

## Producing Musical Events: Golden Memories Presented at IASPM (US) 2009

(This is a work in progress and part of a larger project)

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### Introduction

My talk to day presents one part of a larger study on the production of world musics in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In this paper, I consider the ways in which live Bollywood music events are currently being produced by members of the Indian diaspora in Auckland. I present three project maps that focus on three events produced in the past two years, featuring live performances of popular film songs.

Popular songs of the Hindi cinema are at the heart of popular culture in India and throughout the Indian diaspora. This audience will be aware of the term Bollywood as it is applied to the products and culture of the Hindi cinema and will also be aware that despite global currency in Indian and non-Indian discourse, the term has been problematized by some Indian scholars; including Gopal and Moorti (2008), Rajadhyaksha (2004), and Prasad (2003). Nevertheless this term is central to the marketing of the events used in this case study.

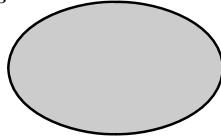
Because all three event producers are performers, motivation is an important factor in this study. Issues of nostalgia and their own desires to perform require consideration. I will address these issues in the conclusion of this talk.

### Method

This study expands my development of a methodology in which shape, position and other graphic variables are used to display quantitative and qualitative information about performance events. Quantitative data is represented by numbers, types and positions of graphic elements. Qualitative data is graphically illustrated by project network maps that identify three components; drivers, resources and relationships.

## DRIVERS

- Direct personal interests in the performance of Indian film songs



- Drivers are motivated as a musician, performer, a teacher, cultural advocate or event organiser

## RESOURCES

- Six types of project resources are identified by rectangular boxes.



- Drivers enclosed in rectangular boxes have direct access to the project resources indicated by that box

**Chart 1**

Drivers	Resources	Relationships
Direct Personal Interest in the performance of Indian film songs	Audience	Commercial
	Local performer	Cultural Identity
	Overseas performer	Family
	Industry	Social
	Sponsor	
	Event Support	

(SLIDE ONE: Chart 1 DRIVERS AND RESOURCES)

The model identifies and analyses the drivers and resources and the relationships that connect them and demonstrate how these elements underlie performance events by representing those events as project maps. Projects involving inter-organisational stakeholders can often be quite complex and may involve large and diverse project networks. This method makes possible the consideration of the dynamics of event production and the relationships that enable them. I have considered current academic event theory including stakeholder relationship circles as developed by Allen et al (2002) and O’Toole and Mikolaitis (2002).

Production drivers are the people who are motivated to produce an event. In the network map the placement of the driver is significant as those drivers in central positions indicate relative importance to the event management. Drivers are identified by grey ovals; multiple drivers are differentiated as “A” “B” etc. A driver may be a performer, teacher, cultural advocate or event organiser; but in the events I describe today, the central drivers are simultaneously the main performers in their event. Naturally, this combination of driver and performer roles in an individual event affects the way in which the production is designed.

Resources are all the elements that make the event possible. These may include performers, funding, venues, audience, and public relations. Similar resource types are placed, whenever possible, in the same area of the project map for easy identification of information. Project resources are identified by rectangular boxes. Production drivers enclosed in rectangular boxes have direct access to the project resources indicated by that box. In this model there are six types of resources: industry, audience, local performer, overseas performer, sponsors, and event support. Each has the potential to contribute a variety of resources as indicated in Table 1.

<b>Resource Contributions</b>	
<b>Industry</b>	Mumbai Film Industry- source of musicians, technical and musical support, intellectual property Performer authenticity Bollywood fan clubs Tangible and Intangible
<b>Audience</b>	Validate the event Percentage of house and financial
<b>Local Performer</b>	Musicians participating from local region May be contracted, friend or family
<b>Overseas Performer</b>	Musicians participating in event not living in New Zealand They may be visiting friends and relatives or contracted
<b>Sponsors</b>	Economic Promotion Cash or in kind
<b>Event Support</b>	Promotional design and distribution Media and Advertising Production details including venue, ticketing, technicians, front of house and administration Venue facilities

**Table 1**

(SLIDE TWO: RESOURCE CONTRIBUTION SLIDE Table One)

