiences' concert attendance is strongly influenced by their desire to re-connect to the past. Participants in the present study expressed concerns regarding their audience's motivation for attending concerts. They emphasized how performing for a more appreciative and demanding audience (like in Iran), encourages the musicians in their creative process. In general, participants observe that when performing Iranian music, a significant majority of their audiences are Iranians, and that a majority of those Iranians attend the concert "out of feelings of nostalgia". The nostalgic audience attends in order to hear old music and does not necessarily appreciate creativity. Consequently, adapting to the musical environment of Canada means growing accustomed to the regrettable absence of a critical audience for Iranian traditional music.

Increased experiments and fusion with other styles or musical cultures leads to diversification of the audience. Thus, the question arises whether fusion concerts are proper opportunities for introducing Iranian music to Canadian audiences. If Iranian musicians are to do so, the audience needs to be informed and educated about the musical style that is being presented. In other words, as stressed by musicians I interviewed, it is important for the non-Iranian audience to differentiate between authentic Iranian music and the fusion of this music with other genres and musical cultures.

**Teaching Iranian traditional music in Canada.** One of the main purposes of the present study was to investigate whether Iranian musicians had to modify their teaching methods and material after coming to Canada. I anticipated new teaching methods and material being developed for the non-Iranian student population. The findings indicated, however, that a

significant majority of the participants' students were Iranian. In fact, most interviewees reported having taught only 2-3 non-Iranian students since their arrival in Montreal. Siamak Nasr was the only participant with a different experience, who reported having as many as 20 non-Iranian students attending his music institute. Furthermore, participants asserted that their non-Iranian students were already interested in and familiar with Iranian culture and music to a great extent (some were fluent in Farsi). As such, they did not need to treat the lessons differently than if it were given with an Iranian student.

A further unexpected finding was that participants were more concerned about their Iranian students compared to their highly motivated non-Iranian students. Teaching students who are mainly beginners, have no aspiration of becoming professional musicians, and have little time to dedicate to music, was worrisome for most participants. Most interviewees expressed great dismay that they had to adjust their teaching methods as well as their expectations because of their students' time and motivation constraints. Shahin Fayaz was the only one who reported a more pleasant teaching experience in Canada than in Iran. On the subject of student motivation, Shahin, amongst others, believes it is the teacher's responsibility to instil passion and dedication in their students. Just as re-connecting to their past motivates the Iranian diaspora to attend concerts, the same feeling of nostalgia seems to be a determining factor for them to attempt music lessons in the genre of Iranian traditional music. Although for many musicians it is not ideal to teach those whose main incentive is to re-create the past, participants seemed to gradually become more flexible and accommodating of their students' situation. As such, they tried to motivate their students by increasing their exposure to music. This includes playing duets with the students during lessons, forming small ensembles and organizing small student concerts,

and establishing music clubs where members of the community are invited to listen and to discuss music together.

**How to promote Iranian music in Canada.** Two questions that need to be answered when promoting Iranian music outside of Iran are: Who represents Iranian culture and music? How is this musical tradition being presented to the world outside of Iran? The issue of authenticity is in question. Preserving Iranian music has been the priority of its practitioners for centuries. For Iranian traditional musicians, the art, comprising a musical tradition that has been closely controlled by rulers and neglected by a majority of Iranian society, needs to be protected and authentically presented to the world. Yet, the artists' concern that the world does not know about this musical tradition and therefore is not interested seems to develop a vicious cycle. Unfamiliarity with and, as a result, lack of interest in this music among Canadian audiences means low attendance at concerts of Iranian music. But while fusing the music with other genres and musical cultures attracts a more diverse audience it prevents one from hearing authentic Iranian music. The audience therefore, will leave the concert hall without appropriate knowledge of the music.

The following recommendations have developed as a result of this study and from my personal experiences as an Iranian-Canadian. Growing up in Iran, my cultural identity was predominantly shaped within that society. Now in Canada, I believe my understanding of the musical tradition of my country of origin can help a broader audience appreciate this rich, complicated yet relatively unknown music. These suggestions have either been directly raised by participants of the present study or were the results of analysis of data and my role as a participant observer in the field.

