

A Comparative Study of the Impact of Different *Gamakas* on the Structure of the *Mohanam Varnam*, “*Ninnu-kori*”: Investigating the *Gamaka* Box Notation System

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My analysis of transcriptions of the *Mohanam varnam*, “*Ninnu-kori*” by three vocalists and three flutists investigates the structural importance of differently applied *gamakas* (ornaments) in the composition. My reductions using typologies of contour in continuous melodic movement in-between fixed instances of the raga’s pitches, show how different *gamakas* change the overall structure of the composition. A final version of the *varnam*, by film composer and Karnatic musician Ramesh Vinayakam is included, along with video of him teaching it to me. His version was written (with *gamakas*) on paper before our lesson, using his *Gamaka* Box notation system (Vinayakam, forthcoming). To contextualize the analysis, I first investigate the significance of differences between Vinayakam's version and the six transcriptions. Secondly, showing how Vinayakam’s notation provided a short cut, I compare my experience of learning the *varnam* “off the page”, to the experience of other authors who have learned Karnatic music via the standard aural method such as Weidman (2006) and Allen (2004). Lastly, I comment on learning Karnatic music from a detailed notation, in the context of the oral tradition.