One of the central features of this project map is the identification of the relationships that unite drivers and resources. Relationships are interests shared by drivers and other individuals who have direct access to resources. The value of this model is that the project map graphically represents the networks that connect drivers and resources, allowing projects to proceed. These mutual concerns may connect individuals, but may also connect the people in organisations, institutions or businesses that control access to the necessary project elements. Furthermore, when a driver has a relationship with another individual, the relationships that that

individual may have with yet other individuals may extend the driver’s access to resources through the resulting indirect relationship. In this scenario, access is gained through another individual’s relationship outside of the direct control of the driver. Collectively these relationships help a project driver to access necessary project resources to produce a successful event. In this talk, I use four different relationship types; commercial, cultural, family and social as outlined in Table 2.

<h2>Relationships</h2>		
<b>Commercial</b>	Broken black lines are economic relationships, for example, performance contracts, sponsorship arrangements or business promotion. They may be direct or indirect	- - - -
<b>Cultural</b>	Solid black lines indicate shared cultural identity	————
<b>Family</b>	Double black lines indicate family members	=====
<b>Social</b>	Dotted black lines indicate social reciprocity	.....

**Table 2**

(SLIDE THREE: RELATIONSHIPS)

In constructing a project map, relationship lines of the same type are placed next to each other whenever possible. This demonstrates clusters of similar relationships when these exist. Relationship clusters form patterns that help the understanding of the nature of inter connected project relationships between drivers and resources.

This paper applies my methodology to three Bollywood music events among the many Bollywood events that happen annually in Auckland. All three amateur singers and the audience they attract have a demonstrated preference for the songs of the period 1950-80, the classic or golden age of the Hindi cinema as this is

sometimes represented. The events featured are listed in Table 3.

## Performance Projects

March 2008	Mega Sangeet Mehfil
April 2009	A Tribute to Kishore Kumar
May 2009	Old is Gold

**Table 3**

(SLIDE FOUR: 3 Events)

### Producing Bollywood in Auckland

The way in which the driver conceives the event, the relationships the driver is able to attract, and the specific identities and world-views of the driver all affect the nature of the event and the driver's potential access to event resources. Of course, some producers of golden-oldie events are able to access more resources than others. Among other factors resource access may depend on many factors that

include:

### Access to resources may depend on:

- International artist connections
- Quality of live musicians
- Existing volunteers and audience base
- Sponsorship networks
- Reputation of singer producing the event
- Media relationships

(SLIDE FIVE Access to Resource)

Both the identity of the driver and the specific way the production model is designed will naturally affect the event content as well as the targeted market sector.

The three events in this study have a number of commonalities:

# Event Components

## Commonalities

- Similar size audiences and repertoire
- Local singers of Hindi popular film music
- Venue and ticket prices
- Local Indian community performances
- Community network involvement
- Performing such events over the past 6 years