- **Language barrier, engaging with the broader Canadian community.** Being able to communicate fluently and easily in one of the official languages of Canada significantly affects the level to which musicians are engaged with Canadian society. The limitations include inhibiting facile collaboration with other musicians, organization of concerts in venues outside the Iranian community, instruction of non-Iranian students, and coordination of opportunities for performance before diverse audiences.
- **Concert advertisement.** Performances of Iranian music must be advertised outside of the Iranian community and must target a more diverse population. Advertisements need to include detailed contextual information about the music that is being performed.
- **Educating the audiences.** Concert organizers (whether or not they are from the Iranian community) need to prepare detailed concert programs that explain the style of music, instruments, poems with English and/or French translations and other related information about the concert. This information, in addition to concert etiquette in Iranian culture, can also be presented by a member of the ensemble or one of the organizers before the concert. It is also helpful to have a list of websites or books in the program for further information about the music.
- **Promoting research on Iranian music in universities.** The growing body of research on Iranian music, both inside and outside of Iran, shows an increase in interest in the subject. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, however, I faced a consistent shortage of sources on Iranian traditional music. Promoting research in universities around the world on this musical tradition would not only attract Iranian musicians and scholars to collaborate with researchers outside of Iran, but it would also present a variety of perspectives to this growing body of research. This in turn would aid the practitioners of

a musical tradition that has existed for centuries to discover and comprehend its characteristics.

**Questions Arising from the Present Research: Areas for Future Research**

I started this project with an ambitious list of research questions. During the course of collecting and analyzing data I realized that not only were many of those questions beyond the scope this thesis, but also that new issues were being raised yet to be discussed by researchers. I believe that by providing a summary of these issues I can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Iranian music, the role of its practitioners outside of Iran and the ways in which this music is being presented and represented.

This research focused on the practitioners of Iranian traditional music. What I believe needs to be discussed by scholars is the other side of the musical relationship, namely the audience and the students. A recurring theme during the interviews was that all transformations in the participants' performing and teaching practices in Canada occurred because of a significantly different clientele in Iran and in Canada. As such I believe it is important to investigate both the Iranian and non-Iranian concert audiences as well as students who take lessons on an Iranian instrument (including voice lessons).

After carefully considering where the attention of investigators could be best directed, I believe that we as a community of researchers could make great strides in the following topics. I would suggest that future research should focus on the role of music in the lives of the Iranian diaspora, looking at:

- What genres and styles of music do they listen to and why;
- The role of music in dealing with the pain of displacement/integration;

- Whether the musical choices change as the individual/community gradually integrates into their new society;
- How active participation in cultural/artistic activities of the homeland differ from passive ones? (taking music lessons being an example of an active participation and attending concerts being an example of a passive participation).

From a more ethnomusicological perspective it would be interesting to look at:

- A comparison between the musicians' interpretations and expressivity, their phrasing and nuances, improvisational techniques etc. in Iran and in Canada, to compare recordings or live performances;
- A more in-depth analysis of music lessons, including quantitative methods that focus on the length of the lessons, amount of time dedicated to each task during the lesson (technique, method books, teaching *radif*, teaching improvisation etc.) and amount of time that the students dedicate to practicing.

## Appendix A

*Interview Question Guide*

The following interview questions are based upon those as found in H. Schippers "Facing the Music: Shaping Music Education from a Global Perspective" (2009).

These questions will serve only as a starting point for the interviews.

Interview questions:

1. Can you tell me something about your own musical history:

    1.1. Earliest remembered musical experiences?

    1.2. Beginning to learn music, formally or informally?

    1.3. Any formal music training in your area of expertise?

    1.4. Any musical training in other traditions?

    1.5. From whom or where did you learn music?

    1.6. How many teachers have you had?

    1.7. Can you talk about your teachers' teaching methodologies, techniques and approaches?

    1.8. How were the lessons structured? How were the rehearsals and your own practicing time structured?

2. When did you move to Canada?

    2.1. Why did you move here? What inspired this immigration?

    2.2. Why Canada? And why Montreal/Toronto?

    2.3. What were your expectations of this society? What had you heard about life here?

    2.4. What is your experience since your arrival? How did this move change your life (personally and professionally)?

    2.5. Have you received additional training in your tradition or other musical traditions? Could you elaborate please?

3. Performance:

    3.1. Could you tell me about your performing experiences here? The concerts you have had, the festivals you have performed at, your collaborations with musicians of other musical

traditions and cultures etc.? Where do you perform? How and by whom are the concerts organized? Who is the audience?

4. Teaching:

    4.1. Before moving to Canada did you used to teach? Did you teach Iranian traditional music? How did you teach? What were your teaching methodologies, books, and repertoire? Who was your clientele? What age group? Why did they want to learn this music? What was their motivation? How serious were your students?

    4.2. What changed after you moved here? How do you teach music here?

    4.3. From which musical tradition(s) do you draw your pedagogical techniques?

    4.4. How do you choose repertoire?

    4.5. Who do you teach? Who are your students? What age group? What ethnic background? Do you only teach Iranians or also non-Iranians?

5. What are your attitudes toward various aspects of the music tradition you represent here in Montreal/Toronto?

    5.1. Do you see your tradition as fixed or constantly in movement and evolving?

    5.2. What do you consider authentic in your music?

    5.3. What is your view on ‘musical dialogues’ between different music traditions?

    5.4. In retrospect, how do you see the dialogues and exchanges between music of your area of expertise and other musical traditions? Any advantages, disadvantages?

6. What place does your musical tradition have in the musical landscape of Canada?

    6.1. In the contemporary setting? In the concert scenes, concert halls? In the academic scene, research and journal articles, etc. What do you think is missing and why?

    6.2. Where do you see this tradition placed in the near future, five years from now, twenty years from now?

    6.3. What is the role of Iranian musicians/performers/educators/scholars/researchers in the Canadian music scene?

    6.4. What role does the government of Canada play? Are you satisfied with their policies towards immigrants, artists, musicians, and how they facilitate the process of arrival and integration into the musical scene of the country?

## Appendix B

*Participants' Oral Recruitment Script*

Title of Research: The performing and teaching practices of Iranian musicians in Canada: Influences of a multicultural society

Researcher: Solmaz Shakerifard
Master of Arts in Music Education, Department of Music Research, Schulich School of Music, McGill University
Montreal: (514) 677 6423
E-mail: solmaz.shakerifard@mail.mcgill.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Lorenzino Email: lisa.lorenzino@mgill.ca

- Hello, my name is Solmaz Shakerifard and I am a Master's student in Music Education in the Schulich School of Music at McGill University and I am conducting a research on the performing and teaching practices of Iranian musicians in Canada and the influences of this multicultural society on such practices. This is in fact the title of my thesis and it explores the way Iranian musicians living in Canada are adapting their performing and teaching practices to their new environment. I would like to examine musicians' perceptions of and attitudes towards life in a multicultural society, and I will focus on how the artists perform and teach music, the advantages and disadvantages of the Canadian Multi-cultural environment, and their adaptation/reception into society.
- I have
    - seen the posters of your most recent/upcoming concert
    - seen your teaching ad in the newspaper
    - heard about your musical practices from (the name of the person who has referred me to the participants)

    and would like to learn about your experiences as an Iranian traditional musician in Canada. Your participation in this study would involve meeting with me for a semi-structured interview and me taking one lesson with you. In the interview I will ask you about your background in performance and teaching in Iran and since you moved to Canada, and how they have changed and what are reasons for such transformations. I will also ask you about your perceptions regarding the place of your musical tradition on the Canadian musical landscape. This interview will last between 45-90 minutes. The interview will be in person at the location of your choice and will be arranged at a time that is convenient for you. I will audio/video-record the interview and will also be taking notes too.

- Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose not to answer any question or even to withdraw at any point from the project. You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. You will be asked to sign a consent sheet prior to the interview to indicate that you are aware of the topic and the nature of your

participation. I will leave a copy of the consent form for you to read before the interview date.

- Anything you say will only be attributed to you with your permission; otherwise the information will be published in my thesis and academic journals and presented in conferences in such a way as to make direct association with yourself impossible. All identifiable data you supply during the research will be held in confidence for five years after the completion of the study and they will be destroyed then. This means that no other person or organization, other than myself and my supervisor, will have access to the interview materials. The information you provide will be published in my thesis and academic journals and presented in conferences in such a way as to make direct association with you impossible.

- Would you be interested in participating in this research project?