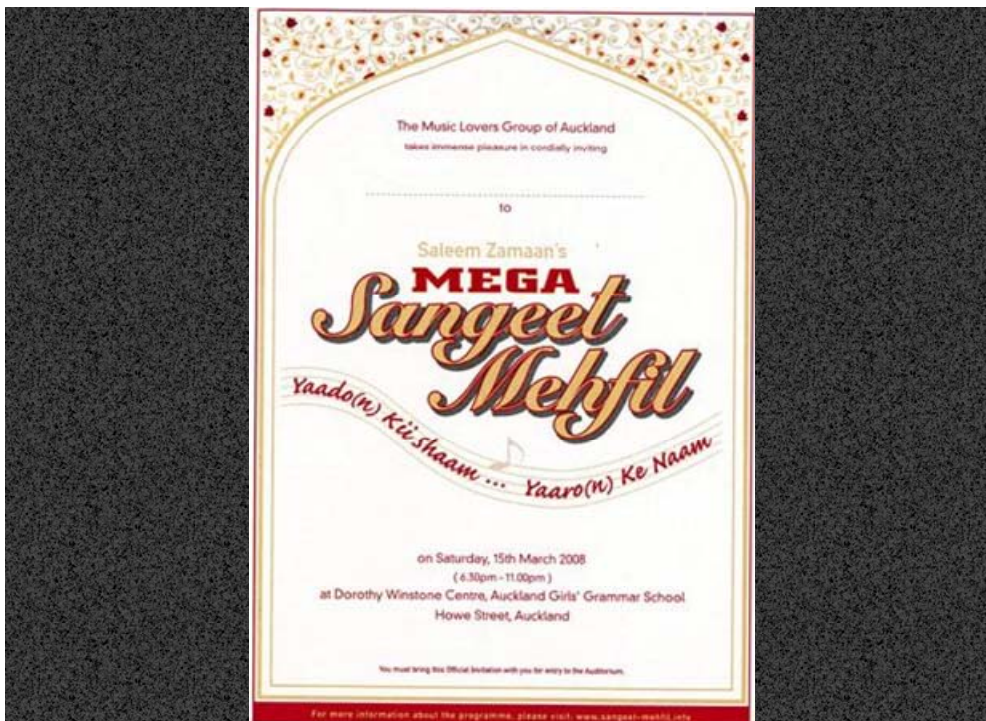
## Differences

- The drivers are from different parts of India
- Audiences represent different cultural performance networks
- Bollywood film industry networks
- Community networks
- Event popularity
- Sponsorship
- Media and promotion

(SLIDE SIX: Event Components)

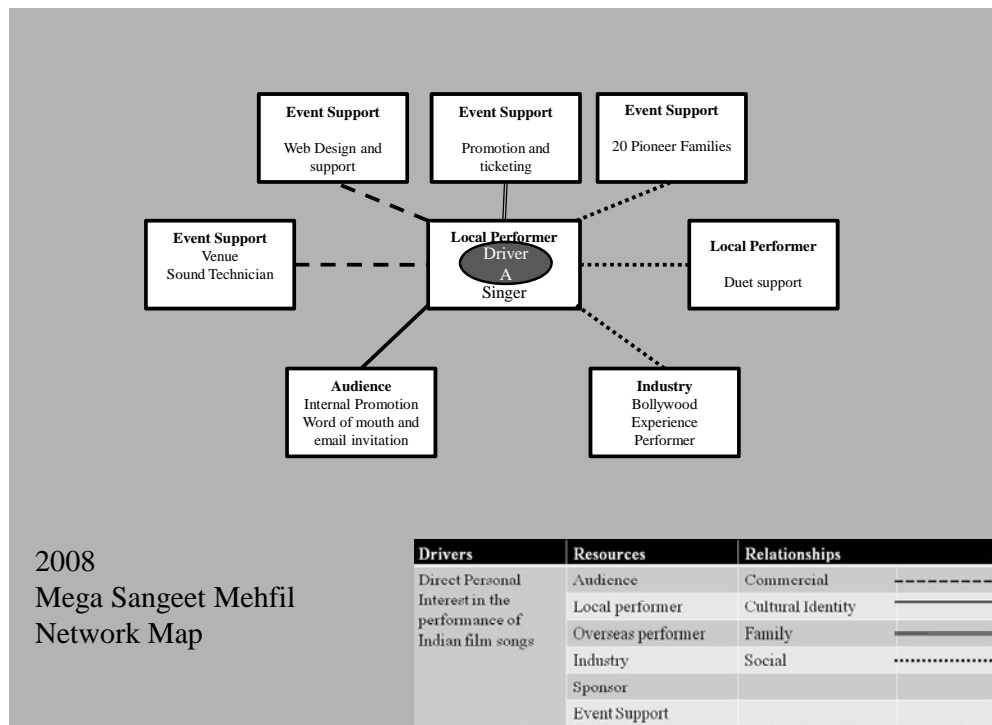
...as well as differences

I examine how these comparative factors interact with the motivations of the production drivers and how the singer delivers live classic Indian film song performances within larger community frameworks.



Mega Sangeet Mehfil (SLIDE SEVEN: INVITE)

This is a picture of an exclusive invitation for the Mega Sangeet Mehfil. The fact that this is an invitation that cost \$20 is significant. Sangeet is a complex term that is colloquially used to mean music. *Mehfil* is an Urdu term that literally means an assembly. It is routinely used in Sufi discourse but is also used to describe an intimate gathering of courtly entertainment including music, dance and hospitality. For most contemporary Indians, it is closely connected to the nostalgic ideology of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Indo-Muslim culture and the music and poetry thereof. The contradictions between a “mega” or large public event and a “mehfil” or small intimate event, were structurally expressed in the production to this event, as I will describe. Nevertheless, the use of this term in the marketing of this event, is an important clue to the cultural identity (and the ideological motivations) of this project’s driver.



(SLIDE NINE: MSM: Project Map One)

Driver A is located in the centre of the map in a local performer resource box connected to event support, audience, industry and performers. A is an educated investment advisor from a Hyderabadi Muslim family who has lived and worked in India, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand.

A worked for some years as a professional studio singer in the Mumbai film industry and consequently has access to an industry resource box containing Bollywood experience. Bollywood experience and the social relationships created have given A authenticity as a singer in the local community as well as access to professionally produced instrumental backing tracks.

For the past several years, A has held regular mehfiles in his spacious living room for other film song aficionados. The regular attendees form what he came to define as the "Pioneer Family" Group of 20 or more volunteers who helped promote and organise larger performance opportunities for A. The Pioneer Family Group sits in an event support resource box linked through social networks. In practice, A's mehfiles have been largely solo events in which he accompanies himself with pre-recorded instrumental tracks played on his computer. The only other performers are women singers, usually two or three per event, who are invited to perform solo female songs or duets with A. A assumed the limited financial risks of his event, which were fortunately covered by revenue from ticket sales. If there had been a profit, A had stipulated that it would be donated to a medical charity in line with the Islamic practice *zakah*. *Zakah* is one of the five central tenets or pillars of Islam. Although literally translated as "purification" or "growth" it refers to the practice of charity for those in need and for the society in general. A defined the purpose of the Mega Sangeet Mehfil in terms of *zakah*.

Megha Sangeet Mehfil sold 60% of the tickets and broke even, had no sponsors, word of mouth marketing and was run by a host of volunteers.



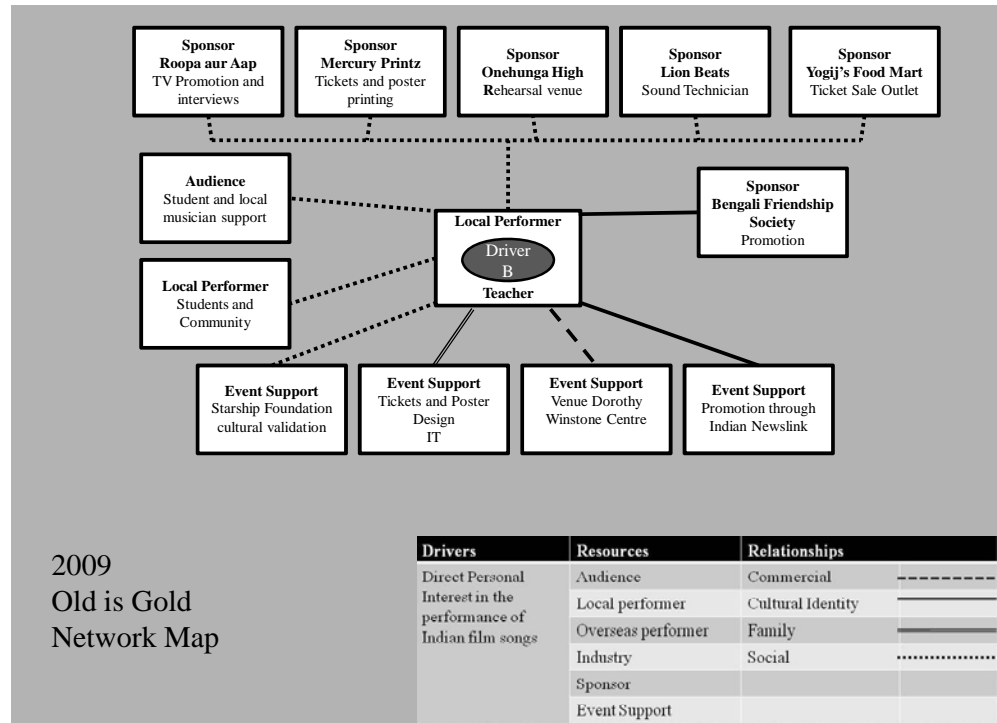
(SLIDE TEN: OIG POSTER)

### Old is Gold III

Old is Gold III was billed as a live musical stage show presented by the Mohammed Rafi Academy of Music. Like the Mega Sangit Mehfil, Old is Gold was been conceptualized as a fundraiser, this time for Starship Children's Hospital, the local children's hospital. This event was a replication of earlier events, Old is Gold I and II, that were presented in previous years in the same format. The Old is Gold series has been more successful than Mega Sangeet Mehfil in accomplishing its stated goal; over \$18,000 has been contributed to this charity over the past five years.