<u>If Yes:</u>

- When is it convenient for you to meet for the interview?
  - Date: _____
  - Time: _____
  - Location: _____
- May I have your email address? The purpose of this is to send you a copy of the Consent Form that you can review before the interview.
  - I will bring another copy of the Consent Form to the interview for us both to sign before the interview begins.
  - Email address: _____
- Do you have any additional questions or concerns about the process or how the information will be used?
- If you think of any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email. I will leave you my card and also my supervisor's card.
- I look forward to talking to you more about your experiences. Thank you for participating.

<u>If No:</u>

- Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Appendix C

*Informed Consent Form*

Title of Research: The performing and teaching practices of Iranian musicians in Canada: Influences of a multicultural society

Researcher: Solmaz Shakerifard
Master of Arts in Music Education, McGill University
Montreal: (514) 677 6423
solmaz.shakerifard@mail.mcgill.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Lorenzino Email: lisa.lorenzino@mgill.ca

You are invited to participate in the above research project

INFORMATION

Purpose of the research: This research explores the way Iranian musicians living in Canada are adapting their performing and teaching practices to their new environment. The researcher will examine musicians' perceptions of and attitudes towards life in a multicultural society. The research will focus on how the artists perform and teach music, the advantages and disadvantages of the Canadian Multi-cultural environment, and their adaptation/reception into society.

What is involved in participating: Participants in this study will be asked to take part in interviews as an expert in their field; in addition, and the researcher will also take one lesson with each participant. The lesson will be audio- and/or video-recorded if the participants agree. If you choose to participate, a meeting date will be set at your convenience. At the time of the meeting, you will be asked to sign this consent sheet and the interview or the lessons will proceed. The interview is expected to last 45-90 minutes. If an interview is being tape-recorded or video-recorded, you will be told of this and you have the right to refuse the taping.

Risks and discomforts: We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

PARTICIPATION

Voluntary participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose to decline to answer any question or even to withdraw at any point from the project.

Withdrawal from the study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. You will be asked to sign a consent sheet prior to the interview to indicate that you are aware of the topic and the nature of your participation. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will have the right to ask any questions at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY [Unless you choose otherwise]

Anything you say will only be attributed to you with your permission; otherwise the information will be published in the researcher's thesis and academic journals and presented in conferences in such a way as to make direct association with yourself impossible. All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence; this means that no other person or organization, other than the researcher and her supervisor, will have access to the interview materials. Your data will be safely stored in a locked file and only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to this information. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your files.

*QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH?*

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Solmaz Shakerifard or her supervisor Dr. Lisa Lorenzino ( lisa.lorenzino@mcgill.ca, 514-398-4535 ext. 0693). This project has been reviewed by the McGill University Research Ethics Board (REB-II). You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your records. If you have ethics-related concerns, you may also contact Ms. Lynda McNeil at the McGill Research Ethics Board at (514) 398-6831, or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

*CONSENT*

I agree to be audio recorded _____ YES _____NO

I agree to be video recorded _____YES _____NO

I agree to be photographed _____YES _____NO

I would like to be identified in this research _____ YES _____ NO

Audio recording of my interview can be used in future related research on a similar topic:
_____YES _____NO

Video recording of my interview can be used in future related research on a similar topic:
_____YES _____NO

Photographs of my interview can be used in future related research on a similar topic:
_____YES _____NO

Video recording of the lessons I gave to the researcher can be used in future related research on a similar topic: _____YES _____NO

Photographs of my interview can be used in the presentation of the data at a conference:
_____YES _____NO

I agree that my name will be associated with the photograph in the presentation of the data at a conference: _____YES _____NO

I acknowledge that I have read the above statement which explains the nature and aim of this investigation, and the statement has been explained to me to my satisfaction. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature_____ Date _____

Researcher's signature_____ Date _____

## List of Interviews

Shahin Fayaz – May 16th, 2013 – North York, Toronto

Saeed Kamjoo – August 6th and 7th, 2013 - Montreal

Mahin Mohajer – May 16th, 2013 – North York, Toronto

Khosha Nakhaei – May 16th, 2013 – North York, Toronto

Siamak Nasr – September 16th, 2013 - Montreal

Pooria Pournazeri – May 7th, 2013 - Montreal

Nima Rahmani – May 14th, 2013 – North York, Toronto

Sepideh Raissadat – May 12th, 2013 - Toronto

Araz Salek – May 14th, 2013 - Toronto

Kiya Tabassian – November 15th, 2013 - Montreal

Kamal Taravati – May 17th, 2013 – Richmond Hill, Ontario

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