Driver B is a singer/teacher from Calcutta, with some classical training. He supports himself by living simply and teaching film songs and other light vocal forms, and by some limited composing and performing. He has organized his teaching activities as the Mohd Rafi Academy, named after one of the Mumbai film industry's greatest playback singers. His students include young and old singers of varied cultural backgrounds including those of Indian, Indo-Fijian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and European origin.

Old is Gold III featured many of the same film songs as Mega Mehfil Sangeet, but included 26 singers in addition to Driver B and accompanied by local musicians of Indian cultural backgrounds performing on a variety of instruments. Old is Gold III took place 24 hours ago so I cannot report whether or not the event raised the \$5000 B hoped to donate to Starship Hospital.



(SLIDE ELEVEN: Project Map 2 Old is Gold)

Driver B has established social relationships with event support, students, audience and sponsorship. The event support relationship with Starship Hospital gives this event a wider public profile that goes beyond the local Indian community. At the same time audience feel they are attending a charity event and supporting a worthy cause. B recruits free local performers, technicians, printers, and rehearsal space through social networks.

Those attending this event will be friends and family of those students and amateur musicians performing with B as well as members of the local Indian community in which B is active including his temple and cultural affiliations. Auckland's local Bengali society and the neighbourhood Indian food mart provide additional promotion and ticketing support through his strong cultural and social networks.

Additional event support is provided by B's son. Six sponsors help underwrite the majority of event production expenses enabling this event to raise money for charity.

Last year, Old is Gold II sold 80% of the tickets and the profits went to charity, had sponsorship, promotion and volunteers from students and local performers.

Indian Newslink, Auckland's major Indian newspaper, promotes B as the editor feels it is important to support B's altruistic endeavour and expects that this year the concert will sell out.

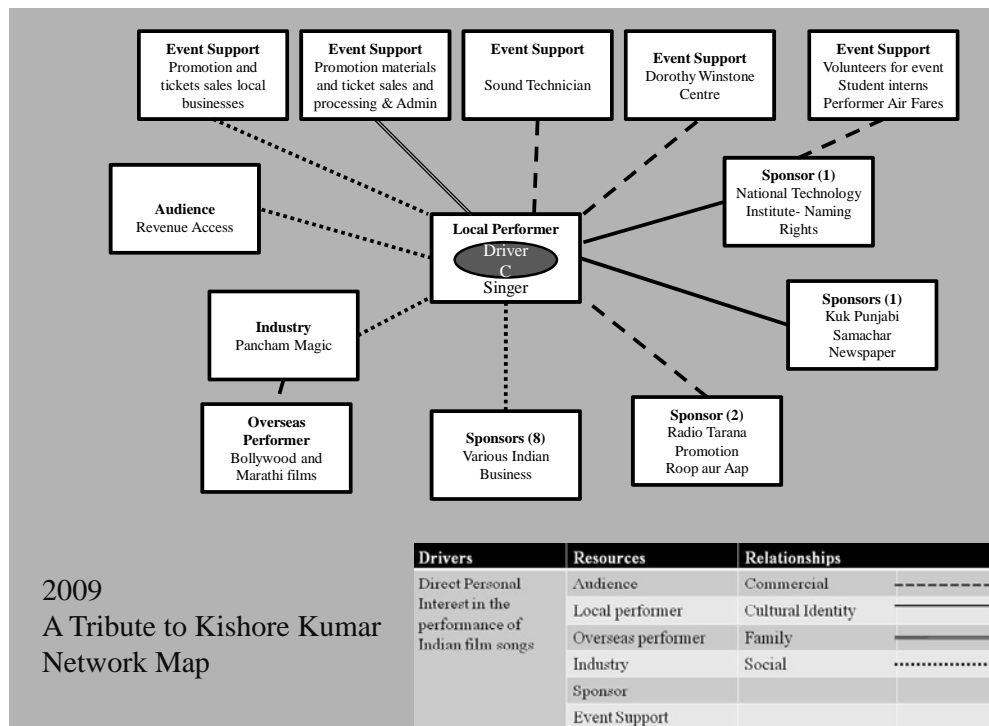


(SLIDE TWELVE: TTK POSTER)

### **Tribute to Kishore Kumar**

A Tribute to Kishore Kumar is one of five concerts featuring Driver C has produced, each featuring himself as vocalist, with backup musicians from India. Driver C is from a Panjabi family but lived in Pune (in West Central India) near Mumbai. He works as a producer for Radio Tarana, Auckland's only commercial Indian-language radio station. C personally arranges all sponsorship, overseas

negotiations with musicians and ticket sales.



(SLIDE THIRTEEN: Project Map 3)

C has a social relationship with Pancham Magic, a large and extremely active fan club of the famous Bollywood composer, R.D. Burman, located in Pune. This provides him with access to Indian musicians who play at Pancham Magic events in Pune, and for Pune’s Marathi film industry (such as it is) and who are willing to travel to Auckland for a week of rehearsals and a concert. This is represented by an indirect commercial line through the Pancham Magic industry resource box. C’s perceived authenticity is reinforced by access to live professional backup musicians to accompany his singing. To bring musicians from India requires funding which C accesses through sponsorship. In exchange for naming rights, the National Technology Institute provided airfares as well as 40 volunteer student interns to provide event support.

Tickets are sold through home as well as distributed and promoted through local Indian businesses.

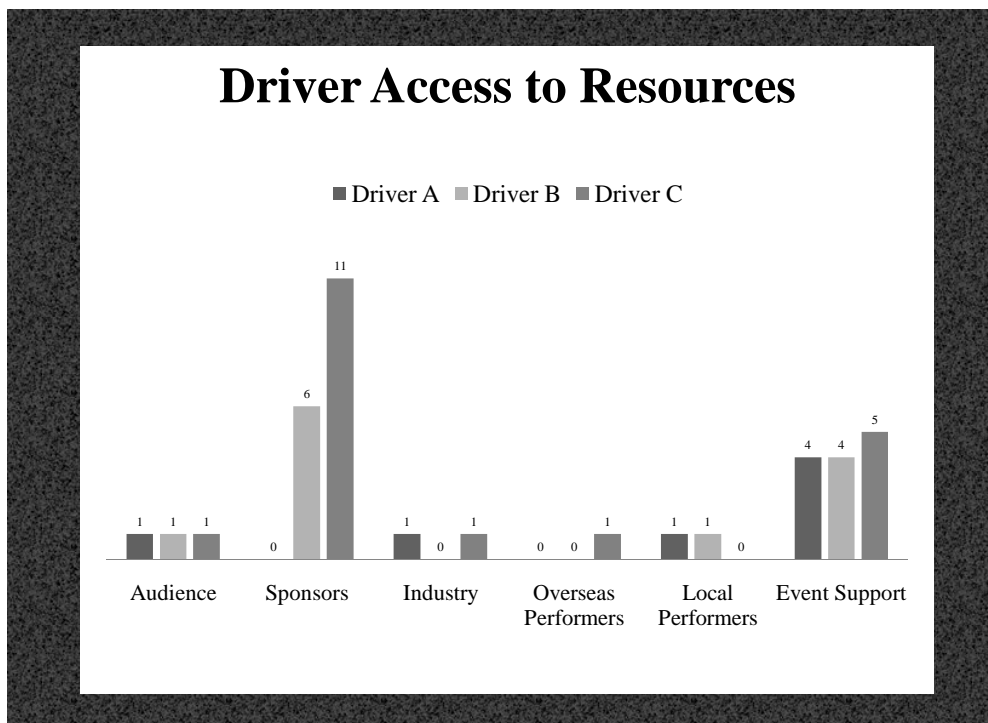
C is able to offer in exchange mentions and advertising discounts on Radio Tarana.

A Tribute to Kishore Kumar sold 100% of its tickets in April 2009 with profits going directly to C. Access to sponsors, international performers and media create strong relationship clusters. C's position at Radio Tarana controls promotion access to the other performers.

### Conclusion

Auckland is a small community in which musicians struggle for limited resources and to some extent, these three drivers are competing for audience, sponsorship, and attention in that context. These three examples show a range of adaptive strategies employed by musicians seeking to position themselves and their musical endeavours in a diasporic setting. Each driver uses a slightly different combination of existing and developing relationships to access the resources necessary for his event. A driver's access to other performers, audience, event support, sponsors and media are factors in how the production is managed and perceived by the community.

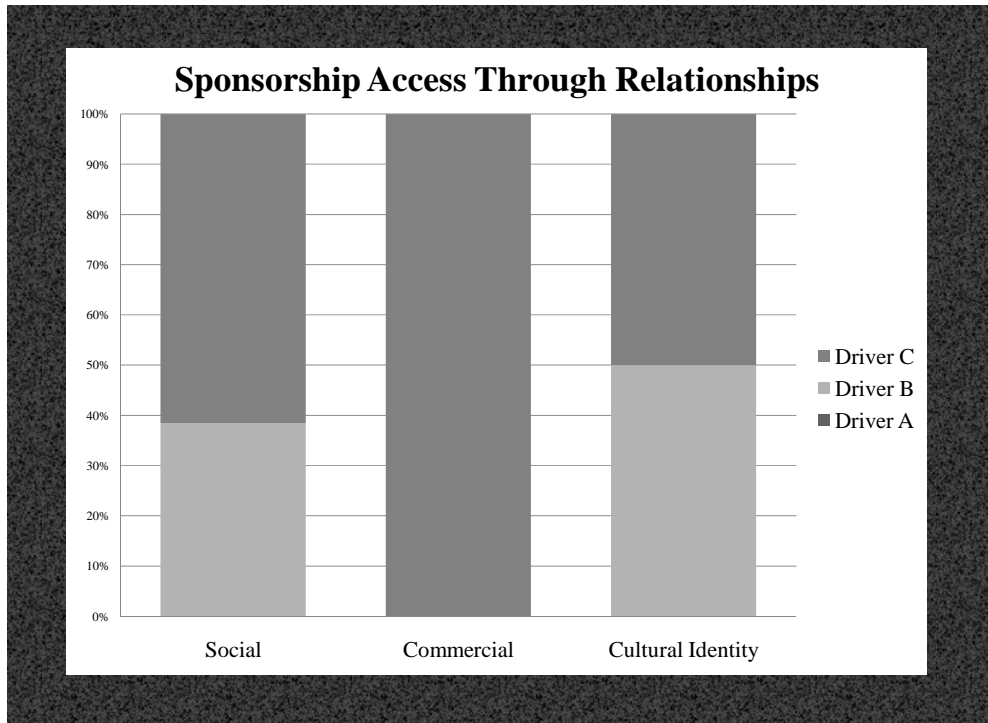
### Resource Issues



(SLIDE FOURTEEN: GRAPH ONE: Driver Access to Resources)

This simple graph shows that by and large, each driver was able to access the same kinds and quantities of resources. The two most crucial resources are, understandably perhaps, the most consistent. Without an audience, and without

sufficient event support an event will either not take place or will be publically perceived a failure and incur driver debt. Industry resources and both performer resources show variation from event structure to event structure; variation is less a matter of competition than of diverse driver histories and consequent production models.



(SLIDE FIFTEEN: GRAPH TWO Sponsorship Access)

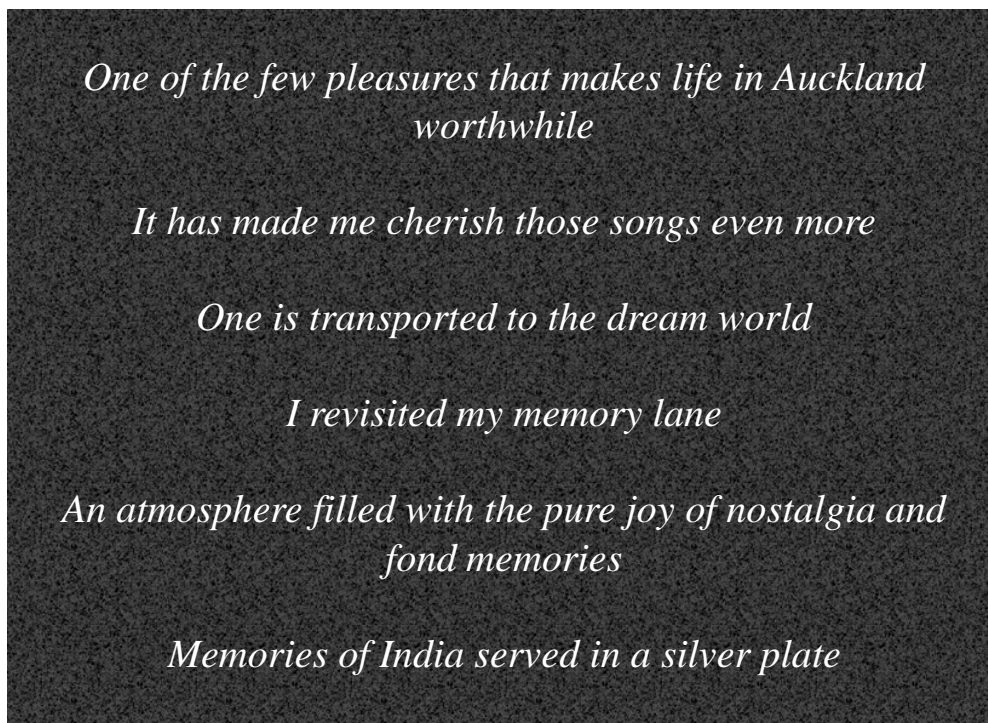
Sponsorship is the one resource that shows what appear to be significant differences across the three events, especially because all three drivers initially conceptualised their events as having sponsors. Driver A 's need to replicate his intimate mehfil structure on a large scale and to continue to control access to the event eventually made sponsorship impossible to achieve in this case. However, A was able to bypass the need for sponsorship by relying on his Pioneer Family social relationships to provide the similar types of support that sponsorship provided for B and C. This graph shows, that for Drivers B and C, social relationships, were the means by which most sponsorship was accessed.

#### Motivation

One of the issues behind these project maps, of course, is the matter of motivation. Driver's A and B positioned their events as efforts for charity (although with different

outcomes). But here, charity may be more a matter of a justification than an actual outcome. Driver C does seek economic profit, although this is both highly uncertain and limited. For all three singers, however, part of the underlying motivation is a matter of socio-musical positioning and prestige in a small diaspora community. What is more, as long as they are on the stage, there is no room for anyone else. There are independent reports of at least some degree of quiet gamesmanship by some of these drivers seeking to limit publicity and audience attendance for other drivers.

On a broader level, nostalgia unites the drivers and the audience. Singers want to perform and be heard and audiences want to experience their performances in the company of other Indians. These events are, in effect, a sharing of cultural memory which, as Wilson (2005) notes, interacts, and is ideologically aligned with nostalgia. The connection between nostalgia and film song events such as these are made clear by the responses shown here by Megha Mehfil Sangeet participants:



(SLIDE FIFTEEN: Mehfil Comments)

Driver A explains:

“Mega Sangeet Mehfil is a private concert for a gathering of like-minded “friends” who enjoy taking a nostalgic musical journey “down memory lane”

into the golden era of Indian Cinema. We offer our friends an opportunity to request live performances of their favourite filmi songs ... an integral part of re-living personal memories.”

Driver B explains his motivation as the urge to be closer to people and earn their love and affection. This desire has encouraged him to teach music to a growing number of enthusiasts in the greater Auckland region.

As I have noted, C is motivated at least in part, by commercial concerns; but he sees this as something that will motivate his audience as well:

“Film songs for the people of Hindustan are an important thing. The audience wants value for each and every dollar and then they will return. ”

Film songs are important, as C notes; in part, because, as Lipsitz (1990) reminds us, popular culture provides a sense of shared memory and a sense of identity. As he suggests, the electronic media has the ability to:

“make collective memory a crucial constituent of individual and group identity in the modern world” (Lipsitz: viii).

If nostalgia is the longing for home, then in the Indian diaspora, one might say that home is where the music is. To feel at home is to know things are in places and so are you; it is a state of mind that need not depend on actual location.

Through local Bollywood singers, the Indian diaspora gathers to share the commonality of communal memory through song.

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